

Second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation

Summary of Online Global Consultations

Background

In the lead up to the Second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (HLM2), taking place from 28 November to 1 December 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya, a series of online global consultations were conducted. The goal of these consultations was to seek knowledge and experience from the wider development community to feed into important bottom-up conversations at HLM2 related to how the Global Partnership and effective development co-operation can best support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The following themes were explored: (i) actions to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation; (ii) leaving no-one behind; and (iii) maximising the contribution of development actors.

From 12 October to 15 November 2016, over 130 inputs were received from participants in 22 countries. Representatives from national governments, the private sector, civil society organisations, foundations and academia shared their ideas, best practices, lessons learned and recommendations related to improving effective development co-operation. This high level of participation underscores the demand for such inclusive and accessible forums, in which all types of stakeholders are able to share their views and provide inputs into global dialogues.

Summary of Discussions

The following is a summary of the key points raised under each of the three themes explored during the online global consultations.

1. Actions to improve the effectiveness of development co-operation

Although some consultation participants thought changes over time have been scarce, the consultation identified important advances: increased transparency through publishing data and aid information and multi-stakeholder approaches and regional platform work for a common approach vis-à-vis multiple approaches to the same problem, among other achievements.

The consultation has emphasised that fighting poverty and inequality is still lying at the heart of development cooperation since its inception, and has reiterated that partnerships such as the Global Partnership allows us to capitalise lessons and learn from mistakes to avoid history repeating itself. The consultation has reminded us that

the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda force us to overcome the “business as usual” model and take risks. Are we ready for this?

Participants also pointed out important areas that require improvement: predictability, alignment, use of country systems, aid untying and mutual accountability need to be taken seriously in order for improvements to be seen. The urgent need for active dialogue between multi-stakeholders-including candid discussions about politics and power that work against effectiveness principles-and disclosure of information were mentioned as essential preconditions for inclusive and horizontal partnerships. The claim for national dialogues on development effectiveness-which include Civil Society actors, of course- has been loud and clear for both Partner Countries and Development Partners. Let’s look at a summary of what consultation participants have flagged for us to analyse and discuss:

- **Synergy between national agenda planning, budgeting and implementation.** While harmonisation between stakeholders is important, it is equally important to not oversimplify approaches. Context-sensitive approaches to harmonisation are key because considering specific challenges and opportunities in countries is crucial for delivering positive impact. In practice, this means government institutions need to work together to ensure linkages and complementarity in planning and budgets and partners must learn to align to this work.
- **Importance of monitoring.** The Global Partnership’s monitoring process is a concrete way to register achievement towards effective development co-operation commitments, setting a clear indication of progress. It also facilitates dialogue based on hard evidence, creating a path to further progress. At the same time, Paris, Accra and Busan effectiveness principles, which were grounded in evidence, are still valid and their implementation must be measured. They may also be continually reviewed in the context of an ever-changing development landscape.
- Relatedly, the importance of monitoring the quality, and not only quantity of development co-operation was noted. The Global Partnership addresses this by creating a platform in which stakeholders can discuss aid quality and methods for improvement, as well as determine practical ways in which principles provide answers to complex problems that continuously arise for the new architecture we face: aid graduation in MICs, private leverage of funding and leaving no one behind. A robust Theory of Change, as well as the willingness and ability to look at the cooperation system as a whole and act upon all the different parts that conform it, instead of just focusing on a couple of parts.
- **Incentives and knowledge sharing.** Both countries and development partners face similar challenges while working towards common goals. Both groups need to do a better job of discussing the political economy, building positive incentives as well as finding effective ways to share knowledge and practical experiences that may lead to exponential progress in implementation of effective development co-operation commitments. This will help to close capacity gaps and reduce negative incentives on both sides.

