We look forward to welcoming you all to the upcoming WINGS workshop, ‘IMPROVING THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY,’ in Cairo on 18 September 2012, in conjunction with the Arab Foundations Forum Annual Meeting (16 to 18 September 2012). Following is a brief background briefing on the workshop, including some reflection questions we would like you to think about in advance of the event.

**Background**

As part of the Global Philanthropy Leadership Initiative (GPLI), WINGS is conducting a review and update of the Principles of Accountability for International Philanthropy, developed by a joint working group of the Council on Foundations (CoF) and the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and published in 2007.

Over the past decade there has been increased emphasis on the critical need for greater accountability and transparency in philanthropy, on the part of both donors and grantees. Today the importance of transparency and public disclosure of information about philanthropic giving is widely acknowledged. Nevertheless, building a culture and practice of accountability faces a range of obstacles, including closed organizational mind-sets, absence of incentives, fear of public scrutiny, and lack of capacity and expertise in sound accountability practices.

If accountability presents a daunting task for organizations working within domestic national environments, it represents a much greater challenge in the case of cross-border giving. Some of the challenges faced by organizations working globally include language and cultural differences, disparate legal and accounting practices, long-distance communications, and working in the unpredictable and often volatile realm of international politics. In 2007, to address the issues surrounding international accountability practices, the European Foundation Centre (EFC) and the Council on Foundations (COF) created a Joint Working Group that developed a set of Principles of Accountability for International Philanthropy.

Five years later, WINGS (Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support) is engaging in a global review and update of the document, with the aim of deepening the understanding and practice of international philanthropy accountability, as well as introducing voices and perspectives from the global South. This will be done through regional consultations to globalize the Principles of Accountability document, vetting it regionally in Africa, the Arab Region, Asia and Latin America. Once the document is reviewed, it will be the basis for a practical toolkit to facilitate the operational
roll-out of the Principles. The review process will be informed by similar documents or guidelines drafted and developed by grantmaker networks in Africa, the Arab region and other regions. The process will provide a basis for the development of a practical tool kit to facilitate the operational roll-out of the Principles.

To take this consultation process forward, WINGS workshop is convening a half-day workshop, **IMPROVING THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY**, to be convened in Cairo on 18 September 2012 from 14:30 to 18:30 hours following the 2012 Annual Meeting of the Arab Foundations Forum. The workshop will bring together philanthropic leaders from the WINGS network in Africa and the Arab Region to review and strengthen the existing Principles document and craft strategies to make it the document come alive in the daily practice in our regions and organizations.

**Why ‘Principles of Accountability for International Philanthropy?’**

As Rob Buchanan and Sevdalina Rukanova wrote when the Principle were first developed, Recognizing that the international context differs in significant respects from philanthropy in one’s own country, the Council on Foundations and the European Foundation Centre (EFC) undertook a joint project in 2005 to look specifically at accountability for philanthropy that crosses international borders. Drawing on their experience... the two organizations felt that cooperation on this issue would produce a response which better reflected the diversity of the sector and the variety of approaches to philanthropy.

The EFC/CoF joint Working Group met four times over two years and conducted extensive consultations with their members, committees, national associations of donors, other grantmaker networks and NGOs. Joint consultations were undertaken with CIVICUS and WINGS and sessions were held at both the Council’s and the EFC’s annual meetings, during which early drafts of the Principles document were reviewed and refined.

The resulting document sets out seven key principles:

- Integrity
- Understanding
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Fairness
- Cooperation and Collaboration
- Effectiveness

These principles are defined, discussed and illustrated with some guidelines and examples for good accountability practice. The intention of the Principles is to offer a simple set of standards specifically for international, cross-border philanthropy. They are meant to embrace a wide diversity of foundations and grantmakers and to complement more detailed codes of practice or ethics adopted at regional and national levels. It was always intended that the Principles should be a living document subject to period review and updating. Recently, in the context of the GPLI, CoF and EFC came together with WINGs to embark on a global consultative process to review and update the
principles, with a particular view to engaging with the voices of philanthropy in the global South. Key areas where the Principles could benefit from further consultation are:

- Which of the principles and illustrative practices need to be reviewed or updated?
- What is missing and should be included (for example, exit strategies for international grantmakers, issues of ‘risk and accountability,’ etc.)?
- How can the Principles be made more operational (through key benchmarks, tool kits, etc.)?

The WINGS workshop process and key reflection questions

In Cairo, we will have a brief opportunity for structured but open dialogue about the Principles. The workshop will feed into a further one-day WINGS Africa/Arab regional workshop in Johannesburg on 2 November 2012 (a satellite event of the 2012 African Grantmakers Assembly). The workshop will attempt to locate the dialogue in the context of African and Arab examples of good practice codes, the global discourse on development effectiveness, and the enabling environment for civil society and philanthropy in Africa and the Arab region.

In preparation for the workshop, we want to request participants to reflect in advance on the following questions:

1) What do we want from this process and who are Principles for?
   - How can the Principles best serve the philanthropy and development community in Africa and the Arab Region?
   - Who are the main audience and stakeholders for the Principles (i.e. Northern donors, Southern foundations and partners, South-South philanthropy, citizens etc.)?

2) What is most valuable in the current Principles and what’s missing and needs to be included?
   - How can we strengthen the principles?

3) How can we make the Principles come alive to improve accountability and development effectiveness in our regions?
   - What recommendations and action steps can we suggest to strengthen the Principles and make them come to life as a vibrant tool for accountability and transparency in international, cross-border philanthropy?
   - How do the Principles complement national or regional principles/codes? Can the Principles be helpful in generating stronger accountability standards, codes and benchmarks at the national level across our regions?
   - What should be included in a tool kit of resources to assist in widening the application and operational use of the Principles?
As time will be very limited at the Cairo workshop, we may not be able to explore all of these questions in detail. However, to make the most of our time we would encourage participants to consider these questions in advance and, if possible, discuss them with colleagues in your organization and network.

**Readings for the workshop**

Background readings for the workshop that will be distributed in advance to participants will include:

- Principles of Accountability for International Philanthropy.
- CAF Southern Africa’s Code of Practice for Ethical and Effective Grantmaking.
- The East African Association and Grantmakers Code of Ethics.
- Arab Foundation Forum’s Principles of Good Practice.
- SAANED’s ‘Guide to Analysing Philanthropy Organizations’ (by Atallah Kuttab).
- A policy briefing from One.org on the ‘aid effectiveness’ debate.
- Bheki Moyo’s background paper on ‘Governing the Public Sphere: Civil Society Space in Africa.’

Supplementary readings you may wish to consult are:

- The International Non-Governmental Organisations Accountability Charter (see [http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharte](http://www.ingoaccountabilitycharte)r.org/)
- Jim Joseph’s article on ‘Redefining Accountability’ (see [http://www.foundationnews.org/CME/article.cfm?ID=3732](http://www.foundationnews.org/CME/article.cfm?ID=3732)).