

# Evaluation of the implementation of the Paris Declaration



Executive  
Summary

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# **EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARIS DECLARATION**

## **PHASE ONE**

### **SYNTHESIS REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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July 2008



**Kabell Consulting ApS**  
Managing for results

# Preface

**T**he Paris Declaration poses an important challenge both to the world of development cooperation in general and to the field of development evaluation. Compared with previous joint statements on aid harmonisation and alignment, it provides a practical, action-oriented roadmap with specific targets to be met by 2010. The number of countries and international organisations participating in the High Level Forum and putting their signature to the joint commitments contained in the Declaration was unprecedented and reflected a progressive widening of the range of voices in the aid effectiveness debate.

Alongside its strong focus on monitoring, the Paris Declaration also highlights the importance of undertaking an independent joint cross-country evaluation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how increased aid effectiveness contributes to meeting development objectives.

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the Paris Declaration and its contribution to aid effectiveness and ultimately to development effectiveness. In order to provide a proper basis for assessment, the evaluation is being carried out in two phases:

- *Phase One* has been conducted with the purpose of strengthening aid effectiveness by assessing changes of behaviour and identifying better practices for partners and donors in implementing the Paris commitments.
- *Phase Two* will be conducted with the purpose of assessing the Declaration's contribution to aid effectiveness and development results.

The first phase of the evaluation is now completed and we hope it will contribute constructively to the ongoing aid effectiveness policy debates and, in particular, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness which will take place in Accra in Ghana in September 2008. The second phase is planned to start in early 2009 and to be completed in time for the 4<sup>th</sup> High Level Forum in 2011.

Phase One comprised eight *Country level evaluations* designed within a common evaluation framework to ensure comparability of findings across countries while allowing flexibility for country specific interests. These evaluations looked at the actual implementation of the Paris Declaration in concrete settings and were undertaken in Bangladesh, Bolivia, the Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Vietnam (the Vietnamese study was an Independent Monitoring Exercise designed and executed separately). The country level evaluations were managed by the respective partner country and most were supported, both financially and substantively, by donors.

The country level evaluations were supplemented by eleven *Donor and multilateral development agency evaluations* which looked at how the Paris Declaration is represented in their policies and guidelines. These evaluations were mainly based on document reviews and supplemented by interviews with key players and were undertaken in the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the UNDG. (The UNDG conducted a joint headquarters and country level evaluation). They were managed by the respective agencies' evaluation departments.

The country and agency evaluations were reviewed by two independent advisers: Rikke Ingrid Jensen and John Eriksson.

The present report is a synthesis of these nineteen evaluations. It was prepared by an independent team comprising Dorte Kabell (Denmark), Nansozi Muwanga (Uganda), Francisco Sagasti (Peru) and Bernard Wood, team leader (Canada).

The Synthesis Report was reviewed by Mary Chinery-Hesse, Adviser to the President of Ghana and formerly Deputy Director General of the International Labour Organisation and Bruce Murray, Adjunct Professor at the Asian Institute of Management and former Director General of Evaluation at the Asian Development Bank.

Strategic guidance to the evaluation has been provided by an international Reference Group comprising members of the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, representatives from partner countries, principally the members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, and representatives for civil society<sup>1</sup>. The Reference Group convened three times in the course of 2007 and 2008. It has also had the opportunity to comment on successive drafts of the Synthesis Report.

The Reference Group appointed a small Management Group<sup>2</sup> tasked with the day-to-day coordination and management of the overall evaluation process. The Management Group also supported the donors and partner countries conducting their evaluations. The Reference Group and Management Group were co-chaired by Sri Lanka and Denmark and were supported by a small secretariat hosted by Denmark.

The Synthesis Team took guidance from the Management Group regarding such issues as interpretation of terms of reference and operational matters, including time-frames

and budget constraints. As specified in its mandate, the team also gave full consideration and responses to substantive comments from both the Reference Group and the Management Group, but the responsibility for the content of this final report, is solely that of the Synthesis Team.

