



DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM

Australia High-Level Symposium

'Shaping a Sustainable Future' -Partners in Development Cooperation-

14-15 May 2012, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Australia

OVERVIEW

The United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) reviews trends and progress in international development cooperation and promotes greater coherence among the activities of different development actors.

The purpose of the Australia High-Level Symposium is to prepare for the next DCF, which will be held on 5-6 July 2012 at UN Headquarters in New York. Part of the DCF will be devoted to the question of the nexus between sustainable development and development cooperation.

Other meetings to prepare for the DCF included a High-Level Symposium on *"Gearing development cooperation towards the Millennium Development Goals: effectiveness and results"* in Mali in May 2011 and a High-Level Symposium on *"Working together to increase the development impact of aid"* in Luxembourg in October 2011. On 9 February 2012, a DCF preparatory meeting discussed *"New dynamics of development cooperation: challenges and opportunities."*

THE AUSTRALIA HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM

The Australia High-Level Symposium will look at the implications for development cooperation of the transition towards sustainable development and how it can contribute to alleviating poverty.

Background

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, will take place on 20-22 June in Brazil this year. At the Rio+20 Conference, world leaders, along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups, will come together to shape how we can reduce poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet. As highlighted in the report *"Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing"*, by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability, the current global development model is unsustainable. The report shows that by 2030, the world will need at least 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more energy and 30 per cent more water. "Business as usual" is no longer an option. Development cooperation can play a vital role in helping countries build policies on the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and there is an urgent need to integrate policy-making on sustainable development.

The DCF is a multi-stakeholder forum, convened by the UN Economic and Social Council to look at the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development cooperation. The DCF, including through the Australia High-Level Symposium, is in a unique position to assist countries to bring the different strands together.

For more information, please contact:

Development Cooperation Policy Branch, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination,
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Objective

The Australia High-Level Symposium will explore opportunities, challenges and lessons learned for effective sustainable development; discuss opportunities for enhancing development cooperation, including official development assistance, and for innovative finance and effective partnerships. The Symposium will discuss leveraging the private sector, the future of South-South and triangular cooperation, and examine the role of sustainable development in the post-2015 development framework.

Outcome

A report of the meeting will be presented to the DCF in July 2012. The recommendations of the Symposium will also be presented at the Rio+20 Summit in June 2012.

Format

The symposium will consist of a series of short interactive dialogues. To allow for a frank and open discussion, the interactive policy dialogue will be conducted under Chatham House rules. In addition, a breakout session during the second day will provide an opportunity for stakeholder groups to make key policy recommendations for the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and related international processes.

Participation

Participants will include Ministers, Directors-General and senior officials in charge of economic affairs, planning, development cooperation or a related area. They will come from governments of developed and developing countries, parliaments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Session 1: Reshaping development cooperation to advance sustainable development

This session will set the scene for the Symposium. Building on discussions at the DCF and in other major international fora, the session will discuss how development cooperation can best support the transition towards a sustainable development path and reduce poverty.

The session will cover: (i) the opportunities and challenges of integrating economic, social and environmental dimensions into development cooperation; (ii) the role of the DCF; and (iii) alignment with global, national and local sustainable development initiatives.

Session 2: Development cooperation for sustainable development: opportunities and challenges

This session will examine the impacts of sustainable development on aid and development cooperation mechanisms. This will include: (i) how aid allocation criteria account for countries' strengths and vulnerabilities; (ii) ways to ensure a balanced sectoral allocation of development cooperation between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development; (iii) the implications of giving greater prominence to sustainable development for the distribution of development assistance between countries at different stages of development; and (iv) how to bolster countries' capacity to pursue more integrated local and national policy-making.

Session 3: Lessons learned from development cooperation and sustainable development

This session will examine successful examples of development cooperation for sustainable development. This session will: (i) clarify how aid should be delivered to best contribute to the goal of sustainable development by highlighting examples of best practice; (ii) examine how to best enhance growth and productive capacities

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without depleting natural resource bases; and (iii) focus on how to build countries' capacities to manage their resources through integrated policy-making at national and local levels.

