

# **UN SYSTEM TASK TEAM ON THE **POST-2015** UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

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**Analysis and overview of new actors  
and formats for the global  
partnership for development post  
2015**

**Thematic Think Piece**

**IFAD, IOM, ITU, OHCHR, OHRLS, UNCTAD,  
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WTO**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the signing agencies and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

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Following on the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Secretary-General established the UN System Task Team in September 2011 to support UN system-wide preparations for the post-2015 UN development agenda, in consultation with all stakeholders. The Task Team is led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme and brings together senior experts from over 60 UN entities and international organizations to provide system-wide support to the post-2015 consultation process, including analytical input, expertise and outreach.

# Analysis and overview of new actors and formats for the global partnership for development post 2015

## Introduction

UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/60/215 (2006) defines partnership as voluntary relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task, and as mutually agreed, to share risk and responsibilities, resources and benefits. Similarly, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) defined partnerships as voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives undertaken by governments, major groups and relevant stakeholders which contributed to the implementation of internationally agreed commitments, goals and objectives, bearing in mind the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation.

The basic concept of partnerships is simple and straightforward, but the application may be complex and time-consuming. It is often challenging to identify common ground among different stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector as well as civil society actors to find the right combination of necessary skills, resources and expertise of those who could make a contribution to successfully achieve a particular objective. Innovative efforts are often required to be more effective in combining resources and competencies to better achieve globally agreed objectives.

Partnerships as a form of collaboration and cooperation at the global, regional and national level have been in the international dialogue for decades. Experience with the use of partnerships as an implementation mechanism of internationally agreed goals and objectives has shown that partnerships, when successfully deployed, have become a crucial and essential tool for a more participatory approach to implementation and a key mechanism in leveraging the comparative advantages of different stakeholders.

The United Nations system has been at the forefront of the use of partnerships to facilitate and expedite the implementation of internationally agreed mandates at the global, regional and national level. However, as the international community undertakes the process of defining the post-2015 development agenda, the UN should aim to advance a more coherent, coordinated and strategic approach to its partnership efforts and activities given that the post-2015 agenda must take a holistic approach to development that advances equity, equality and non-discrimination, that promotes inclusiveness and sustainability, and that delivers on the promise of freedom from fear and want.

Inclusive participation in the formulation and eventual implementation of the post-2015 development agenda is critical to achieving a representative, holistic agenda capable of galvanizing broad international support. The post-2015 agenda must re-examine the current modalities of international cooperation and develop the appropriate global governance institutions to ensure transparency, accountability, representativeness and commitment. New forms of cooperation and partnerships will need to consolidate the gains of the past and advance appropriate approaches to meet the challenges ahead. Renewed efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation and enhance regional arrangements deserve attention.

The right to development must play a central role in the post-2015 global partnership for development. A new global partnership for sustainable development should aim to make progress in all dimensions: inclusive social development; environmental sustainability; economic prosperity and well-being; as well as peace and security.

## **Shifting context for global partnerships**

The UN Millennium Declaration<sup>1</sup> outlines a call for cooperation between governments and the private sector, to ensure greater access to affordable essential drugs and new technologies. Under MDG 8, however, the global partnership for development is not clearly defined -- limited in its scope and over-emphasizes North-South/donor-recipient

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm>

cooperation. This led the High-Level Taskforce on the Right to Development to explore the global partnership within the parameters of “treaty regimes, arrangements and commitments, multi-stakeholder strategies and mechanisms, and multilateral institutions that epitomize global or regional efforts to address MDG 8.”<sup>2</sup>

The UN Secretary-General’s 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review report makes a case for the fact that as the development landscape is changing, “so too should development cooperation”. The drivers of this change are described as demographic (shifting patterns of life and death and population transformations); economic and financial (with rising inequities and new axis of financial strength); technology linking people (the digital revolution and the ICTs) while, simultaneously, states are being called to increase efforts in delivering on the social contracts. Climate change is also forcing societies and the world to rethink the future development paradigm.