This evaluation was initiated on the premise that – in spite of the complexity of evaluating the outcomes of a political declaration – it would be possible to identify useful lessons and actionable recommendations for the governments, agencies and individuals concerned with development effectiveness. We believe that the evaluation has identified such lessons and recommendations. Moreover, the evaluation process itself has been an example of the Paris Declaration's basic principles of partnership and ownership and has contributed to better insights and dialogue with the countries and agencies that participated.

It is now up to the governments, agencies and civil society groups for whom this evaluation has been prepared to apply the lessons and recommendations.



**Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy**      **Niels Dabelstein**

*Co-chairs of the Reference and Management Groups*

1 The Reference Group comprises: Asian Development Bank, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroun, Canada, Denmark, EURODAD, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, Mali, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, OECD/DAC, the Philippines, Reality of Aid, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, UNDP/UNDG, USA, Vietnam, The World Bank and Zambia.

2 The Management Group comprises: Niels Dabelstein, Evaluation Department, Danida/Secretariat for the Evaluation of the Paris Declaration, Denmark; Ted Kliet, Senior Evaluation Officer, Policy and Operations Evaluation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands; Saraswathi Menon, Director, Evaluation Office, UNDP; Velayuthan Sivagnanasothy, Director General, Department of Foreign Aid and Budget Monitoring, Ministry of Plan Implementation, Sri Lanka; and Advocate Elaine Venter, Director, International Development Cooperation, National Treasury, South Africa.

# Executive Summary

## Purpose and background

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed in March 2005, is now recognised as a landmark international agreement aimed at improving the quality of aid and its impact on development. It lays out a road-map of practical commitments, organised around five key principles of effective aid:

- a. Ownership by countries
- b. Alignment with countries' strategies, systems and procedures
- c. Harmonisation of donors' actions
- d. Managing for results, and
- e. Mutual accountability

Each has a set of indicators of achievement. The Declaration also has built-in provisions for the regular monitoring and independent evaluation of how the commitments are being carried out.

This report synthesises the results of the first evaluation of the early implementation of the Paris Declaration, from March 2005 to late 2007. It comprises extensive assessments in eight countries, together with "lighter" studies on eleven Development Partner or "donor"<sup>1</sup> agencies, focussing at the headquarters level. Participation by all countries and agencies was voluntary. An international management group managed the evaluation and received guidance from a reference group

<sup>1</sup> A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY: The terms used in the terms of reference for these two groups were "countries" or "partner countries" for countries receiving aid and "Development Partners" for the countries and agencies providing it. This reflects the understanding that the old terms of "recipient" and "donor" (and "aid" for that matter) implied an undue measure of beneficence in the relationship, and carried undesirable connotations. Nonetheless, the repeated use of "partners" for both groups (several hundred times in this report) has been found to create enormous confusion, especially for its intended non-specialist readership. For the purposes of this report, "countries" or "partner countries" will refer to the countries receiving aid, and the admittedly imperfect term "donors" (which is used in the Paris Declaration) or "development agencies" will usually be used to signify those countries and multilateral agencies providing aid. Other partners, such as non-governmental organisations and private sector actors, will be specifically identified.

drawn from 31 countries and institutions. Since it is an early evaluation, the focus is on ways of improving and enhancing implementation, rather than giving any definitive judgment about effectiveness.

This evaluation complements a parallel monitoring process. The Monitoring Surveys are intended to monitor what is happening with respect to implementation against selected indicators, while this evaluation is intended to shed light on why and how things are happening as they are. In spite of a number of limitations, which are acknowledged in the report, the evaluation results make a significant contribution to that aim.

It should be stressed that no synthesis could hope to capture the full wealth of information, perceptions and insights, and not least remarkably frank assessments, in the individual nineteen reports on which it is based. These reports have a value in themselves in advancing the Paris Declaration in the countries and agencies where they have been conducted. Their detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations merit wide national and international attention. Their executive summaries are annexed to this report, and the full texts are available in the enclosed CD-ROM.

## The evaluation questions

The evaluation has focused on answering three central questions:

- What important trends or events are emerging in the early implementation of the Paris Declaration?
- What major influences are affecting the behaviour of countries and their Development Partners in relation to implementing their Paris commitments?
- Is implementation so far leading toward the Declaration's five commitments of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability? If so, how and why? If not, why not?

