

UNDP ART - SIDE EVENT REPORT

THIRD BIENNIAL HIGH LEVEL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM

Territorial Answers to Global Challenges

Innovative Multi-level Partnerships for Development Effectiveness

July 6th 2012, North Lawn Building, New York

Background - The United Nations Development Cooperation Forum

The United Nations Development Cooperation Forum was established in 2005 by the World Summit that mandated the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to convene a high-level Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). It meets biennially at the United Nations in New York to review trends in international development cooperation and promote greater coherence among the development activities of different development partners. It is the key universal platform fostering a global dialogue on development cooperation trends, coherence and effectiveness. Over the years the DCF has recommended policies and actions rooted in good practices and thereby considerably impacted development cooperation realities.¹

UNDP, member of the DCF Advisory Group, and UN DESA cooperate closely on the DCF providing inputs on specific issues such as mutual accountability, transparency, South – South Cooperation and Decentralized Cooperation (DC). In 2012, DC was for the first time included within DCF discussions reflecting the growing relevance of this cooperation modality.

UNDP, through the ART Initiative, supported the organization of the DCF panel ***Going Local: the potentiality of Decentralized Cooperation***. Together with UCLG and FOGAR², UNDP furthermore organized the ***side event: Territorial Answers to Global Challenges - Innovative multi-level partnerships for development effectiveness*** that allowed exploring the comparative advantage of articulating DC with multilateral frameworks. Both events were well attended by representatives of permanent missions to the UN, representatives from national, sub-national/local governments, CSOs and private sector from the North and the South.

Having DC and thus the role of sub-national governments and social and economic actors within development cooperation discussed in the context of the DCF is already a clear recognition of the role and added value that sub-national actors play within the new partnership for development cooperation.

Decentralized Cooperation and the Territorial Approach to Development in the Global Debates

The world is experiencing multiple financial crises scenarios, unprecedented unemployment and social turmoil, which makes the debate on sustainable human development more relevant than ever. Despite this, the international development community does not seem to have adopted a harmonized and coordinated approach in its promotion. It is therefore a crucial point in time to discuss the role of international development cooperation in supporting sustainable human development and, particularly,

¹ <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/dcf>

² United Cities and Local Governments and the Forum of Global Association of Regions

the part that sub-national actors and a territorial approach to development can play in addressing today's challenges.

The ***outcome document of the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan*** stressed the critical role that sub-national governments and communities play in ensuring ownership of countries' development agendas. It pledged to further support sub-national governments to enable them to fully assume their roles beyond service delivery, enhancing participation and accountability at the sub-national level. UNDP jointly with UCLG and FOGAR, have - through a consultative process on aid effectiveness at the sub-national level and a dedicated side event in Busan - considerably contributed to these outcomes.

The advocated *territorial approach to development* valorises sub-national actors as key stakeholders within the new Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, and considers that applying a "territorial lens" to national development policies and global debates can render development cooperation more effective in addressing the real needs of people.

Taking the territory as the referential space for development efforts also allows greater coherence among those development actors operating in the same space, instead of each actor working in his silo/sector. Development interventions are thus channelled in support of integrated territorial plans, reducing fragmentation and increasing the impact and sustainability of efforts in support of sustainable human development.

Given this, the global debates on international development cooperation should provide the necessary space so the potential contribution of the territorial approach to development can be appraised and used, recognizing the role and importance of sub-national governments and actors.

The recent ***Sustainable Development Conference in Rio*** reaffirmed the key role of all levels of government and legislative bodies in promoting sustainable development and acknowledged the efforts and progress made at the sub-national level. The important role that sub-national governments and communities can play in supporting sustainable development, paying equal attention to its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), was recognized.

The DCF panels on Decentralized Cooperation

The objective of the DC panel "***Going Local: the Potentiality of Decentralized Cooperation***" was two-fold: 1) understand basic facts about DC, such as definition, scope, specific modalities and impact on development goals; and 2) identify good practices in achieving sustainable development that could form the basis for the formulation of "good quality" standards for DC.

Complementing and deepening the panel discussions, the side event "***Territorial Answers to Global Challenges - Innovative Multi-level Partnerships for Development Effectiveness***" had the objective of: 1) presenting first-hand experiences of applying a territorial approach to development in the context of multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance frameworks; 2) highlighting the opportunities that arise from close cooperation between national and sub-national governments, economic and social stakeholders, and multilateral organizations, specifically in promoting internationally agreed development goals.

The panel members represented national and sub-national governments, civil society and private sector institutions. The diversity of the discussants was reflected in the interesting views and recommendations

expressed during the sessions. The main panel set the stage and reviewed in more general terms the DC modality whereas the side event allowed panelists and participants to go into further detail and to valorize recent developments and new trends within the territorial approach to development.

