

2013 – An exceptional year for the DAC



Jon Lomoy, Director of the
Development Co-operation
Directorate of the OECD

The global development landscape is changing fast and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is changing with it. One of the most tangible signs of the Committee's transformation is its opening up to new development actors and the accession of new members. In this regard, 2013 was an exceptional year with five OECD members - the Czech Republic, Iceland, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia - joining the Committee. It took more than 25 years for the previous five countries to join the DAC. With its 29 members, currently, and strengthened collaboration with other providers of development co-operation, notably China and the Arab donors, the DAC is positioning itself as an important player as we move into a new era when the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expire in 2015.

Since its inception in 1961, the DAC has influenced global development co-operation substantially. In 1996, the Committee formulated the International Development Goals, which evolved into the MDGs. The DAC has also promoted dialogue on how to make development co-operation activities more effective, which led to the adoption of an internationally agreed set of principles and broader participation in the DAC's work and activities. The objectivity, neutrality and quality of the Committee's work continue to encourage countries that have gained development experience to join the DAC and share that experience with others. Over the years, membership grew to 24 when Korea joined the Committee in 2010. Last year's wave of accessions is a testament to the continuing importance of the Committee and the relevance of its work.

The accession of new members will enrich discussions within the DAC. The countries that joined the Committee in 2013 may represent a small part of concessional development flows but they have achieved impressive development results and have valuable experience to share in many areas that are central to the DAC's work. These include political and economic transformation, smooth integration into the global economy as well as the promotion of democracy and human rights. Membership of the DAC will further reinforce the position of these countries as important providers of development co-operation and help them to enhance the effectiveness of their development activities.

To some observers, the DAC remains an exclusive club of large, generous donors. However, 2013 proved that the DAC is a heterogeneous group that welcomes different development actors, including those that may still receive official development assistance and whose bilateral programmes may focus on sharing their own recent development experience through technical co-operation.

In order to stay relevant for the development community and to play an important role post-2015, the DAC will continue evolving towards a meeting place where a wide range of development partners learn from each other's experiences and explore new ways of working together to achieve common goals, such as through triangular co-operation. At the same time, the DAC will continue to be a source of knowledge and analysis based on participating countries' good practices. I am convinced that further accessions of countries, both from inside and outside the OECD, will facilitate this positive evolution. For its part, the OECD Secretariat will continue to support this process in any way it can.