



DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM

Luncheon Side Event in preparation for the DCF Germany High-level Symposium

“Effectiveness and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda – lessons from the MDG experience”

OFFICIAL SUMMARY

25 September 2013, 1:15-2:45 pm, UN Headquarters, New York

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of Germany organized a High-level luncheon side-event in preparation for the DCF Germany High-level Symposium on “Accountable and effective development cooperation in a post-2015 era”, to take place on 20-21 March 2014 in Berlin.

1. KEY MESSAGES

- i. **Accountability includes both the process of reporting and assessing compliance with commitments as well as mutual learning and knowledge sharing.** It can foster dialogue among stakeholders and strengthen their interaction at all levels to develop networks and changes in processes. This will be required to advance a holistic post-2015 development agenda that integrates sustainable development.
- ii. **Effectiveness in development cooperation can link clear vision with execution and seeks to maximize the impact and quality of development efforts.** Accountability and effectiveness are complementary and closely linked. Effectiveness requires strong monitoring and accountability.
- iii. **Transparency and public access to relevant and timely data and information are crucial to facilitate accountability among actors and increase effectiveness of development processes.** The post-2015 setting will be a more complex environment with a plurality of stakeholders. It will be important to use data co-created by all relevant actors and make it broadly accessible.
- iv. **There is no one-size-fits-all approach to accountability.** The post-2015 development agenda will be universal in applying to all countries. Yet, challenges and conditions in each country vary. Careful analysis is needed to assess which actors, partnerships and instruments will be most effective in each setting.
- v. **Development can only be achieved from within. No country can be developed from the outside.** It is important to align the implementation of internationally agreed development goals and development efforts to national development plans.
- vi. **The successful contribution from all actors in development cooperation requires an enabling environment conducive to their activities.** All governmental and non-governmental actors can play an important role in holding themselves and others accountable.
- vii. **The voices of all development partners need to be heard.** Continued strategic engagement between the Development Cooperation Forum and the Busan Global

Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation can help to bring all actors to the table to further enhance development effectiveness and accountability.

2. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Gudrun Kopp**, Parliamentary State Secretary, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, stressed that development effectiveness and accountability are crucial to the success of the post-2015 development agenda. She explained how the Development Cooperation Forum and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation provide platforms for the engagement of diverse stakeholders. As such, they strengthen interaction among actors and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, in view of achieving effective and accountable development cooperation that is impact orientated and sustainable. Moreover, no country can be developed from the outside. Thus, development can only be achieved through change that comes from within, facilitated through effective institutions.

Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, challenged participants to reflect upon the main pillars of accountability, its conceptual bases and concrete elements. He noted that further analysis must look at the integration of concepts such as monitoring and development effectiveness. A sustainable development agenda beyond 2015 requires an assessment of how an accountability framework can reflect this holistic focus. Moreover, a bottom-up approach that reflects the needs and capacities at country-level in a global system needs to be promoted, while also exploring the role of partnerships in such a framework.

H.E. Mr. Bhoendradatt Tewarie, Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development of Trinidad and Tobago, gave participants a hands-on example of accountability and effectiveness. Trinidad and Tobago streamlined its five sustainable development priorities into budgets and the work of ministries. Projects are selected through careful assessment and respective ministries are clustered around priorities. To hold ministries accountable, the government established a performance monitoring and management system, the National Transformation Unit. Four-year indicators were agreed upon and a policy framework was accepted by parliament with annual performance reports. In addition to parliamentary review, the government established an independent Economic Development Advisory Board and Civil Society Board.

Executive Director of the Mexican Agency of Cooperation **Mr. Juan Valle Pereña** explained that Mexico has adopted inclusiveness as a key element for the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation to be held in Mexico in April 2014. In addition to (a) an assessment of process since Busan, (b) domestic resource mobilization, (c) role of the private sector, (d) and knowledge sharing, Mexico has suggested two additional themes: (e) South-South and triangular cooperation and (f) challenges of middle-income countries as providing and receiving development partners. Mexico would like the Ministerial Conference to feed into the United Nations work on a post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Anthony Smith, UK Sherpa for the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and Director of International Relations for the Department of International Development, outlined what he considered key elements of development effectiveness and accountability. Driven by an increase in public expectations to justify expenditures, development effectiveness aims to increase quality and targeting. To be effective, development cooperation has to assess which instruments and combinations of instruments

will be most effective to address the actual challenges in each country. This assessment must also extend to identifying which partnerships will be needed. The process of accountability thus involves learning from each other, in addition to reporting and assessing progress.

Secretary-General and CEO of CIVICUS, **Mr. Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah**, highlighted the need for enabling conditions for civil society in the development process, at a time when increasing emphasis is placed on the need for environments conducive to businesses. Civil society is an effective development actor and not only provides services and financing but also can help generate new forms of accountability, holding itself and other stakeholders to account. The persistent and widespread weakness of the authorizing environment for civil society organizations in many countries (according to a recently released CIVICUS index) is therefore a serious barrier for the inclusiveness of the development process.

In the ensuing discussion, participants pointed to the importance of avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach to accountability. Moreover, they agreed upon the significance of ensuring national and local ownership, through respect for countries' own development plans. Participants therefore noted that the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals should be aligned with nationally determined development priorities. In particular, participants maintained that the specific needs and capacities of the most vulnerable countries and population groups must be taken into account when designing a global accountability framework.

Participants acknowledged governments may not always pursue an effective development agenda. Hence accountability has to be a two-way process: external development partners have to deliver on their commitments regarding amounts and modalities of support, and partner countries have to deliver on their commitments regarding development policies and programs. Accountability has to be ensured at the global and country levels.

Participants also agreed that, in order to ensure accountability and effective delivery of commitments, certain elements, such as transparency and availability of timely and relevant data, must be in place. This data should not only be publicly accessible, but must also be coherent and co-created by the various stakeholders. In addition, the issue of inclusiveness was underscored, particularly the inclusion of civil society and population groups such as youth. The role of partnerships should thus be reflected in a realistic way, seeing what each actor can contribute, without overemphasizing one actor's contribution in comparison to others. Lastly, participants called for continued strategic engagement between the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the Development Cooperation Forum to further development effectiveness and accountability in development cooperation.