

Chapter 3

Defining the post-2015 world:
What roles for inclusive rights-based partnerships?

The Regional Agenda for Post-2015 Development and Strategic Partnerships

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The Starting Point: A General framework for the development debate

The global crisis indicates, among other things, that the economic model that is still applied in Latin America and the Caribbean is being questioned and requires a revision. The basis for this revision are the paradigms being discussed and proposed for the framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, particularly from local spaces — specifically, communities and CSOs promoting development, who define several dimensions and give the revised model an essence of sustainability.

Despite agreements and commitments that recognize the interconnection between development and human rights, it is not acceptable that there remains a lack of harmony and discrepancies among them. As Alicia Barcena from Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL) says, equality and inequality — both in terms of rights and assets — are conditioned by productive structure, technological development, gaps in labour, territorial organization, capacity development, social protection and political participation.¹

Development, understood as a process of social, political and economical change, requires good functioning institutions, but also implies a radical revision of values and attitudes. As the Mexican political scientist Rolando Cordera suggests,

“social being” is not only discussed in the social arena; equality also needs to be considered a right and an ethical principle. He highlights that the right to development preceded the current wave of attention to the universalization of human rights and is inseparable from social justice.²

Concomitant with the universality of development objectives, nation-states must assume their role of promoters and guarantors of human rights and national development in regional and national spaces. In that sense, guarantees about human rights will be ensured by nation-states as long as there are public policies protecting these rights. Consequently, proposals for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should focus on public policy actions that need to be implemented by states in the framework of basic guarantees for the fulfilment of rights.

On the other hand, economic growth, even if it is fast and sustained — which right now is not the economic situation for most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) — cannot guarantee or facilitate the achievement of the SDGs.

As noted in the Beyond 2015 campaign, growth does not resolve inequalities if it is not accompanied by wealth redistribution and access to resources, and oriented towards a fair and sustainable future. It is not acceptable to equate the idea of economic growth with inclusive economic development or to sustainable development, which has other perspectives and includes individual and collective rights.

It is important to highlight that Official Development Assistance (ODA) is still essential in LAC countries, despite most of them moving into the category of middle-income countries, often based on questionable indicators. Meanwhile, in almost all of these countries inequality and social gaps remain or are deepening. Middle-income status, based solely on per capita GNP, should not be an argument to eliminate North–South cooperation.

Even if recent progress in LAC is recognized, it is still the region of the world with the worst distribution of wealth, as well as sustained wide social gaps in areas such as capacity development, employment, access to systems of social protection, gender equality, ethnic discrimination, youth issues, and access to power.³

Progress in terms of human rights and gender equality in development requires paying special attention to sexual, reproductive, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are interrelated and are not divisible.⁴

It is clear that inequality risks social, economical and political stability and promotes the values of status quo, power and hierarchy over social cohesion and community. It must not be forgotten that everybody benefits from more equal societies. This has been an important omission in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and without a roadmap to reduce the extreme inequality of incomes, within and between countries, the next post-2015 global targets are at risk of failure.⁵

A Development Agenda — with clear indicators for measuring progress — cannot be separated from the public budgets at every level of government, since these are the primary instrument for development, particularly at the local (sub regional) level. It is in these budgets

where the effectiveness of a truly inclusive development process will be demonstrated.

Financing, therefore, is crucial for the success of the Post-2015 Agenda and SDGs. International experts indicate that it will be necessary to invest 4% of GDP in economies in transition for at least a minimum of 20 years.

We already know that domestic resource mobilization, aid and private capital (coming from the main pension funds, development banks and other investors) will be insufficient in terms of financing and development. Yet these seem to be the only options being explored, and not more innovative financing options such as the proposal of a tax on financial transactions or the use of global public goods. It is not surprising that the international community considers the private sector as the primary source of financing for the Post-2015 Goals.

A more comprehensive vision for development requires a very ambitious global agreement, one that can offer a wide range of options for financing for countries with both low and medium incomes. Despite the important debates on “the world we want,” it is also imperative to get an agreement on how to implement that world we want.

The Global Partnership, established in MDG 8, is essential. Its importance was confirmed by the report from the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons.⁶ From the perspective of Centro Europeo de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (CEPEI), a renewed Global Partnership for 2015 must incorporate policy areas that transcend ODA and traditional development cooperation. The 2011 Busan High Level Forum discussed the essential importance of involving non-official actors, such as CSOs and private sector, to achieve development

effectiveness. However, these wider stakeholder engagements may sharpen the differences or conflicts, instead of reducing them.

Therefore, the evolution of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), post-Busan, seems to have confronted more challenges than progress in constituting an effective structure and generating the political influence needed to coordinate with key development countries and multilateral actors that must be included in a new architecture for development finance. “Non-member countries of the OECD, with higher influence on development issues, instinctively seek alternative routes, instead of building upon traditionally established patterns for development cooperation by the leading group of developed countries that are members of the OECD.”⁷⁷

How is Mexico performing? Advances and challenges

The Mexican Government has positively assessed its progress in fulfilling the MDGs and has been active in monitoring the global process and the post-2015 debate promoted by the UN system. A Government declaration in December 2013 highlighted that, in fact, from 2005, when the first report was drafted, Mexico has made important advances in every Millennium Goal and target. This progress is a result of government policies and programs oriented towards the needs of the population in different areas of development. Moreover, the Government of Mexico incorporated additional goals, which have been called “Goals Beyond the Millennium.” Some of these latter goals have focused on combating poverty and hunger, and also on advancing the effectiveness of pre-school and secondary school education.

The Government has stressed the importance of the rights of Indigenous Peoples and issues in

International Migration to be considered in the building of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The consultation, “Building the future we want in Latin America and the Caribbean: towards a Post-2015 Development Agenda” (April 2013, held in Guadalajara, Jalisco), sent messages about the inclusion of issues in International Migration in the global post-2015 discussions and negotiations, and made a call for the Agenda to address inequalities, including strengthening the voices of Indigenous Peoples. The Government also organized the consultation, “Energy and the Post-2015 Agenda: The Future of Latin America and the Caribbean” (March 2013, held in Merida, Yucatán), in which non-government actors of Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean debated the inclusion of energy issues in the framework for the new international development agenda.

In the 2013 Progress Report prepared by the Government of Mexico, the President of the Republic presents the challenges that Mexico is facing: “We know that the MDGs point to a minimum and do not constitute an answer to all the problems, and they do not solve all the needs of the population. While Mexico achieved all the targets against extreme poverty and hunger, establishing a minimal basis to start the journey, the Government of the Republic considers that the results are not yet those desired by Mexicans. That is why my Government is committed to improve the social and economical conditions of families with fewer resources.”⁷⁸

Marcia de Castro, Resident Representative of the UNDP in Mexico, considers that most of the targets seem to be achievable in Mexico. However, she points to some urgent issues that should be integrated in the national development agenda: i) a reduction of poverty; ii) the inclusion of all Mexicans; iii) full employment; iv) broad participation in primary education for boys and girls; v) gender equality; vi) improved access to

health; vii) environmental sustainability; and viii) contributing to a strong global partnership.

When assessing the indicators for the Goals against the 2015 targets, specialists that monitor each of them suggest that 38 indicators have been achieved (74.5%); five are advancing favourably and are expected to be achieved in 2015 (9.8%); five are not progressing enough (9.8%); two are not progressing or are deteriorating (3.9%), and one lacks information in order to assess progress. Therefore, in 2012 there was a positive balance in which 84% of the indicators have a high probability of being achieved by 2015.⁹

In the conclusions of the report by Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), inclusive development is promoted: “We are in a critical moment to decide by every country the world that the next generations will inherit. This new moment has been preceded by a period of global, regional and national consultations whose magnitude and level of participation was unprecedented.”¹⁰ México has promoted in different forums the importance of an open and inclusive discussion, believing in building a new structure to promote prosperity for all the citizens of the world. The establishment of a new development agenda should be one in which the visions of civil society, private sector and the academy are all considered.

In the report, one of the five major areas for significant change for the Government is the need for a “new global partnership, based on a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and shared responsibility that takes into consideration different capacities. A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual responsibility must back the Post-2015 Agenda. A new partnership shall be based on a mutual understanding of our shared humanity, mutual respect and mutual benefit.”¹¹

Indeed, the progress made by México is important, as are the national and Latin American consultations in which civil society was able to express its views. However, the participants in the Beyond 2015 campaign from the region, have identified some limitations regarding the following areas: i) the framework of development (inclusion and content) and with basic perspectives and values; ii) the determination of the means for achieving the new objectives; and iii) the role of CSOs and the requisite enabling environment to guarantee quality participation. The latter should consider not only social accountability but also of the process for developing the framework for the Development Agenda. In relation to these concerns, the next two sections set out some assessments and some recommendations, not only for Mexico, but also for the Latin American region.

The means for making progress in the post-2015 Development Agenda: Key Actors and Factors

The results of the participative research conducted by Beyond 2015 with persons affected by poverty and marginalization, have shown in general that they do not benefit from current interventions focused on reducing poverty, including those related to the MDGs. Any pretence for a truly inclusive sustainable development, must include the poorest and the most vulnerable in every Goal. The persons living in poverty do not want charity; they want the capacities for realizing their rights and for a meaningful livelihood. For them, sustainable development must be “people-centered.” It must be based on respect for the claim for equality for all, the right and freedom to prosper and flourish. Consequently, the proposed Goal 10.¹ needs to be revised.^{1A} A revision is necessary to translate

1 Target 10.1 commits that, by 2030, the incomes of the bottom 40% in each country will grow faster than the national average.

political will into a real commitment: *Increase recognition and fulfilment of cultural, political, economical, social and environmental rights for political, social and cultural minorities, and eliminate every legal and socio-cultural base of discrimination.*¹²

Given the experience of more than 30 years in LAC, CSOs that are fostering social or sustainable development have developed models of social processes in rural-communities as well as urban popular communities. These models have demonstrated their viability, in part due to the recognition and strengthening of a diversity of community actors who, in the end, are the main actors for development.

