



Board meeting, Brussels, Belgium

3 February 2017, 9:00 – 15:00 CET

Participants:

Board members: Shantanu Mathur (IFAD); Mauro Ghirotti (IADC-Italy), Marjaana Pekkola (MFA Finland), Torben Nilsson (IFAD), David Hegwood (USAID), Meredith McCormack (USAID), Julie Delforce (DFAT-Australia), Felix Fellman (SDC), Joseph Coompsen (AfDB), Monique Calon (MFA-The Netherlands), Patrick Herlant (EC), Mathieu Boche (MFA-France),

Platform secretariat: Reinhild Ernst, Romy Sato, Marion Thompson, Christian Mersmann, Martina Karaparusheva

Apologies: Iris Krebber (DFID); Annelene Bremer (BMZ), Michel Gagnon, Global Affairs Canada

Decisions and agreements

AGENDA ITEM	DECISIONS and AGREEMENTS
<p>1. Welcome and feedback on AGA Brussels, adoption of agenda</p>	<p>1. Co-Chair Shantanu Mathur opened the board meeting underlining that the Platform has been a solid success with many constructive and forward looking deliverables. Taking note of the rapidly changing architecture of international development cooperation, new forms of cooperation and networks are coming up and the Platform is the right place to debate appropriate donor responses. New calls for action with regard to youth and employment.</p> <p>General debate about the AGA Brussels: Keynote was excellently chosen showing the various dimensions of change and pathways to influence the change between complexity and chaos. Key note was strategically wisely chosen to introduce the topic of Agenda 2030.</p> <p>Topic and concept of the AGA (Agenda 2030 and looking back from the future) gave all participants the opportunity to reflect and engage constructively and attract also those members and partners who have not been fully involved in the Platform's work.</p> <p>The High-level Forum was very much welcomed – an open space for leaders to discuss. Excellent outcome and guidance for the Platform. No decision taking event, but concept needs to be further discussed to keep the interest of high-level leaders in the Platform and in engaging on the topic of ARD and rural transformation. Various angles (climate, youth, migration, urbanisation etc.) need to be used to keep ARD high on the political agenda.</p>



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	<p>Next AGA should make sure to engage emerging donors like Brazil, China and India and to re-attract Korea and possibly Japan. The format of a High-Level-Forum should be repeated as it has shown to be very successful in order to involve the decision-makers in the discourse and help to keep ARD and rural transformation high on the political agenda.</p> <p>Felix Fellmann (SDC) proposed to frame the High Level Forum at the next AGA around the topic: “how do donors react to change/complexity?” This would lay the ground for a broad discussion on how structural and financial changes within the different donor agencies underpin the achievement of Agenda 2030 and increase the resilience of donors to deal with the upcoming challenges in the rural-urban development context.</p> <p>It was also pointed out that the term “donor” in the name of the Platform is outdated, misleading and might prevent alliances with new partners, like China, India or Brazil. Some board members would prefer another term that reflects that development cooperation is no more divided into a donor and recipient perspective but rather an equal partnership endeavor that aims at tackling global challenges jointly.</p> <p>2. Agenda was adopted without change.</p>
<p>2. End of co-chair assignment Mauro Ghirotti</p>	<p>Co-chair Mauro Ghirotti gave his end of assignment report after his two-term as co-chair of the Platform. The report is presenting major achievements, recommendations and conclusions. The recommendations are very constructive and operational reminding the board members of basic agreements and checks and balances like the international recruitment of all staff. In his conclusions, Mauro Ghirotti emphasized that the changing conditions of development cooperation call for an open and pragmatic attitude reinforcing the positive approaches which have started in the Platform. The AGA was a very positive expression of this recommendation.</p> <p>Board members very much welcomed the end of assignment report and the presentation and suggested to ask all incoming co-chairs to provide such report. The board thanked Mauro Ghirotti for his dedicated and excellent services expressing the hope that he will remain a very active member of the Platform.</p>
<p>3. Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030 and work streams – progress report 2016</p>	<p>Co-Chair Shantanu Mathur introduced the topic emphasizing that Agenda 2030 is a very broad framework and that the Platform has done well to decide to focus on a few important cross-cutting issues for rural transformation along the lines of the Platform’s thematic work streams. The high-level panel focused the discussions on job creation/economic growth and</p>



