



'Financing the Future: Fresh Perspectives on Global Development'

17-18 March 2015, La Palma Hotel, Accra, Ghana

Concept Note

Theme

2015 will be a critical year for international development finance. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be agreed by the UN General Assembly in September, and the Financing for Development (FfD) Conference will be held in July. Policy processes examining how development finance can contribute to the SDGs and how they should be measured will also be reaching their conclusions.

These decisions come at a time of rapid change for global economy, and hence for the aid industry. Conventional thinking about foreign aid must evolve radically. Rather than being seen as a north-south transfer based on charity, foreign aid must shift to a new paradigm of international public finance (IPF) for sustainable development, which is more relevant for the new era of global challenges, universal commitments, and common interest.

Yet a changing role does not necessarily mean a declining role. Much attention is now being paid to the growth of domestic and private finance flows, and a consensus is emerging on the importance of using aid to 'catalyse' other resources, be they private or domestic. But how can IPF be truly catalytic? And how should IPF continue to be delivered to countries which will still need it to meet the SDGs?

By March 2015, negotiations towards the FfD Summit will be well underway. The role of IPF, and agreements on burden sharing, and 'common and differentiated responsibilities', is likely to be high on the agenda. Securing agreement on these issues will be critical for the success of the FfD summit, and with it the whole SDG process.

Within this context, ODI and partners including UNDP, CEPEI, ACET, CABRI, ESRF, DFI and the Brookings Institute are organising a high-level conference in Accra, Ghana, to debate the role of international public finance within a changing world.

Conference objectives

The objectives of the conference are

- To contribute to a better understanding amongst policy makers and practitioners of the specific role of international public finance within the changing development finance landscape.
- To ensure that debates on the use of international public finance are based on the latest evidence and research, and on perspectives from the country level.

- To provide a neutral and independent forum for debate, consensus building and problem solving.
- To bring together experts from across governments, international organisations, academia, civil society and think tanks for shared debate and learning.
- To identify specific contributions to the Financing for Development process, and to influence key decision makers ahead of the July Summit.

Approach

The event aims to be innovative in the partnership that has come together to design, plan and implement it, in the way that it is run, the experience for participants, and in the media and social networking that surrounds it.

In order to break out from usual country and organisational groupings and allegiances, innovative methods of presentation and discussion will be used.

- Interactive role play sessions on allocating international finance and on country financing strategies;
- A 'speed geeking' session in which selected participants are invited to pitch their ideas for inclusion in the FfD communique in 5 minute blocks, with other participants voting for the most constructive suggestion
- A closing high level panel, in which key decision makers within the FfD process will be invited to take questions in the form of a 'Question Time' style debate from a star interviewer.
- Storyboard depictions of the discussions created throughout the event and presented to the high-level panellists during the closing session.

The event will also offer maximum opportunities for informal discussions and networking on topics identified by participants during the event. Hallways and breakout rooms for poster displays, infographics and animations reflecting emerging trends in development finance will be used throughout the event.

Audience

The target audience for this event will be senior policy-makers, practitioners and academics. These will include:

- Negotiators and facilitators of relevant international policy processes including Financing for Development, the Inter-governmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Finance, and the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development
- Senior officials from developing country governments
- Academia, think tanks and research institutes, from all regions
- Staff and senior officials of bilateral development agencies, multilateral development banks, and other relevant international/regional organisations
- Representatives of providers of international finance (e.g. investment banks, philanthropists, export credit guarantee agencies)

ODI Contacts

Hannah Messenger, Events Manager: h.messenger@odi.org.uk

Gareth Youens, Programme Officer: g.yousens@odi.org.uk

Romilly Greenhill, Team Leader Development Finance: r.greenhill@odi.org.uk