

2021 High-level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum (6-7 May 2021) Draft programme

The 2021 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) High-level Meeting aims to advance international development cooperation that reduces risk, enables recovery and builds resilience in the COVID-19 period and beyond. Its outcome will shape the role of development cooperation in the Decade of Action for the SDGs.

The DCF promotes inclusive solutions for more effective development cooperation in all its forms – financing, capacity support and policy change. It supports efforts toward the coherent implementation of the 2030 and Addis Agendas, Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework. And it puts the needs and priorities of those with the least resources and weakest capacities at the centre of its efforts in order to:

- produce actionable policy guidance for Member States and other actors on development cooperation;
- give strategic direction and add value to the multilateral dialogue on development cooperation by providing official inputs into the HLPF and FfD processes while also contributing to other intergovernmental processes such as LDC-V and COP26;
- document and disseminate evidence to support innovative policies and uptake of best practices; and
- facilitate learning, knowledge-sharing and opportunities for collaboration among actors.

Day one: Thursday, 6 May 2021

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.

Opening of 2021 DCF

- H.E. Munir Akram, President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

9:10 – 9:30 a.m.

From old debates to a new Decade of Action: the future of development cooperation

The global pandemic has challenged the understanding of development cooperation, further exposing gaps and limitations. The scale and scope of the challenges posed by COVID-19 and its socio-economic consequences – particularly for the most vulnerable groups and people – necessitate fundamental shifts in how development cooperation addresses cross-cutting and systemic risks. This session will engage thought leaders in a discussion of how to reinvigorate development cooperation, rethinking old approaches and debates and moving decisively into the new Decade of Action. This call to action will commence the High-level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum and set expectations for two days of high-quality, action-oriented dialogue.

The session will include special remarks and a keynote address.

Focus questions:

- In the COVID-19 period, what are the key drivers of change at global, regional, national or local levels that compel new approaches to international development cooperation?
- How are current approaches to financing, technology transfer and capacity building responding to our new realities?
- Which development cooperation policies and practices have demonstrated their impact and relevance in the current context? Which should be improved to better support developing countries in the Decade of Action?

9:30 – 11:00 a.m. Navigating the risk landscape through development cooperation

Global agreements already in place provide a foundation for development cooperation that is informed by risk, oriented to resilience and strongly linked with climate action. The current crisis has made existing development challenges more acute, while underscoring new and emerging risks and creating new opportunities for cooperation in the new digital landscape. Building back better demands more concerted, creative and flexible implementation of the global agreements, where efforts at all levels build on and reinforce the national capacities, policy frameworks and country systems. The discussion will facilitate insights from leaders and “early adopters” of risk-informed development cooperation, as well as the findings from the 2020 DCF Survey, to generate recommendations for scaling up the quantity, quality and impact of development cooperation.

The session will include presentations by panelists, followed by moderated interactive discussion.

Focus questions:

- What are the key opportunities and challenges in adapting development cooperation policies and practices to manage risk and build resilience?
- How are development partners currently working with developing countries in the design and implementation of risk-informed approaches to sustainable development, including for COVID-19 response and recovery? What policy and planning tools have been most helpful in addressing unforeseen crises? How has science, technology and innovation supported these efforts?
- How are development cooperation partners employing and adapting data and statistical capacities and systems to navigate the risk landscape? What are examples of innovative policies or partnerships?

3:00- 5:00 p.m. Strengthening health systems for vulnerable countries

Securing affordable and equitable access to essential diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines for COVID-19 is mission critical as the pandemic continues to rage in countries around the world. So too is finding ways to ensure that short- and medium-term response and recovery measures work to strengthen health systems and infrastructure in the long-term, building resilience to future health risks and enhancing research and development for health. Developing countries, particularly vulnerable countries such as least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), African states and small island developing States (SIDS), require sustained support through development cooperation. The session will facilitate peer exchange on best practices in development cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, that have delivered results in supporting stronger health systems. Participants will share policy recommendations, building on these and other country experiences.

The session will include presentations by panelists, followed by moderated interactive discussion.

Focus questions:

- What have been some of the most effective international support measures for addressing the COVID-19 health crisis in the most vulnerable countries? Where is development cooperation falling short in supporting a stronger pandemic response in countries in special situations?
- “We are only as strong as our weakest health system”: how are development cooperation partners bridging COVID-19 response with longer term efforts to strengthen the preparedness and overall capacities of health systems in vulnerable countries? How is development cooperation accelerating and strengthening investment in the necessary infrastructure for more effective health preparedness?
- To what extent have new or scaled-up public health initiatives – driven by development cooperation, innovative models and partnerships – been attuned to the needs of the most vulnerable countries, and how have their efforts helped to build resilient health systems and capacities of developing countries?

Day two: Friday, 7 May 2021

9:00 – 11:00a.m. **Development cooperation in addressing the dual challenge of pandemic recovery and the climate emergency**

A green recovery is the path forward to address the dual emergencies of the pandemic and climate change. As resources and activities shift from pandemic response to recovery, development cooperation actors must adopt approaches that best address multiple risks, such as those related to climate change and disasters. This session will explore how development cooperation can support country-driven efforts and capacities to tackle these dual emergencies at the pace needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework. Discussions will highlight country experiences in managing competing development priorities during crises, and make policy recommendations, including on how best to use planning tools for pandemic recovery and climate action.

The session will include presentations by panelists, followed by moderated interactive discussion.

Focus questions:

- What have been some of the biggest obstacles faced by developing countries in accessing and attracting development cooperation for climate action and disaster risk reduction during the pandemic?
- With development cooperation priorities shifting toward COVID-19, how can we ensure that pandemic recovery efforts lay the foundation for tackling the climate emergency?
- In the current context, how are countries and their development cooperation partners scaling up investments in resilient infrastructure, as well as building the requisite capacities, expertise and knowledge needed at national and local levels?
- What are some examples of how South-South and triangular cooperation has helped address the dual challenges of pandemic recovery and climate action? What lessons can be learned from these initiatives in reaching the most vulnerable countries?

3:00 – 4:30 p.m. **Regional cooperation to support science, technology and innovation in the COVID-19 period**

The transboundary nature of the pandemic has underscored the need for regional collaboration to identify and put in place solutions to shared challenges, using the power of STI. South-South and triangular cooperation has been instrumental in this regard. Innovations to enhance data collection and analysis have empowered developing countries to make evidence-based decisions on lockdowns. Digital technology capacities have been built between neighboring countries to support recovery, to harness the best of these technologies while mitigating their risks. And regional development banks have created crisis facilities designed to support recovery and resilience-building, improving the landscape of infrastructure investment. This session will explore regional initiatives designed to support pandemic recovery in its multiple dimensions, while identifying opportunities to scale these efforts for long-term sustainable development.

The session will include presentations by panelists, followed by moderated interactive discussion.

Focus questions:

- To what extent have regional innovations been well suited for timely and high-impact results for COVID-19 response and recovery? How has development cooperation, both financial and non-financial modalities, been tailored to support specific country contexts?
- What have been some of the challenges to scaling regional initiatives and how were they overcome? How did these initiatives engage different stakeholders as they were scaled across the region?
- Has the pandemic experience revealed new areas for enhanced regional cooperation and, if so, what are they? How might all development partners help support such efforts?

4:30 – 4:50 p.m. **Global challenges inspiring action – building a new paradigm for development cooperation**

The session will include special remarks.

4:50 – 5:00 p.m.

Closing of the 2021 DCF High-level meeting

- H.E. Munir Akram, President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations