

FOCUS SESSION 23

Promoting Better Triangular Co-operation: Where Have We Got to Since Busan and Where to Next After 2015?

Wednesday 16 April, 8:00-9:15, Room Montejo 2, Centro Banamex

Speakers

- Mr Jon Lomøy, Director for Development Co-operation, OECD (Moderator)
- Mr Seiji Kihara, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan
- Ms Ryna Garay, Director for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, El Salvador
- Mr Hiroshi Kato, Vice-President of Japan International Cooperation Agency
- Ambassador Fernando Abreu, Executive Director, Brazilian Cooperation Agency
- Ms Juanita Olarte, Director for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation
- Ms Mami Yamada Sakurai, Assistant Director for Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation, UN Office for South-South Cooperation

Conclusions and key messages:

Triangular co-operation is coming of age as a modality of development co-operation. It builds on the complementary strengths of different actors to bring innovative and flexible solutions to address development challenges. **Triangular co-operation follows the spirit of the Busan partnership agreement (2011), promoting inclusive partnerships based on common objectives shared by a diverse range of development partners.**

The Busan partnership agreement proposed a number of actions relating to triangular co-operation, including broadening support, scaling-up and strengthening capacity to engage effectively in triangular co-operation. This focus session provided a timely opportunity to take stock of progress made since Busan in promoting better triangular co-operation and to chart the way forward.

The discussions showed that, since 2011, **several countries and organisations are making efforts to promote better triangular co-operation.** Their work helped to disseminate information on triangular co-operation, produce evidence on how triangular co-operation works and share experiences about mechanisms to promote triangular co-operation. For instance, the

analytical work conducted by Japan¹ clarified some of the existing forms of triangular co-operation as well as the mechanisms to promote it and shed light on the benefits of this form of co-operation. Other initiatives mentioned include the creation of South-South and triangular co-operation funds as well as the regular publication of the *Report on South-South Co-operation in Ibero-America* by the Ibero-American Secretariat.²

Some of the messages emerging from triangular co-operation experiences are:

- **Triangular co-operation can promote knowledge sharing** through a transfer and adaptation of development solutions, where all countries can be providers of knowledge and experience relevant to other countries. Triangular co-operation can also **promote knowledge co-creation** through the production of innovative solutions in a collaborative way.
- **Triangular co-operation can be a tool for building consensus and harmonisation among different partners** if conducted in an inclusive and sustained way. This harmonisation can strengthen bilateral relations among partners involved.
- **Successful triangular co-operation is demand driven and aligned with national priorities of beneficiary countries.** Triangular co-operation cannot be used to impose topics or advance agendas not aligned with national priorities. In addition, it cannot be an excuse for reducing official development assistance or avoiding existing commitments.
- **Triangular co-operation is strongly linked with South-South co-operation but it is a modality of international co-operation in its own right.** In this sense, it should be guided by differentiated principles drawing on those of South-South co-operation such as: ownership, alignment, focus on results, and absence of conditionality or interference in domestic affairs. Triangular co-operation should be grounded in inclusive and horizontal partnerships which imply shared governance, decision-making and accountability among all actors involved.
- **Triangular co-operation still faces several challenges**, particularly with regards to co-ordination (due to differences in institutional models and bureaucracies) and a lack of information, data and evidence available.

Going forward, **triangular co-operation can be an important tool for achieving sustainable development.** The UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals has already included triangular co-operation among the means to achieve the emerging goals that will guide the post-2015 development agenda. But more efforts could be invested in building bridges between the international co-operation agenda and the post-2015 agenda. Discussions during the focus session also pointed to a range of actions to strengthen the contribution of triangular co-operation to development:

- **Recognise triangular co-operation as a specific modality for co-operation** and agree on minimum international standards based on the principles of South-South co-operation.
- **Ensure effective co-ordination and active participation of all partners** to reduce transaction costs and promote harmonised procedures.
- **Design mechanisms and tools to monitor, evaluate and measure progress and impact**, including the knowledge shared and created through this modality.
- **Improve communication and dissemination of information** to promote good practices and raise awareness of the importance of triangular co-operation to development.
- **Increase participation of civil society organisations** in triangular co-operation.

¹ The studies “Tackling Global Challenges through Triangular Cooperation” (2013) and “Triangular Cooperation Mechanism: A Comparative Study of Germany, Japan and the UK” (2014) can be accessed at the website of JICA Research Institute: <http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/index.html>

² The annual reports can be found at: <http://segib.org/es/node/7989>