

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY

South-South Cooperation Providers Workshop: Preparations for the First High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership in Mexico Beijing 24-25 March, 2014

Introduction

The workshop was organised as an informal preparatory event for South-South Development Cooperation Providers ahead of the First High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), to be hosted by the government of Mexico, in Mexico City, 15-16 April 2014. The workshop was co-hosted by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC) and UNDP China, in Beijing 24-25 March, 2014.

The objective of the workshop was to provide South-South development cooperation providers with the opportunity to prepare for, share views on and debate topics to be discussed at the upcoming High Level Meeting (HLM).¹ The workshop brought together representatives from governments, think-tanks, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and academia from eleven countries², along with representatives of the HLM hosts, two of the GPEDC co-chairs, and the Joint Secretariat. The discussions took place under Chatham House rules. A diversity of views was shared among participants, and this summary does not purport to represent a consensus or official positions of any of the participating countries or organisations.

This summary highlights the key priorities and suggestions for ways forward, which emerged. The discussions will be reflected further in the detailed workshop report (forthcoming).

Key priorities and suggestions for ways forward

A) HLM Communiqué: Participants put forward several suggestions on how to further fine-tune the 2nd draft of the HLM Communiqué. Key suggestions were:

- adjust language to make sure focus is on development cooperation, and wording is in accordance with international shared understandings (in general)
- clarify language on the relationship between the GPEDC and the post-2015 Development Agenda. The former may not only be about “how”, but also about elements of “what”. (I. para. 3)
- consider highlighting the diversity of different forms of development cooperation in the first part of the Communiqué, including reflecting experiences of South-South Cooperation (SSC) (I. para. 1-5)
- clarify the difference between North-South and South-South Cooperation, especially regarding differentiated responsibilities. It should be made clear that the Busan implementation chapter refers to the North-South dimension of development cooperation. (II.A.)
- keep a clear distinction between South-South and triangular cooperation (II.D)

¹ The five official HLM themes, discussed at the workshop: 1) Progress since Busan; 2) Partnering for effective taxation and domestic resource mobilisation for development; 3) South-South, triangular co-operation and knowledge sharing; 4) Development co-operation with Middle-Income Countries; 5) Business as a partner in development.

² Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Thailand and Turkey.

- refer to the role of multilateral organizations in triangular cooperation (II.D para. 24)
- keep the focus on capacity building when addressing knowledge sharing (II.D para. 25 & 26)
- split paragraph 21 on MICs into two, to both highlight the need for a revision of current categorization criteria of MICs as well as to offer support for the differential needs of MICs. Nuance language of different categories of countries, as Africa is not one homogenous category (II.C, para. 21)
- include a voluntary initiative (in Annex) on establishing a network of SSC provider think tanks which could elaborate a common conception of SSC and indicators by which the impact of SSC could be assessed. Such a network could be announced at the Mexico HLM and could undertake its work in readiness for the subsequent HLM.

B) HLM themes: Participants discussed the five official HLM themes and put forward suggestions for ways forward and/or priorities directly or indirectly related to these. Key points were:

- *Define next steps and differential commitments and responsibilities of SSC providers:* There was a general call for clarification on the part of providers of SSC themselves to define what differential commitments and responsibilities mean, and what commitments to take on in this regard. This includes defining key principles of particular relevance for SSC providers. One suggestion put forward was to focus on the principles of ownership and results as a common agenda.
- *Assess impact of SSC:* There was general agreement on the need to fill a gap in terms of assessing the impact of SSC; to identify relevant common indicators to assess progress against, while respecting differences in national policies and methods.
- *Set up a network of think tanks among SSC providers:* (See above).
- *SSC providers to work as one constituency:* It was suggested by some participants that providers of SSC should start working as a constituency, and have a common narrative of their role in the GPEDC. This suggestion was based on previous experiences of challenges in collecting and coordinating views of SSC providers vis-à-vis the GPEDC. Furthermore, it was suggested that providers of SSC should have their own body and establish a platform for sharing views and experiences, or make use of existing platforms within for example the UN system.
- *Engage in triangular cooperation to draw on different expertise of countries:* Some participants highlighted the advantage of triangular cooperation in drawing on the respective strengths of different providers of development cooperation, including multilaterals. The potential value of triangular cooperation as a way of promoting increased understanding among different stakeholders was mentioned.
- *Assess impact of knowledge sharing and training programs of SSC providers:* There was general agreement on the need to develop methodologies for assessing the systemic impact of knowledge sharing by SSC providers and the impact over time of individual training programs that providers of SSC are engaged in.
- *Avoid the trap of one size fits all in knowledge sharing among SSC providers:* It was generally agreed that there is a need for qualified analyses of what works and why in different countries and local contexts when sharing knowledge by providers of SSC. It was suggested that international organizations could help support such analysis.

- *Establish mechanisms and build capacity for knowledge sharing, drawing on the unique role of SSC providers:* It was generally agreed that providers of SSC can play a unique role in sharing knowledge drawing on their dual role as providers and recipients, or previous experiences of receiving development cooperation. It was emphasized that it is important for SSC providers to increase their own capacities as providers and “do their homework”. The need for facilitating mechanisms of knowledge sharing at international level was emphasized, as well as the need to establish knowledge hubs. Experiences of CSOs in knowledge sharing were also mentioned in this regard as a resource.
- *Define appropriate categorization of countries to capture complexities of MICs:* There was a general call for the need to develop more sophisticated indicators for categorizing countries, including but not limited to MICs. Categorizations should be based on other dimensions than narrow income per capita to capture the different development challenges in MICs. Examples mentioned were the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), The Human Development Index (HDI) and indices that capture progress on the MDGs. It was suggested that decision-making on development cooperation should not be based on one single criterion.
- *Provide tailored development cooperation to MICs:* Because a majority of the world’s poor live in MICs, there was general agreement on the importance of continuing the provision of development cooperation to MICs based on the specific needs of different MICs. Furthermore, there was agreement that as long as the MICs categorization is in place, the transition of MICs should be supported through gradual adjustment systems for moving from one category to another, including when this affects the availability of concessional finance.
- *Share information on good practices of the role of the private sector among providers of SSC:* Participants brought to the fore a diversity of experiences among SSC provider countries on the role of the private sector in development cooperation and public-private partnerships etc. Given the fact that these experiences are not well documented, participants suggested good practices could be compiled in a Compendium of Good Practices to facilitate experience sharing. The UNDP Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development was mentioned as a possible resource in this regard.
- *Promote the development of reporting standards for business that include development perspectives:* Some participants emphasized the need for reporting tools for assessing the business sector’s contribution to development. Some participants stressed the importance of getting the private sector to do their business in a way that overlaps with the objectives of development cooperation, whilst recognising that this is a general priority not only for SSC providers.
- *Share experiences of different types of domestic resource mobilization among SSC providers:* Some participants stressed that domestic resource mobilization is a broader concept than taxation, which also needs to include other domestic policies and international support/policy coherence for enhancing growth. Some participants suggested that SSC providers could voluntarily share experiences of broadening the tax base as well as stimulating growth.