All the evaluation teams were expected to examine three "enabling conditions" for implementing the Paris Declaration:

- The commitment and leadership being applied
- The capacities to act
- The incentives to do so.

### **Context is key**

The Paris Declaration in 2005 was not the beginning of international concern for improving the effectiveness of aid and its contribution to development. The Paris Declaration was, however, a watershed in formalising and refocusing efforts to develop an international plan of action with unprecedented breadth of support. It was finally spurred by a long-brewing crisis of confidence in the field of aid in the 1990s, and several major global policy responses. Joint actions were needed, based on a new set of relationships between countries and their “Development Partners”. A majority of the countries and agencies evaluated here were already among the acknowledged leaders in aid effectiveness reforms, so that the Declaration came as a major milestone rather than as a point of departure. Context is also dynamic: Several studies highlight substantial shifts and/or uncertainties in implementation performance that can be attributed to political changes and pressures. One other crucial, and changing, part of the context, not yet properly analysed, is the effect of non-aid resource flows and growing aid flows which may remain outside the Paris Declaration frameworks (particularly from major foundations and other private sources, non-traditional official donors, and development NGOs.)

## **Implementation of the five commitments: findings and conclusions**

### **Ownership by countries**

The principle of ownership has gained much greater prominence since 2005, although the evaluations show that the practical meaning and boundaries of country ownership and leadership often remain difficult to define. In both partner countries and donor administrations engagement and leadership at the political level do most to determine how they will act to strengthen country ownership in practice.

All the partner country evaluations indicate a strengthening of national development policies and strategies since 2005, providing a stronger base for ownership. Yet even the countries with the most experience face difficulties in translating these national strategies into sector strategies and operational and decentralised programmes, and in coordinating donors. So while national ownership is strong in these countries, it is also narrow. In practice, it remains heavily weighted in favour of central government players rather than provincial and local authorities, even in fields that are supposed to be devolved. The ownership situation also varies across sectors, with sectors such as education, health, energy and infrastructure remaining primarily government-led, while civil society and marginalised groups find greater space for partnership in cross-sector and humanitarian areas of cooperation and development.

Since 2005, all the donors evaluated have taken further steps to acknowledge the importance of partner country owner-

ship and to ensure that it is respected in practice. At the same time, most donors’ own political and administrative systems are found to set differing limits on their actual behaviour to support country ownership.

To remain useful in advancing the implementation of the Paris Declaration, the concept of ownership in this context needs to be approached not as an absolute condition, but as a process or a continuum. The Monitoring Survey’s indicator on ownership<sup>2</sup> relates to only one simple dimension of this complex picture.

### **Alignment with country strategies, institutions and procedures**

Development agency and partner country evaluations reveal that, despite clear commitments to alignment, implementation of the various components of alignment set out in the Paris Declaration has been highly uneven. Progress is more visible in aligning aid strategies with national priorities, less so in aligning aid allocations, using and building country systems, reducing parallel Project Implementation Units and coordinating support to strengthen capacity. Among bilateral donors, there is only sparse evidence of improvements in aid predictability and untying. As with ownership, the leadership exercised by the host partner country is the prime determinant of how far and how fast alignment will proceed.

The real and perceived risks and relative weaknesses of country systems are serious obstacles to further progress with alignment. Efforts by most countries to strengthen national processes and systems are not yet sufficient to support the needed progress, and not enough donors are ready to help strengthen these systems by actually using them. On the other hand, donors do appear ready to continue and increase financial and technical assistance for the further capacity strengthening required.

### **Harmonisation of donors’ actions**

The evaluations do not suggest any backsliding on harmonisation, but neither do they indicate any overall trend toward progress, with the exception that the European Union Code of Conduct of 2007 is seen as having strong potential to bring further harmonisation among its members. The responsibility for changes to implement harmonisation goals falls primarily on donors. At the same time, the evaluations make clear that, as in other areas, leadership, initiative and support from host partner countries are important, and often indispensable, factors for progress.

