

Economic and Social Council

Launching the

Development Cooperation Forum

Geneva, 5 July 2007

Background Note for Stakeholder Forum

How can the DCF promote enhanced oversight of aid commitments and aid effectiveness for the realization of the IADGs?

The promotion of more effective and coherent international development cooperation is an integral part of the *global partnership for development*. This implies cooperation that is guided by a shared set of development priorities which are owned by all stakeholders. The internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) constitute such an agreed framework for development cooperation.

The Member States have accordingly mandated the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to coordinate the implementation of this agenda and created the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) as a mechanism to enable the Council to promote effective development cooperation in keeping with the IADGs.

While the General Assembly provides guidance on what tasks the DCF should perform in advancing the realization of the IADGs¹, the process of preparing for the first biennial Forum in 2008 will require a multistakeholder approach in eliciting views on how the DCF successfully may advance its agenda. The deliberations that will take place in the Stakeholder Forum will contribute to that dialogue.

The need for effective oversight of aid commitments and aid effectiveness

As part of the global partnership for development, the international community is committed to increase aid to US\$130 billion and double development aid to Africa by 2010. There are at the same time some concerns, particularly among developing countries, that aid for development may actually be entering a more uncertain period due to several factors:

- There are concerns that aid for development may be crowded out, particularly in the context of conflict situations, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters in developing countries. In this

¹ In addition to the World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1), the General Assembly has mandated the DCF:

(i) review trends and progress in international development cooperation and give policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective international development cooperation;

(ii) identify gaps and obstacles with a view to making recommendations on practical measures and policy options to enhance coherence and effectiveness and to promote development cooperation for the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

(iii) provide a platform for Member States to exchange lessons learned and share experiences in formulating, supporting and implementing national development strategies;

(iv) in accordance with the rules of procedure, be open to participation by all stakeholders, including the organizations of the United Nations, the international financial and trade institutions, the regional organizations, civil society and private sector representatives to (A/RES/61/16).

connection, strategic objective other than supporting the realization of the IADGs may increasingly take precedent.

- Public skepticism in some donor countries regarding the impact of development assistance, including perceived high transaction costs in the delivery and use of aid, may be mounting if results are not achieved in the near future; in particular if scaled up aid does not deliver.
- New global priorities, such as climate change and energy security, may soon make significant dents in the existing aid for development funding envelope.

These, and related concerns, all point to the need for a strong global forum that can ensure continued progress in enhancing coherent and effective international development cooperation. In particular, the DCF is expected to help improve oversight of development assistance with regard to aid commitments and aid effectiveness. The Forum offers an opportunity to provide leadership in maintaining a strong focus on these issues in the global dialogue on progress in international development cooperation.

As mandated by the General Assembly, the DCF will focus on the *what* and the *how* of international development cooperation. In identifying challenges and trends, the Forum is expected to provide guidance to development cooperation actors based on high quality analysis. Towards that end, an inclusive and comprehensive consultative process takes on special significance, particularly to match the aspirations of the international community of making the Forum a driver in fostering broad agreements and consensus.

The DCF will promote that partners in the development compact are granted an equal say in ensuring that commitments with regard to the quantity and quality of aid will continue to be pursued. As part of advancing the global partnership for development, an imminent challenge of the Forum will be to give voice to the neediest people that are farthest away from the political process.

The Monterrey process, which, in particular, was characterized by pragmatism and ownership, could be seen as a potential model for the DCF. The Monterrey Conference was unique in bringing leaders and senior officials from governments and international organizations, senior financial and private sector executives and civil society advocates together for the first time to discuss some of the “hard” financial, trade and systemic matters.

Potential discussion questions

1. How can the DCF further enhance mutual accountability in international development cooperation and the global partnership for development for the realization of the IADGs?
2. How would the DCF most effectively provide oversight of aid commitments and aid effectiveness while engaging all stakeholders? What would be the key success criteria for the DCF in performing this role?
3. How can the DCF best give voice to people that are far removed from the political process in the context of development cooperation?
4. How can the DCF most effectively engage relevant stakeholders in the preparatory process for the 2008 Forum?