

Platform General Meeting 2006 Washington

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New strategic partnerships and new study on 'Indicators for Agriculture and Rural Development'

The first two days of the meeting were aimed to help piece together a clearer picture of what works and what doesn't as donors and development partners join forces in a steady progress towards a new architecture of international development assistance.

Download the synthesis report: [Synthesis Report Platform General Meeting 2006, Washington](#)

[Synthesis Report \(with presentations to download\)](#)

On December 4 and 5, the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (the Platform) held its General Meeting in the World Bank premises in Washington D.C. On December 8, it convened a Donor Consultation Workshop together with the World Development Report Team.

The first two days of the meeting were aimed to help piece together a clearer picture of what works and what doesn't as donors and development partners join forces in a steady progress towards a new architecture of international development assistance. With the aim to explore strategic partnership and to learn jointly with the philanthropic sector, the event brought together different actors with the same goal of reducing poverty in developing countries. Various participants from the philanthropic sector, UN agencies and Platform Members and Associates discussed jointly to foster a wider understanding of the harmonisation agenda.

The second day focused on taking stock on the future direction of Platform activities: the World Bank as lead institution took the opportunity to launch the Platform-commissioned study on Core Indicators for Agriculture and Rural Development. The study aims to provide a suitable instrument for development partners in improving aid effectiveness. The event closed with the further development of the members' decision during the Annual General Meeting in Brussels to increase collaboration with regional initiatives, especially NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

The Donor Consultation Workshop on December 8 gave a good overview to latest on-the edge findings of the WDR team and for the first time provided the opportunity for the wider donor community to directly interact with the team. There was consensus among participants that the service of the Platform to collect best practice reports was a real added value to the team and its members. In the spirit of the Paris Declaration, participants decided to have the best practices featured as "œno logo" without the contributing organisations' names and logos but only with the name of the Global Donor Platform. Further outcomes included the reaffirmed commitment of the Platform to provide its communication expertise to the team to contribute to a more holistic dissemination strategy, as well as the importance to closer interact with China as an emerging important player.

You will find a summary of the first two days in the following, including links to all presentations. The Minutes of the December 8 Donor Consultation Workshop and the respective presentations are available [here](#).

Monday, December 4, 2006

Opening

The Platform Chairs, Christoph Kohlmeyer (Head of Division "Rural Development and Global Food Security, BMZ) and Michael Wales (Principal Advisor "FAO Investment Center) opened the event outlining the following days.

Although the meeting was held in parallel to the CGIAR AGM, Katherine Sierra, Vice President of the Sustainable Development Network of the World Bank took the opportunity to join the meeting to welcome the participants and give an opening statement as host to the event.

Progress of Platform activities and lessons learned
Global SWAp Analysis "Interim Report

- Presentation by Mr Michael Wales (FAO)

Michael Wales presented preliminary results of the Platform commissioned study on a global analysis on Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs). After the completion of the desk review in phase I, the study has started with phase II, country case studies. From the four countries (Tanzania, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Vietnam), the study teams have so far completed the country studies in Tanzania and Mozambique. Preliminary results indicate that there lessons learned in the following key areas:

- Ownership
- Emerging importance of decentralisation
- Aid harmonisation and alignment: Budget support is impacting both positively and negatively on SWAs.
- Policy and institutional coherence: Overambitious SWAp designs should be avoided at all costs, particularly where they reduce the ability to adapt and be flexible in the face of changing political priorities and opportunities.

Next steps:

- Nicaragua: mid January
- Vietnam: Forest Sector Support Programme dropped "looking for alternatives
- "Grey" literature: despite requests, no documents received from Platform members "especially for Uganda, Ghana, Bolivia, Cambodia and Burkina Faso
- Final report: full presentation of the study findings will be delivered at a Platform Meeting in 2007

One of the next steps will be to integrate the findings of the study in Platform activities and to synthesize the pillars and get a clearer picture on what works and what doesn't in the formulation of PBAs and SWAs.

