DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Cancels & replaces the same document of 28 May 2020

Summary Record of the 1074th DAC meeting held on 26 March 2020 and 3 April 2020

The Revised Draft Summary Record [DCD/DAC/M(2020)3/REV1] was approved via written procedure and is now issued as FINAL and declassified.

Contact: Eric Bensel; eric.bensel@oecd.org

JT03462257
Summary Record of the 1074th DAC meeting held on 26 March 2020 and 3 April 2020

Item 1. Welcome and Adoption of the Agenda

1. Due to the confinement of all delegates and Secretariat staff resulting from the Covid-19 crisis, this meeting was held virtually through the Zoom videoconferencing tool. A number of delegates highlighted that their delegations did not allow them to use Zoom on their official work devices. They expressed their view that, as such, they were not certain that the security and confidentiality of discussions could be assured and encouraged all decisions to be reconfirmed by written procedure following the meeting.

2. The Chair highlighted revisions to the draft agenda, which would be divided into two separate sessions. Today’s session would focus primarily on the decision items while the 3 April session would address the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB). The agenda item on small island developing states (SIDS) will be moved to end of April to allow the time for discussion that it deserves. The items relating to the Development Co-operation Report and the Peer Review methodology are proposed to be addressed via the written procedure. The Committee then adopted the agenda, as revised by the Chair.

Item 2. Approval of Draft Summary Record

3. The Chair invited the Committee to approve the summary record from the 20 February 2020 DAC meeting. Two members requested revisions to paragraphs 7 and 14, which the Chair asked the Secretariat to incorporate into a revised version for approval via the written procedure.

Item 3. Briefing by the DAC Chair and DCD Director

4. The Director and Chair reported to the Committee on a number of developments and work streams, including through updates issued via email a few days earlier. The Chair highlighted that she has cancelled all external engagements until end April due to the Covid-19 crisis and is closely monitoring the situation to decide on meetings and missions in May and June. She announced that she and the Director had co-authored an op-ed on the current crisis published today in Devex1. She encouraged delegates to consider agreeing, rather soon, a common DAC statement on their response to the crisis.

5. She then announced that the Tidewater meeting, scheduled for 18-19 June 2020 in Ireland, will be postponed, after discussions with the Irish hosts. A new date will be communicated shortly. She suggested that the Committee reflect at some time before the summer break on whether to retain the date for the October High Level Meeting. The May DAC meeting should include a discussion on what topics should be on the HLM agenda. The Roundtable of Heads of CSOs will also be postponed to the first half of 2021. On the issue of debt relief, discussions with the Paris Club have somewhat stalled due to the Covid-19 crisis. However, we continue to push forward and will convene one or two working sessions via Zoom with the hope that we can convene a concluding meeting at a later time.

6. The Director then presented what the OECD is doing to respond to the Covid-19 crisis, which includes the creation of a Digital Hub, a Policy Tracking Initiative, and a series of policy papers. The DCD is collaborating with the Development Cluster to draft a joint policy brief, which will be posted shortly to the Digital Hub. He also proposed to administer a survey to members to gather information on their own national responses, which will inform other policy papers and the 2020 Development Co-operation Report (which will be retooled to focus on global pandemics and global public bads).

7. Members expressed general support for agreeing a statement and responding to a survey; however, they cautioned that their administrations were currently at limited capacity to respond. Deadlines will therefore need to be flexible and procedures light-touch. Members also suggested that it would be useful to convene an informal meeting on the Covid-19 crisis to determine how to speak with one voice on the topic.


Unclassified
8. The Belgian delegate, in his capacity as co-chair of the steering group on climate ++, reported to the Committee on the results of the group’s first meeting. The group is developing a “green paper” which will identify possible outputs to inform Tidewater and the HLM. Members are invited to comment on that paper by 10 April.

9. Lastly, the Director announced that the Secretariat will issue the 2019 preliminary ODA data on 16 April, in collaboration with the Secretary-General and the DAC Chair.

**Item 4. DAC Programme of Work and Budget 2021–22**

10. The Secretariat thanked members for their written comments on the 2021–22 Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) following the 23 March informal meeting. The Secretariat also thanked the Co-Facilitators (Finland and Germany) for their support throughout the process. In addition to a “questions and answers” note circulated prior to the meeting, the Secretariat contextualised the issues of zero real growth (ZRG) versus zero nominal growth (ZNG), addressed foundational outputs versus optional outputs as well as the integration of Covid-19 concerns into the proposal, and indicated the outputs that have been removed from the PWB proposal in order to reduce the budget in line with member requests.