Debates about the particular instruments of budget support<sup>3</sup> – especially in a number of countries and circles where these instruments have become highly controversial – run the risk

<sup>2</sup> Indicator 1: “At least 75% of partner countries have operational development strategies. (By 2010)”

<sup>3</sup> Budget support is generally aid provided through the country’s own financial management systems, and not earmarked for specific projects or expenditure items in the same ways as in traditional aid modalities.

of overshadowing the broader harmonisation agenda and diverting attention from a number of achievements and other harmonisation needs and commitments spelt out in the Paris Declaration.

Basic issues of confidence and trust in others' systems need to be satisfied for harmonisation to meet expectations. This is true even for those donors who do not have to overcome "harmonisation" problems within their own systems, major formal restrictions on entering into harmonised arrangements, or strong pressures for maintaining direct visibility and accountability for their own aid.

Finally, some findings strongly suggest that the role and importance of harmonisation within the Paris Declaration agenda may be changing, increasingly taking a back seat to the push for greater alignment with country systems.

### **Managing for development results**

Many of the evaluations have documented and helped explain the relative lack of attention and progress recorded in implementing the Paris commitment toward managing for results. The evaluations are virtually unanimous that progress is slow toward meeting the Monitoring Survey's benchmark for what partner countries need to do.<sup>4</sup> Several studies raised the need to strengthen statistical capacities and to use them more effectively for decisions.

At the same time, the evaluations also re-focus attention on the Paris Declaration's other concerns: What donors need to do to gear their own systems and their active support to more effective country systems. Given the weak capacity in this area that is also reported, it may not be surprising that different frameworks for results on the two sides are seen as a constraint to progress.

More encouragingly, where information and platforms for participation exist<sup>5</sup>, it is easier for donors to make progress in meeting their own Paris commitments for the better management of aid for results.

Finally, the recognition that significant actions by partner countries in areas related to managing for results may in fact be under-reported suggests that there are also problems in how the requirements to fulfil these particular commitments are being presented and/or understood.

### **Mutual accountability**

All the evaluations convey a sense that the joint processes for tracking progress and resolving problems fall short in terms of mutual accountability. In order to capture what the evaluations actually said about the implementation of the

4 To have in place by 2010 transparent and "monitorable" performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against a) the national development strategies, and b) sector programmes.

5 As in the example of Uganda.

mutual accountability commitment, it is necessary to look beyond the single indicator selected for the Monitoring Survey<sup>6</sup>, and go back to the carefully framed and reciprocal package of mutual commitments in the Paris Declaration itself. It shows that the key questions about mutual accountability that otherwise seem unclear or potentially divisive – particularly regarding who is accountable to whom and for what – had been anticipated and opened up for mutual review by the Declaration.

The evaluations themselves show that, although they all view mutual accountability as a complex puzzle, more pieces of the solution are actually at hand than is generally assumed. The synthesis report identifies a half-dozen types of mechanism that are already being used to varying degrees, and could be better harnessed to fulfil this commitment, on which the credibility of the Paris Declaration depends. Evaluations, and especially joint evaluations, should also play a greater role.

The evaluations show that in this pivotal commitment area of mutual accountability, the obstacles limiting progress are political in nature, primarily related to the potentials for embarrassment or interference. Political leaders need to re-engage to get it on track. Among other benefits, such re-engagement should help clarify the intended role and limits of the Monitoring Survey in the ongoing assessment of implementation, and correct some of the unintended effects of the ways it has been used to date.

### **Overall conclusions**

*The Paris Declaration is a political agenda for action, not just a technical agreement.* The reports have underlined the fact that the entire Paris Declaration and its commitments are political undertakings. In the difficult processes required for implementation, real issues of power and political economy come into play, in many cases requiring political solutions.

As examples of the political steps needed, most donors have yet to prepare their publics and adapt their legislation and regulations as necessary to allow for:

- Putting less emphasis on visibility for their national efforts and tying aid to their own suppliers;
- Accepting and managing risks in relying on country and other donor systems rather than insisting on applying their own;
- Agreeing to delegate greater decision-making power to in-country staff;
- Assuring more predictable aid flows; and
- Finding ways to resolve political disputes with partner countries without undermining long-term relationships.

