



2015

Busan Global Partnership Forum

November 23 – 24, 2015 | The-K hotel, Seoul, Republic of Korea



Plenary session 1

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation's Contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

This is the Executive Summary only. The full report is also available on the Global Partnership website.

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*Developed by **Development Initiatives** in consultation with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea***



Executive summary

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, which led to the creation of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), was a visionary agreement that represented a paradigm shift in how to ‘do’ development, moving from a North–South, donor–recipient model to one that embraced partnership, and from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. It was prescient in forging “a new global development partnership that embraces diversity and recognises the distinct roles that all stakeholders in co-operation can play to support development.” Four years later, similar language is echoed in *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*,¹ which seeks to “Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all countries, in particular developing countries”. The congruence between these two statements confirms that GPEDC’s vision is central to the achievement of the SDGs, and provides the basis for it to make a unique contribution to the 2030 Agenda. This paper explores the GPEDC’s potential role in relation to the 2030 Agenda and offers some preliminary conclusions to stimulate discussion at the 2nd Busan Global Partnership Forum.

GPEDC as an inclusive, multi-stakeholder initiative

The inclusive, multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC is identified by many as one of its key attributes, and a firm foundation for its contribution to the 2030 Agenda. As confirmed at the Mexico Steering Committee meeting in September 2015, given the widespread recognition of the need to mobilise not just development cooperation but all available financial resources to meet the ambition of the SDGs, the GPEDC’s inclusion of emerging economies, the private sector and civil society organisations are potential strengths. But to capitalise on that potential, and to make an irresistible case for the GPEDC’s role in achieving the SDGs, it is not enough for the GPEDC to bring these actors to the table. It needs to increase dialogue with them and encourage them to embed the shared principles of development effectiveness in their own ways of working, at global, regional and country levels.

At present, while some emerging economies have made a significant investment in the GPEDC, others are less engaged, and the same is true of civil society actors. The situation is even more complex with regard to the private sector, given the plethora of individual initiatives focused on enhancing its contribution to development, and there is a need for the GPEDC to clarify its comparative advantage and determine its specific role in this area. Comparison between the shared principles agreed at Busan and the effectiveness principles developed by each of these stakeholder groups within their own forums highlights considerable scope for enhanced collaboration.

Implementation of the SDGs is likely to be through a complex network of partnerships using national experience to build and share best practice across regions, and then using regional platforms to drive global change. It is by encouraging inclusive partnerships of all kinds at country and regional level, and by providing a forum in which members can share their experience and identify common lessons learned, that the GPEDC will maximise its contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

The GPEDC’s global monitoring framework

The GPEDC’s global monitoring framework is also identified by many stakeholders as a unique and valuable asset that could contribute to the monitoring of the SDGs. For this to happen, the monitoring framework needs to be technically sound, based on an agreed theory of change, and presented in a way that provides an unstoppable logic between improving the quality of development and achieving the SDGs.

The current monitoring framework has ten indicators, all of which have targets for 2015, so the first challenge in increasing its relevance to the 2030 Agenda is to revise the targets and the political commitments on which they are based. A second challenge identified in this paper is that aggregate progress on several of the long-established indicators imported from the Paris Declaration has been slow, and if this persists it risks undermining the credibility of the monitoring exercise. Publication of disaggregated data in the next Global Monitoring Report would help to address the presentational aspect of this problem, but the GPEDC also needs to create space for an open dialogue about why progress has been so slow, what can be done to tackle this, and whether certain principles need to be reassessed.

While the monitoring framework should be expanded to include a wider range of actors over time, the GPEDC should focus on dialogue rather than data in the first instance and provide space for capturing this in narrative form. This could be included either in the Global Monitoring Report or in complementary materials, and captured in updates from regional and national workshops.

With a more robust monitoring framework in place, the GPEDC would be well placed to offer its expertise to the SDG monitoring exercise and contribute to the broader follow-up and review mechanisms established by the 2030 Agenda. In terms of approach, the GPEDC could contribute to the global SDG monitoring framework in two different ways – it could seek to become a qualitative data source for a number of individual means of implementation (MOI) indicators; it could offer a complementary report that considers development effectiveness in the context of the SDGs more broadly; or it could pursue both approaches. The GPEDC's experience of running a complex global monitoring exercise, and of establishing successful regional platforms, could provide valuable lessons for those involved in monitoring the SDGs, and the GPEDC should explore the best ways of sharing these.

Conclusions

While the SDGs focus on development outcomes (such as ending extreme poverty), the GPEDC focuses on the quality of development inputs: the effectiveness of development. The two are inextricably linked because more effective inputs and behaviours will contribute to sustained improved outcomes. By maximising its assets, and demonstrating its value in improving development effectiveness, the GPEDC can make a unique contribution to achieving the ambitions of 2030 Agenda. For this to happen, the GPEDC needs to play to its strengths and address its weaknesses as follows:

1. While the multi-stakeholder nature of the GPEDC is a potential strength, to capitalise on this in the post-2015 era, the GPEDC needs to collaborate more with other stakeholder forums at global and regional levels, and promote more dialogue and lesson learning between all of its stakeholders at country level to maximise its impact. The 2nd Busan Global Partnership Forum provides a good opportunity for exploring this with many of its key stakeholders.
2. The monitoring framework needs to be strengthened, its theory of change validated and its continuing relevance tested if it is to be presented as a key component of the GPEDC's 'offer' to the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the GPEDC needs to update existing targets, consider new indicators based on new commitments, and examine why progress on several of its long-established indicators has stalled and what can be done to address this (if the indicators in question are still judged to be relevant and important).
3. Much of the GPEDC's added value derives from the activities undertaken by participants at country level. Consideration should be given to creating a new, openly accessible online platform for sharing best practice and lessons learned from this and other GPEDC forums and workshops. A global repository of lessons learned under the GPEDC, including on the Global Partnership Initiatives and other cross-cutting efforts, could show the value added of the GPEDC and motivate new initiatives among stakeholders to support SDG implementation through effective development cooperation.

Notes

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworlds>