

Opening Remarks by Mr. Navid Hanif

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Launch of the 2025 Development Cooperation Forum Survey Study at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

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Excellencies, colleagues, friends,

The Compromiso de Sevilla gives us hope that international development cooperation is bouncing back.

Today's Development Cooperation Forum Survey Study—with responses from 75 countries and 28 in-depth interviews—provides critical insight into what countries actually experience on the ground.

Developing countries are stepping forward—with ambition, innovation, and resolve. They are ready to lead, but the system must evolve to support them.

Only 17 per cent of SDG targets are on track. By the end of this decade, an estimated 600 million people may still be living in extreme poverty. Official development assistance is being cut—just when global solidarity is needed most.

Yet this year's DCF Survey shows that development cooperation remains essential—and countries are showing us the way forward.

What countries tell us

This DCF Survey had the highest response since 2009—sending a powerful signal that countries want development cooperation that works for them. It reveals both remarkable progress and critical gaps.

What countries told us through the Survey echoes the vision of the Compromiso de Sevilla—cooperation that is:

- country-led and context-specific,
- coherent across policies and partners,
- inclusive in voice and participation, and
- accountable—not just for how much is spent, but for what is achieved.

The DCF Survey brings these principles to life—with evidence, experience, and urgency.

Let's look at four key ways countries are making cooperation more effective—what we call the enablers.

1. Setting National Priorities Through Development Cooperation Policies

Two-thirds of countries now have a national policy guiding their cooperation. These are becoming more comprehensive—addressing ODA, South-South cooperation, technical support, and domestic resource mobilization.

But gaps remain. Coverage has declined since 2022. And many still lack focus on critical elements like untying aid, reducing transaction costs, and improving blended finance.

2. Aligning Action Through Results Frameworks

Only 47 per cent of countries have a Country Results Framework in place—the lowest rate since 2016. Yet where they do exist, they align support with national priorities and reduce duplication.

One Small Island Developing State shared how they adapted: *“We streamlined our indicators to better align with the SDGs—and to make them usable by our ministries.”*

Their message is clear: frameworks work—but countries need the capacity to build and sustain them.

3. Making Cooperation Transparent Through Information Systems

Seventy-eight per cent of countries now use a Development Cooperation Information System. Many are integrating real-time data and connecting with platforms like IATI.

Still, data gaps persist. And access is often limited for civil society and non-state actors.

Yet countries are innovating. In the words of one African respondent: *“Our revised DCIS now allows development partners to input data directly—cutting delays and improving accuracy.”*

4. Building Trust Through National Dialogue Forums

Sixty-three per cent of countries reported having a National Development Cooperation Forum or NDCF—down from 90 per cent in 2016.

Where they are active, these forums align cooperation with national strategies, promote mutual accountability, and build trust.

But they are often under-resourced. And international engagement—especially from non-traditional partners—is declining.

A respondent from a low-income country told us: *“The NDCF has become a critical venue for aligning development activities with national priorities.”*

The Strategic Reality

Countries are leading, innovating, and investing in effective development cooperation systems. But they cannot do it alone.

Three systemic challenges emerge from country responses:

First, fragmentation is overwhelming national systems. The proliferation of actors and channels creates opportunities. But it also increases coordination challenges and transaction costs, particularly for countries with limited institutional capacity.

Second, country ownership remains incomplete. Eighty-three per cent of countries identify strong ownership as key for positive change. Yet, persistent misalignment between funding and country priorities shows traditional ownership models are insufficient.

Third, the effectiveness infrastructure is eroding. Declining results frameworks and dialogue forums signal weakening country capacity to strategically coordinate diverse cooperation partners, flows and domestic actors toward national sustainable development goals.

The DCF Response

The Compromiso de Sevilla renews the DCF’s mandate, positioning the Forum as a trusted, universal platform to:

- Foster inclusive, country-led dialogue
- Track progress on global commitments—including SDG indicator 17.3.1
- Promote mutual learning, accountability, and transparency
- And offer policy guidance that reflects country priorities.

Above all, it strengthens the DCF’s mandate to foster synergies across platforms and drive policy coherence and impact that ensures development cooperation truly serves country priorities amid global challenges and opportunities.

But realizing this vision requires all of us.

The countries here—your experiences, innovations, challenges—make the DCF Survey powerful.

The development partners here—your alignment with country priorities and openness to new approaches—will determine whether we achieve coherence or fragmentation.

The practitioners and policymakers here—your insights and commitment to evidence-based solutions—shape whether we deliver impact or only good intentions.

The parliamentarians, local authorities, private sector, and civil society representatives here—your accountability role and connection of global cooperation to local realities—is essential.

This Conference brings together the full range of development cooperation actors who need the DCF's universal platform—and whose meaningful engagement will strengthen the Forum's capacity to deliver.

As we launch these findings, I look forward to your perspectives. What resonates with your experiences? What innovations can others learn from? How can we strengthen the coordination mechanisms the Survey shows declining? Your insights today will shape how we translate findings into action.

Development cooperation remains one of our most powerful tools to realize the 2030 Agenda. But to succeed, it must be trusted, responsive, and rooted in the needs and aspirations of those it is meant to serve.

The DCF Survey gives us the roadmap. The Compromiso de Sevilla gives us the compass. And this Conference gives us the moment.

Let us seize this moment—with clarity, courage, and commitment to country-led transformation.

Thank you.