The **main panel** on DC was organized around a number of essential questions:

- *What are the comparative strengths of decentralized cooperation in achieving development objectives and results?*
- *How can more information and analysis be generated on good practices in decentralized cooperation in developing countries?*
- *How can decentralized cooperation actors be more involved in development cooperation discussions at the global level?*

The **side event** looked into the above-mentioned challenges and tried to determine if a close collaboration between sub-national actors and the multilateral framework can provide the answers to the challenges raised in the main panel. Specific questions put forward to the discussants were:

- *Is there concrete evidence on multilevel governance systems enhancing coordination between local and national development agendas?*
- *Is the territorial approach an effective means for addressing fragmentation and coordination challenges of development interventions?*
- *Systems for increased development/aid effectiveness at local level. An opportunity for promoting harmonization and alignment at local level or an additional burden for local governments?*
- *The partnership between decentralized cooperation networks, national/local governments and multilateral organizations (multilateral frameworks) presents a concrete mechanism/experience capable of addressing key development challenges as identified in Busan, the Rio+20 and post-2015 discussions? What is the added value of these innovative partnerships?*

Key discussion points raised by panelists

Ms. Cecile Molinier, Director of the UNDP Geneva Office, mentioned in her opening remarks that already the fact that the panel is comprised of representatives from sub-national and national governments, civil society and multilateral organizations, from both the North and the South is not a coincidence. Only a joint effort by all these actors would enable sound territorial development processes that are defined by the people themselves. UNDP as a knowledge based organisation stands ready to facilitate DC initiatives to build upon existing encouraging practices.

This statement was reinforced by the panel moderator, *Ms. Dasa Silovic, Special Advisor to the UN Assistant Administrator and Director UNDP BERA*, who stressed that UNDP, through its overall development interventions, uses and maximises the territorial approach as an important instrument to support sustainable local development. UNDP will continue to encourage the application of aid effectiveness principles, particularly partner alignment with local development priorities and harmonization among different development assistance providers at the local level. To that end, it is crucial to enhance coherence in development assistance, with multi-level frameworks linking the local, national and international levels.

Mr. Marco Ricci, Minister Plenipotentiary and Multilateral Coordinator, Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, highlighted the significant role

of DC in linking communities, fostering social dialogue and promoting development within their regions. According to Mr. Ricci, the ART experience in Lebanon has shown how a multilateral framework generates and fosters partnerships over time, bringing stakeholders of different territories to work collectively in a more effective and transparent manner towards achieving local development priorities.

Ms. Mónica Páez, Technical Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation (SETECI), Government of Ecuador, stressed the importance of having strong links between national development processes and local priorities. National policies and local priorities should mutually reinforce each other and be open to international partners supporting these linkages.

Ms. Antonella Valmorbidia, Director of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies (ALDA), stressed that civil society organizations are among the most active DC actors and should be better integrated in the DC modality. Civil society actors can be activists for democracy and human rights and not only technical partners. They can also promote a political dimension, which is often guided by civil society groups. Decentralized cooperation should also be part of a stronger political action to support decentralization, in countries where it is still weak. A sound territorial approach should ensure strong civil society participation and its linkage with local authorities also in development partner countries.

According to Mr. Felipe Llamas, Director of the Multilateral and Networks Area, Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI), it is crucial to recall that solidarity is the main force driving local governments and other stakeholders to join efforts and work towards achieving sustainable human development objectives. Associations of municipalities contribute considerably towards harmonizing DC in the countries of origin and between countries. Articulation within a multilateral framework as provided by the ART Initiative allows them to better align with local and national development priorities.

Mr. Hugo Armando Rodríguez Mantilla, Executive Director of the Colombian Network of Local Development Agencies (ADELCO), presented the experience of the Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), instruments led by local authorities that promote inclusive local economic development and job creation through public-private partnerships. South-South and triangular peer to peer learning and knowledge exchanges among territorial actors across various regions/continents, that LEDA facilitates, is an added value to inform national policies and strategies on local development.

Good practices carried out in the post-disaster context of Haiti show the importance of involving local, national and international actors in the planning processes right from the beginning. In this regard, the elected local authorities, represented by *Mr Hubert Julien-Laferrier, Vice-President of Grand Lyon, France,* and *Mr. Barry Vrbanovich, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities,* called for a more integrated approach to strengthening local governance that links local, national and global endeavors. This approach will facilitate the scaling-up of successful practices and enable local community leaders to engage in dialogue at the national level to positively influence public policies leading to transformative change and sustainable development at the local level.

This statement was also reinforced by *Mr. Carles Llorens Director General for Development Cooperation of the Generalitat of Catalonia,* who stressed the important role of sub-national governments in the oversight of development process and in enhancing participation and accountability at the sub-national level. He stressed the specific role of sub-national governments in harmonizing and aligning territorial development processes. The participation of regions/sub-national governments in global governance brings in a specific added value as they play a strategic role in promoting participative development and decentralization processes, linking the local and national levels.