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	<p>migration/urbanisation. These will be taken into consideration, while implementing the workplan 2017.</p> <p>The secretariat had presented the summary of the achievements during the AGA Members Day on 2 February 2016 and based on this discussion the board members expressed some concern over the rather broad variety of thematic work in 2016. What are the challenges in 2017 and is the Platform prepared? While recognizing that some work streams are used to prepare annual work plans, another option would be to become more flexible and address upcoming and burning issues rather than conventional thematic work contribution in the mid-term perspective to the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030.</p> <p>In order to have a clearer picture on how to go forward with Agenda 2030 from a donor perspective in support of rural transformation through issues like trade and inclusive agri-business, climate resilience, land governance, gender and youth employment, the board agreed that work streams should be mindful of the impact keeping the focus of the Platform on donor responses to emerging change UNDER Agenda 2030. This focus also needs to be communicated to partners of the Platform.</p>
<p>4. Draft work plan 2017</p>	<p><u>General debate:</u></p> <p>Decision: The board endorsed the Annual Work Plan 2017 of the Platform</p> <p>Comments circled around the rather open concept of the work plan. It was clarified that the overall work plan will be detailed by activities presented by the work streams to be communicated by latest 31 March 2017, also for financial budget allocations. The work plan does not show any budget figures as decided in 2015.</p> <p>The Board members agreed to focus on established work streams and engage in cross cutting discussions around the topics of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. The work streams should use every opportunity for stronger engagement with other forums in order to strengthen the complementarity efforts of each donor. Furthermore, the Board re-established the need to broaden the reach of the Platform by ensuring that the perspective of emerging donors is included in discussions and their new approaches, visions and experiences are used to enrich the ways of dealing with complexity.</p> <p><u>Flagship Publication on rural development</u></p> <p>Decision: Flagship publication should be eliminated from the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020</p> <p>Based on a comment of Annelene Bremer (BMZ), the Flagship Publication of the Platform on rural development envisaged for</p>



	<p>2017/2018 was discussed in the light of the many other publications and the ability of the Platform to elaborate such report. Additionally, such report is very costly and the Platform is not provided with sufficient finance nor did any member commit supplementary finance. The decision was taken to eliminate the Flagship Report on rural development from the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 and focus on updates and small reading pieces.</p> <p><u>NEPAD/CAADP and DPCG cooperation with Platform</u></p> <p>Decision: USAID and BMZ through the secretariat of the Platform to prepare a proposal as a concept for a closer cooperation between NEPAD/CAADP, the Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG) and the Platform which outlines the basic structure of cooperation and explains the financial and human resources implications depending on the tasks and finance for the board of the Platform to take a decision to merge the two secretariats of the Platform and DPCG;</p> <p>Earlier discussions between the Platform members, the secretariats of the Platform and the secretariat/members of the Development Partners Coordination Group (DPCG, formerly DPTT) had taken place, on (i) outreach through the platform’s communication means and (ii) Platform’s work streams to contribute to the implementation of the CAADP Malabo Declaration and the DPCG process.</p> <p>The board acknowledged an informal coordination meeting between DPCG and Platform in Brussels during the AGA which suggested the details of the aforementioned decisions.</p>
<p>5. Finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Report on finances 2016 (ii) Outlook contributions 2017 (iii) Draft 2017 indicative budget and staffing list of the secretariat 	<p><u>(i) Report on finance 2016</u></p> <p>(Decision: The board approved the budget group’s report on finances 2016.</p> <p>On behalf of the budget group of the Platform, the secretariat presented the report on finances 2016 which the Budget Group had endorsed prior to the board meeting.</p> <p><u>(ii) Outlook contributions 2017</u></p> <p>Recommendation: intention of annual/multi-annual contributions to be communicated by 31 March 2017 by all members</p> <p>In consideration of the analysis issued by the secretariat on the difficult budget situation 2017 with a major gap between the indicative budget and the availability of finance in January 2017, the secretariat on behalf of the budget group reiterated that all members should indicate to marion.thompson@donorplatform.org by latest 31 March 2017</p>



their readiness to contribute their membership fee for 2017 and beyond in an effort to provide multi-annual contributions for better planning of the Platform's work programmes and budget.

The envisaged EC contribution for 2017/2018 as a major source of funding will not be available before late-summer 2017 causing a possible financial shortfall in regard to the indicative budget.

The outlook shows an increasing number of members providing multi-annual contributions which is highly appreciated by members and the secretariat.

Draft 2017 indicative budget

Decision: The indicative budget 2017 of the Platform was approved, applying the condition that a review will take place at the end of March, according to the status of contributions at that time.