For their part, most partner countries need:

- Stronger political engagement to assert more fully their leadership in aid alignment, coordination and harmonisation, accepting the risks and managing the effects in their relations with donors.

6 Indicator 12: "All partner countries have mutual assessment reviews in place. (By 2010)."



- To ensure that responsibility for development and aid is shared more widely between different parts and levels of government, as well as with legislatures, civil society and the private sector, and citizens at large.

*It is a shared agenda, with some divergences.* This evaluation reveals only a few consistent differences between the perspectives of country and donor representatives (especially those responsible for programmes and on the ground) on the key issues examined. Three key points where they diverge are:

- What is really limiting the use of country systems to manage aid?
- The relative priorities among ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability; and
- The degree of concern over transitional and increased transaction costs to date in changing systems to live up to Paris Declaration commitments.

*Strengthening capacity and trust in country systems is a major issue.* One of the most important obstacles to implementing the Declaration is the concern about weaknesses of capacities and systems in partner countries. This obstacle is repeatedly identified in almost all of the evaluations, even though the countries assessed here include some of those with the strongest capacities and most advanced systems among all partner countries. This indicates that the concern may at least in part be the result of outdated perceptions among some donors.

*Expectations and uses of the Paris Declaration differ.* In the words of one of the evaluations, views of the Declaration vary from it being a “statement of intent” all the way to it being a set of “non-negotiable decrees”. The widespread tendency to focus almost exclusively on selected indicator targets feeds the latter view. Both country and donor partners are evidently struggling to get a firm grasp on how to actually use the Declaration as implementation proceeds in different settings.

*How to deal with different contexts is an unresolved issue.* A general finding across the evaluations is that a better balance needs to be struck in recognising and adapting the Paris Declaration to different contexts, while maintaining its incentives for the most important collective and collaborative improvements.

*The appropriate uses and limits of the monitoring indicators need to be more clearly recognised.* The evaluations show that misunderstanding the role and place of the Monitoring Survey and its indicators has had serious unintended effects in narrowing the focus of attention, debate and perhaps action to a limited set of measures.

*There are important synergies and tensions between commitments.* Across the board, there are strong indications that movement on the different commitments is in fact mutually reinforcing, but there are also signs of some differences in priorities and possible trade-offs. As implementation advances

on several fronts, it is becoming clearer that countries expect donor harmonisation to be country-led, and to be geared to support alignment. Some of the donors are perceived to be emphasising managing for results, selected aspects of mutual accountability and harmonisation, while partner countries tend to be most concerned with strengthening alignment and ownership.

*The challenges of transition and transaction costs in implementation need to be tackled.* Without calling into question the directions and measures specified by the Paris Declaration to strengthen aid effectiveness, all of the donor evaluations record that these changes are resulting in difficult transitional adjustments and increased transaction costs in managing their aid programmes. The studies suggest that harmonisation and division of labour have not yet advanced to the point of yielding much relief. Partner countries’ evaluations are not yet clear about the burden of the new demands of strategic leadership being placed on them, or old ones of managing multiple donor interventions perhaps being alleviated. Overall, the evaluations do not yet yield a clear view as to whether the net transaction costs of aid will ultimately be reduced from the pre-2005 situation as originally anticipated as a key reason for the reforms, and how the expected benefits (if they exist) will be shared between countries and their Development Partners.

### **Partner country assessments of the Paris Declaration as a tool for aid effectiveness**

Six country studies included chapters evaluating the Paris Declaration as a tool for aid effectiveness, specifically examining the clarity, relevance, and internal coherence of its provisions. The reports find that the Paris Declaration is still really clear only to those stakeholders working with it directly. This highlights the need for broader engagement and popularisation to avert the danger of it becoming a subject only for dialogue among bureaucrats, divorced from the political landscape in which it must be carried forward.

