

Informal Discussion

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation: Where do we stand?

28 May 2017

Key Takeaways

Background

This note summarises key takeaways of a discussion among researchers and practitioners about the “The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC): Where do we stand?”. The discussion took place ahead of the T20 conference in Berlin on 28 May 2017, 4-6pm. Participants came from Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa and Germany. The purpose of the meeting was to continue¹ the frank and open exchange of views. Participants were asked to explore commonalities and differences in their perspectives on the current state and potential future trajectories of the GPEDC. Meeting convenor was the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE). Chatham House rules applied.

Summary of Discussions

Starting Point from Johannesburg meeting - Three scenarios for the future of GPEDC

Future trajectories for the GPEDC are seen as follows:

- 1) “Big bang” scenario of abandoning GPEDC in its current form and rebuilding it from scratch: *favourable but not likely for institutional persistence reasons*;
- 2) Hybrid and parallel platforms resting on innovative working arrangements based on hindsight that emerging economies are not going to join partnership in medium term; traditional donors should maintain focus on the aid effectiveness agenda to sustain support from developing countries: *Most realistic and gainful under current conditions*;
- 3) Incremental rapprochement between GPEDC and UN-DCF based on continued dialogue between traditional donors and emerging economies which may eventually lead to one global platform: *Long-term scenario*.

Reasons for emerging economies to join GPEDC in 2017-2018

- Some emerging economies are not interested in setting up separate global governance systems and want to reduce the transaction costs of engaging in development cooperation on a global level through GPEDC.
- GPEDC can be a platform for emerging economies to coordinate among themselves.
- GPEDC could be a platform to showcase contributions to SDGs and engage with other countries on tackling global public goods challenges.
- There is a perceived degree of convergence between Official Development Assistance (ODA) and South-South Cooperation (SSC) in policy discourse, less in practice. This convergence can be called “Southernisation” of the North and “Northernisation” of the South. ODA providers are moving towards more interest-based and business friendly development cooperation, whereas SSC providers strive for greater transparency and documentation of developmental impacts of their SSC. GPEDC could be the platform to explore this convergence.

¹ Past DIE events on the GPEDC and the global development architecture were held in [Johannesburg 2017](#), [Nairobi 2016](#), [New York 2016](#) and [Mexico City 2014](#).

Obstacles for emerging economies to join GPEDC in 2017-2018

- The historic background of the GPEDC still suggests closeness to the OEDC Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The hybrid support structure of UNDP and OECD is not convincing for several participants, and there are doubts whether GPEDC is an established institution, when key members, such as the USA and UK, show little interest in the GPEDC.
- Capacities in emerging economies for administering development cooperation are still insufficient, especially for engaging in international debates.
- The differences between the two models of providing assistance, ODA and SSC, are not easy to reconcile in the short-term, and the total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD) concept is generally seen as unhelpful in this regard.
- Rising powers are looking to establish their own platforms in global governance to compete with Western dominated international organizations, for example the New Development Bank or the Asian Infrastructure Bank.
- After Busan, when it first looked as if there could be greater convergence between GPEDC and rising powers, the climate for exchange changed afterwards and rising powers felt excluded again.

How to make GPEDC more attractive for emerging economies?

- The most important aspect would be to make the GPEDC more politically relevant. One idea to achieve this is to make the GPEDC a platform to showcase and discuss global initiatives of different countries (Chinese One Belt One Road Initiative, German Marshall Plan with Africa, Asia-Africa Growth Corridor by India and Japan, etc.).
- The institutional setup of the GPEDC should be reconsidered. A stronger UN role in the GPEDC would make the GPEDC more appealing to emerging economies.
- The issue of effectiveness should become center of the GPEDC again, with an updated lexicon on terminology that is also open to SSC. Emerging economies should play a role in shaping the effectiveness debate in this regard.
- The private sector should play a larger role in the GPEDC. Emerging economies distinguish less between public and private cooperation with Southern partners, which could be a starting point for joint discussion in the GPEDC. Private sector engagement at the local level could be another issue of common interest between DAC donors and Southern providers.

GPEDC: Current state and plans

- Closer institutional cooperation between GPEDC and UN-DCF is planned. The GPEDC Co-Chair Uganda also chairs the UN working group on SSC. A high-level dinner event will be hosted by GPEDC Co-Chairs in the context of the 2017 High-level Political Forum meeting in New York in July to discuss the engagement of rising powers in the GPEDC. The Co-Chair Germany, in particular, is paying a lot of attention to a more inclusive approach of the GPEDC.
- There is still strong significant interest among recipients of ODA to maintain the GPEDC as a platform for voicing their views and discussing their concerns regarding the quality of development cooperation, although they might not go as far as requesting SSC providers to join the GPEDC.
- There is a strong intention to strengthen the relevance of the GPEDC at the local level, and to get GPEDC members back on track towards improving on the assessments under the monitoring framework. However, there is also room for improvement to make the current monitoring framework more relevant and to translate the Paris principles into a format more suitable for cooperation towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Policy Recommendations

- There is a need to organize outreach to rising powers, especially China at the highest level (Minister to Minister). The GPEDC approach is technical, however in China and other countries it is perceived as a political agenda. Outreach should come from the UN side and take place at the highest political level.
- More effort has to be put into finding out what happened between Busan, Mexico and Nairobi meetings and why emerging economies turned away from GPEDC in that period. In Busan, a compromise on common but differentiated commitments was drafted, which has been neglected ever since. This debate should be revitalized.
- Trilateral cooperation should be intensified between ODA donors and providers of SSC.
- The GPEDC should provide a space to address the effectiveness of high-level political initiatives, like China's One Belt One Road, and how these initiatives contribute to achieving the Agenda 2030. Further, the GPEDC should be a platform to coordinate these different initiatives to avoid overlap and improve efficiency.
- The private sector also needs to be featured more in GPEDC discussion, ideally through discussions about development effectiveness on the local level. Another dimension to consider is effectiveness on a sectoral level in this regard.

Participants of the meeting

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