Mr. Jacques Perrot, representative of the DG Development and Cooperation of the European Commission, pointed out that, according to the first conclusions of an on-going external study launched by the European Commission (EC), DC projects sustained by the EC can be considered as good tools to reinforce the capacities of local authorities in their soft power, that is to say in their capacity to facilitate the knowledge, experience and the know-how to improve their institutional and operational capacities implying political, strategic and technical competences. This study on DC makes an overall positive evaluation of its development results.

Elected regional authorities, represented by *Ms. Patricia Ayala, Governor of the Uruguayan Department of Artigas* and *Ms. Amina Rouchati, elected member of the Regional Council of Tangier-Tetouan of Morocco,* presented evidence on how local ownership of development processes can be enhanced under the leadership of sub-national authorities and with the close cooperation of local institutions and stakeholders. International cooperation should support planning processes carried out by local actors and make more efforts to align to local policies. UNDP, through the ART Initiative, is strengthening the capacities of territories, regional and local institutions contributing to the alignment of national and international interventions and enhancing local ownership, thus avoiding substituting local capacities.

Mr. Eduardo Porretti, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations and Vicepresident of the UNDP Executive Board, highlighted in his concluding remarks the significance and recognition of the territorial approach to promote sustainable development. Peer learning across sectors and territories in the context of SSC and triangular cooperation should form part of the new development architecture in which MICs would have a specific role to play.

Conclusions and key messages

Evidence provided by the distinguished representatives from national and sub-national governments, civil society, the private sector and the UN system demonstrates the crucial role of sub-national governments and actors in promoting sustainable human development, improving dialogue and partnership between the state, citizens, civil society and the private sector in local planning, service delivery and job creation. For that, the **international development agenda should include local and regional authorities in decision making and dialogue bodies**. The perspective of local and regional governments deriving from their proximity to the citizens is instrumental for the sustainability and the implementation of good governance mechanisms, based on transparency, participation and accountability, and for effective development cooperation.

Sub-national actors are key in promoting solidarity and peer learning across sectors and territories, also in the context of South-South and triangular cooperation. DC initiatives have strongly helped launch, change or reinforce public policies that are within the competence of the local authorities, strengthening their leadership role in articulating the local partners. **DC is a useful tool to build the capacity of sub-national authorities** in their ability to facilitate knowledge, experience and know-how to improve their institutional and operational capacities involving political, strategic and technical skills. This is enhanced when DC works in complementarity with the multilateral framework, as evidenced by ART's practice.

DC is an effective way of **raising awareness** about development and cooperation in donor countries and brings development cooperation **closer to citizens both** in the North and the South.

Civil society organizations and other stakeholders also play an advocacy role as activists for democracy and human rights within a territorial approach. It is crucial to **build bridges between local/sub-national**

governments and CSOs, as well as the private sector, as one of the basic pillars to promote good governance processes.

The responsibility of the local sphere goes beyond the control of local authorities, with incidence of national and international institutions, civil society and private sector. The multiplication of development actors engaged at local level can enrich the development system but also lead to a proliferation and fragmentation of development initiatives and modalities. For that, there is a need to **foster integrative approaches at the sub-national level**, increasing coherence among the different actors in support of sustainable human development. Additionally, it is important to enhance coherence in development assistance along the vertical axis, **linking the local, national and international levels** in support of National Development Strategies (NDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

This is possible through inclusive frameworks, as the ones supported by UNDP in various countries. Led by the local authorities, these governance frameworks bring together the multiple national and international actors that influence the development of a territory. Their added value rests in making development efforts at the local level more effective, as they facilitate local ownership as well as the harmonization and alignment of development cooperation partners' initiatives with local policy processes and priorities.

The UN, as a multilateral organization, and especially the UNDP with its universal presence, plays an important role in facilitating and supporting DC and strengthening the capacities of territories, regional and local institutions. There is **a mutual reinforcing role between DC actors and the multilateral system**. As exemplified by the experience of the ART Initiative, multilateral platforms allow DC actors to better harmonize and align their interventions with national and local development priorities, increasing the impact of their interventions.

The territorial approach has the potential to advance human rights, cooperation across borders in conflict areas, gender equality and sustainable development and in this sense **contribute to the definition of the post-2015 development agenda**. The successor to the MDGs will have to have sustainable development at its heart. It should build on lessons learnt from the MDGs as well as take into account shortcomings, specifically the limited success in addressing structural causes of poverty, inequality and exclusion, and failure to properly address environmental sustainability. Sub-national governments and actors together with the UN system could significantly contribute towards these new sustainable development goals.