

15-16 May 2008 Bonn Workshop – “**Capacity Development: Accra and Beyond**”  
*Capacity Development: Creating the Conditions for Alignment*  
Elene Makonnen

Alignment - along with the capacity considerations associated with its various dimensions - is emerging as essential to progress on all the partnership commitments under the Paris agenda. National capacity, including skills, institutions, systems and processes to articulate development priorities and to manage aid for results within the broader context of public resource management, is the bedrock for country ownership. National capacity defined as such also provides greater fiduciary assurance and confidence in national systems, helps create the conditions for alignment (through the institutional reforms and improvements in the standards of national systems and processes), and in turn, gives meaning to the principle of national ownership.

**What**

- Launch a more robust capacity development (CD) partnership response (by partner countries and their development partners) to create the conditions for alignment under the Paris agenda. This response should focus on country systems and must include monitorable and time-bound benchmarks to track implementation progress, particularly up to the Fourth HLF in 2011.
- Deliver all in-country development partner activities in support of government through national systems unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary. Where it is not possible to do so, (i) put time-limit on the use of any alternative mechanism or additional safeguards, (ii) design the time bound mechanisms in ways which support and develop rather than undermine national systems, and (iii) couple the time-bound alternative mechanisms with a joint country and partner effort to address the systemic weaknesses in the related national system. We floated a similar proposition at an SPA Plenary meeting in 2001. I believe the time is ripe to reactive this proposition by the SPA.

**Why**

- Creating the conditions for alignment through a more robust capacity development (CD) partnership response focused on strengthening country systems is critical to a country-led and owned development effectiveness agenda. It is also essential for the required shift to more equal partnerships in the context of the Paris Declaration

**How**

- There is a growing pool of evidence-based work (including SPA country-based work) on the CD-related challenges associated with budget support, sector budget support, vertical funds, and results-based aid management can serve as a useful platform to jump start such a robust CD partnership response to alignment.
- Implementation of a robust CD partnership response focused on country systems must:
  - Be country-led, championed by government through high level political support, and supported through medium-term partnership commitments by all internal stakeholders and external development partners;
  - Deploy innovative south-south arrangements;
  - Build on what we know has worked across the developing regions in terms of country ownership, leadership, and the conditions/incentives for alignment; and
  - Include monitorable benchmarks to track progress, particularly for the period leading up to HLF 4.

**What are the recommendations for shaping the Accra Action Agenda?**

Focus on use of country systems and on capacity development of national systems and processes to help create the conditions for alignment to country systems (For details, see above section on “What”)