Countries raised concerns about the clarity, validity and purpose of some of the indicators being used to monitor implementation. They challenged the perceived notion that “one size fits all”. Some of the Paris Declaration’s targets are deemed unhelpful, unrealistic or insufficiently adapted to diverse conditions. As examples, informants cast doubt on such issues as: The actual capacity of governments in some countries or donor field staffs to carry the new tasks; the donors’ ability to provide more predictable aid flows; the feasibility or merit of phasing out parallel project implementation units across the board; or of phasing down projects (which are still seen by some as the best vehicle for reaching some vulnerable groups).

The Paris Declaration is relevant to some of the main issues regarding the effectiveness and strategic use of aid, and it encourages greater impetus toward development goals. At the same time the Declaration is not necessarily designed to offer any tailored solutions to some of the other most pressing

development preoccupations, such as: The management of devolution and de-centralisation; human resource and capacity issues; new thematic thrusts in development; sustainability of the results of development projects and programmes; environmental issues; gender concerns; or better management of non-aid financing for development. Simply put, while the Paris Declaration has relevance within its particular sphere of aid effectiveness, it is far from being seen as a panacea for many countries' main development concerns.

The Declaration is seen by some as too prescriptive on countries and not binding enough on donors, and some point to a continuing perception that it is "donor-driven". All see a need to ensure that action on the different commitments is made complementary and mutually reinforcing, and to reduce the potential for incoherence and potential conflicts between different commitments and implementation measures.

### ***Are the required commitments, capacities and incentives in place?***

All of the individual evaluations assessed the "enabling conditions" – commitment, capacities and incentives – available in countries and agencies to support successful implementation of the Paris Declaration. The three tables in Section VII synthesise in one place the overview from the evaluations of the "whys" and "hows" of performance. It should be stressed that the variations in performance – and of the supporting commitment, capacities and incentives in different countries and especially agencies – are extremely wide. This is because the issue of managing aid better is only part (and often a relatively small part) of managing development priorities in all the partner countries assessed. These countries find the Declaration more or less useful for a variety of purposes, and the enabling conditions put in place will naturally reflect those variations.

A few development agencies are now internalising effective aid as their "raison d'être", and the Paris Declaration is a constant guide to how they organise and do their work. For other donor agencies, the evaluations find that aid effectiveness concerns do not always prevail over institutional inertia or other foreign policy or commercial objectives in their aid programmes, and Paris Declaration approaches are not fully internalised or applied. The summary assessments combine the findings and conclusions from both country and donor assessments, since their self-assessments and mutual assessments arrived at remarkably consistent results.

### **Key lessons**

1. To counter the growing risks of bureaucratisation and "aid effectiveness fatigue" that many of the evaluations warn against, concrete measures are needed to re-energise and sustain high-level political engagement in the implementation of aid effectiveness reforms, both in countries and in Development Partner systems. Faster movement from rhetoric to action by both partner governments and donors is now crucial to retaining the Paris Declaration's credibility.

2. Successful implementation of the Declaration's reforms is much more likely in countries where understanding and involvement are extended beyond narrow circles of specialists, as has been shown in some promising advances in involving legislatures and civil society in both partner and donor countries. Within many countries, regional and local levels of government are also increasingly important actors and must be fully involved.
3. Other factors for successful implementation in countries often include the role of "champions" who ensure that the necessary capacity is deployed, and lead the vital drive to align aid with the country's budgetary and accountability systems. Among donors, the changes in regulations and practices to delegate greater authority and capacity to field offices have been the most important enabling conditions for successful implementation.
4. Strengthening both the actual capacities of partner country systems to manage aid effectively, and the international recognition of those capacities where they already exist, are now key requirements for advancing the implementation of the Paris Declaration reforms. Using those systems, while accepting and managing the risks involved, is the best way that donors can help build both capacity and trust.
5. The integrated, balanced and reciprocal character of the full package of Paris Declaration commitments needs to be strongly re-affirmed and applied, and the Monitoring Survey and indicators placed in their proper perspective as part of the overall agenda.
6. To offset the image of the Paris Declaration as a "one size fits all" prescription for rigid compliance, there is a need to reiterate and demonstrate that its guidance can and should be adapted to particular country circumstances, while also clarifying the features to be maintained in common.

