

Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Inputs
2018 High-Level Political Forum: “Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies”
Detailed Substantive Inputs

Introduction

Development assistance has always been critical to responding to shocks and disasters: to care for the injured, to rebuild the damaged, to help restore society and return from calamity. In 2016, 12.5 percent of Official Development Assistance (ODA) was provided in response to humanitarian needs. Of this, close to 90% was in response to emergency response.

Resilience – the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, and to be less reliant on development assistance even in the face of disaster – cannot, on the other hand, be achieved with development assistance alone. Achieving resilience is a longer-term process, addressing environmental, social and economic vulnerability and exclusion, and the root causes of conflicts and fragility, while strengthening enabling institutions and policy environments. It is a process that requires a broader and longer engagement, supported by adequate and effective financing, knowledge and asset transfers, and innovation. As much as anything else, it requires engaging a range of development actors.

The **Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC)** brings together such a range, from recipients to providers, from local government to civil society, from trade unions to the private sector, and beyond, to work together, and make commitments based on long-term partnerships, and mutual transparency.

It is a forum for advice, shared accountability, and shared learning to support the implementation of four principles¹ that are the foundation of effective development co-operation, agreed at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea in 2011 and re-asserted at the Mexico and Nairobi High-Level Meetings (HLMs) of the Global Partnership: (i) ownership by developing countries; (ii) a focus on results; (iii) inclusive development partnerships; and (iv) transparency and accountability to one another.

It represents a holistic development co-operation approach that can, and is already, underscoring meaningful progress towards more resilient societies and the 2030 Agenda.

(a) An assessment of the situation regarding the principle of “ensuring that no one is left behind” at the global level;

From the point of view of the GPEDC, at the global level, ensuring that no one is left behind remains a huge challenge. Whilst progress has been made lifting people out of poverty globally, gains are often not reaching the most vulnerable and those furthest behind, and, within societies, new wealth generation is being increasingly concentrated in unprecedented ways.²

Noting this urgent situation, the GPEDC works in a range of ways to bolster the principle of leaving no one behind:

¹ <http://effectivecooperation.org/about/principles/>

² <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/3-charts-that-explain-global-inequality/>

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- i) **The principle was captured in its renewed mandate, adopted on December 1, 2016** at its Second High-Level Meeting (HLM2) in Nairobi, Kenya, to ensure that, as an approach, leaving no one behind underlines the work of the GPEDC and all its partners;
- ii) **The GPEDC brings together different stakeholders not only in monitoring and other country-level work, but in its leadership** also, by having different kinds of stakeholders represented as constituencies in the Steering Committee, who in turn speak for their respective constituents in driving the GPEDC’s work, ensuring as broad an engagement as possible;
- iii) **The monitoring framework, in turn, encourages national systems to monitor more vulnerable groups.** In particular, the framework’s Indicator 8 maps onto the SDG indicator 5.c.1, on budget allocations for advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. Data from the latest monitoring round indicated 58 of 81 countries reporting (more than 80 per cent) had some system for tracking gender-related budgeting in place, and almost half were publishing this data, providing critical information for the discourse and civic space in those societies.
- iv) **Global Partnership Initiatives**, voluntary engagements currently led by 58 different organizations, provide a further opportunity for stakeholders and groups typically left out of development co-operation conversations to participate in furthering the GPEDC’s four principles, and leaving no one behind.

(c) Valuable lessons learned on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies;

The first point to make is that platforms like the GPEDC operate as learning and sharing hubs. In the case of GPEDC, for how effective development co-operation can enable all kinds of development goals: identifying lessons learnt across contexts, and across constituencies and stakeholders.

Beyond this there are several key lessons that shape the work of the GPEDC and its participants, and that can help lead the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies:

- i) **The transformation will depend on strong, multi-stakeholder, partnerships.** Reviewing several years of HLPF voluntary national reviews (VNRs), it becomes apparent that the value of multi-stakeholder forums and approaches is well understood. But many countries also report on challenges in consolidating effective multi-stakeholder engagement, and the diversity in financing instruments it can bring – in particular in facilitating meaningful participation and sustaining these collaborative relationships. The GPEDC provides a standing platform for such engagement, and the sustained support it has received since its inception suggests that providers, recipients, and other stakeholders see the value that it brings, and recognize that achieving the 2030 Agenda is not just about financing, but partnerships, and sharing knowledge and innovation, too.

Multi-stakeholder approaches improve development outcomes, and they can do so even in the most demanding circumstances. Using data from the 2016 Monitoring Round, and looking

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at a sub-set of responding g7+³ countries, responses under Indicator 2 suggest that mechanisms for government-civil society engagement were increasingly present, both in law and in practice (though opportunities to strengthen the legal and regulatory environment remain). What’s more, these countries collectively scored higher than the average in terms of the relationship between development co-operation providers and these civil society organizations. Such partnerships are driving a path to the 2030 Agenda even where institutions are less strong; helping ensure development is leaving no one behind. Data also suggests that it is often countries in more challenging contexts driving progress in development effectiveness commitments, suggesting buy-in from providers and recipients. These same g7+ countries reported 86% of the improvement in the quality of financial management in-country, and more than two-thirds of the increase in transparency of budget allocations for gender equality.