These global and regional realities led to the emergence of new actors and forms of global partnerships. Concurrent with the increasing diversity of development actors there has been a shift in global public perception of who is responsible for promoting and implementing sustainable development. Society is progressively moving away from traditional state-led foreign aid to an inclusive role of ‘society for society’, to include the general public. This shift has increased the expectation and incentive for individuals and non-state actors to demand space to demonstrate their contribution to sustainable development.

There is also a growing recognition of profound changes that globalisation brings under the current circumstances. The majority of non-state actors have a valuable contribution to make in finding a collective solution to addressing global collective action problems, such as international security, climate change, continuous food insecurity, global health, and effects of rapid urbanization and migration. Global poverty and inequality are now viewed as an issue of common interest requiring joint action.

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<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/15/WG.2/TF/2/Add.1 para. 76.

## Emergence of new actors and formats

The emergence of new actors and new approaches to strengthening the global partnership for development reflects efforts to address the challenges faced by existing partnerships. In 2008, the Group of Twenty (G20) upgraded itself from a finance ministers' discussion forum to include Heads of States and Government to tackle the global financial crisis jointly. It was agreed that a broader policy response was needed, based on closer macroeconomic cooperation, to restore growth, avoid negative spillovers and support emerging market economies and developing countries. As the recovery has been slow and unequal, they agreed to intensify their efforts to create a more conducive environment for global cooperation and development, in order to improve living conditions across the globe and protect the most vulnerable.

On the other hand, groups of developing States, such as, the G77 and Non-aligned Movement (NAM), continue to decry the lack of representativeness and power imbalances within existing international institutional mechanisms advancing development. As a result, Member States have formed new coalitions and adopted new forms of development cooperation, including more inclusive and representative partnerships.

The delivery and effectiveness of development assistance has been affected by the shifting trends of global partnerships. In contrast to the aid architecture of the fifties, there are now 24 members and affiliates of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and at least 23 other countries that give aid. Aid from non-DAC contributors has more than doubled since 2003 and is thought to amount to between \$7 - 10 billion in 2010, including the growing phenomena of 'South-South cooperation'.

Rapid economic development in a number of developing countries, their more rapid recovery from global economic crisis and a growing awareness of their role in the global economy led to a sharp increase in South-South cooperation. As large developing countries rise, global trade and investment patterns have shifted accordingly, and new political alliances and groupings have emerged. In contrast with traditional North-South cooperation, South-South initiatives involve countries with shared development challenges and suggest more equal relationships between donor and recipient countries.

Most South-South development cooperation comes in the form of project finance and technical assistance, with only a small percentage in balance-of-payment or budget support. And contributors to South-South development cooperation allocate most assistance to countries with which they have close political, trade and investment ties. This includes a strong concentration in nearby regions, reflecting cultural and language links, a better understanding of needs.<sup>3</sup> Regional and global financial crises and the insufficient financial cooperation framework led to incentives for several developing countries to search for alternative arrangements to respond to unexpected shocks, such as regional monetary and financial cooperation.

Collaboration in which traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South-South initiatives through the provision of funding, training, and management and technological systems as well as other forms of support through triangular cooperation.<sup>4</sup> Increasingly, multilateral organizations have endeavored to devise various demand-based, South-South support facilities and innovative financing mechanisms to enable developing countries and their development partners to share knowledge, exchange experiences, transfer technologies and pool the resources that are needed to deal effectively with country-specific and common development challenges.<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of different groupings of developing countries is also an important trend. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have been recognized in having special challenges in their path to development. Despite the special attention given to them, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS reported the slowest progress towards reaching the MDGs, due to the measurement bias against countries with low starting points, and incomplete implementation of internationally agreed support measures, among others. While a large number of the poor currently live in middle income countries, it is expected that within a few decades a much larger proportion of the poor will live in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

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<sup>3</sup> SG's report on Trends and progress in international development cooperation, E/2010/93.

