Summary Record of the 1068th DAC meeting held on 18 November 2019

The Revised Draft Summary Record [DCD/DAC/M(2019)10/REV1] was sent to the DAC for APPROVAL via the written procedure.

No objections were expressed by the 6th January 2020's deadline.

The Summary Record is therefore considered approved, issued as final, and declassified.

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Summary Record of the 1067th DAC meeting held on 18 November 2019

Item 1. Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda
1. The DAC Chair welcomed new DAC delegates and asked that the Committee adopt the meeting agenda, which they did without modification.

Item 2. Approval of Draft Summary Record
2. The Chair invited the Committee to approve the draft summary record from the 15 October 2019 DAC meeting. The DAC approved the draft record without modification and agreed to issue it as final and unclassified.

Item 3. Findings from the Global Monitoring Report & Implications for the DAC
3. The Co-Chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), Ambassador Thomas Gass of Switzerland, shared his vision for the GPEDC going forward and introduced the Co-Chairs’ proposal for strategic priorities for the 2020–22 period, which will be discussed at the next GPEDC Steering Committee in Korea on 5–6 December 2019. Ambassador Gass highlighted three main priorities: accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, building better partnerships, and leveraging the GPEDC monitoring for action. Ambassador Gass also welcomed how strongly effectiveness featured at Tidewater this year and underscored the point that the DAC is not driving (and should not drive) the GPEDC alone, but is working closely with partners, including the other Co-Chairs (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bangladesh, Non-executive). The DAC Chair echoed the positive feedback at Tidewater, highlighted the success of the GPEDC Senior Level Meeting in July 2019 at the UN, and mentioned encouraging reflections on effectiveness during her recent mission to China.

4. Members welcomed the Co-Chairs’ priorities, the Secretariat proposal to refresh effectiveness at the DAC [DCD/DAC(2019)54], and a related EU proposal to create a work stream in the DAC to support DAC members’ implementation of development effectiveness principles, highlighting inter alia the important normative and convening role of the GPEDC on development effectiveness, the need for complementarity with DAC work, and the importance of reinvigorated DAC engagement on the topic of effectiveness.

5. Several members commented that while the development effectiveness principles remain relevant, there is a need for the effectiveness agenda to evolve and for a certain reinterpretation of these principles against a changed co-operation landscape. Members highlighted fragile and conflict-affected contexts as one area meriting more discussion, underscored the importance of supporting and accelerating country-level results, and the crucial role of the monitoring exercise in driving action on development effectiveness (while not overburdening stakeholders with reporting). They also welcomed the provision in the Co-Chairs’ priorities of a review or evaluation of the GPEDC to give new impetus in the run-up to its next High Level Meeting, planned for 2022. Several members also indicated interest in specific action areas, such as SDG-specific implementation, data, partnerships with private sector and civil society, South South and triangular co-operation, alongside making the monitoring process more relevant to DAC members’ modalities and partnerships.

6. In playing its part as a key GPEDC constituency, members considered that an informal – and resource-neutral – work stream within the DAC would help to articulate members’ new narrative on development effectiveness while also reflecting on the monitoring findings and process. Launching a light work stream would help to identify synergies with other DAC work streams in preparation for the 2021-22 PWB, and would help generate renewed interest and engagement in effectiveness including in the context of the next DAC High Level Meeting.
7. The Chair concluded that there was broad support for the strategic priorities as well as for the Secretariat and EU proposals and that the upcoming discussions on the DAC’s 2021–22 PWB will look in more detail at how to renew the Committee’s work on effectiveness, by also seeking out more synergies with other work of the Committee while avoiding any duplication of efforts between GPEDC and the DAC. This discussion should inform but not pre-empt any decision on the next PWB. The Chair also welcomed the Swiss GPEDC Co-Chair’s continued strong engagement with the DAC.

Item 4. Briefing by the DCD Director and DAC Chair

8. The DCD Director and DAC Chair reported to the Committee on a number of developments and work streams, including through updates issued via email the prior week.

9. The Chair announced that Ireland has confirmed that it will host Tidewater in June 2020. The Chair also proposed to convene a DAC High Level Meeting in October or November 2020. Specific dates for both events will be communicated once finalised. In reporting back on her recent missions to the Pacific, she underscored the need to ensure that the Committee’s and Secretariat’s good work is communicated to all relevant partners, in particular partner countries. The Chair also reported on her mission to China the previous week, for which she will shortly issue to the Committee some details on its results.

