Side Events
Transparency in development co-operation: Much done, much left to do
(Access event flyer here)
30 November 2016, 08:00-09:00

Objective:
The objectives of this side event were to:

- Enable participants to hear directly from speakers about the benefits and opportunities presented by greater transparency and their use of open data;
- Identify the drivers and barriers to success, highlighting examples of best practice;
- Explore the opportunities over the coming years, particularly regarding data use, and agree how political commitment and increased capacity can combine to deliver success on the ground.

Participants:

Keynote speaker: **Helen Clark**, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Moderator: **Rupert Simons**, CEO, Publish What You Fund

Panellists:

- **Ms Charlotte Petri-Gornitzka**, Chair, Development Assistance Committee, OECD
- **Mohammad Mejbahuddin**, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh and IATI Vice Chair
- **Harpinder Collacott**, Executive Director, Development Initiatives
- **Beth Tritter**, Vice President for Policy and Evaluation, Millennium Challenge Corporation
- **Thomas Yanga**, Director, WFP Liaison Office to the African Union
- **Marc Cohen**, Manager, Quality Assurance, African Development Bank

Key issues discussed:

Ms Helen Clark opened the session, stating that IATI data is already contributing to more effective development and national ownership, citing examples of data use from Liberia, Bangladesh and Myanmar. She outlined how IATI data can support in-country decision-making and better co-ordination in a humanitarian crisis as well as what different actors could contribute to open data efforts: Traditional donors and multilaterals must publish more data and raise awareness with their offices at country level; humanitarian actors must live up to their Grand Bargain commitment to publish data to IATI; and civil society can use the data for analysis and advocacy. Ms Clark emphasised that IATI was open for business with climate finance, South-South co-operation and private finance, not just traditional ODA flows.

During the panel discussion that followed, Ms Petri Gornitzka, emphasised the need to initiate a conversation on how to ensure data is usable and accessible, as well as the need for transparency of funds beyond ODA.

Mr Mejbahuddin shared the recent experience of the government of Bangladesh in importing IATI data directly into their internal systems, and the value of opening up data to citizens so they can see what activities are going on in their region. He called for the publication of more disaggregated data as well as more information on results achieved.

Ms Tritter shared the work of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) as both a producer and consumer of open data, saying that they see transparency as a way to approach several aid effectiveness principles, such as ownership and partnership. MCC is happy to be very open about their mistakes and learn from them – "we succeed publicly and we fail publicly". She then highlighted the need for substantial investment in statistical capacity at country level, something that MCC is working on for the benefit of itself and other development actors.

Mr Cohen discussed motivations for the African Development Bank (AfDB) to increase its transparency, citing the need to see it as a tool to achieve accountability rather than as an end in itself. Having built MapAfrica to showcase their work, the bank is keen to receive feedback from its stakeholders.

Ms Collacott echoed other speakers' calls to use data and cited a significant challenge of ensuring interoperability between data sets; we need a more holistic view as data is not useful in isolation nor if it is not comparable. Joining up data standards would enable data users to see the bigger picture and reduce the need for manual manipulation of data from different sources.

Mr Yanga closed the panel by sharing the experience of the World Food Programme (WFP) work to bridge the humanitarian-development divide, particularly through their long-term strategic partnerships. He echoed calls for data to be used, especially by beneficiary countries following Bangladesh's example.

Questions from the audience brought up interesting examples of data use, and responses were given by representatives from the Government of Liberia (when IATI data was valuable during the Ebola crisis), and from the Government of Myanmar in importing IATI data into their internal systems for use alongside their own data. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) questioned why transparency was not high on the list of concerns during their research on perceptions of aid and Canada asked how we can make data exciting and able to answer people's questions.

Main conclusions and next steps:
Data use was identified as the clear priority for IATI, echoing IATI's commitments in its latest Global Partnership Initiative plans. All actors across the world of development co-operation and humanitarian aid must collaborate to continue to produce more and better data and to ensure this data is easy to access and use for a variety of purposes.

Social media: #HLM2; @IATI_aid; #transparency; #opendata; #development