Session 4: Finance and partnerships for sustainable development

Development cooperation plays an important catalytic role in supporting a transition towards a more sustainable development path. However, an increasing share of development funding will come from other sources, notably from the private sector. This session will include two parallel dialogues:

- *Effective Partnerships*: How can the contributions of all development partners be mobilized for maximum impact? This includes the private sector and foundations, civil society, local governments, and the role of South-South and triangular cooperation.
- *Effective Finance*: How can development cooperation leverage investment and domestic resources to support sustainable development and reduce aid dependency?

Session 5: Mutual accountability for achieving sustainable development

Effective development efforts require all actors to be mutually accountable on the quantity, quality and effectiveness of aid. Mutual accountability requires that delivery and progress be monitored. Accountability has been shown to work better at the national level where providers and partner countries agree an aid policy and if this policy is discussed at inclusive high-level dialogues.

This session will: (i) examine successful national-level mutual accountability mechanisms; (ii) take stock of lessons from regional and global efforts that support national frameworks; (iii) explore measures to ensure that providers consistently respect and support country-led and inclusive development strategies in a coordinated and

effective way; (iv) focus on developing and communicating clear goals for development strategies; (v) reflect on how these lessons could be further developed to improve the focus on sustainable development as an area for future work under the DCF; and (vi) assess the application accountability mechanisms to non-traditional development actors.

Session 6: Breakout sessions of DCF Stakeholder groups

Three parallel breakout sessions will be held with major DCF stakeholder groups – developing countries; donor countries; non-government stakeholders – to consult on the Symposium theme of 'Shaping a sustainable future' and to develop key messages.

Delegates will need to consider the role of international development cooperation in a changing development and economic environment, the role of the DCF, and the impacts of other contemporary processes: Rio+20 Summit G20 Leaders' Summit; Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation.

Session 7: Sustainable development post 2015

This session will examine placing a sustainable development framework at the core of development cooperation efforts. In the lead-up to Rio+20, there is general agreement that sustainable development needs to be at the centre of any post-2015 UN development agenda. It is less clear how sustainable development principles will be integrated into any such framework. Similarly, attention needs to be given to how Sustainable Development Goals could relate to the MDGs and to the post-2015 process. This session will explore how such a sustainable development framework could clarify these linkages and the implications for development cooperation. The session will draw on issues emerging from the ongoing discussions on Rio+20 outcomes.

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2012 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM: AUSTRALIA HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM

Draft Symposium Program

Sunday 13 May

Delegate arrival and registration

Monday 14 May

Morning Session 8:45 – 13:00

	Welcome and Keynote Address	Mr Sha Zukang, Secretary General of Rio+20 and UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Senator Bob Carr, Foreign Minister of Australia
1	Reshaping development cooperation to advance sustainable development	Moderated panel discussion
2	Development cooperation for sustainable development: Opportunities and challenges	Distinguished speakers and moderated discussion

Lunch

Afternoon Session 14:30 – 18:00

3	Lessons learned from development cooperation and sustainable development	Moderated panel discussion
4	Finance and partnerships for sustainable development (parallel sessions)	Two parallel sessions, one on finance and one on partnerships, each with distinguished speakers

Official Symposium Reception and Dinner 19:00

Tuesday 15 May

Morning Session 8:45 – 13:00

5	Mutual accountability for achieving sustainable development	Group discussions and moderated plenary discussion
6	Breakout sessions of DCF stakeholder groups on 'shaping a sustainable future'	Group discussions followed by reports to the plenary

Lunch

Afternoon Session 14:30 – 18:00

	Key messages from consultations and discussions	Moderated plenary discussion
7	Sustainable development post-2015	Moderated plenary discussion

Cocktail Reception 18:00

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