<sup>4</sup> One recent example relates to a funding agreement concluded between UNFPA and the Government of Cameroon, whereby funding was provided by the French Government as part of a debt reduction agreement

<sup>5</sup> SG's report on The state of South-South cooperation, A/64/321.

There is also an increasingly important role for decentralized development actors — namely, local and territorial governments – who are also gaining in influence and recognition. Local governments are vital leaders whose importance is increasingly underscored in local territories. While this is relevant for all development efforts, it is particularly noteworthy in fragile state contexts where essential nutrition and health services are increasingly organized and provided by local governing bodies and non-state entities – facts on the ground which demand their own set of considerations and have their own implications on development partnerships.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and charitable foundations have emerged as active and engaged actors in development cooperation alongside with traditional development partners. Philanthropic foundations are making more financial resources and knowledge available, and have drawn attention to approaches that mix a non-profit focus with a business orientation. It is important to be conscious of the different and complimentary roles played by global, regional and national CSOs, and for the modalities of engagement to reflect and respect these diverse roles and national circumstances.

The corporate social responsibility movement addresses the need for development which has not been adequately covered by traditional partnerships. In recent years, development assistance provided by the private sector has increased substantially and brought intangible benefits such as increased visibility, leveraging of core business competencies, targeted interventions to improve programmatic efficiency, experimental grant-making to support innovative approaches and others. The role of private businesses in aiding the development of poor countries has received increased attention, while social enterprises and social entrepreneurship are also on the rise. The corporate social responsibility movement has played a role in encouraging this shift.

Academic institutions are often classed within philanthropic organisations but these should be given emphasis in partnership formation under their own right. Many academic institutions have links to in-country public health programs and are supporting operational



research, treatment guidelines, policy guidance, building in-country capacity and safeguarding sustaining development.

With the surge of international and internal migration over the last decades, migrant remittances, estimated to reach over \$406 billion in 2012, have become another powerful channel to influence potential growth paths of developing countries. Additional to its financial contribution, migration is also a key non-financial contribution to development with the increase of circulation of talent at all levels.

New areas of global partnerships also have emerged. To illustrate, the Aid for Trade initiative has achieved much progress in establishing a focus at the national, regional and global level on the use of trade as a tool for development and on the fact that development aid helps build and strengthen the supply side capacities of developing and least-developed countries. Aid for Trade to developing countries has increased by 82% since 2005 and reached \$45 billion in 2010.

Transfer of technology and knowledge sharing, especially related to green economy, has become one of the important areas of development partnerships. A partnership approach to technology transfer and knowledge sharing could explore more collaborative ways and frameworks to offer enhanced diffusion of environmentally sound technologies, especially to developing countries. For example, the Durban Conference agreed to take measures to meet the needs of developing countries and be flexible so that the international agreement can be adapted and adjusted in response to the technology needs of developing countries and the demands of the emerging international climate change regime.<sup>6</sup>

The innovations and new solutions to development that ICTs enable have also been sparked by partnerships between new actors and non-traditional ICT sector developers. The emergence of these new players and associations, have contributed to all three dimensions of sustainable development, economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability by harnessing innovation through ICT. The transition towards an open and

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<sup>6</sup> Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventeenth session, held in Durban from 28 November to 11 December 2011, FCCC/CP/2011/9/Add.1

competitive ICT ecosystem brought much more emphasis on multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholders approaches and partnerships, in particular public private partnerships.

As new formats and actors emerge in the global partnerships, the challenge of bringing coherence among the variety of actors and partnerships has been intensified in various regions and sectors. The proliferation of development cooperation actors and forms has led to increased fragmentation, making administration of development assistance more complex and costly. For instance, most South-South cooperation providers do not participate in harmonization initiatives with other providers, except through some regional and country-led forums.

