

10th DCF NEWSLETTER

January 2017

Development Cooperation Forum, Fifth Biennial High-level Meeting – New York, 21-22 July 2016

The Fifth Biennial High-Level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York in July, in the final two days of the 2016 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, following the ministerial level meeting of the High-level



Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

With over 300 representatives of governments, international organizations, parliaments, local authorities, civil society, philanthropic foundations and the private sector in attendance, the Forum focused on the tremendous potential of development cooperation as a lever for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, emphasizing the importance of supporting national efforts, leaving no one behind.

“It is important that actors in development cooperation realise the degree to which the 2015 agreements move us away from business-as-usual. No country has achieved sustainable development. That is why the new agenda is universal. Achieving the SDGs will require a wholesale shift in how countries develop and cooperate,” urged keynote speaker Mary Robinson, President of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice. Sessions brought action-oriented discussion on aligning development cooperation to contribute to the 2030 Agenda, capacity building and technology transfer, contributions of South-South cooperation to sustainable development, private and blended development cooperation, and monitoring and review of development cooperation for better results.

The meeting built on an extensive two-year preparatory process, including: [analytical work](#), culminating in the [2016 Report of the Secretary-General on “Trends and progress in international development cooperation” \(E/2016/65\)](#); three high-level DCF Symposiums held in the [Republic of Korea](#), [Uganda](#) and [Belgium](#); and other special events, briefings, side events and workshops.

Discussions highlighted:

- The broad concept of development cooperation encompassing financial resources, capacity building, technology development and transfer, policy change and multi-stakeholder partnerships
- The importance of directing targeted assistance and providing sufficient resources and support to countries with the least resources and weakest capacities
- Current levels of official development assistance ODA and the necessity to meet existing commitments
- Growing and complementary contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation



“We’re trying to be innovative and forge ahead through new relationships”, Ms. Ana Ciuti, Director-General of International Cooperation, Argentina, at the Wrap-up Session of the 2016 DCF

- Adopting a more comprehensive approach beyond gross national income per capita when identifying the needs of all developing countries
- Using new evidence-based tools to achieve a more localized, results-oriented basis for the monitoring and review of development cooperation
- Incentivizing and assessing effectiveness of private and blended development cooperation
- Promoting the oversight role of parliamentarians, providing capacity support for civil society, and facilitating the greater engagement of people in all spectrums of the development processes

The 2016 DCF heightened the urgency to put, into daily practice, a transformative focus on sustainable development results, putting the furthest behind first and adapting institutions and policies in support of priorities and systems in developing countries. The meeting stressed the importance of context-specific information on development cooperation needs, policies and best practices. It gave further guidance on more effective and prioritized use of ODA and its unique role among the means of implementation. It also called for strengthened efforts by the United Nations to support Southern partners to enhance the evidence base on achieving sustainable development results.

The Forum demonstrated that, for effective efforts to reach the SDGs, open, multi-stakeholder exchanges about development cooperation will have to remain at the centre of a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. Pre-meetings included a launch event for the [2015/2016 DCF Accountability Study](#) for reviewing effectiveness of development cooperation and a technical [workshop on the role of blended finance](#). A range of 2016 DCF Side Events provided further opportunities for lively debate, knowledge sharing and mutual learning among stakeholders. For more information, [click here](#).

2015/2016 DCF Accountability Study: The launch event highlighted the trends and diverse realities of development cooperation coming out of the Survey outcomes, and provided a platform to discuss key issues and opportunities to feed into the UN-led inter-governmental processes on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. ([Summary](#))

Blended finance in the SDG Era: The workshop continued the multi-stakeholder debates on this topic during the 2014-2016 DCF cycle, which also feed the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development. While blended finance can contribute to achieving the SDGs, participants warned against feeding the misimpression that blending is the tool for moving ‘from billions to trillions’ in development finance and focused on identifying the cases where its use was most appropriate and how to manage the associated risks. ([Summary](#))

