

**First Meeting of the Core Steering Group**  
Berlin, Germany (11-12 May 2009)

**Summary Record**

**1. Introduction**

The first meeting of the Capacity Development Alliance (CD Alliance) was held in Berlin, Germany, on 11-12 May 2009. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Talaat Abdel-Malek and Ms. Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven. It was co-sponsored by the CD Alliance and the German Federal Ministry for Development and Cooperation (BMZ)<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and outline an action-oriented and realistic 2009-2010 work plan for the CD Alliance, in order to successfully engage partner countries, donors and CD assistance providers under a common vision and agenda. The plan is expected to promote an integrated approach to capacity development from a Southern perspective, and to link strongly to the capacity development priorities articulated in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), noted in the box below. During the meeting, the members of the CD Alliance “Core Group” from partner countries contributed their experience in capacity development, highlighting their perspective in terms of priority areas for immediate focus and discussing relevant capacity development initiatives in their respective countries and regions. Representatives of donors and CD assistance providers also shared their experience, reviewed major challenges and noted their current strategies for capacity development.

**Accra Agenda for Action capacity development themes**

- **Civil society and private sector** - Enable local civil society and the private sector to play their capacity role.
- **National, sector, and thematic strategies** - Ensure integration of capacity development priorities in relevant national, sub-national, sector and thematic strategies.
- **Technical co-operation** - Work towards demand-driven technical co-operation and promote the use of local and regional resources, including South-South arrangements.
- **Enabling environment** - Address systemic impediments to local capacity development.
- **Country systems** - Assess, strengthen and promote use of country systems to implement policies and manage public resources, including procurement, financial management, results, statistics and information systems.
- **Fragile situations** - Tailor, phase and coordinate capacity building and development in situations of fragility, including countries emerging from conflict

**2. Context**

The co-chairs highlighted the centrality of capacity development in the current debate on aid development effectiveness. Capacity development is now widely recognized as a fundamental element of sustainable development processes, a fact conveyed in more operationally specific terms in the Bonn Consensus and the AAA. Donors and partner countries alike acknowledge that conventional, donor-driven assistance often has not succeeded in promoting sustainable capacity development. Their bottlenecks are a major constraint for partner countries who seek to own and manage their way out of dependence and underdevelopment.

The deliberations at the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (September 2008) underlined the need for a southern-led initiative to promote capacity development (CD). This initiative was launched shortly

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<sup>1</sup> The event was attended by 15 members of the CD Alliance Core Group, representing Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Germany, Japan, the African Capacity Building Foundation (Zimbabwe) and the OECD. The D. Šilovic (representing K. Wignaraja, UNDP) and V. Sivagnanasothy (Sri Lanka) took part to the meeting via audio link. K. Richelle (EuropeAid) and S. Pradhan (World Bank) were represented by colleagues. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provided a presentation which was discussed during the meeting. BMZ, two members of the DAC Secretariat and the LenCD Co-ordinator served as transitional secretariat for the CD Alliance. The complete list of participants and Core Group Members is attached.

afterwards to foster and continue dialogue on various CD challenges including donor-partner country practices and the need for behaviour change – with partner countries in the lead. The CD Alliance aims at offering a forum to Southern political leaders to discuss and identify pragmatic solutions to respond to the capacity development challenges raised Accra. It expects to remain an independent, flexible and informal forum for Southern political leadership, which will collaborate closely with donors and other development partners and service providers working on capacity development – including the DAC, the WP-EFF, UNDP, Japan, LenCD, and the World Bank.

Capacity development is a long-term process. It requires an integrated approach to support individual skills and institutional capacities, and it seeks to deal with systemic constraints that impede the sustainability of interventions. The co-chairs invited participants to envisage an action-oriented and results-focused work plan for the CD Alliance, based upon partner country priorities and specific commitments by Southern leaders to implement effective solutions to capacity issues, particularly as they relate to the AAA.

