



DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM

HIGHLIGHTS

Informal Side Event in preparation for the DCF Switzerland High-level Symposium on

The future of development cooperation in a post-2015 era –

Moving towards equitable and sustainable development for all

Thursday, 4 July 2013

United Nations Headquarters, Geneva

Key messages

- A post-2015 development agenda will have to focus on the unfinished business of the MDGs and promote transformative change to put the world on a more sustainable and equitable path.
- The goals of a post-2015 development agenda should be universal for all countries, yet also take into consideration different national circumstances.
- The agenda should not shy away from areas where progress may be more difficult to measure or to achieve.
- The means of implementation, while taking into account present economic realities, must have a level of ambition to match the vision of broader transformative change.
- Climate change should be brought into the financing framework as well.
- Greater public awareness in both the global North and South of structural issues and questions of policy coherence may provide an opportunity to address them.
- In one scenario, donor fatigue may still lead to a narrow focus on the governance of the aid system, around an OECD/DAC that gradually expands in membership.
- In another scenario, a new global approach to development policy may emerge, with a broader focus, around three major tasks: (i) guaranteeing the provision of universal social standards to the world population; (ii) providing international public goods; and (iii) addressing international inequalities and promoting convergence among countries.
- In a renewed global partnership for development post-2015, “beyond aid” issues could become much more important than aid issues.
- A renewed global partnership for development should be an attractive tool for all partners, building upon their comparative strengths. It should pay particular attention to countries and people most in need. It should engage all stakeholders and mobilize political support for an ambitious transformative agenda.
- To ensure delivery on commitments, a post-2015 development agenda should be backed by an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism for all actors in development cooperation.

Mr. Navid Hanif, Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, situated the side event discussion within the broader context of the

preparations for the 2014 DCF. The three preparatory high-level symposiums would each provide an opportunity for stakeholders collectively to think through the implications of a post-2015 development for the future of development cooperation. The Ethiopia Symposium reflected on the shape that a renewed global partnership for development could take in the post-2015 era. The Switzerland Symposium would look at the implications of a universal unified agenda for the future of development cooperation. The Germany Symposium would explore elements of an effective monitoring and accountability framework for a post-2015 development agenda. The Switzerland Symposium will be an important step in bringing the development cooperation and sustainable development experts together behind a unified and universal agenda.

Mr. Martin Dahinden, Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, explained that the purpose of the event was to generate feedback from stakeholders on the initial vision for the DCF Switzerland High-level Symposium. He noted that the Ethiopia Symposium had already provided substantial elements for the discussion. The Switzerland Symposium would be the first multi-stakeholder dialogue on development cooperation immediately following the Special Event of the President of the General Assembly in September. Participants would discuss future challenges of development cooperation on aid and beyond aid issues and examine sources, channels of financing and global public goods, around a number of key questions. The following four questions were proposed for the purposes of the DCF Symposium: (1) How can development cooperation promote sustainable development as a mutual benefit for all, while aligning with national goals and plans? (2) What implications does the emerging post-2015 development agenda have on the allocation of development cooperation financing, among and within countries and sectors, and with sources other than aid taking a greater role? (3) How can development cooperation actors improve and coordinate their activities and use of financing in support of sustainable development for all? (4) What would enhanced global monitoring and accountability look like for such development cooperation in the post-2015 era?

H.E. Mr. Minelik Alemu Getahun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations Office at Geneva, presented key messages from the Ethiopia High-level Symposium on how a renewed global partnership for development could work in practice. Such a partnership would have to focus on the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and promote transformative change. Development cooperation would have to build on existing international finance commitments, including ODA commitments. At the same time, it would need to challenge old dichotomies and become more comprehensive, building on the different comparative strengths of different actors. It should be demand-driven and increasingly aim to leverage other sources of development finance, in order to mobilize the additional financial resources needed to achieve equitable and sustainable development. To ensure delivery on commitments made, a post-2015 development agenda should be backed by an effective monitoring and accountability mechanism. A renewed global partnership for development should be an attractive tool for engagement of all stakeholders and complemented by partnerships at all levels.

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, stressed that the means of implementation for the post-2015 agenda would have to match the level of ambition to promote broader transformative change to eradicate poverty and to save the planet. It would need to be attractive for different stakeholders, including those that

are new to the development community. Stakeholders, including vulnerable communities and young people, needed to be involved in the formulation of the agenda to ensure their buy-in. Further clarity is needed on some of the critical issues, such as how to address the needs of least developed countries; the need for greater policy coherence and aid efficiency; and how the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities would manifest in different environments. Mrs. Mohammed acknowledged that, given today's economic environment, discussions around the means of implementation could be particularly difficult. She therefore particularly welcomed the contribution of the DCF to forging consensus on these issues.