These are complex processes, and include partnerships between municipal authorities, community-based organizations, NGOs and local economic actors. Together they recognize that it is in the local community where situational diagnosis, the mobilization of actors, and viable public proposals are generated. CSOs have been a key part in consolidating democracy and citizenship. Learning from these experiences or alternative models of multi-stakeholder democratic participation would strengthen the collective definition of objectives, as well as the need for diverse strategies for their effective implementation.

But, paradoxically, in many of these LAC countries there are also processes and projects for the private sector exploitation of natural resources. These projects are implemented with impunity, without recognition of the right of communities to land and territory, without respect for the right to free, prior and informed consent. This external exploitation of resources is presented as development projects, but is usually outside the plans of municipal governments and is inconsistent with inclusive development.

Given this situation, participants from local and community spaces have highlighted the following recommendations for inclusive development:¹³

- Adopt and foster integrated policies and strategies that are coherent and sustainable and that build from the knowledge, abilities and capacities of the local areas and their communities.
- Ensure democratic governability, which implies the participation of all as rights holders and the obligations of the state as duty bearers, as well as an informed citizenship that can generate spaces for reflection with power to propose solutions.
- Guarantee the participation of civil society in the public arena, generate and establish mechanisms to strengthen their capacity for political influence, as promoters of public goods, for social organization, and as actors who also contribute to the design of public policies and regulations.
- Strengthen the capacities of the local regions and the different community actors, such as social organizations, community organizations, NGOs, among others. Decentralization must guarantee effective and egalitarian development in local regions.
- Recognize cultural and territorial diversity, as well as the implications that these conditions have on fostering development. It is not possible to establish common goals and indicators for both a country and its regions.
- Advance towards a concept of development that emphasizes the dignity of life and respect for human beings. Development must not be linked to the economic interest of developed countries, but it must implement inclusive development models that ensure access and equality of opportunities, in which there is recognition of the wealth, capacities and

diversity of those who live in developing countries and local areas. Development cannot be designed from the top down; it is built by people from the local level.

Conclusions: Recommendations about partnerships

Based on the framework for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which is still under debate, and the means for its implementation in the different national and local realities, which require international and domestic resources, partnerships among actors are indeed a key issue requiring a high level of commitment. Consequently there have been great expectations arising from the recently created Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in Busan in 2011. At its first High Level Meeting, which took place in Mexico in April 2014, all stakeholders confirmed the commitment that unites the Global Partnership, which is “the collective search for an inclusive and sustainable development for the world.”

But beyond declarations, it is indeed expected that the GPEDC will have the will, capacity and strength to provide a reformed architecture for the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It must be one that avoids going backwards or softening commitments. CSOs and other social actors are concerned that advances in development effectiveness from the Paris to Busan High Level Forums may be lost.

It is for this reason that an enabling environment is essential — in its different dimensions and areas — in order to promote CSOs’ activities as development actors in their own right. An enabling environment is a necessary condition; in its absence the circle of partnerships for sustainable development cannot be complete. Such an environment implies minimally freedom

of association and expression, effective formal spaces for political engagement, and viable options for the sustainability of CSOs. It includes judicial, political, economical, cultural and cooperation dimensions.

In the words of Alessandra Nilo, in “the future we want,” partnerships with CSOs are crucial — they are key partners in ideological definitions, decisions about policy, and implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda. As a result, it is recommended that the new Development Agenda include an objective that promotes partnerships between the United Nations, governments and civil society at every level.¹⁴

Partnerships, Nilo says, must consider common but differentiated responsibilities when defining the means for implementing the Goals for the new development agenda. ODA is a key element in the promotion of multilateral and bilateral partnerships, and must remain a priority.

But one of the limitations for development is inadequate and insufficient finance. Financing for development is under scrutiny, recognizing the dramatic changes that have happened in the international financial landscape since the MDGs were approved almost 15 years ago. One example is that traditional ODA is under pressure, and its relative importance against other sources of finance has been decreasing. For many middle-income countries, the ratio between ODA and GDP has declined by almost a half during the first decade of the century, while tax collection, foreign direct investment and remittances have substantially increased.¹⁵

The GPEDC, which brings together 157 countries, has potential as an important actor supporting the SDGs. But it remains to be seen if it has the structure and the strength to achieve or facilitate new policies and funding modalities to strengthen its impact on sustainable

development and the mobilization of resources at the national level. Moreover, there are other actors and processes not included in the Global Partnership, which remain to be defined in their relationship to North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation. It is also essential that there be appropriate regulation of the private sector (legal framework) and their “investments” for development. How will the latter provide resources but also challenge governments and other local and community-based actors under the framework of partnerships?

Objectives and goals should not only have universal application. They also require universal commitment. Universality must involve at the same level a commitment to the means of implementation and an open debate is needed regarding this issue. It is very important to clarify that a global partnership, in which every actor has responsibility, is crucial for the success of the framework and its implementation.¹⁶

With respect to the core issues of peace, security and governability, it should not be forgotten that 75% of the world's conflicts are related to confrontations over natural resources and the territories affected by large resource-related projects. Peace and security are not always related to a lack of democracy, leadership or governability. A wrong approach to development can cause greater inequality between countries and thereby distort or nullify the actions of partnership for development.

Endnotes

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“Development Platform of the Americas”: Unions Defining their own Development Model

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Introduction

The deadline to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2000 is fast approaching. In general terms, these objectives were quite modest when compared to the magnitude of social needs that still affect large portions of humanity. Although some objectives – such as reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half – have been achieved, it is important to note that this result has been achieved mainly because of the significant contribution of countries like China and Brazil, through income transfer policies as well as other mechanisms. In most low-income countries, extreme poverty remains as serious and abject as ever.

A key problem affecting the fragility of the UN social and environmental goals is that most of the subscribing countries follow neoliberal economic policies, which have brought about a concentration of income and a reduction of social protection coverage. Such policies impede progress in attaining even modest proposals such as the MDGs within a timeframe that spanned a decade and a half.

Surprisingly, even though the MDGs are not fully achieved, they will be replaced by new goals in a process initiated during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in 2012 at Rio de Janeiro. This time they are called “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs), to be adopted at the UN General Assembly in September 2015. Despite the laudable integration of the environmental

dimension with social and economic perspectives, it is likely that they will also fail, as neoliberal policies not only persist, but also have been accentuated in many developed countries.

One aspect of this heightened neoliberalism is a deepening of the privatization of “development cooperation.” The rhetoric on the need for private sector engagement in international cooperation, particularly in relation to the post-2015 initiatives, has been promoted on the grounds of insufficient public resources and an abundance of resources controlled by private companies. However, so far there is no commitment from the private sector to allocate significant grant resources to achieve SDGs; rather, it is more likely that scarce public resources for development cooperation will increasingly be appropriated by the private sector and utilized for corporate interests.

In any case, the debate over “development” is, first and foremost, a political debate, one that requires the determination of an appropriate model for implementation, and it is essential that this model subordinates economic and private interests to popular needs and interests, as reflected in related State policies. Only then will a global post-2015 development project promote real change for people.

The Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA)

For the past ten years, the Trade Union Confederation of Americas (TUCA) has been

elaborating a regional proposal for workers' rights and working conditions called the "Labour Platform of the Americas (PLA)." The PLA is a platform of organizations representing workers' struggles in the Americas against neoliberal policies of income distribution, reduced protection for labour rights, lack of decent work, a deterioration of social protection, and precarious working conditions.

This Platform has aimed to bring together the efforts of the American labour movement in each country in the region, through collective proposals for the implementation of a "Decent Work Agenda," as set out by the ILO. However, it was also apparent that the Platform was falling short in not addressing the political and economic factors causing serious deterioration in the conditions facing workers from North America to the Southern Cone of the continent. Likewise, more efforts were needed to facilitate dialogue with progressive governments of different political tendencies, which are looking for new development models as an alternative to neoliberalism.

Therefore, TUCA decided to proceed with a proposal that would maintain the policy interests of the PLA together with a trade union vision of "development," one that ensures the four pillars of sustainability, namely the economic, social, environmental and political pillar. This process has resulted in work since 2012 on a proposal for the Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA).

The most critical point for PLADA is its political pillar, which assigns an essential role to the State to regulate economic relations and ensure economic development with fair income distribution, as well as social protection and respect for the environment for future generations.

PLADA's comprehensive development agenda is also due to the fact that different social actors contributed to its conception: indeed, besides TUCA and its affiliated trade union confederations, many civil society organizations — such as

Friends of the Earth, Via Campesina, the World March of Women — have been contributing to the definition of PLADA pillars. This partnership of organizations is politically crucial, given that the challenges of fighting neoliberalism and implementing a new development model cannot only be the responsibility of the trade union movement. It must also be the responsibility of a wider social alliance consisting of peasants, women, indigenous organizations, and NGOs, among other sectors.

