

**Second Meeting of the Accra HLF Steering Committee
(OECD-DAC, Paris, April 20, 2007)**

Summary of the Discussion

1. The second meeting of Steering Committee (SC) for the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Accra HLF) took place on Friday, April 20, 2007 in Paris. Mr. Cedergren chaired the meeting which was attended by the members of the SC with video links to Accra, Managua, Pretoria, Tokyo and Washington, and audio link to New York. Annex A lists the participants present at the meeting.

Organizational Issues

2. Dates. There was a discussion on whether the original proposed dates for the Accra HLF (September 4-6, 2008) should be reconsidered since Fridays and Saturdays are considered a Sabbath day for some religious faiths. Representatives from the Government of Ghana confirmed that they would be agreeable to advance the dates for the Accra HLF to September 2-4, 2008 (Tuesday-Thursday) which was subsequently agreed by the SC as the new dates for the Accra HLF.

3. Facilities. The SC members were provided with a brief description of the Accra International Conference Center facilities that will be used for the Accra HLF (Annex B). The Forum is expected to draw a very large group, possibly 700-1000 participants from about 120 countries and institutions. The SC discussed how the structure of the Forum agenda should be planned keeping in mind the available facilities at the Conference Center and to consider use of committee rooms in the nearby Parliament or hotel facility if additional rooms are needed. The plenary sessions will likely be held in the main auditorium of the Conference Center that has seating for 1000 people and interpreting facilities. It was suggested that the marketplace event could be located in the entryway to the Conference Center where the long hallway will permit space for poster displays and information booths. Given the limited number of sizeable individual meeting rooms available, the upper limit of roundtable seminars is likely to be in the range of 10-12.

4. Budget. Using the budget expenses for the 2005 Paris HLF (about \$1.1 million) and the recent Hanoi Roundtable (approximately \$0.8 million) as reference points, the costs for staging the Accra HLF event itself is estimated to be in the range of \$1.2 to \$1.5 million. There will also be costs associated with holding four to six preparatory regional events prior to the Forum. Based on past experiences of regional workshops held before and after the Paris HLF, the costs varied in different regions. For example, the cost for the Bamako workshop (March 2006) was \$210,000 which included conference facilities, participants costs (travel, accommodation, etc.), and other logistics while costs for the Bolivia workshop (October 2006) was \$125,000 since many participants, including those from partner countries, paid for themselves (about 200 participants in both workshops). Therefore, it is likely that the total budget could exceed \$2 million and SC members agreed that fund-raising for the Accra HLF will likely be necessary and that this should begin in the near future. To help defray the costs, some participants suggested that fund-

raising could also be done locally at the country level from local donor agencies (e.g., South Africa and the EC supported this proposal). Similarly, potential contributions should be explored from the private sector which provided sizeable contributions for the Hanoi Roundtable. In order to have a better picture of the magnitude of fund-raising needed, the Chair asked that an indicative budget plan be prepared before the next SC meeting.

5. Preparatory Country/Regional Events. Related to the discussion on costs, the discussion focused on the requisite number of country/regional events that would be necessary to prepare partner countries and local donor communities and other actors ahead of the Forum. These consultative events could focus on select issues/themes with a group of interested countries, and for larger regional events it was agreed that linguistic segregation along Anglophone and Francophone countries could be too limiting to allow cross learning and sharing of experiences.

Accra HLF Agenda Issues

6. Partner Country Note. The representative from South Africa introduced a concept note that was prepared by partner countries following a workshop in Kwa-Zulu Natal in September 2006 as input toward the preparation of the Accra HLF (Annex C). The note outlined the steps and measures partner countries are planning to take in the preparation of the Accra HLF to help shape and strengthen ownership of the agenda, to ensure partner countries views are well represented in the preparatory analytic studies, and to have balanced representation in the roster of speakers at the Forum itself. The Chair welcomed this initiative, noted that the issues identified for the Accra agenda in the partner countries note feature prominently also in the Accra HLF Concept Note prepared by the SC. The Chair reiterated the SC's strong intention to ensure substantive partner country input in the planning of the Accra HLF and at the same time emphasized the importance of having one integrated preparatory process leading to a shared agenda and a common outcome document. The SC member from South Africa provided assurance that this will indeed be the case.

7. A matrix was prepared as a preliminary proposal to guide the SC's discussion on how to organize a large number of topics proposed for the Accra HLF (Annex D). The topics in the matrix were organized depending on the maturity of ongoing discussions, where they might fit within the three-level structure agreed for the Accra HLF—high-level Ministerial meeting, in-depth roundtable seminars and a marketplace, and the available studies and analytical work to support them. It is understood that these studies and analyses will need to be synthesized or consolidated, assessed to see whether these need to be further developed through additional analytic work which should build on any existing or ongoing work undertaken by some agencies. The matrix was considered to be a useful tool as a basis for discussion that could serve as a reference for further improvements.

