SESSION 2 “SHARING EXPERIENCES ON TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION”

This session is expected to enrich understanding of different factors that can contribute to good triangular co-operation.

The three lead discussants

1. Mr Hiroshi Kato, Director, Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute,
2. Ms Sandra Bessudo Lion, General Director, Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation,
3. Ms Christina Matusse, National Vice Director for Planning, Ministry of Planning and Development, Mozambique.

Thank you Ms. Adams. We welcome the moderation of the United States Agency for International Development in this session, and we are honored to share this session with partners with whom we have been working closely in South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

On behalf of Ms. Sandra Bessudo, General Director of the Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation, I would like to greet the efforts of enriching the international debate on Triangular Cooperation. It is a good base in order to move together into practice, and agreements should be made. The efforts around this dialogue respond to the renewed and inclusive cooperation landscape, where a diverse range of partners, is broadening the menu of development options available to achieve common development challenges.

Development cooperation anchors in three complementary pillars: a) knowledge sharing; b) financial support; and c) technical assistance. Thus, Triangular Cooperation emerges as the model where the three pillars better converge, bringing innovative responses to address sustainable development challenges.

When engaging in Triangular Cooperation, it is important to have in mind “what it is” and “how to do it”.
For Colombia, Triangular Cooperation is a promising avenue that bridges South-South and North-South Cooperation, where at least three vehicles involved in horizontal partnerships, are interested in sharing, learning, and exploring their complementary strengths.

“…BUT HOW?”

That’s the main question surrounding Triangular Cooperation worldwide.

Before referring to the characteristics, it is important to agree on the principles for good Triangular Cooperation. The Colombian experience shows that South-South and Triangular Cooperation perceive strong benefits when horizontal partnerships are based on equity, trust, ownership, mutual learning, flexibility and coordination.

According to this, APC-Colombia shares the conclusions of the brainstorming meeting on Triangular Cooperation held last year here, in Lisbon. Nevertheless, would like to complement with the following comments:

1- All partners involved in Triangular Cooperation, are facilitators that share responsibilities for demand-driven development results, according to their strengths.

2- As a pivotal partner, Colombia has experiences, knowledge and lessons that are complemented with financial resources to scale-up the horizontal partnerships. Pivotal partners act as engines of change where coordination is a key instrument for development results.

3- Rather than referring to models, it is crucial to agree on the concept. For Colombia, Triangular Cooperation responds to one concept, with different ways of implementation, where partners can play one of the three roles, but not simultaneously.
4- Strengthening capacities under Triangular Cooperation, responds to the principle of mutual learning of all partners involved, and not exclusively of developing countries, so that new knowledge can emerge.

5- Quantifying and measuring Triangular Cooperation, especially under the pillar of knowledge sharing, is a key challenge. In this sense, it is important to advance in measuring the expertise and knowledge involved.

6- The lack of common programmatic and strategic approaches for planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of triangular programs and projects can generate high transaction costs.

7- Highly adaptable solutions should be promoted under Triangular Cooperation, where flexibility, cultural similarities, and strong bilateral relationships, are at the basis.

8- The use of country systems to channel funds is not a necessary way of fulfilling the conditions for good triangular cooperation. Especially when referring to the pivotal partner. The Colombian experience has shown that legal and administrative procedures are very long and usually delay the implementation for at least one year.

9- Ownership also refers to the capacity of the pivotal partner to identify their strengths based on locally appropriate knowledge and lessons. This should be translated into Good Practices, where International Organizations can act as brokers with specific methodologies to strength Centers of Excellence (i.e Statistics – Mozambique).

Let me complement the principles above mentioned, with 7 factors for successful triangular cooperation:

1. Common goal, clear division of roles, and shared responsibilities
2. Sustained political buy-in
3. Beneficiary country leadership
4. Capacity development and mutual learning for all partners
5. Shared decision-making and accountability with reliability, trust and respect, being essential ingredients
6. Flexibility, adaptability and predictability for establishing triangular partnerships
7. Time and sustained funding

Before finishing, I would like to share with you, how innovation is at the basis of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Colombia.

Colombia has grown to become a pivotal partner, with effective regional South-South Cooperation mechanisms, that have been attractive for triangular cooperation projects. This is the case of: (a) The Caribbean Basin Strategy, (b) the Program with the Mesoamerican Region and (c) The Colombian Cooperation Strategy for Integral Security.

Aiming to diversify and expand South-South Cooperation to other regions and with the same spirit of the strategies above mentioned, Colombia is also working with Southeast Asia and Africa.

Colombia has increased 550% its budget in two years for the implementation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, managing 27 million dollars since 2010. This is an important amount that shows our commitment and solidarity towards sustainable development.

THANK YOU!