Partnerships with non-traditional actors need to shift from implementation of specific projects and initiatives to building cross-sector capacity and networks. This type of partnership will require strong initial support by international organizations and donors both in technical capacity development of non-state actors, as well as support in resource mobilization.<sup>7</sup> The role of the UN in this regard will be crucial.

## **Towards coherence, effectiveness and ownership**

Development cooperation is no longer the exclusive domain of nation states.<sup>8</sup> The critical themes of the new approach to partnership will be the emergence of new economic state powers, the increasing role of stakeholders other than states, and the value of non-financial contributions. As emphasized above, a holistic approach must be taken in formulating the post-2015 global partnership for development. International human rights standards can offer guidance towards new forms of cooperation between *inter alia*, States, civil society, international organizations and the private sector. Transformative changes that are needed for post-2015 global partnerships can be categorized into three layers: to strengthen the existing system of global partnerships; to enhance the system in terms of the width and

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the ITU and UNESCO's Broadband Commission for Digital Development and ITU Smart Grid. Details are available from <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/> and <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-T/focusgroups/smart/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> UN Secretary-General's 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review report (QCPR)

depth of its development impact; and to consider the benefits of scaling partnerships at the highest level.

### **Reinforcing the international agreed goals and principles**

The evolving aid landscape requires changes in architecture and management and a shift in types and models for partnership. There are many calls for action to deliver on the global partnership for development, including market access, enhancing global economic governance, trade facilitation and technology transfer. In view of the lack of cohesion between traditional and non-traditional donors the global development partners should review the commitment and nature of their participation, reinforcing the principles of aid impact, ownership and effectiveness, among others. Commitment should be reaffirmed for the implementation of the Paris Agenda in all partnerships and observance of these principles should be integrated within the quality assurance of development assistance programmes and partnerships. Partnerships should also be strengthened to support developing countries, and recognize countries with special needs, such as LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, and countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. The new global partnership needs to prioritize these groups of countries with a view to support them in their efforts to build resilience for long-term sustainable and equitable development in the broadest sense.

### **Enhancing the system: widening and deepening**

One of the critical elements of replicating and scaling up successful initiatives in global partnerships is to include new actors explicitly in the international system. Recent developments in South-South cooperation have taken the form of increased volume of trade, flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges. Accordingly, new partnerships should take the form of efficiency gains as opposed to financial contributions, and multilateral governance will need to strengthen collective rules and actions in some areas, particularly finance.

The proliferation and increasing influence of networks in the global system appears to generate more hybrid forms of governance, where platforms have been created to bring together increasing efforts among the private sector and investors with national

governments, and technical and academic institutes. Thus, the international community should actively promote network governance structures for achieving local, regional and global development objectives. Networks are rarely effective on their own; therefore, they need to form a symbiotic relationship with international organizations. The emerging world order is one in which networks, rather than operating alone, come to incorporate and work together with international organizations.

Well-designed regional anchors will be also necessary, as policy coordination among countries with similar challenges and common purpose at the regional level is likely to be readily forged. Knowledge networks can be particularly useful in processes of regional and inter-regional cooperation, where prior mutual learning, information exchanges and coordination of efforts can ease, support and speed up development collaboration among countries and organizations sharing similar objectives.

At the same time, there is a need for a search for simple indicators and clearer sustainability criteria for non-traditional actors. Global forums such as the Development Cooperation Forum can perform a vital role in bringing together all relevant stakeholders and encouraging universal compliance with accepted principles of development partnership. The Rio+20 Conference played an important role in fostering joint action in developing, establishing, strengthening as well as measuring progress in implementing sustainable development through partnerships. The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation has also highlighted the need for accountability.

It is also necessary to identify alternative resources, areas and channels for enhanced cooperation. Multistakeholder partnerships have proven effective to galvanize broad-based joint action, define concrete objectives and clear timetables as well as serve as mutual accountability frameworks. The United Nations should use its expertise in advancing multistakeholder approaches for development to serve as an enhanced broker of partnerships. This capacity could be delivered by engaging the relevant stakeholders, assisting in identifying the appropriate institutional frameworks and, networks for partnerships to deliver and matching these to development gaps.

