

Trade union statement in response to the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN), bringing together national trade union confederations from South and North, Solidarity Support Organisations and Global Unions as well a representation from ITUC regions and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), meeting in Florence from 12-14 December 2011, took note of the Busan Outcome Document (BOD) and the proposed Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

Geopolitics and global crisis were framing the debate.

1. The Busan High Level Forum 4 (HLF4) took place in a radically changed geopolitical and development context marked by severe multiple international crises and addressed by failing neoliberal policies ultimately producing growing inequality.
2. New players took part in shaping of the Partnership, including the private sector and emerging economies. New modalities also appeared on the agenda such as private public partnerships and the potential of South-South and trilateral cooperation.
3. Official Development Assistance (ODA) is diminishing in terms of volume, developmental impact and results. It is also focussing more and more on the catalytic role it should play especially towards the LDC's and situations of fragility and societies at risk. However, the Middle Income Countries (MIC) are more and more excluded from ODA priorities and targets, despite the growing challenge of inequality and the persistence of high poverty rates in those countries.
4. Although growing decentralisation is consolidating ownership and responsibility of southern partners, at the same time it also allows donor states to escape from their commitments and engagements towards commonly agreed targets such as the 0.7% of GDP.
5. Trade unions are facing reduced access to ODA in the donor countries, whilst in the south, trade unions have limited or no access to cooperation resources and lack policy space and recognition; as a result the overall support for trade unions and their role as development actors is under threat.

The Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

6. The Busan Outcome Document is an open ended political declaration that is the result of a relatively open multistakeholder consultation and participation process involving civil society, including trade union representation.

7. We welcome the inclusion of decent work and social protection, the will to address inequality as a development challenge and the promotion of international agreed commitments on human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disability and good governance.
8. We also note the confirmation of the role of civil society organisations as development actors in their own right, the acknowledgement of the Istanbul principles on Civil Society Organisations' (CSO) effectiveness and the commitment to strive towards a rights-based enabling environment for civil society.
9. Although the High Level Forum managed to broaden the GPEDC's legitimacy and potential impact, the diversification of commitments and the voluntary nature of the BOD has lowered the overall ambition, created contradictions in the orientations and has led to vague intentions and weak commitments concerning the post Busan plan of action.
10. Similarly, rights-based approaches (RBA) have been relegated to, and mitigated by, in-country focus and voluntary commitments. The reference related to promoting rights-based approaches by CSOs only is a clear regression with respect to the Accra Agenda for Action and other international commitments on RBA.
11. Overall, the trade union movement cannot share the underlying economic development model of the Partnership based, nearly exclusively, on growth as driver for development. We regret the limited role for the state primarily seen as the enabler of market and private sector driven policies, and the lack of attention to job creation, local and sustainable entrepreneurship and public sector driven strategies.
12. We also note with concern the failure to specify a framework for effective and responsible private sector commitment based on internationally agreed standards such as the International Labour Organisations' (ILO) labour standards, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines on multi-national enterprises and the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights.
13. In particular we regret the failure to recognise trade unions as key players in their own right and as a social partner in development as well as the omission to include social dialogue as an instrument for engaging the private sector to sustainability in development.

Taking up the post Busan challenges

14. The international trade union movement commits to engage in the GPEDC and its governance and working structures in the post Busan processes, in particular in shaping the proposed building blocks on "private sector", on "results and accountability" and others, such as RBA, in order to meet the agreed ambitions as set out in the preamble, common goals and commitments of the GPEDC. We will actively support the promotion of rights based approaches in development and contribute to establishing relevant indicators on decent work, social protection, democratic ownership and other socially relevant development effectiveness targets.
15. The international trade union movement reiterates its commitment toward an alternative development paradigm based on social justice and sustainability through fighting inequality, promoting the Decent Work Agenda, social protection and green jobs, and an inclusive and legitimate, standards based, international development architecture.

Firenze/ Florence, 14th of December 2011.