

Concept Note Session 1

Building sustainability and resilience through development cooperation

ECOSOC Chamber, Monday, 21 May 2018, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Format

90-minute interactive panel discussion, in plenary and guided by moderator.

Objective

To promote focused, candid knowledge exchange and mutual learning, and to generate concrete messages and policy recommendations on the session's specific themes.

Focus questions

- *How far have we come in aligning our development cooperation institutions and actions with the 2030 Agenda and in reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalized countries and people, including women and girls?*
- *What is the state of play in leveraging the distinctive and catalytic role of ODA to advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda?*
- *What are the signs of a strengthened contribution of development cooperation in climate actions?*

Background

The 2016 DCF called for putting into practice a transformative focus on sustainable development results, adapting institutions and policies in support of priorities and systems in developing countries. The Forum also gave strong policy guidance on the role of development cooperation in supporting the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people. It highlighted, among other measures, the need to meet existing commitments to Official Development Assistance (ODA), while improving its allocation and effective use.

Development cooperation is evolving in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Yet change is not happening with sufficient speed or depth. Development actors have to learn more, and more swiftly, how to operate and achieve results in an increasingly complex and diverse development cooperation space. To do so they need to both embrace and manage diversity.

Development cooperation can help initiate and support the profound policy and programme integration required to implement the 2030 Agenda, leaving no one behind. It can promote the adoption of “whole-of-government” and whole-of society approaches and in turn also provide a new opening on mainstreaming gender equality in national development strategies and instruments and into all stages of policy making, budgeting and service delivery cycles.

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ODA, while limited within the overall scheme of means of implementation, remains critical. Today, other public and private sources of development finance largely bypass Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and other countries in special situations. For countries with limited capacities, ODA will remain a distinct and vital source of development finance. For many, ODA can serve in different ways as a powerful catalyst to engage

other actors, such as the private sector, in development efforts It can also help keep development cooperation firmly focused on targeting those furthest behind first.

Sectoral shifts in ODA allocation may have disproportionate effects on vulnerable population groups and countries, where funding of social programmes is dependent on ODA. While investments in economic sectors, humanitarian aid and in-donor refugee costs have risen steadily between 2010 and 2015, those in social sectors have been on the decline. Further improving the ability, especially at national and subnational levels, to track the most vulnerable and marginalized groups will be essential to better understand their needs and provide more tailored and effective support.

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Development cooperation needs to become ‘disaster risk-informed’, to reduce, rather than contribute, to risks. Building resilience and sustainability requires well-tailored support, based on countries’ needs and vulnerabilities. In particular, LDCs and other countries with special needs will require increased investment in “adaptive social safety nets” to strengthen households’ coping capacity, and allow for better, more targeted responses to disasters. Support to capacity building provided to LDCs and SIDS needs to be stepped up to facilitate preparation and submission of bankable proposals.

Climate change has differentiated impact on countries and individuals: those furthest behind tend to be hit the hardest, with women often suffering disproportionately. The contribution of development cooperation to climate action needs to be further strengthened and more deliberately targeted at those furthest behind. The increased focus of climate financing on adaptation in 2017 is encouraging. However, specific funding needs and ways to meet them remain uncertain, due to insufficient levels of climate finance. Timeliness, predictability and fragmentation of climate finance pose additional challenges. Important work has taken place and is continuing to address these challenges.

Further reference

- Report of the Secretary-General on Trends and progress in international development cooperation, E/2018/55 [[Arabic](#)] [[Chinese](#)] [[English](#)] [[French](#)] [[Russian](#)] [[Spanish](#)]
- Development Cooperation to ensure that no one be left behind, José Antonio Alonso - UN Committee for Development Policy Background Paper [No. 30](#)
- What is development cooperation? - DCF Policy Brief [No. 1](#)
- ODA allocation and other trends in development cooperation in LDCs and vulnerable contexts - DCF Policy Brief [No. 13](#)
- Making development cooperation on climate change sensitive to the most vulnerable countries - DCF Policy Brief [No. 14](#)
- New forms of cooperation and increased coherence to implement the SDGs - DCF Policy Brief [No. 15](#)
- Re-engineering development cooperation institutions to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - DCF Policy Brief [No. 16](#)

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