Apart from being an instrument for broader political debate with leaders of international organizations, PLADA and its components can also be used to guide proposals at the national level in the countries within North America, Latin America and the Caribbean.

PLADA was launched in May 2014 in Santiago, Chile, with the presence of the newly elected president Michelle Bachelet. A few weeks later it was presented during a public meeting to the Uruguayan government in the presence of President José Mujica and his ministers, who are implementing several important aspects of the agenda through their various ministries. During the coming months, PLADA will also be discussed with the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras and Peru, while civil society organizations of the region will also be invited to join the process of discussion and national advocacy for sustainable development. On the other hand, TUCA will work closely with its national affiliates, in order for them to take ownership of the proposal and develop discussions on the implementation of PLADA according to their national circumstances and priorities.

Through this ambitious process, the trade union movement of the Americas means to contribute to the debate of the post-2015 Agenda with comprehensive and concrete proposals, which put decent work at the centre and express a coherent vision from workers from Canada to Argentina on how to advance towards social justice and sustainability.

Beyond lip service on mutual learning: The potential of CSO and think-tank partnerships for transforming Rising Powers' contributions to sustainable development

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Introduction¹

As the introduction to this report puts it, “partnership’ has become a buzzword in the global arena.” Given this context, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which was launched in late 2011 and held its first High-Level Meeting in Mexico City in April 2014, should have been ideally positioned to make a difference. In particular, the GPEDC held out the promise of significant progress in two key areas of partnership. The first was between the donors (mainly Northern countries) aligned with the OECD-DAC, and the ‘Rising Power’ exponents of South-South Cooperation.² The second was between governments and non-state actors in both the North and South – with the latter including both civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector.

However, the GPEDC has, to date, largely failed to fulfil its promise in both these areas. In this chapter, we will briefly outline how and why this has proved to be the case, drawing on desk research and on participant observation at the Mexico City High-Level Meeting. We will then go on to suggest that the GPEDC has instead succeeded in opening up space for another kind of partnership, which could in turn help to bridge the gaps that it has thus far failed to overcome between the North and South, and between governments and civil society groups from the South. This new kind of partnership links civil

society organisations based in Rising Power countries with think-tanks and other academic actors from those countries and from the global North. We conclude by highlighting some of the potential contributions that such partnerships could make in a post-2015 era, where the principle of universality will challenge donor-recipient dichotomies and where knowledge exchange will be as important as financial flows in achieving effective development cooperation.

From Busan to Mexico

The GPEDC emerged from the 2011 Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, whose final declaration saw a range of commitments that seemed to hold genuine promise for efforts to make the rhetoric of mutual learning and multi-stakeholder partnership a reality. These included a significant new emphasis on the importance of South-South Cooperation (SSC), a greatly increased profile for private sector engagement, and much positive language about the importance of civil society. There was also a significant enough role for CSOs in the process leading to the adoption of the Busan Outcome Document for it to be interpreted by the broad-based CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE) as recognition of civil society representatives as ‘full and equal participants.’³

However, by the time of the Mexico meeting, it was clear that of these three key areas — SSC, the role of the private sector and engagement

with civil society — only the second had seen significant progress, and even here it was taking a narrower shape than the post-Busan optimism had suggested. The presence of a few handpicked African entrepreneurs failed to disguise the heavily Northern-corporate feel of the private-sector presence at the Mexico City High-Level Meeting (HLM). Among the business delegates, the vast majority were not local small and medium enterprise (SME) champions seeking recognition of SMEs' key roles in job creation, or national Chambers of Commerce explaining how they were encouraging their members to pay their taxes in order to fund social programmes. Nor were they Chinese or Turkish businesses sharing what they had learned about investing in contexts considered too poor or high-risk by Northern companies.

Instead, most of the HLM seats were filled by executives from US and Europe-based corporations. For many of these corporations, 'development' is about corporate social responsibility (CSR), the investment climate, and official aid programmes. All too often, CSR is seen as a strategy for securing competitive advantage over rival firms from Rising Power countries, the investment climate is taken to mean low taxes and light-touch regulation, and aid programmes are seen as opportunities to gain access to cheap finance and service delivery contracts from 'business-friendly' Northern donors.

Philanthropic foundations also enjoyed high-level presence at the GPEDC, having been invited to participate formally in discussions of the development compact for the first time. An increased focus on engaging with a more diverse actors, combined with strictures in the funding environment and foundations' often generous funding, no doubt contributed to their presence. Still, this was heavily Northern-dominated, and therefore under-representative of foundations

from Rising Power countries such as India or Brazil. It is worth noting however that the OECD-sponsored Global Network of Foundations Working for Development⁴ has made a concerted effort to reach out to foundations in the rising powers.⁵

Unlike private-sector (or philanthropic) engagement, the role of civil society in effective development was not deemed important enough to merit a specific plenary session in Mexico City. This made a mockery of the commitment to 'full and equal' participation. But with hardening anti-NGO attitudes among many governments in the South, declining aid budgets, and a turn towards the private sector among many governments in the North — on top of existing North-South divisions within civil society itself — CSOs were unable to build sufficiently strong alliances to reverse the situation. At the Mexico HLM, delegates from the CPDE were reduced to staging a protest over the unbalanced treatment, wherein they donned Mexican wrestler masks to assert, "we don't want to have to struggle for our place at this table."

Much of the 'buzz' at the HLM centred on whether it would be attended by the Rising Power countries whose growing importance in development cooperation was finally formally recognised by the OECD at Busan, cementing a process which started with the third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in 2008. A delegation from China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), which is responsible for development cooperation, was expected in Mexico City. However, their participation ended up being cancelled at the last minute, leading to a flurry of questions as to who should take the blame for this failure to 'bring China on board.' The head of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency did attend, but took every opportunity to

announce that he was there only as an observer, since Brazil was not a ‘member’ of the GPEDC. India’s Development Partnership Administration had never committed to participating in the Mexico meeting. Among the other BRICS, South Africa’s participation was more low-key than expected. By contrast Russia was more assertive than the organisers must have hoped. Given rising tensions over the country’s role in Ukraine, when the Russian representative made a point of extolling his country’s cooperation with its CIS neighbours as an example of how the principles of the GPEDC were being applied in practice, it must have been a source of embarrassment rather than pride.

The failure to achieve meaningful participation by key Rising Power countries in the Mexico HLM seemed to suggest that the GPEDC did not after all represent a new paradigm in development cooperation policy-making. Yet in 2011, much of the rhetoric around Busan had implied that the traditional donors now understood that the shift to a multi-polar world with a rising ‘global South’ meant that the balance of power was no longer concentrated in the North. Development cooperation was no longer about ‘effective aid’; the influence of the Paris Declaration was waning and the days of advocating for a homogeneous DAC-led development landscape were over. In this context, the news that key Rising Power countries like China, India and Brazil had ‘signed up’ to the Busan process was greeted with euphoria by those who hoped for a smooth transition to a new international aid order in which, as the Busan Outcome Document put it, ‘we now all form an integral part of a new and more inclusive development agenda.’²⁶

However, the euphoria proved both misplaced and short-lived. The gulf in understanding as to what ‘signing up’ actually meant was simply too

great. The traditional donors chose to interpret their success at ‘getting the BRICS on board’ as meaning that DAC hegemony was no longer threatened. They could revert to business as usual, dominating the process by which the rules governing all forms of development cooperation would be laid down. By contrast, the Rising Powers focused on the fact that they had only agreed to follow certain principles on a voluntary basis, a non-binding adherence which in no way altered their longstanding insistence on the fundamentally different nature of North-South aid and South-South development cooperation.

The post-Busan context was marked by intensifying geopolitical competition, including around key development issues such as the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and the roles played by Northern and Rising Power countries in Africa. A lack of meaningful dialogue at the political level made it harder to create significant space for building mutual understanding at the technical level. Some attempts were made to follow up on pioneering efforts such as the ‘China-DAC Study Group,’²⁷ and traditional donors such as Germany, Japan, the US and the UK sought to intensify ‘triangular cooperation’ and establish experience-sharing arrangements with Rising Powers’ development cooperation agencies. However, at the highest levels, the leading Northern donors failed to convince anyone that they actually understood how much the development landscape had shifted, or that they recognised the need to change their own attitudes and behaviour if the commitment to mutual learning was to progress beyond lip-service.

In particular, many traditional donors continued to downplay the value of the increasingly coherent UN effort to establish a global governance architecture for development cooperation,

through the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and now the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). They made unfavourable comparisons between the UN and the OECD, contrasting the former's cumbersome structures and emphasis on political posturing with the latter's efficient bureaucracy and problem-solving approach. CSOs shared some of these critical perspectives on the UN, and valued some of the achievements of the HLPF process, where the Working Party for Aid Effectiveness provided a space for CSOs to influence development cooperation from a different perspective. Civil society groups brought focus on issues such as sustainable development effectiveness, the root causes of poverty, and the realization of human rights, through successful CSO-led initiatives such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative.⁸ It was noted that this would not have been possible within the government-led UN process, where CSOs' presence is still marginal.

