ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION: DAC’S CONTRIBUTION TO MEET COMMITMENTS

DAC Senior Level Meeting, 9 (p.m.) and 10 (a.m.) December 2008

This document is submitted for DISCUSSION under Item 3 of the Draft Annotated Senior Level Meeting Agenda [DCD/DAC/A(2008)15/REV3]

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ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION:
DAC’S CONTRIBUTION TO MEET IMMEDIATE COMMITMENTS

I. Introduction

1. The Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, which was held in Accra, Ghana in September 2008, was a great success. Over 130 countries, civil society organisations and other development stakeholders agreed to accelerate implementation of the Paris Declaration commitments through the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The AAA, which was developed through broad and inclusive consultation and communication, commits donors and partner countries to take a series of new concrete measures to accelerate achievement of the Paris Declaration principles.

2. What really matters now is how the AAA is implemented. The AAA includes a set of “beginning now” issues, which call for donors and developing countries to take action as a matter of urgency. These issues – related to using country systems, enhancing transparency about aid plans and use, division of labour and strengthening accountability mechanisms – call for strong and high level political will to realise reforms and to change behaviour.

3. An initial review of the implementation of the “beginning now” issues of the AAA was carried out last month by the members of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness [DCD/DAC/EFF(2008)34]. An analysis of the planned actions shows that the starting point and the urgency with which these reforms are being undertaken differ greatly among DAC donors. Significant and urgent action is needed to build internal capacities and strengthen partnerships amongst stakeholders to deliver on the AAA commitments by 2010.

4. At this pace of reform, significant progress on the AAA is unlikely to be achieved without high-level political resolve from OECD countries on the key “beginning now” areas.

Questions for Discussion

Against this background, the Senior Level Meeting (SLM) is invited to consider how the OECD Development Assistance Committee can best contribute to implementing the “beginning now” issues of the AAA. More specifically:

- What actions will donors take to place the highest level of institutional priority – and build staff incentives and devote adequate resources – on supporting the implementation of the immediate AAA commitments? A list of areas is presented overleaf to help guide discussions.
- What actions need to be taken collectively by the DAC? What steps are DAC members willing to take to measure progress in implementing the AAA, and hold each other accountable?
- What additional guidance on implementing the Accra Agenda for Action would you like to share with the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness?
II. Key “beginning now” action areas for consideration by the SLM

Issues for donors

5. Developing plans for using country systems (para 15d): A number of donors report that they are taking steps to streamline guidance to use country systems, to increase use when certain benchmarks are met, or to pilot use on a case-by-case basis. What actions are donors prepared to take to establish incentives that promote the use of country systems? To what degree are donors taking steps to use country systems for different aid modalities, including for project management?

6. Regularly make public all conditions linked to disbursements (para 25b): Only a few donors specify that information on conditionalities – if they are stipulated – is made public. What actions are donors prepared to take to address constraints (policies, laws, terms of financial agreements etc) that prevent information on all conditionalities being made public?

7. Provide full and timely information on annual commitments and actual disbursements (para 26b): A number of donors already share, or plan to share information on annual commitments and actual disbursements. What actions are donors prepared to take to systematically improve the quality, accessibility and timing of providing information to partner countries?

8. Provide regular and timely information on rolling three- to five- year expenditure and/or implementation plans (para 26c). A number of donors already share or plan to share (at least tentative) information on forward expenditure / implementation plans, and the OECD has been collecting forward looking data on indicative disbursements since 2006. What actions are donors prepared to take to further improve the realism and comprehensiveness of multi-annual predictions? What alternative arrangements are donors willing to make when such information cannot be made available?

Issues to be undertaken jointly by donors and developing countries within the WP-EFF

9. Complete good practice principles on country-led division of labour… and evaluate progress in implementation starting in 2009 (Para 17b). The task of developing good practice principles was started in 2007 by an ad hoc task team within the WP-EFF, and the final version is planned to be endorsed by April 2009. What actions are donors prepared to apply the principles in their own engagement at country level? How would donors address constraints (political pressure etc) which may hinder the application of division of labour principles? How would donors ensure buy-in from partner countries on division of labour?

10. Start a dialogue on international division of labour across countries by June 2009 (para 17c). Necessary data to inform such a dialogue has been made available by the OECD, in particular to identify countries who do not receive sufficient volumes of aid and countries where a high number of donors may create excessive transaction costs. A session of the Global Forum for Development (8 December 2008) provides a beginning for this dialogue. How will donors engage in this dialogue, which includes sensitive issues about aid allocation? How will they ensure partner country necessary participation?

11. Jointly review and strengthen existing international accountability mechanisms… [and] review proposal for strengthening the mechanisms by end 2009 (para 24c). An initial review has been undertaken by the Joint Venture on Managing for Results. What actions are donors prepared to take to strengthen accountability at the international level?