Trends and Progress in International Development Cooperation

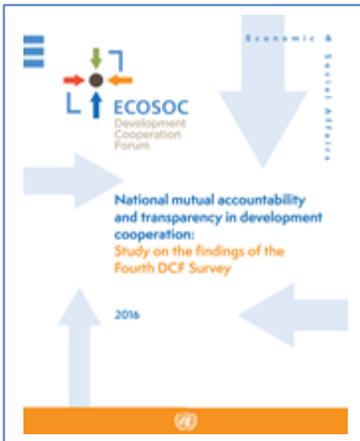
Serving as the main substantive input to the 2016 DCF, the [2016 Report of the Secretary-General on “Trends and progress in international development cooperation”](#) was released on 10 May 2016. The report details the United Nations’ conceptual framing of development cooperation, which encompasses financial resources, capacity-building, technology development and transfer, policy change and multi-stakeholder partnerships. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, the report covers recent trends in development cooperation flows. It brings particular focus to improving targeted allocation and effective use of official development assistance, aligning cooperation with the SDGs and national sustainable development strategies, understanding the rapid evolution of South-South cooperation, and strengthening monitoring, review and accountability of development commitments under the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The report also called for private entities engaged in development cooperation to publish more and better information on the effectiveness and impact of their cooperation and their assessment methods. For the complete report, [click here](#).



“We need more urgency to try to close some of these gaps and start to do so now.”
 Lord Jack McConnell, Member of UK Parliament, at the Wrap-up Session of the 2016 DCF



2015/2016 DCF Global Accountability Survey



Against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda, the [2015/2016 DCF Global Accountability survey](#) supports the efforts of developing countries and their partners to strengthen ‘mutual accountability’ in development cooperation and enhance transparency of information. The biennial survey, undertaken for the DCF since 2009 by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), monitors, reviews and documents the evidence on the state of play in effectiveness of development cooperation on the ground in the responding countries. The responses are assessed in comprehensive studies that encourage multi-stakeholder learning and inform regional and global monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development.

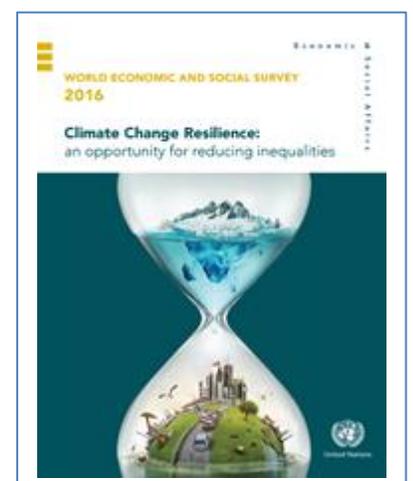
A total of 58 developing countries participated in this fourth survey, many of them engaging in the exercise their development partners, both bilaterally and multi-laterally, in addition to other stakeholders at the national level, including Parliamentarians, local government representatives, NGOs, etc. [Click here](#) for a brief summary of the key findings and recommendations of the latest Survey.

DCF Side Event on Parliaments and Accountability at the GPEDC HLM2

Held in Nairobi on 30 November, alongside the second high-level meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the [DCF Side Event focused on “The Role of Parliamentarians and Public in Strengthening Accountability in Development Cooperation: Key Steps to Move Forward”](#). The event advanced the discussion on the reasons and possible solutions for the lack of participation by parliamentarians in development cooperation processes. Co-organized by UNDESA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA), the side event built on the recommendations of the fourth DCF Global Accountability Survey and the multi-stakeholder discussions in the Development Cooperation Forum. The DCF provides a major platform through which Parliamentarians engage directly in the global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Addis Agenda, including to identify critical capacity gaps and generate concrete guidance for policy makers and practitioners at all levels. For the meeting summary, [click here](#).

South-South Cooperation to increase efforts on climate change

Climate change and resilience building, plus the role of science, technology and innovation (STI), are integrated across the DCF discussions and programme of work. The work of the DCF fed into the recent [High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change](#), organized during [the 22nd Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) in Marrakesh, Morocco on 14 November 2016. Participants discussed challenges and opportunities in the new implementation stage, deepened exchanges among developing countries and increased momentum towards wider South-South cooperation. The Forum provided an opportunity to expand global partnerships for the Southern countries and enhance the capacity and readiness of developing countries to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris Agreement and contribute to global sustainable development. Participants also shared experiences and successful cases and good practices to enlarge the impacts of South-South Cooperation on sustainable development.



Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, gave a [statement](#) highlighting how South-South cooperation can uniquely support efforts to help those most deeply affected by climate change, bringing together the work of DCF on South-South cooperation with the findings of UNDESA’s 2016 World Economic and Social Survey report, “Climate Change Resilience – An Opportunity for Reducing Inequalities”. Mr. Wu presented the various efforts by UNDESA to support



“Enhanced and effective development cooperation is critical. Here, the distinct features and guiding principles of South-South cooperation are especially suited to implement many aspects of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. While the road ahead remains challenging, it is within our reach to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future.”

USG Mr. Wu Hongbo, High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change, 14 November 2016

Southern countries to pursue evidence-based development efforts, including implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. He focused the Forum’s attention on how South-South cooperation, extended on the basis of solidarity and mutuality, holds clear strengths, when it comes to climate change, poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Blended financing and Public-Private Partnerships for the SDGs

UN DESA’s Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) has dedicated a range of efforts to advancing discussions on the optimal use of blended financing instruments in favor of developing countries, addressing: enhancing public sector capacity; better managing associated risks; and ensuring alignment and country ownership. Technical workshops, including the most recent on “Blended finance in the SDG era” (see box on page 2) as well as on [“The impact of private and blended development cooperation: What can we expect in practice?”](#) and [“The role of catalytic aid in financing sustainable development”](#) – have built on and fed into ongoing work of both the DCF and UN System, in particular the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development. OESC is also working to expand the knowledge base on key development cooperation issues related to [South-South cooperation](#), a number of which are relevant to public-private partnerships (PPPs), for example: assessing South-South private sector engagement models for better managing risks; and understanding the role of PPPs in the critical areas of infrastructure and the environment.

“When using ODA, we need to respect effectiveness principles, no matter whether it is a public or a private deal - ownership and alignment are key!”

Comment in the DESA workshop on “Blended finance in the SDG era”, New York, 20 July 2016

Blended Finance in the SDG Era, UNDESA technical workshop and DCF side event

The technical workshop, held on 20 July 2016 and co-organized by OESC and UNDESA’s Financing for Development Office (FFDO), concluded that: (i) developing countries should play a central role in the decision to prioritize the use of ODA for blending and in the planning, design and management of specific blended finance projects; (ii) continued efforts are needed to ensure transparency and accountability of all actors in blended financing; and (iii) development cooperation should also support public sector capacity in developing countries to more effectively engage in blended financing decisions and projects and to manage complex multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda defines “blended finance” as activities that combine “concessional public finance with non-concessional private finance and expertise from the public and private sector, special-purpose vehicles, non-recourse project financing, risk mitigation instruments and pooled funding structures.” See the full summary of the workshop [here](#).

Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development Meeting on the Follow-up to Commitments in the Addis Ababa Agenda on Public-Private Partnerships

The PPP principles contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda include:

i) public procurement frameworks and contracts should be transparent; ii) there should be clear accountability mechanisms; iii) liabilities should be managed; iv) social and environmental standards should be met; v) careful consideration should be given to the appropriate structure and use of blended finance instruments; and vi) projects involving blended finance, including PPPs, should share risks and reward fairly.

The technical workshop alongside the DCF provided a basis for the expert group meeting of the IATF held on 16 December 2016 to discuss how the principles on public-private partnerships (PPPs) contained in the Addis Agenda can be applied to define a unified set of PPP guidelines and advance the sustainable development agenda. Participants reviewed the provisions in the Addis Agenda on PPPs, possible implications for PPP implementation and existing PPP Guidelines. The meeting revealed how much work is already underway in the international system on developing and adopting guidelines and documentation for PPPs, with examples of initiatives presented by [UNECE](#), on [“People-First PPPs for the SDGs”](#), and by [OECD](#), on [Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private Partnerships](#). Task Force members considered some of the various toolkits and training materials



available to countries to manage PPPs, such as the [World Bank's PPP Knowledge Lab](#), the [PPP Fiscal Risk Assessment Model \(PFRAM\)](#) developed by the IMF and World Bank, and the [online PPP training](#), [PPP Country Readiness Assessment](#) and the [Qualitative Value-for-Money toolkit](#) developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Task Force members also discussed the Sustainable Development Goals PPP target (*SDG 17.17.1*, the amount of US dollars committed to PPPs), reflecting on the limitations of this measurement, and generated ideas for an integrated IATF work programme on PPPs. Organized by FFDO, the meeting engaged a number of experts from the private sector and academia as well as from the international agencies. For more information on the IATF, [click here](#).