11. Members shared their preferences and priorities on outputs and the foundational/optional mix to further focus the proposal. At the request of members, the Secretariat shared quick calculations that compared the 2019–20 PWB with the 2021–22 PWB, the latter broken down by ZNG on Foundational versus ZRG on Foundational. Many delegates emphasised the need to place the response to the Covid-19 crisis firmly in the DAC’s work, and the Secretariat commented that it would be addressed in the next iteration of the proposal.

12. The Chair concluded that, while there remain a few areas of contention, the Committee was broadly in agreement with the thrust of the work proposed. As there was insufficient support to continue with ZRG across foundational and optional outputs, the Chair proposed agreement on ZNG with the option of increasing voluntary contributions if possible once the consequences of the economic crisis are better known. She affirmed the Committee’s desire to protect the budget for core DAC work. Lastly, the Chair encouraged members to share comments in writing; all member comments are posted by the Secretariat on the DAC Community Space. The Director requested guidance from members on which funding compromise/option should be pursued for the /REV3 of the proposal.

**Item 5. SIDS / Vulnerability / Short-term ODA mechanism**

13. The Committee agreed to postpone discussion on this item until the late April formal meeting.

**Item 6. Recommendation on Environmental Assessment of Development Assistance Projects and Programmes**

14. As agreed in the 2017 DAC action plan on the standard setting review, the Secretariat consolidated three recommendations on environmental assessment of development assistance projects and programmes into a single instrument. This instrument has subsequently been discussed by the respective subsidiary bodies of the DAC and the Environment Policy Committee (EPOC) and submitted to the parent committees for endorsement, with a view to submitting to Council for approval. The EPOC has agreed to this new consolidated recommendation via the written procedure on 15 March 2020.

15. The DAC was invited to agree endorsement of the consolidated recommendations. A few members commented that they had some language edits to propose, which the Chair asked that they circulate in writing by close of business on 27 March 2020. The Secretariat along with the Environment Directorate and the Legal Directorate will address any new comments and share a version with any changes in revision mode; members will then be invited to agree to this instrument via the written procedure. It was further noted that any changes of a substantive or substantial nature would require bringing the text back to EPOC or even the respective subsidiary bodies, as they have already agreed the present text.

16. The DAC subsequently, on 10 April 2020, agreed to a consolidated recommendation by written procedure with very limited, non-substantive changes.
Item 7. Private Finance for Sustainable Development Community of Practice: Work Plan

17. Following the DAC’s approval of the establishment of a Community of Practice on Private Finance for Sustainable Development (CoP-PFSD) in January 2020, the Secretariat presented the CoP’s work plan for 2020. The work plan includes two streams: the development of guidance notes on the OECD/DAC Blended Finance Principles and work on the Impact Standards for Financing Sustainable Development (IS-FSD).

18. A majority of DAC members expressed support for the work plan as proposed by the Secretariat, with one member proposing specific amendments. Members encouraged the Secretariat to include further focus on the current Covid-19 pandemic, gender and least developed countries, and to ensure the CoP’s products are available to as many stakeholders as possible. On the impact work stream, DAC members recommended to continue the close co-ordination both with internal initiatives (especially with the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, and the Tri Hita Karana Roadmap for Blended Finance) and external efforts (including the Impact Management Project, the recently launched development impact investing group, the International Finance Corporation, the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, and the development finance institutions harmonisation initiative). Finally, DAC members expressed their opinion that, depending on this work’s progress and remaining flexible in light of the current Covid-19 situation, the DAC High Level Meeting could serve as a venue for updating the Committee on progress regarding this ambitious plan. The Secretariat later submitted a revised work plan, to be approved by the DAC via written procedure.

Item 8. Concept for 2020 Development Co-operation Report

19. In light of the reduced time available for this meeting, the Committee agreed to remove this item from the agenda and provide comments in writing to the Secretariat.

Item 9. Updating the DAC Peer Review Methodology

20. In light of the reduced time available for this meeting, the Committee agreed to remove this item from the agenda and provide comments in writing to the Secretariat.

Item 10. Any Other Business

21. The delegates from the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany intervened to inquire about the selection process for the chair of an informal INCAF task team. UNDP had been selected to serve as chair but there were concerns about an observer chairing an OECD body. The Director clarified that the Secretariat has liaised with the Legal Directorate who advised that it is indeed possible for observers to chair an informal task force. Furthermore, chairs serve ad personam and as such do not represent their institutions.

22. The delegate from Germany asked that members express by close of business tomorrow their preference for zero real growth or zero nominal growth for the 2021–22 PWB.

23. The delegate from the European Union highlighted that a few days ago the European Commission and the High Representative adopted a Joint Communication and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020–24. It addresses, inter alia, the issue of digitalisation, shrinking civic space, and climate change. He invited delegations and the Secretariat to read that communication carefully.

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