Whatever the justification for these criticisms, they ignored the fundamental importance of the UN's political legitimacy as a site of symbolic equality between nations and a space where the South could be heard. As an analysis by the Brazil-based BRICS Policy Center puts it: although Southern development cooperation provider countries differ in their views of the GPEDC, they share a belief in the legitimacy of the UN. "Some countries characterize the GPEDC as 'old wine in new bottles' while others identify it as the right forum for standardizing principles on SSC [...] however, all SSC providers favour UN-led processes in the multilateral fora, where discussions on SSC experiences and practices should ultimately take place,"⁹ according to the analysis. The North's failure to show that it understood this meant that some Rising Powers could invoke their Southern credentials as a justification for intensifying their support for

the DCF while withholding it from the GPEDC, accusing the latter of trying to usurp the political legitimacy that rightfully belonged to the UN.

Successful diplomacy by OECD-member 'Rising Powers' such as Korea and the HLM's host nation, Mexico, ensured that several key UN figures — including the Secretary-General — did attend the Mexico City meeting. However, this now appears to have been an exercise in papering over cracks that remain as wide as ever. Despite a concerted GPEDC effort to engage with the DCF around its meeting in July 2014, the UN responded with little more than an offer of informal dialogue between the two fora. This, in turn, allowed many key Rising Powers to continue citing the GPEDC's lack of formal UN legitimacy as a reason for avoiding engagement. The world of intergovernmental negotiations on development cooperation has thus been left with two flawed spaces, with the GPEDC being described in a German Development Institute briefing as "relatively effective, but not legitimate" and the DCF as "legitimate, but with limited effectiveness."¹⁰

What the Mexico HLM did achieve

The Mexico City High-Level Meeting was unable to overcome this North-South divide in intergovernmental debates on development cooperation – though this is hardly surprising given the geopolitical context. It is increasingly clear that any politically viable intergovernmental negotiation will need to have the stamp of UN legitimacy, which has thus far been withheld from the GPEDC. We would argue, however, that the fact that it has been excluded from the field of government-to-government negotiations over binding global policy commitments may paradoxically enhance the GPEDC's ability to

make a worthwhile contribution. This is because of the way that development cooperation is changing — and in particular because of the growing importance of multi-directional knowledge exchange and multi-stakeholder partnerships involving non-state actors, a field in which it is beginning to show that it has significant potential.

We base this reflection on our observation of the way in which the Mexico City HLM was able to create a rich range of opportunities for sharing experiences and forging new partnerships. These were found not in the set-piece plenaries but rather in the dozens of parallel self-organised ‘Focus Sessions,’ many of which were used to launch ‘voluntary initiatives’ that were subsequently incorporated into the HLM’s final communiqué. The result was a remarkable burst of energy, creativity and optimism about the potential for innovative and effective multi-stakeholder partnerships in development cooperation. The Focus Sessions allowed new alliances to be built, whilst also providing a space for voluntary initiatives that had been launched at Accra or Busan to showcase the work that had been done over a number of years. While the intergovernmental debates remain characterised by geopolitical deadlock and tired platitudes, some important changes are clearly taking place beneath the surface. The Mexico City HLM’s achievement was to create a platform for exploring the shape that some of these changes might take in future.

This achievement was due to a combination of the Mexican government’s skillful hosting, the financial support of traditional donors such as the UK, and the fresh perspectives brought by a range of actors who were prepared to think beyond the limited frameworks of the aid effectiveness debate. Some of these fresh perspectives came from the groups who had been specifically

courted by the GPEDC, including the private sector and leading middle-income countries such as the host nation, Mexico. Some came from groups who had not been on the GPEDC’s radar but saw the Mexico meeting as an opportunity to claim some space to set out their ideas. Meanwhile, others came from groups who had long been associated with the separate worlds of North-South aid and South-South Cooperation — some had been working together on creating an enabling environment for the transition from aid to development effectiveness since Accra or Busan,¹¹ and there were also those who had simply decided to think differently about how development cooperation might move forward to 2015 and beyond, rather than remaining trapped within the same mindsets that had contributed to the political impasse.

Among these groups, we will focus on two that we believe have much to contribute to the kind of innovative partnerships that will be needed to make the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals a reality: civil society organisations, from Rising Power countries that are increasingly active in development cooperation; and think-tanks and other academic actors both from those countries and from the global North.

Beyond government-to-government: CSOs and think-tanks as actors in South-South Cooperation

South-South Cooperation (SSC) is almost invariably discussed as a government-to-government relationship. Civil society organisations engaging with both the GPEDC’s and the UN’s work on SSC have tended to concentrate their efforts on ensuring the transparency and accountability of such

relationships.¹² This engagement has been stronger at the international level, where it benefits from Northern donor support through structures such as the CPDE (and its predecessor BetterAid), than domestically, where governments tend to be reluctant to discuss their SSC activities with civil society. As one important recent study argues, “to date, it appears to be the case that there is very little dialogue with domestic CSOs in most South–South aid-providing countries.”¹³

Exceptions do exist, such as the multi-stakeholder Forum on India’s Development Cooperation and the formal civil society dialogue platform on development cooperation policy created by the Government of Mexico.¹⁴ In general, however, CSOs have struggled to engage systematically with their countries’ SSC activities, caught as they are between differing interests: the need to focus scarce resources on domestic challenges of poverty, sustainability and inequality; and governments’ tendency to treat SSC as part of the traditionally closed field of foreign policy.

Despite this lack of dialogue with their governments, some CSOs from Southern countries have themselves been developing their own forms of SSC for many years, through solidarity-based relationships with counterpart organisations and communities elsewhere in the South. These relationships have been supported by actors ranging from Northern NGOs to UN agencies to global social movement networks. They have involved processes that — while by no means free of practical problems and power imbalances — often come closer to modelling the horizontal dialogue and mutual learning that should characterise SSC than the government-to-government exchanges promoted by Rising Powers’ official development cooperation programmes.

In the run-up to the Mexico City meeting, the authors were part of a team of researchers and

civil society activists from the UK, Mexico, India and Brazil that carried out a number of case studies of ‘CSO-led South-South Cooperation’. These studies (documented in written and video formats on a project-specific website, cso-ssc.org) demonstrate the depth and breadth of this form of SSC. The cases range from farmer-to-farmer links between Mexico and Haiti and between Brazil and Mozambique, to experience-sharing on democratic local governance among NGOs from India, Bangladesh and Cambodia, to the spread of slum-dwellers’ self-help and organisational techniques from India to South Africa and beyond. They provide excellent examples of the Busan principles in practice, especially the principle of inclusive development partnerships.¹⁵

The key findings from our case study synthesis were shared by team members from India and Brazil at a Focus Session during the Mexico HLM. The same Focus Session also discussed the role of business actors from middle-income countries, and of think-tanks that are becoming increasingly significant players in the Rising Powers’ development cooperation policy landscape. While business was a major theme at the HLM, as already noted, the private sector representation was dominated by Northern corporations, who vastly outnumbered the business delegates from middle-income countries. In the case of think-tanks, it was the whole sector that had been left out: unlike the BRICS club of leading Rising Powers, which has both a Think-Tank Council and a fully-fledged Academic Forum, the GPEDC’s architecture does not recognise academia as a stakeholder group, relegating Northern and Southern think-tanks alike to the margins of its debates.

The Mexico HLM provided the potential for academia’s participation in the GPEDC, with the Mexican Agency for International Development

Cooperation (AMEXICD) stating its interest in engaging with academia as one of the GPEDC's constituencies. Academics from a varied political and academic spectrum in the North and South were also present at the July 2014 ECOSOC Fourth Biennial Development Cooperation Forum in New York.

While there has long been a flourishing field of research on aid and development in the global North, South-South Cooperation is an under-researched field in the Rising Power countries themselves. These countries have historically lacked anything resembling an 'aid industry' that could support consultancy-based research. Their academic research on development processes has tended to focus on national trajectories rather than international comparisons.

However, this gap is rapidly being filled by a new wave of think-tank activity, including both recently established institutions such as Brazil's BRICS Policy Center (BPC), and longer-established players such as the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) and India's Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). In addition, policy-oriented research institutes that have traditionally focused on domestic challenges have begun to set up units dedicated to research on SSC, including Brazil's Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), which publishes the official reports on Brazilian development cooperation, and China Agricultural University, which now hosts the China International Development Research Network (CIDRN).

At the Mexico HLM, representatives from several of these organisations came together to launch a significant new initiative, the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST). Convened by RIS

(India), SAIIA (South Africa) and IPEA (Brazil), and supported by China's CIDRN and Mexico's Instituto Mora, this new network is committed to ensuring more systematic sharing of ideas, instruments and data among specialists in SSC who are based in Rising Power countries. It may, in time, turn into the embryo of a structure that can provide SSC with the same kinds of systematic experience-sharing, technical guidance and peer review that the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has come to provide for Northern donors.

The bridging role of think-tanks: Opening up possibilities for new partnerships

Given the political impasse and polarisation between Rising Powers and Northern donors after Busan, it is very significant that the NeST initiative was launched at the Mexico HLM. Despite their academic autonomy, many of the key think-tanks in the network are actually part of Rising Power governments: IPEA, for example, is attached to the Strategic Affairs Secretariat of the Brazilian Presidency, while RIS is a branch of India's Ministry of External Affairs. Thus, while these countries may have insisted that they were not signing up to the GPEDC, the active participation in the Mexico City HLM of the government think-tanks, which help to shape the Rising Powers' development cooperation policies, suggests that their governments see significant value in a more indirect but nonetheless highly strategic engagement at the technical level.¹⁶

Significantly, the NeST founding group invited two think-tanks from Northern donor countries — the German Development Institute (DIE) and our own organisation, the UK-based Institute

of Development Studies (IDS) — to participate as observers in its inaugural meeting. This signalled an interest in South-North dialogue, which holds great promise for the future — not least because it was initiated by Southern institutions themselves, instead of one of the many multilateral and bilateral agencies that have been trying to position themselves as brokers between North and South. In the delicate politics of North-South dialogue, the technical and the political can never be fully separated; the issue of political ownership of the space where technical dialogue takes place is a critical determinant of the likelihood that such dialogue will actually succeed in promoting mutual learning.

