

Trade Union Messages

to the High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation



The High Level Meeting in Mexico is the first occasion for the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) to review what has been accomplished since Busan and to also make commitments on new areas of the development effectiveness agenda. For the trade union movement this process is at a critical juncture as it has been steadily losing steam and had a difficult time identifying a sense of purpose or value to the international development community. This means the Mexico meeting is also an important turning point where the GPEDC can either cement its credibility and relevance going forward or continue to stagnate and wither to the point of irrelevance.

The most impressive and unique attribute of the GPEDC is its ability to convene a diverse range of stakeholders on an equal footing, under a single umbrella and towards a common objective—making development cooperation more effective. Inclusivity, for trade unions, is this process's *raison d'être*. The inclusive approach is not without its challenges and growing pains, but any regression in this aspect of the GPEDC will be a serious blow to its credibility. We therefore insist that a qualitative stock taking follow the Mexico HLM to determine where efforts to be inclusive have worked and have not, with a view to learning and improving.

The trade union movement is committed to the success of the GPEDC and will work to ensure its relevance, though not without cause and demands.

As the GPEDC looks to how to improve development cooperation and agree to new actions it is important to remember the origins of the agenda. In this respect, we insist that every effort be taken to live up to and fulfil commitments made in Paris, Accra and Busan.

Trade unions are actively engaged in the development effectiveness agenda, developing specific “Principles and Guidelines on Development effectiveness”. These represent the vision and values of trade union organizations on development, and are designed to serve as a common reference for development cooperation initiatives, strengthening ownership, accountability and working methodologies among trade union partners. These Principles have been also complemented by innovative monitoring tools to improve the quality of Trade Unions partnerships for development.

Trade unions and civil society more broadly continue to fight for development justice by promoting the Human Rights based Approach as the lynchpin of development effectiveness. It should be the foundation on which our collective efforts are built and the common thread that binds the diverse stakeholders that make up the partnership.

As trade unions, we insist that the Decent Work Agenda become a central objective for the development effectiveness agenda. The Decent Work Agenda is a development agenda and with increasing emphasis on the role of the private sector in this process it is critical that Decent Work be championed equally alongside the promotion of the private sector to ensure that economic growth is in fact inclusive and sustainable.

**Progress since
Busan and
Inclusive
Development**

The Busan Principles of Ownership, Inclusiveness, Results and Transparency and Accountability are the foundations of the GPEDC. Living up to these principles as a global partnership have proven as difficult as would have been expected, though with the appropriate behaviour change they are not beyond the realm of possibility. Trade unions believe that the Mexico HLM must:

- Reaffirm and strengthen previous commitments in Busan, Accra, Paris especially on the principle of democratic ownership**
- Promote the social dialogue as an instrument for democratic elaboration of development policy at national level**
- Expose the reality of shrinking space for civil society, especially repression and violence against trade unions in many countries**

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Domestic Resource Mobilization

Effective taxation is the most credible means to eliminate dependence on development assistance. Adequate government revenue allows the state to assert its role to provide development outcomes and especially essential public services. But taxation can only be effective if:

Private sector activity, especially of MNCs is appropriately taxed
Progressive taxation policies are implemented

South South and Triangular Cooperation

While trade unions recognize that South South and Triangular Cooperation is distinct from traditional development assistance we believe also believe that GPEDC should:

Extend aid and development effectiveness principles to SSC
Ensure that SSC learn from shortcomings of N-S cooperation and improve efforts by being guided by history of what works and doesn't
Better integrate Civil Society in SSC activities and efforts
Create a better understanding among SS providers of employment related issues

Middle Income Countries

Trade unions share the view that addressing the challenges faced in MICs is a top priority of the development effectiveness agenda. Indeed unemployment and inequality, key issues for the trade union movement, are most pronounced in the so-called MICs. In this light we call on the GPEDC to:

Give full attention to issue of inequality and seek ways & means to address it
Linked to inequality it is fundamental to understand the role of trade unions and labor market institutions to fight inequality, through for example minimum living wage legislation, collective bargaining and social protection—or the decent work agenda.
Underscore importance of universal social protection and specifically the creation and implementation social protection floors in the MIC context
Progressive taxation should be explicitly highlighted is the best long term measure to address and redress inequality

Private Sector

The very motivation that underpins private sector activity, namely its profit seeking nature, is not necessarily aligned with development objectives, despite efforts to sugar-coat this reality with a concept of "shared value" which posits that development objectives and profit seeking are not at odds. We do however, also recognize that the private sector can play a role in fulfilling development outcomes but only if the following GPEDC promotes and upholds:

The developmental role of the state especially when it comes to providing essential public services
Clear rules and standards based criteria for Private Sector participation, that are rigidly enforce to ensure contribution to development outcomes/objectives
A more balanced understanding of PPPs, including the recognition of the OECDs own work on the issue- i.e. OECD Principles for Public Governance of PPPs
Clear commitments on the accountability of the private sector and the role of trade unions and civil society holding business to account
A human rights-based approach to development applied to the private sector through rule of law and social dialogue
A stronger focus on SMEs