### **3. Partner country comments on capacity development**

- Capacity development processes and interventions must be demand-driven, Southern-led and fully integrated into national and sector programmes. Inadequate progress so far has been due to the supply-driven nature of aid programmes and to systemic failures, including limited political commitment in partner countries, the absence of favourable incentive systems and the lack of government-wide reforms.
- Capacity development interventions must be focused at the country level. National and local capacity champions can use the CD Alliance platform to share experiences and engage other partners to promote best practices and change action for effective capacity development in country.
- Examples of success stories in partner countries, including some fragile situations, can be highlighted. Committed leaders and good examples of country-led strategies for capacity development in Africa include Ghana, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Liberia.
- The CD Alliance can provide a relevant forum for experience sharing and peer-to-peer learning among partner countries. Cross-learning and collaboration with other existing regional and sub-regional platforms such as the recently established CDDE in Asia and the Pacific should be sought to invite synergies and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Similarly, linkages with other key actors, such as NEPAD in Africa or UNDP also should be promoted.
- Partner country participants viewed many of the most immediate CD priorities in terms consistent with those of the AAA, including strengthening of country systems (procurement, statistics, public financial management, results), identifying best practices in fragile contexts (often caused by weak institutions and where peace and stability are linked to capacity) and strategies to strengthen capacities outside the public sector (civil society, NGO networks, private sector).
- Technical cooperation (TC) is a leading issue. Donor efforts to evaluate and reform their technical cooperation approaches were welcomed. Donors are urged especially to identify more appropriate approaches at the country level. Interest and commitment to expand South-South and triangular cooperation were also noted, examples of which were particularly noted in Latin America and Asia. Participants from Chile and Colombia shared their experiences; opportunities to replicate such initiatives elsewhere are to be sought.

### **4. Donor and CD assistance provider comments**

- Efforts to identify good practice and to improve strategies for capacity development are multiple among donors today. Many donors acknowledge the need to critically review TC to improve its effectiveness in

developing local and national capacities and so as to respond to partner country needs and priorities. Some are currently moving in this direction, including work by EuropeAid on TC and the reform of strategy relating to capacity building at the World Bank. The CD Alliance can be a useful source of feedback to donors and bring a Southern perspective to these reform processes.

- Donors broadly support relevant forms of South-South and triangular co-operation. They would encourage greater experience sharing among partner countries and saw the CD Alliance as a useful forum for cross learning. Donors and CD service providers can play a strong role in helping to facilitate and connect Southern actors so as to promote more joined up learning in this area. Both donors and partner countries support learning processes which focus at the level of practitioners. Learning processes need to be tailored to country specific contexts and, to the extent possible, managed by partner countries.
- The CD Alliance can play several crucial roles and should choose them carefully. It can help to sustain the demand for change from donors and encourage them to change implementation behaviour. It can help partner countries identify their champions and offer them a forum to promote better coordination among themselves and with donors. It was felt important for the CD Alliance to adopt a focused agenda, with priority given to action and substance, and with procedures kept as simple and flexible as possible.
- The CD Alliance can play a key role in promoting Southern perspectives for implementation of the AAA, through the next High Level Forum in 2011. The AAA agenda offers an opportunity for the CD Alliance to be focused and results oriented, with clear time horizons. To use the AAA agenda of actions as an operational framework, it will want to be as representative as possible of the range of partner countries. The need to define clear and achievable results and to enhance existing mechanisms to monitor progress was emphasised. Donor participants noted similar priorities for action in relation to fragile situations, strengthening country systems, integration of capacity issues at the sectors level, including environment, climate change, health, and social security.
- Donors and assistance providers invited the CD Alliance to work with them to enhance synergies and avoid duplications across work streams. The simple and lightly structured partnership between the CD Alliance and the DAC and LenCD seemed immediately relevant in this sense. It offers a quickly operational platform for bringing donors and partner countries together in support of the implementation, through 2011, of the priority themes for capacity development contained in the AAA. It was noted that all three groups already have inter-relationships (Dr. Abdel-Malek and Mr. Richelle as co-chairs of the WP-EFF; Mr. Tomimoto as CD advocate on the WP-EFF Executive Committee; interconnected steering committee membership among the three groups).

## 5. Next steps

*Immediate action:* In the next few weeks, the following steps have been agreed:

- The Alliance will seek to expand its core group membership to enhance regional representation and become more inclusive of the broader spectrum of partner countries and other key actors, such as non-governmental groups. In this vein, the CD Alliance will improve its communication strategy to reach out members and potential champions – inducing the introduction of a user-friendly website. All core members will forward a short personal bio for future reference.
- A number of success stories and good practices in CD will be identified in such areas like public procurement, civil service reform, etc. to instil a sense of pragmatism in approach.
- Southern members will produce a short written statement on specific opportunities for capacity development actions in their respective countries, sub-regions, or regions. This will include reference to most immediate capacity development priorities. They will help identify three or four local or national capacity development champions, selected on the basis of such criteria as

being senior policy makers that have shown strong commitment to capacity development. The possibility of providing members with a template for reporting will be considered.

*Learning platforms:* The CD alliance will explore the best opportunities to establish CD regional platforms, especially in Africa to start with, to collect and consolidate information and promote the use of good practice, with specific focus on the AAA priority areas. They will offer capacity development champions and others access to share knowledge and resources for capacity development. These platforms will be action oriented with a clearly defined mandate so as to avoid overlap or duplication with other existing efforts. Linkages and synergies with other initiatives and partners such as CDDE, NEPAD, and ACBF will be promoted.