10. The Director then presented the Report on Implementation of the 2019–20 Programme of Work and Budget of the Development Assistance Committee [DCD/DAC(2019)52], which covers the period January 2019 to June 2019. He commented that this report is part of the standard reporting requirements for all OECD Committees and highlighted that progress is line with the PWB and that expenditure over the reporting period is at 48% of the total estimated costs for 2019. Expenditure varies somewhat among the 15 Output Results of the DAC PWB, which is considered normal as PWB implementation is not necessarily linear. Mobilisation of voluntary contributions (VCs) at this stage of the biennium is on a good trajectory. He then encouraged members to sustain their efforts to un-earmark their VCs to ensure that foundational outputs which are prioritised and funded by all members are indeed implemented. The US delegate expressed concerns over the last sentence of paragraph 2 in the report, as the DAC mandate contains no explicit link to the Paris Agreement.

11. The Director then reported on progress in developing the Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) measurement framework. The first version of the TOSSD methodology was finalised in June 2019 during the 8th meeting of the TOSSD Task Force that took place in Ottawa. The results of the first TOSSD data were also successfully launched on 4 October 2019, providing a real “proof of concept” that TOSSD can bring additional transparency on financial flows and in-kind resources targeting sustainable development. In addition, as the Secretariat of the TOSSD Task Force, the DCD submitted in June 2019 a proposal for TOSSD to be integrated in the 2020 Comprehensive Review of the SDG indicators. The group that manages this process, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, met on 21–24 October and acknowledged the importance of measuring TOSSD flows, but also mentioned that the indicator still needed refinement. The group proposed to form a working group with more country and UN-system involvement to finalise the methodology with the International TOSSD Task Force, in particular the components of TOSSD related to South-South Co-operation. This working group would have a duration of two years at which point a finalised methodology would be considered for inclusion as part of the global indicator framework (in 2022). The DCD is in contact with the UN Statistics Division to get more information on how the working group will operate. The International TOSSD Task Force will continue its work to ensure that the methodology is kept up to date for the 2020 data collection round. The Task Force is still expanding, with Indonesia and Burkina Faso having joined the group as full members, and Norway as an observer. The Task Force has also agreed to have a CSO representative participate as an observer to the Task Force. The Director then encouraged members to mobilise their respective Heads of Statistics to fully support TOSSD during the 51st session of the UN Statistical Commission from 3 to 6 March 2020. He announced that the Secretariat is ready to organise an informal session on TOSSD to respond to any further questions.
12. The DAC Facilitators for the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT) then reported to the Committee on the results from the most recent meeting of this subsidiary body. Issues discussed included: an update to the Annex 2 list of ODA–eligible international organisations, improving transparency on WP-STAT proceedings, and the allocation of regional aid to LDCs. The next formal WP-STAT meeting is scheduled for 16 December 2019, an informal meeting for February 2020, and the launch of the Statistical Peer Reviews for 26 February 2020.

**Item 5. Policy Network Update: International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF)**

13. Austria, the United States, and the Secretariat provided an update on INCAF activities, including an overview of the 6th November INCAF Director Level Meeting (DLM) and the Task Team meeting held on the 7th and 8th of November. During the INCAF DLM, Directors focused on implementation of the DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, highlighting the need to strengthen high-level commitment to the Recommendation, as well as multilateral reform and conflict prevention. These discussions included presentations from INCAF members and multilateral agencies on good practices and Directors reviewed a draft working paper measuring ODA flows to, and effectiveness of, conflict prevention efforts. Decisions and strategic priorities from the DLM were articulated in a communiqué that has been shared with DAC members. The subsequent Task Team meeting focused on INCAF’s progress against its work plan and a summary of this progress was presented to the DAC during the session. Highlights from this discussion included the focus on financing in fragile settings – including the use of ODA to ‘smooth’ the transition of peacekeeping drawdowns; INCAF’s on-going support for, and engagement in, the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding; and the development of an INCAF ‘common position’ on financing refugee situations ahead of the Global Refugee Forum on 16–18 December 2019.

14. The DAC chair emphasised the importance of a unified approach to implementing the nexus and the importance of working across networks, which still often remain siloed. DAC members expressed their appreciation for the substance of the INCAF meetings and commended the Secretariat on its efficient organisation of the meeting as well as the senior-level representation at the meeting. Members also underlined the importance of the peace dimension of the nexus and ensuring that operationalisation of the Recommendation is gender-sensitive. They also welcomed the focus on conflict prevention and the on-going efforts for further dialogue and analysis, as well as the emphasis on taking forward further cross-network collaboration. Finally, the DCD Director expressed his appreciation for the overall support to the Recommendation and the focus on action throughout the INCAF meetings. The DAC Chair concluded the discussion by underlining the importance of INCAF and asked the Secretariat to regularly update the DAC, as INCAF plays a critical role in supporting greater aid effectiveness in fragile settings, which will be key to achieving our Agenda 2030 commitments.

