

HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

More than two years on from the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Busan, Korea, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the international process which evolved out of Paris Declaration and the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (Rome, Paris, Accra, Busan) will meet in Mexico on 15-16 April. The meeting will convene the full “membership” of the GPEDC at High Level, including from Civil Society and Trade Unions, to discuss the following themes:

- **Progress on implementing the Busan commitments on effective development co-operation.** This session will review progress and take new steps to boost impact of the commitments made at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011. The session will also look at ways to promote inclusive development.
- **Tax and domestic resource mobilisation.** Participants will take action to step up and support development co-operation so that it can boost tax collection and cut illicit financial flows in developing countries.
- **Middle-income countries and effective development co-operation.** This session will look at ways to intensify support to poverty reduction and inclusive growth in middle-income countries.
- **Knowledge sharing, South-South and triangular co-operation.** Global Partnership members will showcase and commit to support development co-operation with and between developing countries, including through knowledge and know-how exchange.
- **The private sector and effective development co-operation.** Among other initiatives, participants will set a road map for more, better development co-operation between business and governments.

Each of these sessions will aim to produce a set of “deliverables”, or action plans, to be taken forward from Mexico. On the part of the trade union movement we have been involved in the planning of the session *Progress on implementing the Busan commitments...* and have had significant input on the contents of this session as relate to the issue of inclusive development. We have attempted to actively participate in the session on *Private Sector* with very limited success, though we were successful in securing a panel speaker in the session.

Developments and considerations ahead of Mexico

A process losing momentum

In many respects, momentum on the aid and development effectiveness agenda has been very erratic since the 4th High Level Forum in November 2011. While a small governing body, the Steering Committee, has met regularly in the interim period, and the joint support team (OECD/UNDP) of the has been tasked with carrying out a light monitoring process and some associated activities, activities at the global level have been very infrequent. This was partly by design, with the “country heavy, global light” approach, but it is evident that the proponents of this approach had not anticipated the consequences would have on the overall momentum and coherence of the process. Indeed, the consequence has been the stagnation of the processes at the national and regional level as stakeholders who are not part of the steering committee have experienced a disconnect with the process overall. This suggests that the Mexico meeting should try to introduce some alternative working arrangements to facilitate broader and sustained participation in the process.

Trade Unions in the Steering Committee

One of the more positive and recent developments in the process relates to a long standing demand on our part to seek representation in the governance structures of the process. At the most recent meeting of the Steering Committee our requests were finally fulfilled with the expansion of the

Steering Committee to include a second CSO seat for Trade Unions. Other additions include Foundations, Local Authorities and Regional Governments, Arab Donors. Given this new recognition we have some new incentive to see that the process pick up its momentum and relevance, in so far as we are able to influence the outputs of the partnership. On the other hand, the current working arrangements are in need of improvement, owing to the fact that while we are now “at the table” we face the challenge of being heard.

The Mexico Outcome Document

The main outcome of the Mexico High Level meeting will be a non-negotiated communique which is largely in the hands of the Mexican government. For its part the Mexican government has undertaken a schedule of consultations between now and Mexico in order to produce a document that reflects the views and priorities of all stakeholders of the partnership.

Our general feedback to the communique could be along the following lines:

- While the communique is meant to be forward looking it does not address commitments made in Paris, Accra and Busan in any substantive way, and therefore risks sending the signal that progress on the commitments is adequate to date, which is in most instances not the case.
- At the same time in many areas it is not forward looking enough and appears to only reaffirm those commitments made most recently in Busan.
- In line with the above the (Human) Rights Based Approach remains something for CSOs to promote and still not recognized as a foundation of development effectiveness.
- Decent work is nowhere in the document which seems a step back from Busan where it was acknowledged as one of the overarching objectives. This is especially unfortunate given the attention devoted to the private sector and the role of business in delivering development outcomes.
- References to the private sector and its potential role paint a very unbalanced picture an unrealistic and uninformed picture of how the private sector behaves in reality—for example the wholesale embrace of PPPs. A blank check to business has the potential to undermine development efforts as much as it can contribute, and so clear language on the accountability of the private sector and the role of trade unions and civil society holding business to account is required.

We have contributed inputs collectively with CSOs. The detailed feedback is available for comparison vis-à-vis the communique in electronic form.

Participation in HLM

A small trade union delegation will participate in the HLM in Mexico (7-12 trade unionists). Besides the few formal roles in the official sessions, we will co-organize two “focus sessions” (or side events) on the Human Rights Based Approach and the private sector.

Following the HLM

The expectation is that the Mexico meeting will reinvigorate a stagnating process. Potentially the set of action oriented outputs will create opportunities for all stakeholders to become more active between the Mexico meeting and the subsequent HLM. For a certainty, the leadership of the GPEDC will change with a new set of co-chairs and new members in the Steering Committee.

On the longer term however, the outcomes of the different parallel processes (UN2015, UNDCF, G20 Development, GPEDC ...) may lead to more coherent and integrated global structures.

Coordination with Civil Society

We remain active in the Civil Society Partnership for Development Effectiveness, the platform organized around the development effectiveness agenda. In particular, we will continue to take a leading role on the CSO efforts around the Human Rights Based Approach and the Private Sector.

However, as we are now recognized independently of the CSO platform we will at the same time aim to play a more distinct role in the GPEDC on the whole.

Working together to strengthen our voice at all levels.

If we want our international action to be successful, especially around our major advocacy demands on decent work, including social protection and participation through social dialogue, we must ensure that also at national and regional level our voice is heard.