### **Key recommendations**

These recommendations are derived directly from the synthesised findings and conclusions of the evaluation, building both on examples of good practice and revealed weaknesses in the different countries and Development Partner programmes evaluated. They are set at a strategic level, and are likely to be applicable to a much wider range of countries and donor agencies than those directly evaluated, a number of which are already at the forefront of reform.

It is recommended that countries and partner agencies take the following steps for the remainder of the Paris Declaration review period up to 2010, establishing a clear basis for the five-year assessment of progress and further course corrections as needed at that time.

It is recommended that partner country authorities:

1. Announce, before the end of 2008, a manageable number of prioritised steps they will take to strengthen their leadership of aid relationships up to 2010 in the light of lessons from monitoring, evaluations and other stocktaking to date.
2. Build on the interim reviews of implementation in 2008 to ensure that they have in place a continuing transparent mechanism, ideally anchored in the legislature, for political monitoring and public participation around aid management and reform.
3. Give clear guidance to donors who are supporting capacity strengthening on their priorities for assistance to manage aid more effectively, consistent with their main development concerns.
4. Work out, by 2010 at the latest, adapted systems of managing for results that will best serve their domestic planning, management and accountability needs, and provide a sufficient basis for harnessing donors' contributions.

It is recommended that Development Partner/donor authorities:

5. Update their legislatures and publics in 2008 on progress to date with aid effectiveness reforms, underlining the need and plans for further concrete changes to be implemented before 2010 to accept and support country leadership in aid implementation and greater donor harmonisation.
6. Before the end of 2008, announce their further detailed plans to delegate by 2010 to their field offices sufficient decision-making authority, appropriately skilled staff

and other resources to support and participate fully in better-aligned and harmonised country-led cooperation.

7. Specify their concrete planned steps to improve, by 2010 at the latest, the timeliness, completeness and accuracy of their reporting and projections for aid flows to feed into the planning, budgeting and reporting cycles of partner countries, together with other donors. Make the necessary provisions for multi-year allocations, commitments, or firm projections.
8. Provide supplementary budgets, staffing and training up to 2010 to help their own programmes adjust for the transitional and new demands and transaction costs and learning needs that are being reported as major concerns in implementing the Paris agenda.
9. Allocate special resources (budgets and coordinated technical assistance) to support and reinforce countries' prioritised efforts to strengthen their own capacities to implement more effective cooperation. Work with partners to design and manage other interim means of implementation (such as project implementation units) so that they steadily enhance capacity and country ownership.

It is recommended that the organisers of the Phase Two evaluation on implementation:

10. Design the evaluation strategically to: Pursue the results and dilemmas found during Phase One and address squarely the question of "aid effectiveness", assessing whether aid is contributing to better development outcomes and impacts (development effectiveness). It should rely on representative country evaluations and apply a consistent core methodology.

“This Synthesis Report is a coherent strategic document that facilitates the sharing of experience and good practices among countries and their development partners. The lessons and recommendations proposed are of longer term strategic importance, charting a sound way forward for improved application of the Paris Declaration.

The country evaluations demonstrate that the Paris Declaration has made a positive impact on the management of development assistance. The Declaration has exhibited its potential as a rallying pole for refocusing, reinforcing and legitimizing positive processes of aid administration, for maximum impact.

In order that the Paris Declaration retain credibility, however, it is important that both Governments and Development Partners move much faster from rhetoric to action in applying the principles.”

*Mary Chinery-Hesse, Chief Advisor to  
H.E. The President of the Republic of Ghana*

## Countries and agencies evaluated

Asian Development Bank • Australia • Bangladesh • Bolivia  
Denmark • Finland • France • Germany • Luxemburg • Nether-  
lands • New Zealand • the Philippines • Senegal • South Africa  
Sri Lanka • Uganda • United Kingdom • UNDP/UNDG • Vietnam

## Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Results and Accountability



High Level Forum  
Paris ■ February 28 – March 2, 2005

Joint Progress  
Toward Enhanced  
Aid Effectiveness



3<sup>rd</sup>  
High Level Forum  
ON AID EFFECTIVENESS  
SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2008 ACCRA GHANA