Considering the aforementioned outlook on contributions 2017 and beyond, the indicative budget was briefly discussed and approved applying the condition that a review will take place at the end of March 2017 according to the status of member contributions at that time. The secretariat will inform the Budget Group shortly after end of March about the status of 2017 contributions and the potential effect / need for adjustment on the 2017 indicative budget.

It was emphasised that the budget is constructed based on budget items and not on activities/outputs.

Staffing of the secretariat

Decision: Staffing list of the Secretariat was endorsed and it was decided to continue the cooperation with Christian Mersmann as policy advisor of the secretariat beyond his official retirement age on 30 November 2017 and to request GIZ as administrative host of the secretariat to extend his contract until 31. December 2018.

The secretariat should be enabled to fulfill its tasks in continuity. This is in particular true because of the tight budget situation of the Platform in 2017. The nomination of Reinhild Ernst as the coordinator of the secretariat in July 2016 was welcomed and it was reiterated that all recruitments should be carried out internationally.

Since the current phase of the increased financial contribution of BMZ is provided in phases and the current phase is coming to an end on 31 December 2018, it was agreed that the secretariat and GIZ should be supported to keep the secretariat team well-functioning by keeping the staff composition at least until the end of the aforementioned phase. The consequences of the envisaged availability of EC contributions in the order of Euro 1.5 million will be subject to debate at the virtual board meeting in



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	<p>June/July 2017 or during a special board session.</p> <p><u>Procedures of Platform governance:</u></p> <p>Recommendation: prepare cumulative and incremental procedures for the board</p> <p>In the absence of a detailed Charta of the Platform, sound governance structure as detailed in the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020 need to be complimented by a set of procedures as agreed in the various board meeting. This compilation of procedural agreements should be made available to the Board at any meeting and on the web. USAID committed to contribute to that process of compilation.</p>
<p>6. Partners engagement and partners request</p>	<p>A brief summary of partnership criteria/partnership categories was provided by the secretariat and discussed. It was underlined that on the one hand side, more and more partners engage in work streams and in the Strategic Initiative Agenda 2030 in a very informal way. This is very much appreciated as the broader scope and debate under the Platform with new dimension like trade and agri-business, climate finance and youth etc. demand new networks and new actors to get involved.</p> <p>On the other hand, the Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020 outlined clearly that the Platform is indeed a donors' platform provided as a forum to debate donor/IFI related responses to new developments in international cooperation. The question of accountability of partners was raised and it was recommended to keep partnership at a rather informal level. It was stressed that the establishment of partnerships should not mean endorsement to their agenda or policy directives. No decision or recommendation whether or not partners should appear on the website etc.</p> <p>With regard to the partnership requests from possibly BMG Foundation, GFRAS and GFAR, the co-chairs will examine the request as they come in and discuss with the board on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>It was agreed to clarify on the website the exact scope of work with partners and not formalise the partnership until decision of the Board is taken on the issue.</p> <p>As to the pending requests, it was suggested to prepare a letter that the Platform's membership has been only open to donor countries until now and not to foundations, but the Board is looking into the issue. Until a decision is taken, the Board appreciates the partnerships and collaborative work.</p> <p>The secretariat will prepare a suggestion on how to change the membership section in the Strategic Plan. The proposed text will be shared with the Board in advance of the virtual board</p>



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	meeting in June, where a discussion on the issue will take place.
7. Communication Strategy Development	<p>Decision: The board agreed with the hiring of a consultant to develop a new Communication Strategy for the Platform, in line with its Strategic Plan 2016-2020.</p> <p>The contract should only be signed when the financial situation allows for such an activity (after end of March, when all members have indicated their financial commitments to the Platform).</p>
8. Election of co-chair	<p>Decision: The board elected by enthusiastic acclamation Patrick Herlant (DEVCO, EU Commission) as the new co-chair 2017 - 2018</p> <p>Shantanu Mathur, IFAD, has another year of mandate. With the new Strategic Plan, the co-chairs and the secretariat have the trust from the board to pursue activities directly with the work streams leaders and engaging in Management meetings with secretariat as the general oversight instrument of the co-chairmanship.</p>
9. AOB	The Board asked the secretariat to include the minutes of the Board meeting into the folder for the next board meeting.
10. Closing remarks	The co-chair Shantanu Mathur thanked all board members for their participation and closed the meeting that ended a very busy and fruitful working week of the AGA, Members Day and board meeting.