8. High-level Meeting. The selected topics for the high-level meeting on Day 3 must have the appropriate political level focus that warrants the interest and attention of

the senior-level participants who will be in attendance. Discussion of these topics should be carefully planned to focus on the critical policy actions that are needed to reach 2010, following two and half years of implementing the Paris Declaration and a forward looking strategy beyond the Accra HLF.

9. Roundtable Topics. Discussion topics at the Roundtable should facilitate and support decision taking, policy endorsement, and articulate a way forward on a number of issues that are key to advance aid effectiveness. Given a desire to consult more broadly on Roundtable Topics, including with greater numbers of partner countries, no decisions were sought at this time. As reflected in Annex D, possible topics that were discussed included country experiences, division of labor, use of country systems, incentives, results (follow-up to Hanoi), and the tracer sector.

10. Marketplace. Posters, information booths, and other communications (e.g., written materials) for the marketplace at the Accra HLF are intended as opportunities for partner countries and donors to provide information and concrete examples in applying the Paris principles and to share experiences for cross-learning or explore new themes/ideas. The breadth of topics would cover across different sectors and all interested partners should be encouraged to participate.

11. Tracer Sector. The SC discussed the proposal for a tracer sector to be included in the Accra HLF agenda. The objective of having a tracer sector should go beyond addressing the vertical vs. horizontal issues; rather it should provide operational insights into and understanding of how the Paris agenda applies at the sector level and contributes to greater development effectiveness. As was discussed at the meeting, health is a particularly challenging sector from an aid effectiveness perspective because of the involvement in it of a large number and broad range of development partners. The health sector has strong links to the scaling up agenda and international health experts and practitioners have already started looking at how aid effectiveness issues impede progress towards the health MDGs. The SC agreed that health should be the tracer study for inclusion in the development of the Forum agenda, probably as a one of the Roundtable topics. It also acknowledged that we must also learn from other key sectors and that undertaking analytic work to achieve greater understanding should be encouraged, though not as detailed as what is envisaged for the health sector. Japan suggested that the infrastructure sector could be one of the additional sectors to be studied in this way and the World Bank supported the proposal.

12. Additional Thoughts. It will be important for the SC to ensure that the Forum strikes the right balance between strong partner country-ownership including the views of new partners, and also that the Forum begins to identify a vision of the aid effectiveness agenda beyond 2010. The Accra HLF needs to demonstrate why aid effectiveness matters; the Forum should emphasize the progress, as well as lack thereof, made towards implementing the Paris principles as well as additional actions needed. As part of scaling up and forward-looking, the Accra HLF agenda has to be strategic and to provide direct input to the agenda of the Development Forum that will take place in Qatar in December 2008. However, the SC has to be mindful not to set the agenda too rigidly and the SC

should seek broader input from partner countries in developing the agenda, beyond those who are already participating as members of the SC.

Accra Agenda for Action

13. The Chair emphasized that the content for the outcome document, “Accra Agenda for Action” (AAA), would need to be prepared and negotiated ahead of the Forum. However, the document should leave room to incorporate linkages to the discussions resulting from the Roundtable seminars. To help guide the SC’s discussion on the content of the AAA, a draft outline or document would be prepared for discussion at the next SC meeting.

CSO Advisory Group

14. CIDA as chair of the Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (AG) introduced a draft concept note and a proposed work plan of the AG. A key objective of the AG is to promote improved understanding of aid effectiveness relating to the roles of CSOs in development. It hopes to use the Accra Forum as a launching pad for bringing this improved understanding forward

15. Several SC members welcomed the update on the activities of the AG and called for the AG to articulate a more focused theme and the outcomes it expects of its role for Accra and beyond. It was recognized that CSOs are also important players to the aid effectiveness agenda, given this role they will also be expected to be held accountable for contributing to the Paris implementation agenda through their actions especially at the country level.

Next Steps

16. The Chair asked that the following documents be prepared and circulated in advance for discussion at the next SC meeting:

- a new document drawing from the concept note, laying out the structure and content of the three day event, including, the marketplace, the roundtable topics, and the key political issues for the high-level ministerial meeting which will help define the content and going forward actions for their discussion and decisions (the topics to be included should draw from the matrix as well as reflect the comments made during the meeting);
- a more specific list of required analytic studies to support the relevant sessions at the Forum;
- the elements or the outline of the AAA with some indications on its format; and
- a preliminary budget that will provide an indication of the total estimated costs including the preparatory regional events. This preliminary budget will inform the SC on the extent of fund-raising activities that will be necessary.

17. The next meeting for the SC will take place on Friday, June 29, 2007.