Professor Jose Antonio Alonso, Professor of Applied Economics, Comutense University, and member of the United Nations Committee on Development Policy, outlined several major trends in the international development landscape: an increased level of heterogeneity in the developing world and a shift in the geography of poverty; a reduction in extreme poverty but stagnant relative poverty; an increased need for global public goods, due to globalization; and an emergence of new development actors and instruments, resulting in new funding opportunities, as well as fragmentation and duplication. These trends called for revisiting the questions of: (i) to whom development cooperation should be provided, (ii) who should provide it, (iii) what should be provided and (iv) how it should be provided. One scenario could be that donor fatigue results in a renewed focus on the governance of the aid system, around an OECD/DAC that gradually expands in membership. Another scenario could be a new global approach to development policy, going beyond the donor-recipient dichotomy and based on common but differentiated responsibilities. It would have a more wide-ranging agenda, focused on three major tasks: (i) guaranteeing the provision of universal social standards to the world population; (ii) providing international public goods; and (iii) addressing international inequalities and promoting convergence among countries. According to Professor Alonso, without deep transformation, neither the DCF nor the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation would be positioned to support such an agenda, while the DCF had the advantage of being located within the UN.

Mr. Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director General, European Commission, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation, EuropeAid, European Commission, underscored that discussions needed to take place in several fora as part of the preparations for a post-2015 development and stressed the important role of the DCF in that process. He observed that, while the MDGs were a 'catching –up' exercise, what was being called for now was a much more ambitious transformation. The recently adopted communication of the European Commission aimed to promote such a transformation by bringing together the development and sustainable development agendas, around five key building blocks. These building blocks resembled the transformational changes identified by the High-level Panel of the Secretary-General on Post-2015. Mr. Rudischhauser noted that, while the panel presented a broad vision, the twelve goals it identified were still very much focused on the present development agenda. The goals should be universal yet take into consideration different national circumstances and also reflect the multidimensional nature of poverty.

Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), emphasized the widening of the development agenda and the broader range of stakeholders that would need to be engaged. She called upon stakeholders not to shy away from targets (mentioning gender equality, transparency, governance, and human and citizen rights), which could be more difficult to measure or would require behavior change. She also

called for a greater focus on policy coherence and stressed the need to move beyond silos towards more integrated approaches. She said that, the world must rise to the leadership challenge of engaging citizens in the elaboration of a post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Jonathan Glennie, Research Fellow, Centre for Aid and Public Expenditure, Overseas Development Institute, noted that the main implication of putting sustainable development at the centre of a post-2015 development agenda would be that the problem of development cooperation would no longer be located in the global South. Accordingly, the global partnership for development could become less important than structural change that promotes a good financial climate for sustainable development. Mr. Glennie hence saw a need to restructure global financing and to address structural problems, such as the tax regime, tax evasion, debt workout mechanisms, trade rules, etc. The recent economic and financial crisis had resulted in aid fatigue but also raised awareness of citizens, both in the global North and South, of structural problems; this provided a window of opportunity to address structural issues and questions of policy coherence. In a post-2015 era, all countries should provide development cooperation. He suggested that middle-income countries should commit to 0.7 per cent ODA target to compel traditional donors to also meet the 0.7 UN target. Even least developing countries should shift funding to development. Climate change needs to be brought into the framework.

During the **interactive discussion**, participants pointed out that the development community could be a vehicle to engage other Ministries in a broader development agenda that goes beyond the traditional realm of development cooperation. Accordingly, it was proposed that the Symposium could also explore issues of policy coherence between development policy and policies directly impacting development progress, such as trade policy. The Symposium could also explore how to promote an enabling international environment for development, an objective that only gains in importance as aid is increasingly outshined by other sources of development finance. The importance of ensuring that a post-2015 development agenda would be focused on the needs of countries lagging most behind in terms of MDG achievement, as well as the most marginalized, was also stressed. Civil society, local governments and the private sector would be critical for the successful implementation of a post-2015 development agenda and should therefore be involved in the entire process of the elaboration of a post-2015 development agenda.

During the discussions, the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations in New York announced the interest of Belgium in hosting a future DCF Symposium.

In his concluding remarks, **Mr. Dahinden**, Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, outlined next steps. Based on the rich discussion and suggestions, Switzerland and DESA would refine the focus and objectives of the Symposium. Mr. Dahinden noted the call for the Symposium to help reach greater clarity on the future shape of development cooperation and to identify key priority areas on which the international community should focus its attention in the run-up to 2015.