

WORKSHOP FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION PROVIDERS: Preparing for the Mexico High Level Meeting on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

South-South cooperation (SSC) providers have expressed on numerous occasions the need for more opportunities to meet together before large international conferences to discuss and debate the issues among themselves and develop a stronger Southern voice.

In response to this demand, and requests from South-South cooperation provider countries for more information on the first Mexico High Level Meeting (HLM) on the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in April 2014, UNDP China and the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Development Cooperation (CAITEC) co-hosted a workshop for government and civil society representatives of 11 SSC provider countries, in Beijing on 24-25 March 2014.ⁱ

The Mexico HLM could provide an opportunity to build on the promise that was offered at Busan of a new, inclusive, and country-focused approach to working together to achieve development objectives. The goal of the Beijing workshop was to offer SSC providers an opportunity to prepare for, share views on, and debate topics to be discussed at the HLM.ⁱⁱ The workshop's key discussions focused on participants' inputs on the HLM Communiqué and highlighted what issues SSC providers want to discuss in Mexico in the context of the HLM themes. Participants also proposed to create a network of Southern think tanks to be established; the inaugural meeting of this network will take place on the eve of the Mexico HLM. This UNDP China Issue Brief is an overview of workshop participants' diverse views, and does not purport to represent a consensus or official positions of any of the participating countries or organizations. The discussions took place under Chatham House rules.

SSC Providers' Inputs into the Mexico Communiqué

The Special Envoy to the Mexico HLM, responsible for drafting the Communiqué,ⁱⁱⁱ was a key participant at the workshop. The Communiqué will be the HLM's outcome document, based on consultations with a wide array of partners around the world. Some of the key points communicated at the workshop to the Special Envoy included: the importance of ensuring that the Communiqué's language focuses clearly on development cooperation; clarifying the relationship between the GPEDC and the post-2015 Development Agenda; and specifying that there is a difference

between North-South and South-South Cooperation, particularly in regards to the concept of differentiated responsibilities.



Workshop participants including (from left to right in front row): Mr. Christophe Bahuet, UNDP China Country Director; Mr. Gu Xueming, Vice President of CAITEC; Ms. Fadzai Gwaradzimba, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director of Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, UNDP; and Mr. Mauricio Escanero, Special Envoy of Mexico to the HLM GPEDC.

SSC Providers' Views on Official Mexico HLM Themes

Theme 1: Progress since Busan

Participants noted that there still exist significant areas for improvement since Busan. These included: accelerating the use of country systems; ensuring transparency efforts are driven by country demand; ensuring country-level coordination mechanisms are inclusive of a range of development actors; and, finally, expanding the engagement in the Global Partnership to achieve a truly multi-stakeholder approach.

Theme 2: Partnering for effective taxation and domestic resource mobilization for development

Domestic resource mobilization is a broader concept than taxation alone and needs to include other domestic policies and international support/policy coherence for enhancing growth. SSC providers could share experiences of broadening the tax base as well as stimulating growth.

Theme 3: South-South, triangular co-operation and knowledge sharing

Define differential commitments and responsibilities of SSC providers: SSC providers could define what differential commitments and responsibilities mean, and what commitments to take on in this regard. This could include defining key principles of particular relevance for SSC providers, such as ownership and results.

Assess impact of SSC: There is a gap in assessing the impact of SSC and a need to identify relevant common indicators against which to assess progress, while respecting differences in national policies and methods.

SSC providers to work as one constituency: Providers of SSC could start working as a constituency, and have a common narrative of their role in the GPEDC. SSC providers could have their own institutional body, and establish a platform for sharing views and experiences, or make use of existing platforms within, for example, the UN system.

Engage in triangular cooperation to draw on different expertise of countries: Triangular cooperation can draw on the respective strengths of different providers of development cooperation, including multilaterals. Triangular cooperation can also be a way of promoting increased understanding among different stakeholders.

Assess impact of knowledge sharing and training programs of SSC providers: There is a need to develop methodologies for assessing the systemic impact of knowledge sharing by SSC providers and the impact over time of individual training programs that providers of SSC are engaged in.

Avoid the trap of one size fits all in knowledge sharing among SSC providers: Systematic analyses of what works and why in different countries and local contexts is an important foundation for sharing knowledge by providers of SSC. International organizations could help support such analyses.

Establish mechanisms and build capacity for knowledge sharing, drawing on the unique role of SSC providers: Providers of SSC can play a unique role in sharing knowledge drawing on their dual role as providers and recipients, or previous experiences of receiving development cooperation. It is important for SSC providers to increase their own capacities as providers and “do their homework” by reflecting on and sharing their experiences of receiving and providing development assistance. It could also be beneficial to develop knowledge hubs and facilitating mechanisms for knowledge sharing at international level.



Workshop participants discuss HLM themes in a break-out group.

Theme 4: Development co-operation with Middle-Income Countries

Define appropriate categorization of countries to capture complexities of MICs: It would be useful to develop more sophisticated indicators for categorizing countries, including but not limited to MICs. Categorizations should be based on other dimensions than narrow income per capita to capture the different development challenges in MICs.^{iv}

Provide tailored development cooperation to MICs: Because a majority of the world's poor live in MICs, it is important to continue the provision of development cooperation to MICs

based on the specific needs of different MICs. The transition of MICs should be supported through gradual adjustment systems for moving from one category to another, including when this affects the availability of concessional finance.

Theme 5: Business as a partner in development

Share information on good practices of the role of the private sector among providers of SSC: There are diverse experiences of SSC providers countries regarding the role of the private sector in development cooperation and public-private partnerships etc. Given the fact that these experiences are not well documented, good practices could be compiled in a Compendium of Good Practices to facilitate experience sharing.^v

New Southern Initiative: Network of South-South Think-tanks (NeST)

Southern development actors at the workshop proposed the establishment of a new Network of Southern Think-tanks (NeST). The network's mandate could include working towards elaborating a common conception of SSC, and developing indicators against which the impact of SSC could be assessed. NeST would be led and driven by the South to bring further clarity to the specific contribution that SSC can make to global development. The inaugural meeting of the NeST will take place on the eve of the Mexico HLM.

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ⁱ The Post-Workshop Report has more detailed discussion of the event, and can be found at

<http://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/library/south-south-cooperation/>. Participants included representatives from governments, think-tanks, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and academia from eleven countries (Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Thailand and Turkey), along with representatives of the HLM hosts, two of the GPEDC co-chairs, and the Joint Secretariat.

ⁱⁱ The five official HLM themes discussed at the workshop (as at time of writing): 1) Progress since Busan; 2) Partnering for effective taxation and domestic resource mobilization for development; 3) South-South, triangular co-operation and knowledge sharing; 4) Development co-operation with Middle-Income Countries; 5) Business as a partner in development.

ⁱⁱⁱ The third draft of the Mexico HLM Communiqué released on April 10, 2014 can be found here: <http://effectivecooperation.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/RevisedDraftoftheMexicoHLMCommunique.pdf>

^{iv} Examples mentioned were the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), The Human Development Index (HDI), and indices that capture progress on the MDGs. It was suggested that decision-making on development cooperation should not be based on one single criterion.

^v The UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development was mentioned as a possible resource in this regard.

This Issue Brief forms part of a series to promote understanding of Chinese foreign assistance and encourage the sharing of development experiences between China, other developing countries and the donor community. Thanks to Dr. Penny Davies and to the South-South Policy Team, especially Dr. Merriden Varrall, Ms. Emily Davis and Ms. Liao Yafei for their work on this Issue Brief.