Another initiative launched at the Mexico HLM that also holds promise for North-South dialogue is a network that sets out to play a double bridging role: connecting think-tanks working on development cooperation policy in North and South; and promoting mutual understanding between civil society organisations and think-tanks. This is the Future International Cooperation Policy Network (FICPN), which was recorded in the HLM Communiqué as a Voluntary Initiative dedicated to “helping to generate, map and articulate future international cooperation that can underpin a flourishing global society”.¹⁷ FICPN’s membership includes development policy research institutes and NGOs from OECD and BRICS countries. It is guided by an Advisory Council that includes civil society leaders from India and Brazil as well as African and Chinese think-tank directors, academics from South Africa, Argentina and Germany, and former senior OECD officials. This diverse membership is united by a shared commitment to mutual learning across the divides between North and South and between state and civil society, and also by another key aspect of FICPN’s agenda: promoting dialogue

between civil society organisations and think-tanks. Furthermore, the Network seeks to anchor its work in robust and rigorous research, which ensures that the ‘multi’ in multi-stakeholder and multi-directional learning is indeed representative and enabling of a ‘flourishing global society’ that contributes to improved developmental outcomes on a global level.

The importance of dialogue between CSOs and think-tanks was highlighted by a series of collaborative studies in the BRICS countries to understand the domestic and international dynamics of Rising Powers’ changing roles in international development.¹⁸ On one hand, CSOs repeatedly told the research teams that they desperately needed academic support to make sense of the complex world of development cooperation policy; on the other hand, researchers realised that there was a wealth of CSO-led South-South Cooperation experiences that were not being documented or even discussed in academic debates on SSC, or indeed by government actors engaged in SSC policies and programmes.

Given the closeness to government of many key development policy think-tanks in Rising Power countries, better dialogue between CSOs and those think-tanks could also help to bridge the gap between state and civil society actors. This is an essential step towards more inclusive policy debate in contexts that (as noted above) may be hostile to the notion of CSOs having a voice on what are often considered to be strategic foreign policy issues. Eventually, the realisation that many CSOs have valuable South-South Cooperation experience of their own — as well as recognition of the roles they have often played domestically, in producing the development innovations that the Rising Powers

are now seeking to share internationally — could help to create a more enabling environment for civil society involvement in government-to-government SSC activities.

Towards multi-directional learning?

The potential for new partnerships between CSOs and think-tanks across North and South is not only significant because the mutual understanding built up through such partnerships may help to overcome the mistrust that marks so many relationships in the new multi-polar world of development cooperation. It is also important because of the nature of the development challenges and goals that the world is likely to set for itself in the post-2015 period.

Realising the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals will require much more than national policy commitments in the South and aid commitments from the North. The acceptance of the principle of universality means that every country, North and South, will need to look to its own domestic as well as international commitments, and, in the process, realise that it may have something to learn as well as something to teach. This was the message that Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto gave to the GPEDC, when he emphasised in his opening speech at the HLM that “not all countries have the financial resources to support other nations, but all have experiences and successful policy examples that they could share beyond their borders.”

Financial resource flows will of course remain extremely important, but the post-2015 world will be one in which knowledge flows — whether North-South, South-South or South-North — become an increasingly essential resource for meeting complex sustainable development challenges. This may ease the tension felt by

middle-income countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, who feel undue pressure from northern donors to step up to the plate after years of being recipients of aid. The move towards a greater focus on multi-directional learning means the south can participate with a different – but valuable all the same – currency, which can also contribute to the increasing developmental challenges faced by northern countries (e.g. with rising inequality, overstretched health systems, ageing populations etc.). However this may not be enough to mitigate the dwindling resource flows from north to south, and will force civil society organisations and think-tanks alike to be nimble in how they negotiate the changing funding landscape.

There are many challenges facing the consolidation of partnerships between CSOs and think-tanks, ranging from their different ideas about what kinds of evidence matter most for policy, to their different relationships with government, reflected in the reluctance of groupings like the BRICS to create formal spaces for dialogue with civil society alongside their academic and business fora. CSOs have also been critical of the extent to which governments’ current SSC practices are actually promoting inclusive and sustainable development.¹⁹ Nonetheless, in this world of multi-directional learning, such partnerships could potentially play a key role. CSOs have the ability to identify pressing issues of social justice and sustainability and develop innovative responses to these challenges. Think-tanks have the ability to turn CSO experiences into evidence for policymakers, while making opaque policy processes intelligible for CSOs seeking entry points for their advocacy work.

Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, Director of PRIA, an Indian NGO which has been very active in debates on South-South Cooperation, has

Challenges of CSO Engagement in SSC21	Key Enablers for a CSO Partnership Policy in SSC22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reluctance of government to recognise CSO-led SSC reflects the state of CSO-State relations • Legal and policy frameworks in many developing countries are challenging, with increasingly restrictive regulatory environments • Development cooperation is generally considered as part of foreign policy, and governments tend to be much less open to dialogue with CSOs • Despite growing investment in SSC by MIC governments, very few have funding windows to support CSO-led initiatives • There is a lack of analytical documentation and review of CSO-led SSC practices • In the post-Busan and post-Mexico contexts, Southern CSOs are also redefining their relationships with Northern INGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and define the inclusion of CSOs in official policies for SSC • Facilitate and create an enabling legal and policy environment for development cooperation with CSOs • Invest in strengthening the knowledge and capacities of CSOs in both partner countries and providing countries • Build an environment of trust through iterative transactions (e.g. programmatic relationships) and mutual transparency and accountability • Create space for policy dialogue and learning between CSOs and the institutions involved in SSC

highlighted the challenges and enabling factors for CSO engagement in Rising Powers’ development cooperation, summarised in the table below:20

The GPEDC bills itself as being about “the ‘how’ of the next global development framework.”23 Getting the ‘how’ right means understanding what works and why. Armed with this understanding, mechanisms such as South-South Cooperation can focus on sharing lessons derived from one context in ways that make sense for other contexts, rather than simply exporting one-size-fits-all packages in the style that has all too often been the case for North-South aid.

The GPEDC has shown that it has the potential to serve as an enabling space for reflecting on the knowledge of CSOs and think-tank analysis on both the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ of development. They can build together to turn such exchanges into a more mainstream feature of development cooperation, creating incentives to overcome the differences of political positioning, technical language and institutional culture that still obstruct

many potential CSO-think-tank partnerships.

Under the leadership of countries such as Mexico, which have shown the willingness and ability to engage with and learn from North and South alike, the GPEDC also has the potential to grow as a space for North-South mutual learning — provided it can leave behind the doomed struggle to impose frameworks on the Rising Powers and compete with the UN in terms of political legitimacy. Until the political landscape has thawed to the point where intergovernmental technical exchanges can blossom, North-South think-tank partnerships will provide an important, potential way forward for promoting this mutual learning.

The experience of the Mexico HLM demonstrated that these kinds of partnership involving CSOs and think-tanks — two groups of actors that have been relatively neglected by the GPEDC thus far — may hold the key to unlocking the contribution of the Rising Powers to the transformation of development cooperation for the post-2015 era. The essence of this contribution is not financial,

significant as this may be in some areas; instead, it is a combination of these countries' capacity for technical innovation in meeting development challenges and their clear political principles (if not always their consistent practice) regarding the two-way nature of the horizontal processes through which these experiences should be shared. These are the essential ingredients of successful mutual learning for sustainable development.

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Endnotes

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- 2 In this context, Rising Powers is used to denote countries such as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which are frequently described as 'emerging economies', together with Mexico, Turkey, Colombia, and Indonesia.
- 3 See <http://cso-effectiveness.org/busan-partnership-for-effective,190>.
- 4 <http://www.oecd.org/site/netfwd/>
- 5 Thus far, the Brazilian Instituto Ayrton Senna seems to be the only foundation from a BRICS country that has signed up.
- 6 Busan Outcome Document, section 14. See http://effectivecooperation.org/files/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN2.pdf
- 7 Li and Carey 2014: 12)
- 8 <http://cso-effectiveness.org/4th-high-level-forum-on-aid,080>
- 9 Assunção and Esteves 2014: 8.
- 10 Janus et al. 2014: 2.
- 11 For an insight on the earlier processes from a participant civil society perspective in this process see http://cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/csos_on_the_road_from_accra_to_busan_final.pdf
- 12 Additional material on the implications of the principles of SSC and lessons for development effectiveness for SSC practice can be found on the Reality of Aid global network website: http://www.realityofaid.org/?roa_report=south-south-development-cooperation-a-challenge-to-the-aid-system

Chapter 3: Defining the post-2015 world: What roles for inclusive rights-based partnerships?