Adapting the United Nations development system to the 2030 Agenda – the “QCPR process”

DCF discussions throughout the 2014-2016 cycle have highlighted how the United Nations development system also needs to adapt to the major challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The high-level meeting of the DCF held in July reinforced the call for a change of mind-set, a shift from sectoral to integrated thinking and a focus on sustainability and leaving no-one behind that needs to be reflected at all levels.

In its resolution 2014/14, the Economic and Social Council decided to convene a transparent and inclusive dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations Development system, in the context of the 2030 Agenda. [The ECOSOC Dialogue](#) resulted in a series of proposals for strengthening the UN development system, and the outcome of these deliberations served as key input to [the quadrennial comprehensive policy review \(QCPR\)](#) of the General Assembly on operational activities of the UN System in 2016. The DCF research and discussions also contributed to this ‘QCPR’ process.

The General Assembly adopted the [2016 QCPR resolution](#) in December 2016. In the resolution, Member States recognize that the United Nations development system is at crossroads following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and that improvement in coordination and coherence at all levels is required. Moving forward, the follow-up to the QCPR and ideas on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system will provide a major vehicle to review how United Nations system-wide performance can effectively support Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.



DCF analysis and outreach on international development cooperation – looking ahead

The 2016 DCF and its extensive preparatory process showed how the DCF enables open, candid, critical and action-oriented dialogue among all partners. The DCF will continue to produce concrete guidance for policy makers and practitioners at all levels and to provide critical inputs to the HLPF and ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum, including in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF).

Looking ahead, it is important to ensure that the General Assembly's efforts on the 2030 Agenda and Addis follow-up processes, as well as the follow-up to the [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review \(QCPR\)](#), and [longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system](#) fully benefit from the distinctive work of the DCF. DCF key messages should also be reflected in the work done at regional, national and local levels.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council will convene the [6th Biennial High-level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum](#), as part of the [high-level segment of ECOSOC](#) at United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2018. UNDESA is initiating the first phase of analytical work and outreach and planning the high-level preparatory symposiums and other special events and expert group meetings. The first symposium is expected to focus on South-South and triangular cooperation and is slated for mid-2017. For more details including a brief information note on the 2018 DCF, [click here](#).

Upcoming events on development cooperation organized by UNDESA

[Operational Activities for Development Segment of ECOSOC 28 February – 2 March 2017: Identifying key elements of the 2016 Resolution on the QCPR around the re-positioning of the UN development system in the context of the 2030 Agenda](#)



[Regional meeting on industrialization and infrastructure](#), held on the margins of the AU/ECA Joint Conference on African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Dakar, Senegal [26-28 March 2017](#): *Exploring sustainable industrialization and infrastructure development in Africa in the context of the SDGs*

The 2017 [ECOSOC Partnership Forum](#) (New York, 5 April) will provide a platform to galvanize multi-stakeholder partnerships aimed at promoting infrastructure development, particularly in countries facing the largest infrastructure gaps.

[Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals](#) (STI Forum) [15-16 May 2017](#): *Highlighting the role of science and technology in promoting the SDGs*

[ECOSOC forum on Financing for Development follow-up](#) [22-25 May 2017](#): *Discussing the follow-up and review of the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda*

[2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) [10-19 July 2017](#): *Theme - Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*



***Sixth Biennial High-level Meeting of the
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM
United Nations, New York, July 2018***

The United Nations Economic and Social Council will convene the sixth high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum at United Nations Headquarters in New York in July 2018. UNDESA is initiating the analytical work and outreach and planning the high-level preparatory symposiums and other special events and expert group meetings. The first symposium will focus on South-South and triangular cooperation and is slated for mid-2017.

UNDESA invites your feedback and suggestions for the DCF

In its role as secretariat to ECOSOC and its Development Cooperation Forum, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs supports efforts to engage the range of development cooperation actors in more evidence-based, balanced and inclusive global debate on international development cooperation. UNDESA welcomes feedback and suggestions on its work in support of the DCF.

Are there any key issues or challenges in development cooperation with which you feel the DCF could more actively engage in its action-oriented policy debates? What improvements can the DCF make as a global multi-stakeholder forum to deepen the discussions and strengthen their impact? Please send us your feedback and suggestions to dcf@un.org.

We are grateful for your commitment to the DCF and value your contributions. Thank you!

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