

Background Note on Global Partnership for Development

For half a century, the partnership for development entailed developed countries making financial transfers and providing technical assistance to developing countries, to which they also granted trade preferences and accorded “special and differential treatment” in the give and take of global trade negotiations. The offers of assistance were generally accompanied by donor policy advice, often coordinated at the country level by international financial institutions through formal “conditionality” agreements.

By the time of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, however, this model of the global partnership was showing signs of wear. Donors increasingly rethought the objectives of their assistance, which focused more and more on pressing social concerns, such as the eradication of poverty and gender inequality, while boosting health and education. Donors thus directed some of their attention away from investing in infrastructure, agriculture and other fundamental economic sectors that had previously been the focus of development cooperation, increasingly leaving them to private international sources to help finance capital formation, such as foreign direct investment.

The adoption of the Millennium Development Goals came along with a strategy to encourage Governments to honour their Millennium pledges by quantifying the commitments, monitoring their implementation and then publicizing the results. As Governments agreed to be monitored in their support of the MDGs, this approach promised renewed life in the global partnership.

Nevertheless, aid flows did not begin to reflect this promise until a different kind of global agreement was forged at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002. Governments jointly made a wide range of policy commitments that were broader in scope than those captured in Goal 8. Policy steps were taken soon after to implement the Monterrey commitments. These included the pledges by major providers of ODA at the Summit of the Group of 8 in Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005, as well as the intensified international work to increase aid effectiveness led by the DAC. The commitments were also evident in the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative of 2005, which substantially deepened the relief made available to a group of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). Moreover, interested developed and developing countries began to devise innovative proposals for mobilizing international resources for development.

It is now more than a decade since the Monterrey Conference and almost 15 years since the Millennium Summit. The early 2000s dose of political momentum has once again tapered off and needs a boost. For example, the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national income of developed countries to development aid has been receding in the past two years. We must reverse this trend.

Moreover, we need a renewed and more effective global partnership to support the forthcoming post-2015 development agenda. The global partnership should finish the job started with Goal 8, including meeting the assistance objective of 0.7 per cent of gross national income, as well as other intergovernmental agreements, such as the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Istanbul Programme of Action, as well as the outcome of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.

All partners should deliver on past commitments, particularly those on official development assistance, climate finance and domestic resource mobilization. Official development assistance will remain crucial, including for leveraging other finance, particularly for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, many countries in Africa and countries emerging from conflict and disasters.

The impact of official development assistance can be magnified by other sources of finance, including innovative sources. We also need multi-stakeholder partnerships to respond to the sustainable development agenda. These should include not only governments but also businesses, private philanthropic foundations, international organizations, civil society, volunteer groups, local authorities, parliaments, trade unions, research institutes and academia. Such partnerships can channel commitments and actions from a wider set of actors, and their success depends on assigning roles, responsibilities and clear accountability.