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The international community has long used the concept of “global partnership” to describe a set of international trade, aid and financial policy commitments that all countries concerned should jointly fulfil to convert economic opportunities into development achievements. The notion of “global partnership¹” recognizes that each country has the primary responsibility of its own economic and social development, and that the global community is responsible for creating an enabling international environment.

The eighth Millennium Development Goal, MDG8, came to symbolize the first inter-governmentally agreed, overarching global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on Sustainable Development. It aimed at fulfilling the Millennium Declaration’s promise to “create an environment – at the national and global levels alike – which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty”.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, envisages a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. The revitalized global partnership is more inclusive and comprehensive. It is also expected to overcome the shortcomings of MDG8, in process, design, monitoring & review and implementation, and to mobilize more and more effective support for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Lessons learned from MDG8

The MDG 8 has several shortcomings in its design and monitoring and review², notably:

First, the Goal 8 did not cover all aspects of the global partnership for development, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Second, there is largely a lack of quantitative and time-bound targets. There are also inconsistencies between goals, targets and indicators. This reflects, at least in part, political difficulties in agreeing on more precisely defined targets and commitments on many of the dimensions of the global partnership for development. The lack of data poses challenges for tracking commitments in a timely manner in spite of improvements over years.

Third, structurally, MDG8 stood apart from the rest of the MDGs.

What policy and practice changes are needed for development cooperation to respond to the 2030 Agenda?

The 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) established a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development. The revitalize partnership calls for rethinking the role and approach of development cooperation.

The Development Cooperation Forum provides the platform to facilitate the exchange and mutual learning among development cooperation actors on how to adjust development cooperation policies and practices to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This policy brief is intended to provide a background for this exercise.

In particular, this policy brief aims to inform the political café and the first two sessions of the DCF Uganda High-level Symposium, which provide countries and other stakeholders an opportunity to present ideas/initial thinking/policies on how to adjust development cooperation policies and interventions towards achieving the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.

The Symposium will take place in Kampala on 5-6 November 2015, with pre-meetings on 4 November. It will also look at the role of development cooperation in supporting technology facilitation and capacity building and examine specific aspects of monitoring and review of development cooperation, including: country-drive monitoring and reporting frameworks; local level and citizen-based monitoring and review; and assessing effectiveness and impact of private and blended development cooperation. The discussions should yield concrete recommendations on these issues and will also make important contributions to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development and High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.



¹ Global partnership in this policy brief refers to the most overarching intergovernmentally-agreed global partnership

² MDG Gap Task Force report 2015, United Nations

While it was supposed to support the achievement of the MDGs, there were no explicit links between MDG8 and the other goals.

Fourth, MDG 8 has often been misinterpreted as focusing solely on aid commitments. This contributed to significantly less engagement from other key government entities that deal with finance, economic planning and tax issues.

The design of the revitalized global partnership envisaged by the 2030 Agenda and AAAA building on Monterrey and Doha Conferences goes a long way to address these shortcomings. However, a well-designed partnership and follow-up & review process alone is insufficient. Full implementation requires leadership and political will of all nations, adaptation of national policies and institutions, policy shift and coordination by relevant global institutions (United Nations, Bretton Woods Institutions) and incentives for all partners to assume their share of global responsibility. Ultimately, the success of a revitalized global partnership hinges upon the active and continuous interaction among these partners to be open and learn from each other and deliver on the commitments that they have made.

2. Adapting national development cooperation policy ³

The global partnership should work to mobilize public and private, domestic and international finance, as well as technologies and capacity building for sustainable development. In the post-2015 era, all national development cooperation policies should fulfil at least two main functions: orienting development cooperation towards SDGs and mobilizing greater financial and non-financial support for SDGs.

Aligning development cooperation priorities

National circumstances are different and the relevance of specific SDGs varies from country to country. Universality does not mean that all countries should have the same priorities. In fact, each country, as partner in development cooperation, has its own priorities. Those priorities have evolved in particular historical contexts; reflect certain belief in development enablers and path (often times based on their own development trajectory); as well as consideration of cultural, historical and geopolitical ties. The factors underpinning these priorities are not sensitive to change. Therefore, it is not realistic to expect an immediate shift in countries' development cooperation priorities in the near term following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda.

