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Development Co-operation Report 2015
Making Partnerships Effective Coalitions for Action

Summary in English

The development efforts made by the international community over the past 60 years have had measurable impact on reducing poverty, improving human health and tackling other pressing challenges. Yet fragmented initiatives, conflicting priorities and uncoordinated approaches continue to hold back progress.

At the same time, in our increasingly interconnected and globalised world, national boundaries are blurring; the notion of state sovereignty that underpinned traditional forms of international co-operation is increasingly challenged.

The need for co-ordinated action is more urgent than ever. The United Nations has led the formulation of 17 ambitious, universal and far-reaching Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Improved and expanded international co-operation, within a system of global governance underpinned by appropriate mechanisms of mutual accountability, will be essential to achieve these goals.

Partnerships are powerful drivers of development

While most agree that partnerships are crucial for driving collective action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the term "partnerships" encompasses diverse approaches, structures and purposes, making it difficult – if not impossible – to generalise about them.

At the same time, while universal in nature and applicable to all countries, the Sustainable Development Goals are founded on the respect for diversity – of contexts, needs, capabilities, policies and priorities, among others. To be effective, it is essential that partnerships addressing these global goals be driven by the priorities of the individual countries.

Within this context, three guiding principles can help to realise the full potential of partnerships post-2015:

- 1 - **Accountable action** . Accountability means being responsible for one's action or inaction and, in the latter case, accepting potential sanctions for lack of compliance with commitments. Although accountability provided by governments will remain at the core of post-2015 action, today's development partnerships bring together a range of stakeholders: national governments, parliaments, civil society, philanthropies, multilateral organisations, businesses and many others – not least among them the communities affected by development initiatives. While drawing on common development effectiveness principles, many of today's accountability frameworks are founded on the recognition that different stakeholders may approach a common development agenda in different ways. This recognition builds trust andmutual respect, two characteristics that are at the core of accountability. So how do we manage accountability within the increasing complexity of international co-operation? New ways of holding each other to account are needed, in combination with measurable commitments and standards that are continually reviewed and updated to keep them relevant and responsive, and to maintain shared commitment and political momentum. It is also fundamental to ensure that all partners are represented within governance mechanisms and that all voices are heard.

- 2 - **Co-ordinated and effective action** .With the growing diversity of partners involved in development co-operation, it is more important than ever to avoid duplication of effort and fragmentation – problems that have long challenged the effectiveness of development co-operation. While effective action post-2015 can be greatly facilitated by focusing partnerships on specific issues or sectors – such as health, education and sustainable energy – this does not mean that more and bigger partnerships are the best solution; experience demonstrates that this can actually hinder rather than promote progress. Streamlined partnerships – integrating existing actors and structures – reduce fragmented or overlapping action and ease the reporting and administrative burden on developing countries, thereby improving both delivery and impact. Partnerships – including between the public and private sectors – can also help take solutions to scale, expanding the reach of development solutions to large numbers of beneficiaries in ways that individual governments, businesses or philanthropies are usually not capable of doing on their own. Finally – but by no means least important – strong, committed leadership gives partnerships the momentum they need to tackle complex development challenges, stay on course and mobilise the human and financial resources required to get the job done.

- 3 - **Experience-based action** . The reform of global development co-operation to meet today's development challenges calls for changes in behaviour and mind-sets. Dialogue and learning from experience are essential to produce these changes. The 11 case stories included in this report represent diverse partnership experiences and approaches, yet there is at least one thing all of them share: an emphasis on the importance of learning from experience, knowledge sharing and the distillation of lessons and good practice. South-South co-operation is an important vehicle for knowledge sharing, enabling countries to apply lessons taken directly from the experience of others to inform their own policies and programmes. Accountability mechanisms contribute to learning from experience, enhancing the quality of development co-operation to improve its impact and relevance. These mechanisms range from peer reviews that focus on how development co-operation is framed, managed and delivered, to monitoring, reporting and evaluation cycles that are used to support continuing adaptation.

Post-2015 partnerships will bring new and evolving roles

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require strong involvement by many actors, including:

- the private sector, for job creation, technology development and investment
- civil society for holding development co-operation partners to account, pushing for action on national and global commitments and scrutiny to ensure productive and accountable investment of public resources.

This implies a changing role for governments, which have traditionally been seen as the main providers of finance for development.

A policy framework for post-2015 partnerships

The Development Co-operation Report 2015 explores the role of partnerships in providing the necessary balance of sovereignty and subsidiarity, of inclusiveness and differentiation, of coherence and specialisation for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals. Drawing lessons from experience, it proposes ten success factors that provide an implementation and monitoring framework for making partnerships effective coalitions for action:

- 1. Secure high-level leadership.
- 2. Ensure partnerships are country-led and context-specific.
- 3. Avoid duplication of effort and fragmentation.
- 4. Make governance inclusive and transparent.
- 5. Apply the right type of partnership model for the challenge.
- 6. Agree on principles, targets, implementation plans and enforcement mechanisms.
- 7. Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- 8. Maintain a clear focus on results.
- 9. Measure and monitor progress towards goals and targets.

- 10. Mobilise the required financial resources and use them effectively.

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