Joint Donor Concept on Rural Development (JDRC): Process of consensus and adoption of SDC

- Presentation by Mr Willi Graf (SDC)

Placed within the guiding framework of the MDGs, the JDRC reflects those areas in which Platform members have found common ground in terms of identifying the key "drivers" or ("pillars") of rural development and the guiding principles and approaches for rural development delivery. The process of reaching consensus was build over a six-month period, during workshops, e-fora and found its end in the Annual General Meeting in Brussels, April 2006. The final output is the first joint strategy on which the majority of donors could reach a consensus. It has been a great success for the harmonization of global policies that the Swiss Development Cooperation has decided to accept this paper as a basis for their own rural development strategy.

Throughout his presentation, Willi Graf pointed to the rationale for adopting the strategy and suggested a common procedure for accepting joint strategies:

- Participation in formulation of joint strategy to the extent possible.
- Elaboration and consultation of 2 page 'interpretation' of joint strategy into institutional and operational reality of SDC.
- Approval of strategy and interpretation by SDC top management.
- Communication in the same way as SDC "strategies, use in learning processes.

Important lesson learned was the clarification from participants that it is easier to adopt a joint strategy, which was elaborated by various donors, as adopting a strategy paper from one institution. Participants lauded the decision by SDC as important step towards harmonisation and agreed to explore possibilities within their agencies to do the same.

Hot Topics: Rural development issues of global significance " next steps in deepening expertise and knowledge

Due to time constraints the point was taken off the Agenda. The moderators pointed out that the process of further working with the hot topics has been started with the call to a "topic leader" to establish thematic small working groups led by the Platform Secretariat.

In-Country Facilitation: Lessons learned and progress of harmonisation and alignment in our pilot countries

- Presentation by Ms Sonja Bartelt (Platform Secretariat)

The Platform Secretariat opened the presentation with the rationale for the Platform's facilitation service: As the last decade has witnessed a transformation in the architecture of international development assistance the members of the Platform have realised that this new development environment requires a new way of doing business as well as a different kind of thinking, both within the donor organisations, in the field and within the partner institutions. It acknowledges that it will take time to change habits and work programmes. Therefore, the Platform members have agreed to provide an independent "facilitation service" to support donors and partners alike in this transformation process.

Sonja Bartelt continued with a short overview to the four pilot countries and finished with an outlook to projects in the pipeline. The focus will lay on systematizing of lessons-learned from facilitation service & generating products from emerging results on PBAs, as for example fact sheets on lessons learned in Cambodia and Nicaragua. Another important area will be to create the synergies with other Platform activities like the SWAp study and the Hot topics. Richard Anson continued with an overview of emerging lessons learned of the one year facilitation service in Nicaragua.

Exploring Strategic Partnerships

The philanthropic community: Vision and goals

- Presentation by Mr Suresh Kumar (Clinton Foundation)

Within the presentation, Suresh Kumar explained the rationale for the initiative and the Foundations' focus on the fertiliser and seed sector. Using a business model approach, the Foundations' aim is to create scaleable businesses and sustainable profits.

The presentation of Suresh Kumar fostered a lively discussion on the engagement of the philanthropic sector in the Rural Development sector of development work. Important lessons learned was the clarification that the Clinton Foundation works differently to other philanthropic initiatives as the rules of engagement demand that activities are scaleable and sustainable.

Welcoming a new member: UN Office on Drugs and Crime - Sustainable Livelihoods Unit

- Presentation by Mr Jorge Rios (UNODC)

Jorge Rios focused on the challenges of Alternative Development and the challenges for coordination in fragile states. The following discussion focused on Synergies and value added of the new membership. All participants welcomed the view of Alternative Development within the Platform discussion.