Yet, the achievement of the SDGs hinges on the synergy between national policies and strategies of all countries and the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs provide a new way of thinking in policy making. For development cooperation policy makers, the SDGs demand a careful examination of policy synergy and trade-offs between sectoral interventions by development cooperation which could potentially lead to re-prioritization or re-allocation of resources across sectors.

National development cooperation policies should also make sure resource allocation across and within countries is equitable and takes into consideration all types of vulnerabilities. Compared to the MDGs, the 2030 Agenda is much broader in scope. Eradicating poverty remains the greatest global challenge. Countries, in particular LDCs, should be given priority in development cooperation. Meanwhile, countries that face other vulnerabilities but lack the means to address them should also be supported. The attention to inequalities and resilience and the commitment to leave no one behind would require that all vulnerable segments of the society within countries have adequate support.

Scaling up official support

The achievement of SDGs requires an unprecedented level of financial and non-financial support. International public finance plays a unique role. ODA will remain critical, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable

³ National development cooperation policies define a country's vision, priorities, commitments and activities related to international development cooperation. They can either be stand-alone documents or part of a national action/development plan. Well-structured policies spell out the principles and objectives of development cooperation, the roles and responsibilities or division of labour among the various parties involved, decision-making processes, and how implementation is to be monitored. National development cooperation policies do not exist in isolation of other national legislation and policies – they must be linked to the national development strategies and plans of countries.

countries. OECD/DAC members are expected to make available more ODA and achieve the 0.7% ODA target within the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda.

Development cooperation needs to assume more weight in the planning, budgeting and resource allocation processes of donors and other relevant actors. Governments always face competing priorities and scarce resources. Making development cooperation a continued government priority among the multiple priorities requires, among others: 1) the support of domestic tax-payers and constituencies, 2) leadership that is committed to sustainable development and 3) institutionalization of the positioning of development cooperation in national processes.

Some OECD/DAC members and non-DAC countries have experiences in securing national commitments to development cooperation. For example, the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 of the United Kingdom places a duty on the Secretary of State to ensure that the 0.7% target is met by the government in the year 2015 and each subsequent calendar year, and accountability for meeting the 0.7% target is to Parliament, rather than the courts. Securing aid commitments through national legislation can be a way forward. But, given the different country contexts, legislation cannot be the one-size-fits-all solution.

The institutions, infrastructure, channels, operational approaches and human resources to support aid delivery should be oriented to execute and deliver intended results. Aid should go where it is most needed and where the best results can be gained for taxpayers' money. Improving transparency and communication of results can help tax payers better relate development cooperation to their own values concerns and interest. On the other hand, the results-focus should avoid prioritizing quick-wins over long-term development outcomes that are difficult to quantify.

Southern partners demonstrated considerable willingness to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through South-South cooperation. Southern partners see South-South cooperation as voluntary partnerships and as a complement to North-South cooperation. The demand for South-South cooperation is on the rise and many Southern partners have continuously scaled up their support. Some Southern partners have national legislative and administrative processes to ensure the level of engagement in South-South cooperation. Mutual learning among Southern partners in this regard can help them further develop their own development cooperation policies and institutions.

Leveraging partnerships with non-state actors

Official support alone cannot deliver on the ambitious 2030 Agenda. Domestic resource mobilization, enhanced international tax cooperation and combatting illicit financial flows, plus sound policies, private investments and effective partnerships will also play important roles.

Development cooperation authorities and institutions in particular need to acquire new capacities and skill-sets. They must be able to assess the opportunities and challenges in engaging non-state actors, tap into their strengths and develop new modalities, e.g. public-private partnerships which may maximize the sustainable development impact of the limited resources from the official sector through leveraging when appropriate.

As governments and other actors prepare for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and the policy and institutional changes they envisage, there is a need for them to share with and learn from each other through an inclusive global platform that can bring together all actors.

3. Pursuing policy coherence for development at all levels

The Sustainable Development Goals apply to all countries and practically affect all forms of public policy. The goals are multidimensional (social, economic, environmental) and interconnected. Such an agenda demands coherence and integration across the whole range of policies that shape sustainable development. Therefore, coherence and integration will be at the core of the transformations that are required in all countries regardless of how they define themselves as actors in development cooperation.