Finally, multi-stakeholder approaches help drive different modalities of development co-operation, and different sources of financing. Current GPEDC co-chair Bangladesh understood this when partnering with UNDP and multiple local organizations in 2010, to re-plant mangrove forests in four areas in the southern delta to combat, and in some cases reverse, the erosion that had been accelerating due to climate change: protecting homes, and preserving livelihoods. This year, India has undertaken a new commitment to GPEDC Steering Committee member Nepal (including \$250m in development co-operation funding) to build some 50,000 earthquake-proof homes, with UN partners providing technical assistance.

- ii) **Trust, based on mutual commitments and transparency, is key to sustaining productive long-term engagements.** Afghanistan, another a member of the GPEDC Steering Committee has been, by some way, the single largest recipient of resilience-focused development co-operation over the last decade and a half.⁴ This trust has been underscored by mutual commitments by providers, recipients and other actors, and a fundamental willingness to engage on a sustainable basis: namely, with recipient country-owned processes. In 2015, according to GPEDC monitoring, 77% of reported development co-operation in Afghanistan was aligned to country-led objectives. 72% used national monitoring systems, while the government participated in 71% of evaluations. More than three-quarters of disbursements were made according to schedule. The data indicates, moreover, areas of clear progress. Where, in 2010, only 27% of development co-operation was recorded via the government budget, this figure had leapt to 61% by 2015/16, with some key providers (including the Asian Development Bank, the UK and EU) achieving 100%.⁵

Afghanistan’s role in the GPEDC also supports longer-term engagement in other ways. As a multi-stakeholder platform, the GPEDC also provides a frank and open forum for mutual learning, where the kind of data discussed above can begin to shape the development

³ <http://www.g7plus.org/>

⁴ For these purposes we refer here to OECD DAC code 150: Government and Civil Society. This includes spending on conflict reduction, as well as government capacities more broadly.

⁵ http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Afghanistan_16_11.pdf?s

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discourse, and contribute to political momentum, both for Afghanistan’s development objectives, and the potential of effective development co-operation.

- iii) **Effective development principles speak to the core components of transformation.** Resilience, even more than other areas of governance, is not an isolated policy area. There are critical and inter-linked components, that determine the capacity of state and society to transform, and to respond: clear political guidance; strong national institutions; coherent policy formulation; integrated, whole-of-government approaches to implementation. All of these are essential to a cross-cutting issue like resilience and crisis response, which require strong and authoritative leadership, prioritization, policy coordination, and effective execution. Working with national systems, and national frameworks, is critical to putting the work of resilience on as sustainable a footing as possible. It will also help make this work more effective, by better adapting interventions to the demands of the prevailing context. A 2015 ODI report on the use of country systems in what they term ‘fragile states’⁶ makes exactly this point: that while political economy considerations may dissuade the use of country systems in such contexts, failing to do so risks undermining the state itself, and, in the longer-term, undermining the benefits of the original intervention. Far better, it argues, to invest in additional safeguards, in order ‘to allow extensive use of government systems’.

Recipient-led forums, such as the g7+ and its ‘New Deal for engagement in fragile states’,⁷ and the provider-led International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF⁸), and their respective principles for development intervention, underscore the premise of the GPEDC: that in the transformation to sustainable and resilient societies, principles remain important, and more action, and attention, is needed.

(e) Areas where political guidance by the high-level political forum is required;

The High-Level Political Forum can assist the Global Partnership in showcasing the importance of effective development co-operation for achieving the 2030 Agenda – including ‘plug-in’ frameworks like Sendai. Of particular value, in terms of negotiated commitments, is the effective development co-operation monitoring framework (a robust approach to data, complete with an inclusive and transparent process for reviewing and refining the framework⁹) which can inform the monitoring of broader development commitments.

Additionally, it can help signal the GPEDC as a space for principled engagement between national and local governments, international organizations, civil society, trade unions, parliaments, foundations, and the business sector, and others, on how best to work together, and achieve shared goals.

⁶ <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10153.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.g7plus.org/en/our-work/new-deal-implementation>

⁸ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/incaf/44282247.pdf>

⁹ For more information on monitoring round consultations please see <http://effectivecooperation.org/monitoring-country-progress/openconsultation/>

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(f) Policy recommendations on ways to accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies.

The Secretary-General, like many before him, has spoken repeatedly about the value of prevention: preventing crises, rather than managing them at exorbitant cost; not a premise for intrusive and long-term interventions, but rather a way of avoiding them. He has, further, identified inclusive sustainable development as a key part of this prevention strategy. The right investments will improve local capacities to manage and recover, and lead a way to more resilient societies. But getting investments right will require engaging all partners, to best understand the capacities that need to be boosted, and improve the mix and effectiveness of those investments, in line with national priorities and investment plans.

Policy recommendations ought to build on the good experience of the GPEDC at the country level, to work toward:

- A multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue on resilience and other development priorities, with the active engagement of all development actors and providers of a range of financing instruments, including the private sector, development finance institutions, civil society organizations, and others;
- A focus, for the platform, on gauging and understanding the effectiveness of instruments in the specific country context, and how, given the context, development co-operation can be best leveraged;
- Building on recent GPEDC work, explore case studies and options for private sector engagement, and efforts to foster dialogue on learning from different modalities of development co-operation, to support inclusive and informed policy dialogues.

The need now is to highlight not just the central role of development to crisis prevention, but of *development co-operation*. Mobilizing the c.\$1.4tn each year needed to meet the SDGs¹⁰ will require engaging with a full range of stakeholders, and employing a full range of development co-operation modalities, building on mutual frameworks like the GPEDC. It is only through such platforms, and partnerships, that the 2030 Agenda will be realized.

¹⁰ <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/sdg-investment-needs/>