- **Strong engagement with the private sector.** Engaging the private sector is often discussed as a necessary component of development action but too often this rhetoric is not followed by actionable recommendations on implementation. The online global consultations suggested one way to move forward on engaging the private sector by starting to look at business models and to emulate private successes in development practice. It was also noted that profit should not be viewed as a negative, but as a possible incentive. It was also noted that development practitioners should find ways to take advantage of the work the private sector is already doing.
- **Innovative technology.** Digitisation of service delivery, user-centred innovation methodologies, and experimentation within and by civil service provide governments with the means to improve the delivery of public services, thereby enhancing accountability, transparency and effectiveness, leading to greater public trust.
- **Enabling environments and participatory budgeting.** Participants requested that HLM2 undertake the commitment of establishing enabling environments to ensure a broad multi-stakeholder participation. Participatory budgeting was noted as a local solution to streamline budget allocations and strengthen operational efficiencies. It was suggested that development partners remain open to this and other innovative ideas to strengthen country systems.
- **Increased donor accountability.** Aid fragmentation and donor proliferation remain a challenge, so it is crucial to establish clear accountability mechanisms that hold all stakeholders responsible. 3 important issues have been flagged: (1) the possibility of cooperation agencies operating in perverse environments, because there is a pressing need to suppress critical feedback in order to keep a certain image; (2) maybe agencies avoid learning from the past and (3) that agencies may reduce competitive pressure that could push them to deliver results.
- **International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).** It was noted how the IATI Standard, which was recently updated to align with the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), exemplifies how development stakeholders are producing fit-for-purpose instruments that improve the transparency and accountability of co-operation and facilitate informed decision-making with timely and quality data. The value-added of this has been increasingly recognised and has led to growing demand and interest in publishing data.

Last, participants pointed out that effectiveness is a highly political agenda and this should never be overlooked.

So, because cooperation is more than the sum of its parts, we need systemic approaches to identify and examine interdependence and connectivity at play in different public policy areas and especially, practices: from working in silos to working inter-sectorially; from multiple approaches to common approaches; from

business as usual to business unusual; from parroting change to practicing change and from talking and thinking to action and accomplishments.

2. Leaving no-one behind

- There is general agreement that development co-operation should include identifying and addressing the needs of marginalised and vulnerable groups, such as women and children and those living in poverty. To do this effectively, these voices must be included in agenda setting and monitoring processes – this means going beyond engaging government actors and actively seeking out new perspectives and ensuring this input is reflected in regulatory and policy frameworks.

3. Multi-stakeholder approach

- The Global Partnership has provided a platform that allows all stakeholders to participate in decision making, implementation and monitoring related to effective development co-operation. This aligns with SDG17, which emphasises the importance of engaging different actors towards fighting poverty and inequality.
- Evidence based policy-making remains one of the key ingredients for improving development effectiveness. Therefore, development stakeholders need to collaboratively seek policy coherence in partner countries and ensure that policy discussions are translated into actions and results.
- There is a need to invest in the development of mutual trust between stakeholders as well as with communities to guarantee sustainability of initiatives. This must be deliberate and not assumed in the initiatives. Communalities must be involved at the conception stages of the project. This calls for their active participation not only at the project operationalisation stage but also at the proposal stages of the project.
- The environment must be enabling for the multi-stakeholder approaches to work. All stakeholders must ensure that their dialogue and engagement structures, regulations and policies permit and allow for multistakeholder approaches. The objective should seek to put the citizen at the heart of policy making

Key Messages and Recommendations for HLM2

With the goal of accelerating progress towards achievement of the SDGs, the global online consultations have generated the following inputs to be shared at HLM2:

1. Continue to recognise that country context is a key consideration and approaches for improving development effectiveness must respond to specific country challenges and opportunities.
2. Promote increased information sharing among all stakeholders, including increasing the amount and accessibility of development data in order to improve aid coordination and programme implementation.

3. Refine and integrate new indicators in the monitoring framework to ensure relevant data is collected and approaches are based on hard evidence.
4. Commit to establishing enabling environments that facilitate broad multi-stakeholder participation, including engaging vulnerable populations.
5. Recognise that politics and power work against effectiveness principles-and this ought to be one of the main topics for multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus for joint action.