*Work plan and budget:* The Southern member statements will constitute the basis for the CD Alliance 2009-2010 work plan. The AAA provides a specific agenda of capacity development priorities through 2011, however, the Alliance will need to further focus its immediate actions to two or three priority areas and initiatives, for which a clear results framework should also be defined to allow for monitoring progress and assessing achievements. In the next months – likely by the end of July 2009 - the CD Alliance co-chairs will work closely with other members and with the support of the transitional secretariat to outline both a CD Alliance work plan and a budget. Funding and support from partners will then be sought. The DAC Secretariat offered the use of its network of CD correspondents as one mechanism to publicise the need for support.

*Seeking partnership:* Linkages and collaboration with other capacity development programmes in donor and partner countries will be explored. The DAC suggested that the CD Alliance to link with its work on fragile states and climate change, and to provide pragmatic support for the various aid effectiveness clusters and work streams in the WP-EFF architecture. UNDP encouraged the integration of the CD Alliance work into its upcoming initiatives, including those of South-South co-operation. The CD Alliance agreed to help provide feedback to donors on their strategies and initiatives in capacity development, and to assist other partners in setting up standards for good behaviour in capacity development (e.g. “code of conduct” for TC).

## **6. Issues for further consideration**

*Selection of events:* Numerous initiatives and events, including the areas of technical co-operation and South-South cooperation, are already known. The CD Alliance will define its comparative advantage to work in these areas, based on southern-defined priority needs, and to promote cross-fertilization of ideas. The nature of such engagement will be shaped gradually as other events and initiatives unfold, including upcoming meetings sponsored by EuropeAid (May 2009), UNDP (November 2009) and Colombia (2010).

*Links with DAC and LenCD:* Operational modalities, practical aspects and division of labour in the CD Alliance-DAC-LenCD partnership also need to be clarified. Currently, the DAC and LenCD are working with an African consultant to design an efficient approach to the establishment of a CD learning platform in Africa based on the six priority themes from the AAA. The LenCD learning platform will be part of a UNDP project framework that should be operational by July 2009. The DAC Secretariat has agreed, at the request of the CD Alliance co-chair, to continue its role as transitional secretariat until the Alliance can establish its own support structure. The CD Alliance agreed to seek, as soon as possible, support to establish its own small secretariat.

In conclusion, the meeting stressed the importance of moving ahead without delay but with careful planning of events to help produce outcomes and a multiplier effect. To achieve this, firm commitments within a common vision and framework by partner countries, donors and CD assistance providers are essential.

## **Annex 1 – Agenda**

### **First Meeting of the Core Steering Group BMZ, Berlin (Germany) - 11-12 May 2009**

#### **Day One, Monday 11 May 2009**

**14:30 – 15:00** Registration

**15:00 – 15:30** Welcome by the two co-chairs - introductions, and approval of proposed agenda

**15:30 – 18:00** Perspectives on capacity development (CD) in partner countries – presentations by members of the Alliance Core Group from partner countries, followed by discussion  
Perspectives on CD session (cont.), including assistance by middle income countries through south-south co-operation

**19:30** Dinner invitation by Ms. Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven

#### **Day Two, Tuesday 12 May 2009**

**08:30 – 10:00** Perspectives of donors and CD assistance providers: Presentations by representatives. Discussion, with feedback on southern CD perspectives presented earlier

**10:00 – 10:30** Coffee Break

**10:30 – 11:15** Summary presentation of OECD/DAC support to Capacity Development including the recently Compiled inventory of Donor policies and practices

**11:15 – 12:45** Toward a Work Plan (to spring or summer 2010): Prospective CD “clients” and assistance providers – next steps

**12:45 – 14:00** Lunch Break

**14:00 – 15:30** Review of funding options for the Capacity Development Alliance

**15:30 – 17:00** Possibilities of organising regional forum to mobilise political support and CD champions in (Africa and/or Asia to begin with) – identifying venue(s) and further actions required.

**17:00 – 17:30** Summing up by co-chairs, and conclusion of meeting

**Departure**

## Annex 2 – Participant List

### CD Alliance Core Group Members

#### *ACBF*

**Apollinaire Ndorukwigira** Operations Director, Africa Capacity Building Foundation - Harare, Zimbabwe a.ndorukwigira@acbf-pact.org

#### *Chile*

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#### *Egypt*

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#### *Europe Aid*

**Virginia Manzitti (representing Koos Richelle)** European Commission, Europe Aid, Brussels, Belgium Virginia.MANZITTI@ec.europa.eu

#### *Germany*

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#### *Sri Lanka*

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#### *UN Development Programme (UNDP)*

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#### *Transitional Secretariat*

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### Annex 3 - CD Alliance Core Group Members

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