



United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The 4th DCF survey on national mutual accountability: Getting ready for the post-2015 world

Planning workshop for policy makers and practitioners

8 April 2015, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Rooms 302-303, Songdo Convensia, Incheon, Republic of Korea

Workshop Summary

Purpose and participants

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized a planning workshop on the 4th survey on national mutual accountability, alongside the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) High-level Symposium in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The purpose of the workshop was to examine how the national mutual accountability survey conducted for the DCF could be improved and adapted to reflect the new realities in monitoring and review of development cooperation commitments and results in a post-2015 world. The workshop brought together over 50 representatives of governments, members of parliament, local and regional governments, civil society organization, foundations and international organizations.

Background

Since 2008, the DCF has reviewed the effectiveness of mutual accountability mechanisms and transparency initiatives at national, regional and global levels. The national mutual accountability survey is an important mechanism for the DCF to assess the effectiveness of mutual accountability in development cooperation at the national level.

Three surveys have been conducted since 2008, and the 4th round of the survey will be conducted in the latter half of 2015. A draft questionnaire for the 4th survey had been prepared and was reviewed by external experts, and was presented to the workshop for suggestions for improvement.

Key messages

1. Mutual accountability is an important principle in development cooperation, especially in a post-2015 setting where there is a need for practical tools for monitoring development cooperation commitments in an increasingly complex environment. National institutions and systems should be strengthened to create confidence in them. Citizens have a role to play in mutual accountability.

2. Survey design. The survey should take into account different country contexts. The terminology used in the questionnaire should be clear and unambiguous. The questionnaire should be kept as simple as possible, but this should be balanced against the need for depth and breadth. Questions should be reviewed to minimise subjectivity of the responses. Where feasible, the responses should be triangulated with other sources of information and the results of other surveys.

3. Content and scope. The questionnaire is comprehensive, though with some gaps. Political leadership as an enabler should be captured in the survey, as well as greater prominence for the role of parliaments and other oversight institutions. The survey should reflect the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environment.

4. Process. More attention should be paid to the roll-out of the survey to ensure a higher response rate than in previous years. UNDESA should ensure that the survey is visible and communicate a clear message that the purpose of the survey is to promote dialogue and mutual

learning, as well as to track progress on national mutual accountability in development cooperation.

Where feasible, there should be a formal launch of the survey at national level by the lead ministry responsible for coordination of development cooperation, with the support of UNDP. While governments are expected to lead the process of completing the survey, they need to find ways to engage development partners and stakeholders in the process.

Dissemination of results. Reporting and feedback of the survey results to countries should be improved. The results of the survey should be shared with countries as early as possible and feed into domestic discussions on development cooperation. Country level results could be presented officially to Parliament, and published in accessible formats for citizens, civil society and other stakeholders. Creative use of technology and data visualization should be explored to improve the dissemination of the national mutual accountability survey results.

Next steps

The draft questionnaire will be refined further, taking into consideration the suggestions made at the workshop. Participants were invited to submit additional comments and suggestions to the DCF Secretariat in UNDESA by 25 April 2015.

For further information:

DCF Secretariat

Development Cooperation Policy Branch,
Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination,
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
UN Secretariat Building, 25th floor, New York, NY 10017
Email: dcf@un.org Website: www.un.org/ecosoc/dcf