**Item 6. PISA for Development**

15. In this session, the Director of the OECD’s Directorate for Education and Skills (EDU) presented the PISA for Development (PISA-D) initiative that is designed to make PISA more accessible to and relevant for Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC). The EDU Director informed the Committee that the PISA-D project is nearing its end and presented a Project Completion Report that consolidates the evidence from the initiative, the policy relevance for participating countries, lessons learnt, best practices, and main challenges related to the implementation of PISA in LMIC.

16. During his presentation, the EDU Director highlighted how the availability of up-to-date, internationally comparable, quality education data, especially learning assessment data, are an essential first step towards achieving the Education Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) and achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He noted that one of the key sources of data for monitoring progress towards achieving SDG 4 is the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). He said that over the past two decades, PISA has become the world’s premier reference for evaluating the quality, equity and efficiency of school systems and, since 2014, DCD and EDU have been jointly implementing the PISA-D initiative. The outputs of the project are now being
scaled-up in the main PISA assessment and almost 90 countries are participating in the latest cycle (PISA 2021) to provide key data on global progress towards the achievement of SDG 4.

17. He confirmed that PISA-D has been successful, but the results of the initiative are a warning klaxon loud and clear that business as usual (BAU) in educational development (more enrolment, more standard inputs) is going to reproduce BAU and that is nowhere near a cohort learning SDG of “universal minimum levels of proficiency”. He alerted DAC members to expect recommendations about what might work to achieve learning for all to be big, systemic, different (to the point of radical) – and hence unpopular. He concluded by reminding the Committee that education is central to the achievement of all the SDGs and failure in education will lead to failure across the whole SDG agenda.

18. The Chair then invited reactions from the Committee, particularly in respect of Members’ continuing support for education in their partner countries and their contributions to global monitoring of SDG 4 and the SDGs more generally. Members indicated their significant support for the PISA-D initiative and its role in SDG 4 monitoring and welcomed this excellent example of horizontal work across the two Directorates, DCD and EDU. Members also noted that the project was a good example of how the OECD is making its most important policy instruments more accessible to and relevant for a wider range of countries.

19. Delegates also highlighted the importance of the use of learning assessment data and Greece was pleased to note the ways in which PISA-D had built capacity in the participating countries to analyse the data, interpret the results, and prepare national reports focused on policy implications. Australia, Ireland and New Zealand asked for more information about the OECD’s ambitions for PISA as a global programme, and the EDU Director confirmed that the plan was to increase the number of participants in PISA by 10–15 countries per cycle. Australia was interested in the potential applicability of PISA-D in the Pacific; the EDU Director responded that this was perfectly feasible and already in progress for the Caribbean Islands Region. New Zealand shared information on a similar well-functioning initiative in the Pacific region, the Pacific Islands Numeracy and Literacy Assessment (PILNA). Norway said it was a proud supporter of the initiative and encouraged the OECD to further develop the PISA instruments and outreach to ensure the successful participation of low-income countries in future cycles of the assessment. Norway also noted the financial challenges faced by low-income countries in participating in PISA. Slovakia emphasised the importance of PISA-D’s efforts to incorporate the out-of-school youth in the PISA assessment and looked forward to the launching of the results of this component of the project in 2020. The DCD Director referenced the on-going Arab–DAC donors dialogue, which focuses on aid to education and stressed the importance of establishing links between this dialogue and the outputs of PISA-D. The EDU Director responded that there is strong synergy between the Arab countries’ own experiences in PISA, where they are among the lowest performers whilst spending comparatively large amounts on their education systems, and the countries they are seeking to support.

20. In summarising the discussions, the Chair noted how the PISA-D results challenged the prevailing educational development paradigm that the achievement of universal access to education was a necessary precursor to learning for all. The evidence of the project combined with supplementary data indicated that a more effective strategy for achieving a cohort learning SDG of “universal minimum levels of proficiency” might be to address quality issues before universal access was attempted. The Chair also called for more analysis of why education systems in developing countries were performing so badly. In closing, the Chair thanked EDU for the contribution to this session and hoped that the PISA-D experience will help shape future discussions regarding development co-operation in support of SDG 4 that the OECD is engaged in through the UNESCO-led SDG 4 architecture, particularly the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee that is co-chaired by UNESCO and Japan.
Item 7. Summary of Conclusions

21. The Secretariat provided an overview of the decisions, action points, and next steps emerging from the day’s proceedings. The Secretariat will circulate this overview to the Committee in electronic form.

Item 8. Any Other Business

22. The delegate from Canada intervened to raise the issue of the Working Group on Measuring Mobilisation. She asserted that renewed effort is needed to develop solutions, ideally before the end of November deadline for reporting. She made a plea to motivate more bilateral DAC members to engage their capitals and Executive Director offices in multilateral development banks (MDBs). The Secretariat echoed Canada’s concern over the urgency of bringing this issue to conclusion. The Chair asked Canada and the Secretariat to work together to spell out for members the issues in plain language.