

Capacity Development

Small Group A, Policy Dialogue on Development Co-operation

The Policy Dialogue on Development Co-operation, to be held in Mexico City on 28-29 September 2009, will include Small Group discussions on triangular co-operation. This document provides background information on capacity development, which will be the focus of Small Group A, chaired by Talaat Abdel-Malek. The objectives and structure of the session are spelled out in the *Annotated Agenda*.

A Renewed Focus on Capacity

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and 2008 Accra Agenda for Action are proof of a renewed focus on capacity. Together, providers of South-South co-operation and DAC donors can address the following questions:

a) Technical assistance

- What comparative advantages do providers of South-South co-operation and DAC donors have in delivering technical assistance?
- What can providers of South-South co-operation and DAC donors do to promote local ownership and ensure that technical assistance is delivered according to partner country priorities?
 - For instance, how can implementing agencies better factor in the local context (local systems, language, cultural understanding)?
 - How can partner countries be better engaged in management and decision-making?
- How can technical assistance promote learning and help build national capacity, rather than substituting it?
- Can technical assistance be made less costly than it currently is?

b) Training

- Partner countries have often pointed out that traditional training pays insufficient attention to local context and priorities.
- A further criticism of traditional training is its insufficient on long-term, sustainable results. Can results be determined in a more realistic and strategic manner? How can results be factored into the choice of implementing agencies? What room is there for improved impact evaluation?

c) Educational grants (scholarships, fellowships)

- Currently, most educational grants are provided for donor-side institutions, which select candidates according to performance. How donors and providers of South-South co-operation ensure that the selection of scholars and grantees aligns with strategic capacity-development objectives?
- How can the role and impact of grants be followed and tracked?

d) Emerging issues

- How can local or regional resources for capacity development be mobilized and utilized?
- What progress is being made in using comprehensive capacity assessments?
- Can the ongoing focus on individual skills be translated into organizational learning?