The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness highlights the importance of capacity development for Southern ownership and leadership of development strategies and processes. It places capacity development at the centre of international aid debate.

In 2006, the DAC issued a guidance note (The Challenge of Capacity Development - Working towards Good Practice) which became widely known as an international reference. Since then, the DAC has sought to help donors identify and apply operational good practice consistent with these guidance principles.

In 2008, the DAC helped raise the visibility of capacity development in the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness by supporting a donor - partner country Bonn Consensus list of six capacity development operational priorities - later to become part of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The 16 different AAA passages on capacity can indeed be grouped into six operational themes that match the Bonn consensus list and are a common agenda for future use by all development partners. Based upon this joint North-South mandate, the DAC approved follow on actions centred on the capacity priorities of the AAA through the next High Level Forum (HLF4) in Busan, South Korea (2011).

AAA Capacity Development Priorities

- **Enabling environment** - address the systemic impediments to local capacity development.
- **National, sector, and thematic strategies** - ensure proper integration of capacity development priorities in key national, sub-national, sector and thematic strategies.
- **Country systems** - strengthen country system capacity to implement policies and manage public resources.
- **Fragile situations** – tailor capacity building in situations of fragility, including countries emerging from conflict.
- **Technical co-operation** - work towards demand-driven technical co-operation and promote the use of local and regional resources, including through South-South arrangements.
- **Civil society/private sector** - enable local civil society and the private sector to play their role in capacity development.
• Encouragement to all parties to shape and use a common agenda of priority capacity development actions – to Busan and beyond.

The overarching objective of this effort since Accra has been to promote strategic shifts to the WP-EFF approach for capacity development:

• From joint learning to concrete, joint behaviour change;
• From donor leadership to partner country ownership of CD processes;
• From headquarters policy to country implementation of CD principles.

Promoting greater coherence on capacity development within OECD
A small Capacity Development Unit within the DAC Secretariat has worked within the OECD to promote greater coherence and experience sharing on the topic of capacity development across key areas of work such as environment, aid effectiveness, or conflict and fragility. Efforts included a series of capacity-related events around issues of common interest (country systems, fragile situations, workshop on approaches and principles, issue briefs), and ad-hoc support upon demand.

Example of OECD supported initiatives

- Environment Network: support to the Capacity Development for Environment Initiative
- Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF): support to WP-EFF clusters on Country Systems, Ownership and Accountability and Managing for Development Results
- International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF): support for the INCAF International Dialogue process
- Evaluation Network: support to the Evaluation Capacity Development Initiative

BUILDING JOINT PARTNERSHIP

Seeking partnership
To implement its initiative, the DAC has formed an informal partnership with the CD Alliance - a Southern-led forum for CD political advocacy - and the Learning Network on Capacity Development (LenCD) - a North-South CD professional learning network. We also established linkages with several other partners within and outside of the donor community, including - the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the European Commission, the Asian Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness (CDDE), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and various bilateral donors.

Raising visibility of Southern voices
Together, we seek to raise the visibility of Southern perspectives in the current work on capacity development and to strengthen partner country leadership of it. In particular, Southern participation in key international forums such as the March 2010 Colombia High Level Forum, key DAC events and other relevant meetings on the road to Busan have been promoted. This included an initial study on an African Learning Platform for Capacity Development with NEPAD.

CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND KEY MESSAGES FOR BUSAN

Consolidating learning and key messages for Busan
Two years after Accra and one year to Busan, we are now consolidating this collective learning to help shape joint South-North messages for the next HLF. A professional drafting team is currently assembling “Perspectives Notes” on each of the six AAA capacity priorities which will better join up existing field evidence, including perspectives of key donors and Southern groups. The findings of these notes will feed into a more political and strategic Synthesis Report on Capacity Development Learning for Busan, under the leadership of a small High Level Group of Southern senior professionals who will guide the drafting of the Synthesis Report.

Paris Consultation and Cairo Workshop
A special consultation on CD in aid business processes: Getting it right! will be organised on 29-30 November 2010. The event will seek greater consensus on key messages for Busan. The High Level Group¹ will then plan a Cairo meeting (March 2011) of leading partners around the conclusions of its Synthesis Report and conclude with strategic messages for capacity development in Busan and beyond.

1. Talaat Abdel-Malek (Egypt), Frannie Leautier (ACBF), Chhieng Yanara (Cambodia), and Fernando Straface (Argentina).

To know more on the current DAC initiative on capacity development, please visit www.oecd.org/dac/capacitydevelopment
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