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Grounding effective development cooperation principles in country systems and dialogue process – UNDP support to Myanmar

Workshop on Monitoring Indicators for Effective Development Cooperation, Yangon, Myanmar, 19-20 October 2015

Following the GPEDC regional workshop organized in Bangkok on 7-8 October by the UNDP-OECD joint support team with support from the Asia-Pacific Development Effectiveness, the Government of Myanmar asked the UNDP country office to help organize a follow-up in-country workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the GPEDC monitoring framework and its indicators to a broader range of stakeholders at country level.

The workshop provided an opportunity, to highlight the benefits of participating in global monitoring efforts based on experience from other countries in the region and to mobilise interest from a broader range of stakeholders beyond the Foreign Economic Relations Department in the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development (MNPED), the national focal point for development cooperation. The following features of the GPEDC monitoring framework are of particular interest to Myanmar at this stage: strengthening country systems and processes; greater availability of and access to data on development cooperation to improve planning and have a better understanding of how to make development cooperation more efficient and effective; strengthening country systems and on-going processes, including enhancing inclusive partnerships.

Although the government confirmed interest to engage in the process, it cannot commit yet to submit data, because of the elections in early November. However, the current government team is keen to participate in the 2nd monitoring round. Such participation would enable it to provide the new government early next year with a good package of better data and a baseline to guide further efforts in strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships and making the best use of development cooperation for optimal impact. Participation in the monitoring process provides also a good opportunity to further strengthen the home grown aid management data base. The government will hold the next Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum in January 2016. On the basis of previous practice, this could provide an opportunity to discuss the findings and validate the data. There was a strong level of interest from the Union Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce to further explore the possibility of measuring the GPEDC indicator on private sector engagement as a way to strengthen ongoing public-private dialogue initiatives.

Some of the key outcomes of the two-day meeting – for a detailed read-out, please refer to the workshop's outcome statements:

- ***Genuine country ownership for effective development cooperation.*** Following the new Constitution and the general elections in 2010, Myanmar is making impressive efforts towards democratization and economic transformation. Without having been able to participate actively in international discussions of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation until recently, Myanmar demonstrated strong leadership in localizing the Busan principles. During the first ever Development Cooperation Forum in 2013, the government and development partners adopted the Nay Piy Taw Accord based on the principles of the Busan Partnership Agreement,

emphasizing national ownership, transparency and accountability, focus on results, inclusive partnerships and share prosperity. As part of the process, the government has established coordination structures and developed an aid management information system, the Mohinga.

- ***Strong support to align with national development priorities.*** The workshop mobilized participation from several line ministries which provided a opportunity to look into the contribution of the GPEDC to broader aspects of national development planning. As such, the discussions provided push to look into indicator 1 on use of country results frameworks. A leitmotiv during the two day discussions was to keep the focus on improving the living conditions of the Myanmar people as the motivation behind efforts to improve the management and coordination of development cooperation.
- ***Inclusiveness.*** The Government of Myanmar clearly recognizes the value of enhancing inclusive partnerships involving all national stakeholders. The workshop mobilized participation from civil society and private sector and was a living proof of the valued added of the Global Partnership to provide a platform for open and frank dialogue about issues of mutual concern. Given the context of democratic transition, both the government and non-state actors recognized the need to build trust as a basis for meaningful engagement. However, alongside trust, capacity is also needed. The difficulty of engaging some specific groups (e.g. some CSOs, SMEs) which do not have focal points was noted. The suggestion was made to identify more than one focal point for the assessment of indicator 2 on the CSO enabling environment and indicator 3 on private sector engagement. Discussions on private sector highlighted the importance of champions to take the discussions forward.
- ***Grounding monitoring in existing systems and processes.*** Discussions emphasized how monitoring efforts can use existing data from the Myanmar home-grown aid management data base, Mohinga for some of the quantitative data required for providers (e.g. indicators 5a on annual predictability, 6 on aid on budget and 9b on use of country PFM and procurements systems). The Cambodia example highlighted the benefits of having a single monitoring process which can reduce transaction costs. At the same time, participation in the GPEDC monitoring process can contribute to further improve the Mohinga by mobilising greater participation of development partners to update information and fill data gaps. Further opportunities to ground the monitoring in existing processes include:
- ***South South exchange.*** Following the regional GPEDC monitoring workshop organized by the AP-DEF in Bangkok on 7-8 October, the UNDP country office in Myanmar invited participants from Cambodia and Vietnam. Their contribution to the discussions was invaluable as the Myanmar government is keen to intensify exchange with countries in the region. The participant from Vietnam, a consultant who has worked closely with the government on monitoring aid effectiveness for the past 10 years, could learn more about the new indicators and will encourage his government to monitor private sector engagement.

The EU financial contribution enabled the UNDP Bangkok regional hub to provide additional catalytic support to on-going work carried out by the UNDP country office, working closely with the Foreign Economic Relations in the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development. This support took the form of advisory support and technical guidance on the GPEDC monitoring framework and facilitation of some of the discussions. Feedback from participants confirmed the usefulness of such a workshop. In the evaluation form, 1/3 reported that they did not know about the Busan Global Partnership but all have reported they feel comfortable of explaining the Busan Global Partnership and its monitoring indicators to their friends.