



THE NETHERLANDS

“ A calm year with worrying signs ”

By Partos

Main trends

This report comes at a time of great turbulence in Dutch development cooperation. In April 2023, the government announced a EUR 3.4 billion cut to the development budget in order to finance the chronically underfunded domestic reception of refugees. However, the actual implementation of the cuts has become uncertain due to the unexpected fall of the current government in July 2023 and the announcement of snap elections to be held in November.

Given the upcoming elections, the status of the current Dutch development cooperation policy document is now unclear. The policy was well-received by civil society. Especially positive announcements were the creation of a feminist foreign policy, the continued prioritisation of sexual and reproductive health and rights, the increase in humanitarian and climate funding and the recognition of the important role played by civil society.

At the same time, further action remained necessary on important themes like climate justice and policy coherence. The note also appeared to backtrack on earlier commitments concerning corporate social responsibility (CSR) legislation. Furthermore, despite a highly critical reception, Minister Schreinemacher pursued the course of previous governments on aid and trade policy by increasing funding for private actors and introduced a form of tied aid. Most importantly, and as a precursor to the 2023 cuts, 14.5% of ODA was spent on refugee reception in 2022.

Government's relationship with civil society

The Dutch government provides funding to many Partos member organisations. Partos itself has regular contact with the ministry. Member organisations have regular contact with the ministry as well, both on anticipated and existing policies, as well as on funding issues, for example with the Power of Voices partnerships which are co-implemented

Reported ODA: EUR 5817 million

0.67% GNI (↑ from 0.52% in 2021)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 4967 million

0.57% GNI (↑ from 0.48% in 2021)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 850 million

14.6% of total



with the ministry. However, CSOs indicate that the funding modalities are creating tensions between them and the ministry. The ministry's wish to be a flexible operating partner appears to be at odds with the fact that it fully transfers operational and financial risks to its partners. The tension is exacerbated by disproportional reporting and monitoring requirements.

The Dutch government should:

- **Make sure that ODA stimulates equitable and sustainable development in the Global South. To do this, spendings on short-term political priorities should be excluded from ODA reporting. These include the reception of refugees, support to the private sector without much evidence for its positive long-term development impact, or migration management policies that try to keep people from entering the EU.**
- **Prioritise policy coherence for development: among other, close loopholes for tax evasion, tackle unfair trade practices, drastically reduce the enormous negative impact of Dutch agriculture and other sectors.**
- **Tackle the climate crisis in an (internationally) just way: reduce fossil fuel emissions as fast as possible, stop providing subsidies to fossil fuel activities immediately, pay our fair share of climate finance on top of existing ODA and make sure that our transition to a green economy does not harm the Global South.**
- **Continue supporting civil society, both in the Netherlands and in the Global South, especially in the context of growing repression and intimidation. Involve CSOs as early as possible in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy.**