

Side Event Summary Note

New tasks and challenges for development co-operation agencies in Middle Income Countries

November 30, 2016 14:30h-15:30h, Sunbird room

Speakers/Panelists:

- H.E. Mrs. Nongnuth Phetcharatana, Special Envoy, Thailand
- Dr. Annalisa Prizzon, Research Fellow at Overseas Development Institute
- Mehmet Süreyya Er, Vice President of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Turkey
- Amb. María del Carmen Domínguez, Director of Strategic Planning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile
- Jorge Chediek, Director, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, Envoy of the Secretary General

Key messages and actions arising:

- MICs themselves are a very diverse grouping, which means the lessons they can offer on development co-operation are equally rich. Since much of the development co-operation they carry is south-south, they can make better use of their understanding of regional contexts and of solidarity in order to face the challenges posed as they become dual countries.
- In the case of development co-operation carried out by MICs, to avail oneself of regional perspectives and contexts is key to carry out intense mutual learning and knowledge sharing, and to develop mutual trust to improve success.
- Financing is a key challenge, and MICs are engaging more and more in innovative solutions – which will be key – such as engaging the diversity of stakeholders or developing funds with other countries in order to multiply efforts and foster mutual learning.

Summary

Turkey pointed out that MICs are a heterogeneous group, on numerous fronts. Therefore, the ways MICs carry out development co-operation is also distinct, though, by nature, MICs are mostly southern providers.

South-South Co-operation (SSC) requires a common lexicon for better coordination. As well, in order to increase the quality of development co-operation, the following are of great importance: coordination, knowledge exchange and mutual learning, data collecting and reporting, and mutual trust.

Lessons learned by Turkey include: the relevance of enthusiastic ownership by development co-operation agencies, which enhances exchanges; the importance of reducing transaction costs and being speedy on delivery; the increased understanding between southern partners that derives from shared languages and cultures.

ODI remarked how most partner country governments don't use labels such as « DAC » or « non DAC », or other similar schemes, to define their partners. In many cases, countries distinguish development partners with their own regions, for example America, Asia and Europe.

Chile called attention to the fact of the challenges countries face when they enter a dual (donor-recipient) country category, as this brings new responsibilities with SDG-wise while at the same time ODA flows are reduced to these same countries due to their status change. Additionally, development co-operation agencies in dual countries need to re-train their people for their new roles, with the difficulty of there being no models to do this. In this case, lesson-sharing becomes of special relevance, as well as the commitment from highest authorities.

Additionally, it was mentioned that SSC and triangular co-operation are being done in innovative fashion, and that having more engagement with non-state partners, such as international organizations like the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), will help with effectiveness and innovation.

In the case of Thailand, inclusion is a key theme of their development co-operation, which focuses on areas such as poverty alleviation, education, agriculture, and public health. As well, community participation and follow up to guarantee project sustainability is something they work on with recipient countries.

It was mentioned how quality must have precedence over quantity, and a tendency to move from project based co-operation to program based co-operation.

Among the challenges mentioned by Thailand is the question of accountability. Since development co-operation is funded by tax money and its budget is approved by parliament, how to account for what is spent? In this regard, Thailand works on People-Public-Private-Partnerships in order to help the public achieve a common understanding of the benefits of the development co-operation Thailand carries out.

The following were identified as the main challenges for development co-operation by agencies in MICs:

- Human resources, as usually agencies must rely on people from other ministries to provide expertise.
- Budget and financing are a particularly salient challenge, which also impacts training and human resources. Some solutions include engaging domestic NGOs, for example, or aiming at having a body of professionals with a broad roster of capabilities.
- Accountability/reporting/data-gathering.
- Leadership, without which this kind of work becomes difficult and unaligned.