

ARAB-DAC DIALOGUE ON DEVELOPMENT

27 March 2017 in Bern

CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY

Members of the Arab Coordination Group (ACG) and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) met for the fourth consecutive year with the theme of how to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Dialogue was co-chaired by Ms Charlotte Petri Gornitzka, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee and Mr Suleiman Al Herbish, Director-General of the OPEC Fund for International Development, on behalf of Mr Abdlatif Al-Hamad, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The meeting was hosted by Switzerland in Bern on 27 March 2017.

As on previous occasions, the 2017 Arab-DAC Dialogue brought together high and senior-level representatives from a range of bilateral and multilateral providers of development co-operation. The event focused on adjusting development co-operation tools to ensure sustainable development, sharing good practice on implementing effective development co-operation and promoting joint action on education in fragile settings. The meeting was also an opportunity to take stock of the activities of the ACG-DAC Task Force on Energy.

Progress since the 2016 Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development

The ability of Arab countries and institutions and DAC members to forge trust, collaborate and work together, in the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 17 on partnerships, is crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The two communities continued collaborating in 2016 in the following ways:

- Arab providers and the OECD continued to develop harmonised standards that ACG institutions can use to report their development co-operation flows.
- Interested ACG and DAC members continued working in the joint ACG-DAC Task Force on Energy and explored setting up a joint Task Force on Education.
- ACG institutions and Arab countries provided inputs to the second monitoring report of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, prepared by the OECD/UNDP. The ACG organised a meeting on the monitoring exercise with the providers in September 2016 at the OPEC Fund for International Development.
- Several Arab foundations participated in an OECD survey on philanthropic institutions.

Adjusting development co-operation tools to ensure sustainable development

To achieve the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, developing countries need tools from Arab and DAC providers that support them as they move along a sustainable development path. Such support can take the form of more, and more effective, official development finance, mobilisation and use of domestic resources, technical support and policy advice to build capacity and improve regulations, leveraging of private investment and greater use of new technologies. A number of tools are being deployed, for example, in the area of financial inclusion to boost access to finance for low-income individuals (in particular women and youth) and for small-scale businesses, both formal and informal. Triangular co-operation is an approach that helps achieve greater financial inclusion. The different partners involved can make good use of their complementary strengths, deliver relevant solutions and engage in scaling-up triangular co-operation to involve other stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society organisations or academia.

Going forward, participants agreed on the need for Arab providers and DAC members to:

- Share knowledge and experiences and explore the complementarities across Arab and DAC providers, for example in the areas of financial inclusion and in working in fragile settings, including through triangular co-operation.
- Deepen Arab-DAC co-operation to map the landscape of current financing challenges where the two communities operate and explore how working with the private sector can be an opportunity to achieve sustainable development.

Sharing good practice on implementing effective development co-operation

The [Nairobi Outcome Document](#) calls for strengthening action-oriented dialogue among different development stakeholders to “link the evidence generated through monitoring to the formulation of development co-operation policies and instruments that serve country needs” and to “identify practical solutions to accelerating progress on specific bottlenecks”. Responding to this call, participants exchanged their respective practices in promoting effective development co-operation, such as providing untied aid and using developing countries’ systems. Looking ahead, discussions highlighted the importance of reforming development co-operation policies so that they translate into implementation of effective development co-operation at the project level adapted to each specific context and of promoting strong headquarters-country office communication to raise awareness, streamline country-level operations and ensure comprehensive and good quality reporting in the Global Partnership’s monitoring exercises. Participants reaffirmed that the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation is well-placed to support achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Going forward, participants agreed on the need for Arab providers and DAC members to:

- Continue sharing good practice on transparency, mutual accountability, strengthening and using developing countries’ systems and to take decisive action to fulfil commitments in these areas.
- Contribute actively to preparations for the third monitoring round of the Global Partnership.

Promoting joint actions on education in fragile settings

The Sustainable Development Goals recognise that policy makers need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. However, although worldwide improvements have been made in achieving universal access to education since 2000, progress has been dampened recently. This is the case, for example, of Syria where the civil war has displaced around 11 million people. At their dialogue in 2016, Arab and DAC providers discussed setting up a joint task force on education in refugee camps to accelerate access to quality education in areas that are not being addressed through other initiatives. Since then, the Islamic Development Bank, Norway and the United Kingdom, with support of the OECD, drafted terms of reference for a joint task force which were endorsed at the meeting.

Going forward, participants agreed on the need for Arab providers and DAC members to:

- Conduct a mapping exercise of all initiatives that promote education in fragile settings, especially for refugees.
- Increase co-ordination in the education sector through the Arab-DAC Task Force on Education to enhance access, quality and impact of providers’ actions and support large displaced populations in fragile settings.
- Ensure that the Task Force links to other partners and on-going initiatives.

Progress report on the AGC-DAC Task Force on Energy

A Task Force on Energy, comprising the Netherlands, the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, the OPEC Fund for International Development and the United Kingdom, was established after the Arab-DAC Dialogue in 2015 to determine the feasibility of working together in a specific sector. To pursue its mandate, the Task Force explored opportunities to promote greater energy access in two pilot countries: Malawi and Uganda. Through the Task Force, the ACG and the DAC have learnt how to work together better at the country and sector levels and are ready to take forward this work to address some of the challenges of ensuring energy access for all in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. by promoting adequate levels of power generation, expanding energy access and increasing affordability).

Going forward, participants agreed on the need for Arab providers and DAC members to:

- Continue collaborating in Malawi and Uganda and report back on progress at the 2018 Arab-DAC Dialogue.
- Continue seeking to broaden the membership of the Task Force and engage other Sub-Saharan African countries.

In the concluding session, participants asked that the secretariats of the ACG and the DAC keep track of actions agreed and to report back on progress achieved at the next Arab-DAC Dialogue on Development, which the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development offers to host in Kuwait City in 2018. In addition, the OPEC Fund for International Development proposed to host a workshop in Vienna to discuss specific bottlenecks that ACG and DAC members encounter in delivering their development co-operation.