Tuesday, December 5, 2006

Core Indicators for Agriculture and Rural Development

- Presentation by Mr Nwanze Okidegbe (World Bank)
- Core Indicators for Agriculture and Rural Development - Draft Proposal (World Bank 2006)

Selecting monitorable indicators for agriculture and rural development - Measuring results in less-than-ideal conditions

- Presentation by Mr Tim Marchant (Consultant)

Expert panel discussion on core indicators:

The session had the overall aim to foster a discussion on the use of indicators and fine-tune the proposal with expert input. Next steps include the distribution of final version to the Platform Steering Committee and Platform members.

Africa-related Initiatives

The session gave an insight to the most important players interested to foster African agricultural development, innovative instruments to foster private business and gave an overview to the CAADP process.

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)

- Presentation by Mr Peter Matlon (Rockefeller Foundation)

Peter Matlon outlined the initiatives aim to bring about an African green revolution with a right mix of policies and the focus on the Program for Africa's Seeds System (PASS).

CAADP Pillar 4 - Challenges for joint research

- Presentation by Mr David Howlett (DFID)

David Howlett presented in the session the challenges and opportunities for Harmonisation on agricultural research in Africa. He outlined the challenges for harmonization of agricultural research around CAADP, which include:

- Geographic "not in the same place"
- Not all development partners are on board
- Links between national to regional/sub-regional on donor coordination are weak (e.g. CAADP roundtables)
- Transaction costs

He finished his report with suggested areas for the role of the Donor Platform to support the ongoing efforts.

CAADP Processes - Update and role of the Platform

- Presentation by Ms Sonja Bartelt (Platform Secretariat)

Sonja Bartelt opened the presentation with the rationale for the engagement of the Platform, which is to facilitate enhanced donor coordination to improve aid effectiveness in the CAADP implementation. The recently issued Progress Report on Agriculture at the 7th African Partnership Forum (APF) Meeting, October 2006 in Moscow, constitutes a "wake-up call" as the report assesses the overall score on progress as "red". It finds, on balance, little progress to date under four CAADP pillars, nor on the two cross-cutting issues "national resources and capacity" and "support from development partners". It highlights the need for the African-led initiative to be backed by more coordinated and effective support from development partners while reassessing what more can be done to broaden and deepen donor alignment with the CAADP framework and national strategies.

Answering to the wake-up call issued by the APF, the Donor Platform together with USAID convened the first donor consultation workshop on devising ways to strengthen coordinated donor support for CAADP in Geneva on November 15, 2006. The meeting came to a series of important conclusions, including a clarification for the role of the Donor Platform and activities to be taken forward by the Platform to support its members in implementing CAADP. This includes the decision by the donors to resolve and streamline communications both within relevant donor agencies and between them, as well as between donors and African institutions at country, regional, and continental levels. She visualized the institutional landscape of the CAADP process leading, to a lively discussion around the different levels of the CAADP implementation. It highlighted the urgent need to explore ways of establishing donor advisory groups at the level of Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to help promote agricultural development within regional integration.

African Enterprise Challenge Fund - presentation and discussion

- Presentation by Mr Anuradha Bajaj (DFID)

Anuradha Bajaj presented the AECF, outlining that "in practice, the objective of a challenge fund is to provide the smallest possible financial contribution to a socially worthwhile project consistent with making it less risky and more financially sustainable to the private promoter". Anuradha outlined that the Challenge Fund is led by DFID at the moment, but that it is a multi-actor initiative and invited others for closer discussion and collaboration. The presentation spurred a lively discussion around the initiative and other already existing initiatives in other countries, like the Public Private Partnership (PPP) in Germany. Participants agreed that it will be useful to exchange knowledge on the different initiatives.

Before the closure of the event, members welcomed the contribution to engage closer with the Neuchatel Initiative. While the link is already established, there has been no active exchange of activities.

The Chairs closed the session with the outlook of the Friday workshop on the WDR and announced to start a survey for a suitable date for the Platform's Annual General Meeting in 2007. As the year will have the European Rural Forum as a major Rural Development conference in June, the Platform will explore ways to bring together its members to discuss jointly issues of harmonisation.

We would like to thank all participants for their very constructive and insightful input to the event!