Embracing a whole-of-government approach

Multi-sectoral, integrated and coherent policy responses will be especially important at the national level. However, many countries are not well equipped to implement policies that have to be coordinated across many sectors. Negative, unintended consequences of non-development cooperation policies by partner countries can have a tremendous development impact that is often not accounted for or discussed. Similarly, external assistance to developing countries is mostly organised along sector lines between individual line ministries.

Some countries have begun the review of their own development cooperation strategies and policies in light of the SDGs. It is critical to consistently have sustainable development as the overarching objective of this exercise. Some reviews so far have benefited from engaging ministries/departments beyond development cooperation authorities. This approach can enable governments to look at how different sectoral interventions can jointly contribute to the development priorities of a given country, i.e. policy coherence for development. But, like other inter-departmental/sectoral coordination processes within a government, such exercise may result in favouring the agenda of the more influential sectors/institutions when there is lack of authority that is over and above sectoral interests and can represent impartially the objective of such reviews (e.g. sustainable development). There have been recommendations that the office of the President or Prime Minister should coordinate such exercises in some countries, depending on the national systems. The role of national economic and social councils or similar inclusive and multi-stakeholder mechanisms for engagement and review has also been underscored.

Trade, investment, monetary and fiscal policies are central for sustainable development. Ensuring the synergy between these policies and development cooperation policies has long been a challenge. For those who provide development cooperation, lessons can be learned from the ongoing efforts. Through Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), the European Union seeks to take account of development objectives in all of its policies that are likely to affect developing countries. The European Union identified 12 policy areas under five priority challenges for PCD. It monitors progress on PCD in the European Union and its Member States in its biennial EU Report on Policy Coherence for Development.

Operational approaches and mind-sets will need to change, building on examples of innovative policy making, such as the whole of government approaches to promote policy coherence for sustainable development. Updated tools and approaches are required to adjust development cooperation towards integrated policy frameworks for sustainable development. Integrated policies are fundamental to foster synergies between economic, social and environmental policies; deal with trade-offs; and consider trans-boundary and inter-generational impacts on sustainable development.

National development cooperation policies of providers will work only with those of partners. All partners of development cooperation should also create an enabling environment for development cooperation. At policy level, it involves incorporation of relevant SDGs in national development plans/strategies, careful consideration of trade-offs between interventions and ensuring development-orientation of all policy areas. Legislation, rules and regulations should also be put in place to ensure external assistance is aligned with national sustainable development plans and strategies.

Improving policy and operational cooperation among global institutions

The 2030 Agenda and the AAAA provided a framework for policy alignment and coordination at global level. Global multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations and international financial institutions, are not only a main channel of delivery for development cooperation, but also important policy-setters in support of the 2030 Agenda, with capacity to engage other actors.

Effective implementation will require global institutions, old and new, to align their priorities, corporate strategies, operational approaches, funding and capacity with the SDGs and 2030 Agenda, as called for in the AAAA. In some cases, fundamental institutional reforms are needed. These reforms should not only optimize organizational efficiency of organizations, but also make them a better fit for the implementation of the 2030 agenda. Multilateral aid should be better aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Solutions have to be found to address bilateralization of multilateral aid.

With proliferation of global development actors, better coordination among global institutions becomes critical. A wide range of actors – public, private, civil society – are key players in various areas of SDGs. Ensuring the buy-

in of these actors to the 2030 Agenda remains a challenge. Forming partnerships has been the main method to achieve that objective. There must be thinking of new ways that depart from ad-hoc engagement towards more systematic and institutionalized arrangements.

Global intergovernmental institutions are most critical in incentivizing governments and all actors to fulfil commitments and actions needed for the revitalized global partnership for sustainable development to do its job. Thus far, focus has been on the design of better monitoring and review mechanisms at global level. Lessons learned from the MDG8 monitoring, the Annual Ministerial Review, the Development Cooperation Forum, the DAC Peer Review and African Peer Review lead to the conclusion that global monitoring and review i.e. monitoring/surveillance with high-level debates of the associated reports by inter-governmental organs, need to be reinforced by stronger modalities of horizontal accountability e.g. peer reviews and reviews between partners.

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