- 13 Tomlinson 2013: 110.
- 14 Poskitt and Shankland 2014: 5.
- 15 Poskitt and Shankland 2014: 6.
- 16 This is not dissimilar to the efforts to separate the technical from the political in the transition from aid effectiveness to effective development cooperation.
- 17 Voluntary Initiative 20 of the Mexico High Level Meeting Communiqué (see http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/ENG_Final-ConsensusMexicoHLMCommunique.pdf).
- 18 See <http://www.ids.ac.uk/risingpowers> for more information on these studies.
- 19 One term employed in the Sustainable Development Goals narrative is “shared but differentiated responsibilities”. We have posited that where North-South cooperation has traditionally been about resource sharing, South-South cooperation is about knowledge sharing (Carey, 2014). However, current practices of SSC raise important questions regarding the extent to which SSC promotes or contributes to sustainable development, not just in terms of financial sustainability generated by mutually beneficial trade and investments, but also institutional and environmental sustainability (Bandyopadhyay, 2014).
- 20 Bandyopadhyay, 2014
- 21 Bandyopadhyay, 2014
- 22 Bandyopadhyay, 2014
- 23 See <http://effectivecooperation.org/hlm2014/>.

A Post-2015 Drive for Universal Access to Water and Sanitation¹

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Introduction

In 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Resolution A/res/55/2), which set out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).² There is no separate Goal for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, even though this was a major issue plaguing the poor of the world, responsible for millions of deaths annually. However, with target 10 of the MDGs, States committed themselves to “*halving, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.*” At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, States additionally committed themselves to the target of: “*halv[ing], by the year 2015...the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation.*”

It is instructive to note that within the United Nations system, three initiatives were instigated to encourage achievement of the goals and targets:

- A process of national reporting to view progress towards achievement of the Goals;
- The Millennium Project was established, drawing together hundreds of policy makers, practitioners and experts from across a wide range of institutions and countries to research how progress can be accelerated and sustained; and
- The Millennium Development Goals campaign was launched to spread awareness and build global support for the Goal.³

As many as 800 million people are without access to an improved water source, and many more remain without access to or a supply of safe and sustainable water. Indeed, it is likely that the number of people using safe water supplies has been overestimated, since water quality testing was not feasible on a global scale at the time when the MDG target was formulated. In addition, disparities continue to exist between and within countries. For example, the poorest in Sub-Saharan Africa have only experienced limited progress in drinking-water coverage. Moreover, not enough attention has been given to the inter-linkages between service provision and management of surface and groundwater water resources, as well as to sustainable mechanisms for financing and maintaining water supply services and infrastructure. If sustainability aspects are not duly considered, there is considerable risk of slippage on the gains made in extending these services.⁴

Women play an important, if not essential role, in water management. The differences and inequalities between women and men influence how individuals respond to changes in water resources management. Understanding gender roles, relations, and inequalities can help explain the choices people make and their different options. Involving both women and men in integrated water resources initiatives can increase project effectiveness and efficiency.⁵

¹ This chapter is an abridged version of a longer and more full discussion of the challenges and prospects for sustainable development goals relating to water and sanitation.

It is essential to track the financing for achieving the MDG targets related to water and sanitation. In examining financing, there has been a strong focus on capital expenditure and identification of sources of funding for such capital expenditure, rather than on the adoption of an overall “sector financing” approach, examining in detail what may be needed to operate and maintain existing assets.

The allocation of development resources to the water and sanitation sector also continues to be shaped by the use of donor conditionality, donor-driven development initiatives, the reliance on market and private sector-led development, and the increased use of loan finance by several donors. These policies belie true development partnerships and undermine democratic country ownership and the potential for self-determination of development plans, as well as the establishment of strong and effective country-led institutions. For example, in 2008 alone, the World Bank (WB) Group financing in the water sector totalled US\$2.5 billion.

However, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Sub-Saharan Africa are critical of the role of the WB in this sector. “The World Bank has financed a couple of Water Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa putting conditionality, which focuses more on privatization of public utilities under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement, which in the end takes the poor further away from gaining access to this basic life need”, notes David Akuta, Programme Manager of Society for Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN).⁶

The story is no different with bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA), which comes into the water sector with an avalanche of conditionality. Some make it compulsory for benefiting communities to pay between 10% and 20% of the cost of a water facility before they receive aid. Poor communities that are unable to

meet such conditions are cut off from benefiting from such aid.

Highlights of OECD ODA flows

The OECD collects and regularly updates statistics on aid for water supply and sanitation. The data collection is based on a standard methodology and agreed definitions, which ensures that data can be used to analyse trends and compare the efforts of donors.⁷ OECD analysis provides insight on how and where aid for water is spent. While aid to water supply and sanitation has increased in recent years, these contributions still seem to be insufficient considering the funding needs.⁸

- Aid was instrumental in encouraging progress towards the MDG targets on water supply and sanitation. Since 1990, drinking water and sanitation coverage in the developing world has increased by 16% and 20% respectively. However, much remains to be done. Drinking water coverage averages only 63% in LDCs, and much of sub-Saharan Africa and several of the most populous Asian countries remain off track in meeting the MDG sanitation target.
- In 2010-11, total annual average aid commitments to water and sanitation amounted to US\$7.6 billion, representing 6% of total sector allocable aid. The largest bilateral providers in 2010-11 were Japan (23% of total aid to the sector, or an average of US\$1.8 billion per year), Germany (11% or US\$868 million) and the United States (6% or US\$442 million). IDA provided US\$1.3 billion (17% of aid to sector) and the EU Institutions US\$538 million (7% of aid to the sector).
- In 2010-11, aid to water and sanitation targeted regions most in need of improved access to water and sanitation: Sub-Saharan Africa received 25% of total aid to the sector, and South and Central Asia, 23%.

The poorest countries (LDCs and other LICs) received 33% of total aid to the sector.

- Of total DAC members' aid to this sector in 2010-11, water supply activities represented 19%, sanitation 18%, and combined water supply and sanitation activities 42%; the remaining 21% consisted of sector budget support, contributions to funds managed by international organisations, waste management and education activities.

Other countries that have significantly increased their aid to the sector in recent years include Switzerland, Australia and Finland. Among those providing aid for water and sanitation, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), with 20% and 18% respectively, extended the highest proportion of their aid to the sector.

Africa is a priority recipient of European Union (EU) aid to the water sector, with 60% of the EU's ODA to the water sector going to Africa. According to the EU Water Initiative, these allocations provide a strong incentive to enhance co-ordination in policy dialogue between Europe and Africa, for example through the mechanisms of the European Union Water Initiative (AWG) and the Africa Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW).⁹

However, Wateraid (2011) notes that partner governments in developing countries and donors need to recognise that their allocations to the sector fall far short of what is required. Estimates show that the funding gap in Sub-Saharan Africa alone is as high as US\$15 billion a year, and although data is less certain, the financing gap across all developing countries is likely to be several times that amount. This 2011 estimate is now three years old, and the gap will certainly have increased.

Funding solutions may increasingly look to cost recovery and utility efficiency, contributions from households, and the private sector. But governments in particular must provide the lead and the lion's share of the step change in funding, with the support of donors and international agencies. These latter resources will also help secure a sustainable balance between domestic and external resources.

There are positive examples of donors increasing their aid to WASH, including the African Development Fund's substantial increase to US\$280 million,¹⁰ and Australia's increase from A\$45 million in 2008-09 to A\$175 million in 2010-11 and its plans to increase further to A\$350 million by 2014-15.¹¹ Others however, such as Sweden, Norway and the Inter-American Development Bank Special Fund have reduced their WASH aid budgets over recent years.¹² The UK, which as recently as 2009 announced its intention to increase its WASH funding for Africa to £200 million a year, spent only half that amount worldwide in 2010-11.¹³

Poor donor coordination and transparency

The evidence from various case studies suggests that much more that needs to be done to improve coordination and transparency, despite examples of donors participating in national coordination and harmonisation platforms. Ethiopia and Mozambique have 20 donors simultaneously providing resources to the WASH sector; Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya have eighteen. While in these cases a lead donor has been identified, for other countries — such as Niger where 15 donors are active — there is no lead donor. Nevertheless, procurement and reporting compliance is reducing the efficiency of the sector in Ethiopia. In Madagascar there is considerable fragmentation with 10 active donors generally

working outside of government systems. As non-DAC donors such as China, Brazil, India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates begin to increase their activity in the sector, effective donor coordination between DAC and non-DAC donors becomes an even more urgent priority. 14

The growing role of non-DAC donors also increases the importance of clear and transparent reporting of aid. Lack of transparency on aid allocation and disbursements is a general problem, which the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is addressing, but donor reporting on WASH is especially poor. Sanitation is the most off-track MDG sector but donor reporting makes it very difficult to disaggregate water supply from sanitation aid flows. This is important because the lack of accessible data about where aid resources go has a direct bearing on the rationality and accountability of decisions for the allocation of WASH resources. It is also difficult to establish how much donor funding is 'off-budget' or does not go through national government budgeting and accounts.¹⁵ All of these conditions make policy-making, monitoring and evaluation all the more difficult.

Financing Water and Sanitation Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

Despite these clear benefits for human development, many countries seem to have allocated insufficient resources to meet the MDG target for sanitation and drinking water by 2015. When compared with other sectors — particularly the other major social sectors of education and health — sanitation and drinking water receive a relatively low priority for both ODA and domestic allocations.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that the total spending required in developing countries to meet the water component of the

MDG target, excluding programme costs, is US\$42 billion; meanwhile, for sanitation the figure is pegged at US\$142 billion. The current national governments' budget allocation on water and sanitation does not seem likely to be sufficient to resolve these conditions soon enough. Hence, private sector investment in water and sanitation infrastructure is a prerequisite to achieve water and sanitation Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁶

Current and future water challenges can be solved only by a multi-stakeholder approach, i.e. through cooperation among national governments, the international donor community, private sector, civil society and youth. National governments will need to allocate an adequate portion of their budget dedicated to water and sanitation, and the international donor community should prioritize investments in water and sanitation related infrastructure. Private sector investment should be encouraged through tax discounts, subsidies and awards.