### **Revaluation of the impact of global partnerships**

There is an urgent need for a framework which could facilitate greater impact, transparency, accountability and sustainability in global partnerships. Stakeholders with strong commitments can enhance transparency and social accountability of development partnerships, particularly where partnerships are new and operating outside of existing mechanisms. Ultimately it is the residents of States who must engage and take responsibility for the fair and inclusive sustainable development of their nations.

Considerations should be given to thoughts on how to operationalize the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibilities in the implementation of sustainable development. In particular, post-2015 global partnerships should proceed in two levels: increase awareness and political space to create stronger demand for action; and accelerate action through effective engagement with diverse stakeholders. Mutual accountability involving all actors and promoting accountability of governments towards their own people is essential for post-2015 development agenda.

Some key actions to consider for implementing the above include:

- Connect and cross-fertilize different sectors working on same issues, such as climate change;
- Advance more strategic approaches to use partnerships to build bridges between diverse stakeholder communities, institutions and actors at different levels as well as address gaps in governance, participation and implementation;
- Promote transparency, accountability and representativeness, including consideration of adequate representation of civil society, within international organizations while respecting their respective rules of engagement;
- Coordinate common messages towards increased awareness on major issues such as climate change, sustainable development, etc;
- Foster greater sharing of knowledge and resources; and,
- Broker collaboration and more participatory approaches to accelerate action on all issues previously mentioned;
- Increase streamlining of guidelines and impact-assessment mechanisms for developing appropriate partnerships in the United Nations system.

## Conclusion

Faced with slower world economic growth prospects and a focus on fiscal imbalances in many developed countries, development cooperation should refocus on the need to ensure people-centred development through continued, sustained and inclusive assistance, one of the main forces in reducing global poverty. As new actors and forms of partnership emerge, they must be enlisted in the challenging task of ensuring holistic, rights-based development across the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

In the post 2015 era, a reevaluation of the impact of global partnerships is needed. Supporters of multistakeholder global partnerships facilitating the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda would argue that the approach can fundamentally serve to bridge three gaps which exist in traditional cooperation: governance, participation and implementation and financing gaps. Partnership creation should be a fertile mechanism to advance a more participatory approach to address development challenges. The United Nations system could additionally reference and expand its existing work supporting policy development, implementation, monitoring, as well as institutional change, by encouraging the consideration, acceptance and streamlining of new guidelines and impact-assessment frameworks for the creation of new partnerships serving the future development agenda.

## **UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda**

### **Membership**

*Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Co-Chair*

*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Co-Chair*

*Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*

*Department of Public Information (DPI)*

*Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)*

*Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)*

*Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

*Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)*

*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

*Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG)*

*Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)*

*Global Environment Facility (GEF)*

*International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*

*International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)*

*International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)*

*International Labour Organization (ILO)*

*International Maritime Organization (IMO)*

*International Monetary Fund (IMF)*

*International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

*International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*

*Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)*

*Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)*

*Office of the Deputy Secretary-General (ODSG)*

*Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR)*

*Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)*

*Office of the Special Advisor on Africa (OSAA)*

*Peace building Support Office (PBSO)*

*United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)*

*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*

*United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)*  
*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*  
*United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women)*  
*United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*  
*United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*  
*United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)*  
*United Nations Global Compact Office*  
*United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*  
*United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)*  
*United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*  
*United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)*  
*United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)*  
*United Nations Millennium Campaign*  
*United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)*  
*United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)*  
*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*  
*United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)*  
*United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)*  
*United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)*  
*United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination Secretariat (CEB)*  
*United Nations University (UNU)*  
*United Nations Volunteers (UNV)*  
*United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)*  
*Universal Postal Union (UPU)*  
*World Bank*  
*World Food Programme (WFP)*  
*World Health Organization (WHO)*  
*World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)*  
*World Meteorological Organization (WMO)*  
*World Trade Organization (WTO)*