The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is path-breaking because it finally gets fully past the narrow focus on financing. It sets out concrete actions to advance the broader partnership dimension and to bring the engagement of all stakeholders in mobilizing the “means of implementation” for sustainable development.

International development cooperation is a particular means of implementation that is also being recognized in each and every chapter of this IATF report and the agencies’ collective efforts.

By development cooperation, we mean not only financial flows. We also mean technical know-how, the cooperative actions to build capacities and also collective actions for policy change at the national, regional and global levels. Development cooperation encompasses these four areas of action, which the Development Cooperation Forum has been discussing since 2008.

I would like to highlight four key messages that come out strongly from the IATF Report, which may be useful to you in your efforts between now and July, in preparation for the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development and for the ECOSOC High-level Segment, including the High-level Political Forum.

First, the growing diversity of actors in international development cooperation, both state and non-state, makes the landscape very distinct and opens up new opportunities.

Let me mention here the rise and rapid evolution of South-South cooperation. A recent DESA survey of developing countries shows that of 129 respondents, almost two-thirds were in some way providing development cooperation, including technical know-how or capacity building. Over one-third have a dedicated entity responsible for South-South and triangular cooperation. So the landscape has
changed significantly from the 1990s, when we consider both the scope of development cooperation and the diversity of actors.

To bring this into the United Nations, the Development Cooperation Forum has offered an open, neutral and inclusive space for Southern partners to share their experiences, good practices, solutions and challenges amongst themselves and with the range of actors. Through the DCF, the United Nations also supports, at their request, their efforts to generate information that is comparable and can be used by the global community in looking at the impact of South-South cooperation on sustainable development, bringing the Southern partners closer to the work of the United Nations on the SDGs.

As evidenced by the data, 2014-2015 saw an increased profile of South-led multilateral financial institutions. South-South cooperation has also made inroads in climate change, humanitarian assistance, food security, capacity and peace and stability building. These are gains to be leveraged.

Second, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is all about results, and achieving those results requires looking at effectiveness not as a ‘niche’ issue. Effectiveness applies across the 2030 and Addis Agendas and not to only one type of flow.

Here, the recommendations of the IATF on effective development cooperation aligned with the 2030 Agenda are built upon a diverse range of inputs and experiences.

We draw, for instance, on DESA analytical work considering quality, impact and effectiveness of South-South cooperation. This work is based on the clear principles and attributes identified by Southern partners themselves, such as in the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which stressed attention to such aspects as the prioritisation of certain sectors and projects, their conditionalities, procedures, concessionality, value for money, speed of delivery, predictability and coordination – all of which affect the quality and contribution of South-South cooperation to sustainable development.

The IATF Report also features some of the key findings and recommendations arising from the DCF Global Accountability Survey, which originated with a mandate from the 2009 Doha Outcome on Financing for Development. UNDESA runs this voluntary survey exercise, which is open to all developing countries and aims to help ensure that development cooperation is aligned with national policies, has national ownership, transparency and accountability.

The 2015/2016 DCF Survey shows, for example, considerable nationally-driven effort for policy coherence: 90 per cent of the respondents had National Development Cooperation Policies in place, many going beyond ODA. This was not the case six years ago. The policies are tools to look at the quantity and quality of the different modalities of development cooperation and also to engage parliaments and citizens in looking at the effectiveness and results. But there is still strong need for the strengthening of capacities and institutions for effective monitoring and review of development cooperation for better results.
The IATF report also benefits from the UN system’s own perspective on effectiveness, stemming from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of United Nations operational activities for development or “QCPR”. Member States have decided the UN system has to focus on results and become fit to deliver on those results. The QCPR resolution adopted in December 2016 has provided the framework to reorient the UN system as a whole towards improved effectiveness and impact in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. So effectiveness should be seen from a much broader context and not just as a ‘niche issue’.

Third, the IATF report emphasizes the value of applying the overarching principles of development cooperation effectiveness to blended finance and other forms of public-private partnerships. Blended finance is not a new modality; we have seen its use since the 1980’s, especially by the European Union and other actors. Yet, the complexity of financial instruments is making it very difficult for a large number of developing countries to handle this modality effectively.

The biggest issue in this context is building the capacity of developing countries to determine when and how to utilize blended finance for sustainable development results. So taking an effectiveness perspective on blended finance should bring focused action on capacity building, on ensuring transparency, country ownership and alignment with country priorities, and on assessing the quality and impact of these public-private partnerships. Our findings point, to example, to great potential in better leveraging partnerships and the diversity of development cooperation actors and initiatives in support of science, technology and innovation to push the agenda forward (as we discuss in another chapter of the report).

Fourth, as the IATF exercise shows, the Task Force has a wide range of data, information and policy analysis emanating from our respective efforts. We need to ensure these are captured in a more integrated manner, so this has a greater impact on our monitoring and ultimately our collective support to follow-up, review and implementation of the Addis Agenda. This requires a holistic and horizontal world view, to see financial, technical and capacity development, policy change and partnership investments. So effective monitoring also requires that holistic lens to look at the results of development cooperation, in the context of the broader global partnership for sustainable development laid out in the Addis Agenda.

Let me close by saying this is very much the ethos and action orientation of the Development Cooperation Forum, which we in UNDESA’s Office for ECOSOC Support & Coordination have the honour to support. The DCF is inclusive, with universal membership, drawing together ministers of finance and development cooperation and senior-level experts from Parliaments to local authorities, UN system, civil society, private sector and philanthropic organizations – in a non-negotiating setting. This gives the space to look at development cooperation from a very open perspective, build the evidence base in terms of impact on the SDGs and the overall picture on means of implementation, and advance knowledge sharing and mutual learning for better results.