Some recommendations for financing a Water and Sanitation SDG include: 1) increasing aid flow to Sub-Saharan Africa and other countries in critical conditions of WASH; and 2) fair, equitable and sustainable cost recovery strategies for a sustainable financing of WASH. Cost recovery must also be sought with a best possible use of tariffs, taxes and transfers, to cover needs related to infrastructure development and extension, operation and maintenance.

Situating water, sanitation and hygiene in the Post-2015 SDGs

One of the main outcomes of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, was the agreement by Member States to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs to succeed the Millennium Development Goals.

Rio+20 did not elaborate specific goals, but stated that the SDGs should be limited in number, aspirational, and easy to communicate. The goals should address in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015. A 30-member Open Working Group (OWG) of the General Assembly was tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs.

Interestingly, a Post-2015 Water Thematic Consultation had members meeting with over 260 CSOs, the poor in communities, governments, the private sector, UN agencies, and other stakeholders in over 60 countries. It recognised that water is a key determinant in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development, and must be a central focus of the post-2015 development agenda.

However, a number of CSOs working on water and sanitation issues have elaborated ideas for a proposed dedicated Goal for Water. The Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS) believes that given the weakness of the sanitation target in the MDGs, there is an express need for a dedicated goal for both water and sanitation.¹⁷ This also remains the position of organisations like Wateraid and campaigns such as the End Water Poverty (EWP).¹⁸ In like manner, the Africa Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW) at the Fifth Africa Water Week (AWW) held in Dakar, Senegal in May 2014 demanded a dedicated Water Security and Sanitation Goal for the post-2015 SDGs.

Key elements of a dedicated water and sanitation goal

The much anticipated Water and Sanitation Goal directly addresses the development aim of societies, promotes human dignity, and ensures

the long-term sustainability of achievements, leading to the following development outcomes, among others:

- **Healthy People:** Through universal access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, improving water quality and raising service standards.
- **Increased Prosperity:** Through the sustainable use and development of water resources, increasing and sharing the available benefits.
- **Equitable Societies:** Through robust and effective water governance with more effective institutions and administrative systems, as well as through enforcement of right to water and sanitation.
- **Protected Ecosystems:** Through improved water quality and wastewater management taking account of environmental limits. An end to open defecation.
- **Resilient Communities:** Through reduced risk of water-related disasters to protect vulnerable groups and minimize economic losses.¹⁹

Recommendations for action to ensure water and sanitation for the poor

Achieving access to water, sanitation and hygiene requires the concerted and deliberate prioritization of water and sanitation in development agendas at the global, regional, national, and community levels. The following recommendations, based on field experience and some suggestions from *Water and Sanitation for The Unserved Poor*, could help the world achieve the desired results:

1. Formulate a distinct Goal for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in the post-2015 SDGs.
2. Target aid on the basis of need: to Sub-

Saharan Africa and South Asia in particular; to least developed, fragile and low income countries; and to lower middle income countries where need is high.

3. Provide aid as grants rather than loans, and focus on basic services for rural areas and poor urban areas.
4. Reduce the burden of red tape on developing country governments and align aid with national policies and systems.
5. G20 countries should consider innovative financing mechanisms, such as financial transaction taxes, carbon taxes, and international transport taxes as part of the funding solution and to mitigate the impacts of excessive financial volatility and dangerous climate change.
6. Double global aid flows to water, sanitation and hygiene to release an additional US\$10 billion per year in the run up to 2015 and beyond.
7. Governments and donor agencies should simultaneously pursue investment and reforms for improved water supply, sanitation and water management. Improvement in the use of finances through South-South and North-South knowledge exchange and cooperation is also strongly recommended.
8. Governments and donor agencies must empower local authorities and communities with the authority, resources and professional capacity required to manage water supply and sanitation service delivery.
9. Governments and utilities must ensure that users who can pay, do pay, in order to fund the operation, maintenance and expansion of services — but they must also ensure that the needs of poor households are met.
10. Governments and their civil society and private sector partners must support a wide range of water and sanitation technologies

and service levels that are technically, socially, environmentally and financially appropriate.

11. Institutional, financial and technological innovation must be promoted in strategic areas.
12. The UN system organizations and their Member States must ensure the provision of strong and effective support for the achievement of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene SDG and targets (if achieved), as well as for water resources management and development.

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- 1 Leo Atakpu (2014) is Chairman, Board of Trustees, Africa Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEW) and a member of the Board of Reality of Aid (RoA) Africa. He is also the Deputy Executive Director of Africa Network on Environment and Economic Justice (ANEEJ). He has led several initiatives in Nigeria's Water and Sanitation sector culminating in the establishment of the National Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (NEWSAN), a coalition of over 300 NGOs working in the WASH sector in Nigeria. He can be reached on ohiroatakpu@yahoo.co.uk, @LAtakpu. skype: Leo.Atakpu
- 2 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
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Chapter 3: Defining the post-2015 world: What roles for inclusive rights-based partnerships?

major WASH project in Zambezi province in Mozambique. In 2009, the United Arab Emirates funded WASH projects in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and Kenya.

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Redefining partnership: The Need for a holistic approach for effective development partnership in Bangladesh

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The current, changing global context for poverty reduction and development cooperation must be situated against a backdrop of economic recession, changing policy approaches, uncertainty, climate change, conflict and security. Global leaders have been emphasizing partnerships for development effectiveness, with a focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within policies to implement poverty reduction. As the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs is only one year away, the United Nations (UN) has been undertaking a process to craft a Post-2015 Development Agenda, which highlights sustainable development in terms of poverty reduction in all its dimensions.

While various awards — the South-South Award, the MDG Award, the Global Diversity Award, and the FAO Food Award — have recognized Bangladesh's seemingly noteworthy progress in achieving MDGs, this success has not resulted in meeting people's expectations in all sectors. The Honourable Prime Minister said in a speech at the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, "So, we need to be united... [on a] development agenda that would fulfil our aspiration of building a just, prosperous and sustainable world where no person or nation is left behind."¹ However, one of the important reasons for continued failure in fully achieving the targets of the MDGs is the lack of true partnerships among the different development actors.

The UN and world leaders have been making an effort to create a post-2015 development agenda

that is truly inclusive. The ongoing discussion about the new agenda takes into consideration the challenges, lessons, experiences and achievements of the MDGs. The framework has stressed the importance of a new form of global partnership between developed and developing countries, including South-South Cooperation (SSC). The idea of a global partnership for development was first envisioned at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 when Member States agreed "to create an environment — at the national and global levels alike — which is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty."²

This idea was manifested in MDG 8, Develop a Global Partnership for Development. A recent 2013 Report published by UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda, titled, "A renewed global partnership for development," set out the gaps and weaknesses of Goal 8. The Report found that it lacked "a strong normative foundation, as it failed to integrate international human rights commitments, including the duty of international cooperation for development established by the UN Charter and affirmed by the Declaration on the Right to Development."³

Meanwhile, the "Millennium Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2012" argues that real global partnership for development has yet to emerge, which is mostly due to problems regarding the expected cooperation from the developed donor countries (represented in the OECD Development Assistance Committee), as promised in the MDGs.⁴ Indeed, Bangladesh has

been facing significant development challenges, which include unstable economic growth, gaps in achieving the MDGs, low employment rate, rising inequalities, food insecurity, inadequate social protection, insufficient infrastructure, adverse impacts from climate change, and inadequate Official Development Assistance (ODA). These challenges have led to a decline in economic and social development in Bangladesh.

Yet Bangladesh has also achieved remarkable progress in terms of gender equality, primary education and infant mortality rate, compared to other developing countries. The country has also achieved approximately 6% annual economic growth during the past decade. However, the World Bank indicates that despite this strong track record, about 47 million people are still below the poverty line, and improving access to quality services for this vulnerable group is a priority. There are also many people who could fall back into poverty if they lose their jobs or are affected by natural disasters.⁵ The Household Income

and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of Bangladesh points out that in 2010 31.5% of the population live below the poverty line and cannot afford the nutritional requirement of 2,122 calories per day.⁶

The flow of ODA for development cooperation in Bangladesh is still challenging. According to the Bangladesh Progress Report 2012, “between 1990-91 and 2010-11, disbursed ODA as a proportion of Bangladesh’s GDP has declined from 5.6 percent to 1.6 percent. During this period, per capita ODA disbursement fell from US\$ 15.75 to US\$ 12.01.”⁷

Table One points out that among donors to Bangladesh, only three countries — Netherland, Sweden and Norway — have fulfilled their commitment to provide more than 0.7% of their GNI as ODA to the developing countries. It seems that ODA performance for the majority of OECD countries remains distant from their commitment in MDG Goal 8. It is also important to note that Goal 8 is necessarily linked to the achievement of the other seven MDGs.

TABLE 1: Net ODA Received by Bangladesh from OECD Countries, 2010-2011

Country	ODA received by Bangladesh from OECD countries (US\$ million)	GNI of OECD countries in 2011 (US\$ million)	Total ODA provided by OECD countries (US\$ million)	Total ODA as % of GNI of OECD countries	ODA received as % of GNI of OECD countries	ODA received as of total ODA from OECD countries
1	2	3	4	$5=(4/3)*100$	$6=(2/3)*100$	$7=(2/4)*100$
Canada	13.91	1,570,886	5,084	0.32	0.0009	0.27
Denmark	13.10	335, 102	2,057	0.61	0.0039	0.64
Germany	48.05	3,617,712	13,329	0.37	0.0013	0.36
Japan	120.02	5,739,473	10,039	0.17	0.0021	1.20
Netherlands	0.33	829,013	5,969	0.72	0.0000	0.01
Sweden	11.55	502,451	5,005	1.00	0.0023	0.23
UK	96.69	2,370,444	13,039	0.55	0.0041	0.74
South Korea	54.47	1,038,981	1,259	0.12	0.0052	4.33
Norway	5.87	440,185	4,196	0.95	0.0013	0.14
Total	363.99	16,444,247	59,977	0.36	0.0022	0.61

Source: Cited in Bangladesh Progress Report, 2013, Bangladesh Planning Commission

During the period of 1990-91 to 2010-11, the total ODA received by Bangladesh was US\$10,811.2 million (see Table Two), out of which the transport sector received the highest share, followed by power, water resources, the health, and education sectors. During this period, total disbursement for important MDGs sectors such as education, health, social welfare and labour have shown rising trends. These MDG sectors, along with agriculture and rural development, received nearly 51% of total ODA outlay.⁸

Generally, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and its Development Partners (DPs) work together in the Local Consultative Group (LCG) mechanism. The LCG, however, is yet to play an effective role in terms of “development cooperation activities at sector level. Development Partners (DPs) are divided among themselves by the scale of their programme and considerable aid fragmentation.”⁹ To this end, it may be possible to say that the influence of a donor-driven approach is still very much alive in programme implementation, which is contrary to country ownership. Similarly, DPs feel more comfortable using their own aid management systems, even though strengthening institutional capacity prioritized in their own development agenda.

Since the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008, partner countries and donors have been making efforts to strengthen and improve their aid relationships. As a result, a Joint Cooperation Strategy (JCS) emerged in Bangladesh in 2010. The strategy aims to establish an ‘accountability mechanism.’ The Government of Bangladesh and the DPs have taken various joint initiatives to strengthen their relationships through the JCS. The JCS core document outlines a joint vision for aid effectiveness in Bangladesh and contains corresponding partnership commitments by both the GoB and the DPs. Policy level commitments are still in the process of being translated into practical changes through the formulation of a JCS action plan. Despite serious commitment on

the part of the Government and its development partners, producing results towards development effectiveness remains a challenge.¹⁰ Such slow progress is an indication that a true partnership has not been in place between the parties.

The Global Partnership for Effective Partnership for Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which was launched in 2012, emphasizes “the important role of other development actors, including SSC between emerging and developing

TABLE 2: Disbursement of ODA in Major Sectors during 1990-91 to 2010-11

Sector	Total disbursement (US\$ million)	% of total (rank)
Agriculture	668.9	6.19 (7)
Rural Development and Institutions	603.3	5.58 (8)
Water resources	1,260.3	11.66 (3)
Power	1,607.3	14.87 (2)
Oil, gas and mineral resources	566.8	5.24(9)
Science and technology research	0.6	0.01 (17)
Transport	2,198.1	20.33(1)
Communication	215.4	1.99 (12)
Industries	314.3	2.91 (11)
Education and religious affairs	867.5	8.02 (5)
Sports and culture	0.5	0.00 (18)
Health, population and family welfare	1,019.3	9.43 (4)
Social welfare, women’s affair and youth development	32.6	0.30 (14)
Labour and manpower	0.7	0.01 (16)
Public administration	211.7	1.96 (13)
Physical planning, water supply and housing	810.2	7.49 (6)
Mass media	16.1	0.15 (15)
Private sector	417.6	3.86 (10)
Total	10,811.20	100

Source: Cited in Bangladesh Progress Report, 2013, Bangladesh Planning Commission

economies, international organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other non-state actors, including the private sector.”¹¹ SSC and Triangular Development Cooperation (TDC) could play a potential role in the emerging development scenario.

SSC is understood to be characterized by partnership and solidarity for development, rather than development assistance or aid. Sharing a common development experience, developing countries have valuable lessons, skills and expertise that can benefit other developing countries.¹² In terms of SSC, the role of India and China is especially important for Bangladesh. Bangladesh expects that SSC will bring significant progress in sharing development experience, transferring knowledge and strengthening horizontal partnerships as part of effective development cooperation between the Low and Middle-Income Countries (MICs) in the South.¹³ However, it is evident that both China and India do not often exhibit the principles of SSC in their roles in Bangladesh. Geopolitical tensions may affect the practices of SSC and TDC.

Ideally, SSC should not be approached along the lines of traditional relationships with northern donors. But SSC is also open to criticism. Mohammad Asif-uz-Zaman, Additional Secretary of the Economics Relation Division, states in a paper titled “A country level stocktaking of ODA from the Emerging and Southern Donors” that “some Southern contributors have been criticised for not taking sufficient account of human rights when providing assistance to programme countries.” He also focuses on TDC in the same paper:

Triangular development cooperation, whereby Northern donors finance projects or programmes executed by Southern countries has to date focused primarily on technical cooperation as

Southern countries are seen as having more relevant expertise and experience to meet developing country needs. While triangular cooperation forms a significant part of some Southern countries assistance programmes, its overall volume is not known due to lack of data.¹⁴

In Bangladesh, the role of CSOs, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), is very vibrant. These organizations provide a large number of aid/grant channels for development resources into the country. The 2011 High Level Forum’s Busan Outcome Document (BoD) recognizes the contribution of CSOs as effective development partners. The BoD denotes that CSOs promote “rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation.”¹⁵ CSOs in Bangladesh, for example, engage in development through service delivery, providing humanitarian assistance and offering policy advocacy and research.

CSOs intend to play a significant role as effective development partners in contributing to the achievement of the MDGs. They have been crucial in the promotion and shaping of the Post-2015 development agenda at the country level. However, at the same time, CSOs have to face a series of challenges relating to the shrinking space for social movements and civic activities in many countries around the world. In particular, CSOs who work on democracy and governance issues face pushback and repression from those who have powerful and influential stakes in the status quo when CSOs openly criticize them. These conditions pointedly indicate the lack of true partnerships between CSOs and government and powerful stakeholders. It should also be noted that international organizations enter into partnerships with other local and national CSOs for service delivery activities. However, their

approach is often not one of true partnership, but rather, more of a cliental approach. It has therefore been the CSO experience that the partnerships among CSOs, donors, and government cannot be relied upon to achieve their expected goals and objectives.

CSOs have also addressed their own governance, accountability and effectiveness as reflected in the Istanbul Principles and the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness. But in many countries, such as Bangladesh, NGOs have increasingly become subject to criticism about their roles and functions, levelled at them by the government, political parties, professionals and the general public. At the same time, NGOs also have taken the chance to criticise donors and government for their authoritative roles with the NGOs. In fact, NGOs occupy a very difficult position in public life, as constraints from donors and government are increasingly affecting their political participation on issues affecting governance, human rights and democracy. Indeed, a true partnership will only be realized when it breaks through the hurdles facing all types of civic actors in development.

Recent years have seen the UN heavily promoting and investing in partnerships to engage private companies in achieving sustainable development.¹⁶ In light of failed commitments and declining ODA in the aftermath of the fiscal crises in North America, the European Union and Japan, partnership with the private sector is increasingly a strategy by donors to increase financial resources for development.¹⁷

The role of the private sector in Bangladesh is noteworthy, especially for achieving economic growth. The Government of Bangladesh has promised to increase the GDP growth rate to the magical double-digit of 10% by 2017.¹⁸ Achieving this level of GDP growth requires facilitating a high level of local and foreign investment in the

economy. The Government adopted the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach in its budget for the 2009/10 fiscal year as a new alternative for stimulating economic development. However, there has been no clear direction as to who would implement PPP projects, and who would lead or supervise. A level of mistrust is evident between the public and private sector. Moreover, the private sector may not pay attention to the high cost of project implementation, as development programs are financed with public money and therefore excessive costs may become a burden on the people. Another major challenge for the Government is the establishment of a public institution for the preparation, implementation, and control of PPP budgets. There is also lack of clarity and hesitation regarding the means by which the Government will finance infrastructure development through a PPP initiative.¹⁹

The 2013 General Assembly of the United Nations reiterates that national ownership will be a fundamental condition for the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda. National efforts will also require assistance through international support and an enabling international policy environment for the development of the country. The ambition for the post-2015 agenda necessitates the mobilisation of all resources, public and private, domestic and international, and their effective deployment for reducing poverty and inequality. Renewed partnerships will be key in order to mobilise new public and private resources and take advantage of different contributions by stakeholders, especially in the areas of research, technology, innovation, finance and human capacity.²⁰

To conclude, it seems evident that while the idea of partnership is given rhetorical significance, in practice partnerships are neither emphasized nor translated into concrete actions. This failure has contributed to the lack of success of the international community to fully realize the targeted goals embedded in the MDGs. However,

experience suggests that working through true partnerships with mutual understanding and respect for common interest among all relevant stakeholders is essential to achieving complex socio-economic goals. The post-2015 development framework must emphasize building true partnership in practice, in order to realize a just world without poverty and inequality.

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