

SYNTHESIS REPORT: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON THE ROAD TO ACCRA

*Prepared as a room document for the 15-16 May 2008 Bonn workshop on
“Capacity Development: Accra and Beyond”*

**OECD/DAC
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1. Capacity development as a priority in The Paris Declaration

Partner countries and donors first officially declared the common objective of greater aid effectiveness in Rome in 2003 at a High Level Forum (HLF1). This was followed in 2005 by the Paris Declaration (HLF2). The Paris Declaration contains five core dimensions (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, mutual accountability) organised around a “pyramid” with 56 action-oriented commitments. In September 2008, partner countries and donors will come together in Accra (HLF3) to examine the status of implementation of the Paris Declaration. A subsequent joint progress check is also planned for 2011 (HLF4).

The difficulties of promoting broad based and sustainable development in many developing countries, especially in those with extremely poor or fragile environments, has led to growing reflection on how to best approach capacity development in these countries. Many partner countries also are increasingly vocal in expressing their collective concern about some traditional approaches of donors which seem out of synch with their own priorities and realities.

The Paris Declaration refers extensively (see Annex 1) to the topic of capacity development as one of the basic objectives of effective development cooperation. Capacity development references in the Declaration include:

- The commonly felt **priority need** to strengthen national strategies and operational frameworks in partner countries to achieve greater aid effectiveness.
- The need for donors to use **policies** that strengthen country capacity so as to permit partner country leadership in guiding the use of their funds. This has spurred a special interest in strengthening the capacity of local **public financial management** and **procurement**.
- The need to to strengthen country capacity and the demand for **results based management** in an **inclusive and participatory manner**.
- The importance of mutually acceptable frameworks to assess **performance** of country-led strategies for capacity development.
- The priority need for capacity development policies in **fragile states** that support state building. Also, the need to adjust Paris principles of harmonization, alignment and managing for results to the realities of the fragile state environment of weak governance and weak capacity.

Over the last two years of implementation of Paris Declaration principles, increasing interest in capacity development has been expressed, both to address more immediate, operational themes or sector priorities for improved aid effectiveness and to address the longer term implications of capacity development, in line with prospective thinking about the future of international aid (i.e. capacity development as the “end game” of aid).

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) has reaffirmed its interest in pursuing a special initiative in support of capacity development for Accra and beyond. In February 2008 it established the position of Senior Coordinator for Capacity Development to work with DAC bilateral donors and their various partners to encourage a more effective international effort in this area. An initial priority has been to help highlight the capacity development messages for Accra, hence the focus of this “synthesis report”.

2. On the road to Accra

As part of the Paris Declaration implementation process, the Accra HLF Steering Committee was established to guide a sequence of actions to progressively and collaboratively integrate a range of special work streams which are being used to help prepare the High Level Forum in Accra.

Key reference milestones identified by the Steering Committee include:

- “Progress Report” drafts which describe the status of the workstreams being carried out for Accra;
- the series of regional preparatory events to elicit better understanding of messages on aid effectiveness from the regions (Fiji, Bangkok, Kigali, Washington);
- ongoing preparations for all nine Accra Round Tables where aid effectiveness substantive issues can be discussed and
- the series of Accra Agenda for Action drafts (18 March; 12 June; 20 July).

Although capacity development already is known to be a priority issue, no Round Table has been set up around this theme. Capacity development is an important cross cutting theme which will surface as a priority issue for several of the Round Tables.

The new DAC initiative in support of capacity development noted above will assist in building messages for Accra based on the results of its major workshop in Bonn, Germany (15-16 May 2008), co-sponsored with the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The workshop will be structured so as to draw upon the collective wisdom of its 70-80 participants to identify messages for the Accra Round Tables and Agenda for Action, as well as logical follow up actions beyond Accra.

It will do so in the following ways:

- Two special workshop room documents: (i) This “**Synthesis Report**”, assembled by the DAC Secretariat, which draws on the 1 April 2008 draft of the abovementioned Progress Report and from special feedback provided by the individual Accra workstreams will inventory early capacity development messages. (ii) A “**Perspectives on Capacity Development**” paper, drawn up by a special workshop reference group of capacity development specialists, will attempt to summarize key capacity development messages (What? Why? How?) in one simple matrix.
- The workshop will assemble **participants** from both the various regional preparatory events and from the nine Round Tables. Their presence will permit cross fertilisation of thinking related to capacity development to and from these special perspectives.
- Finally, once concluded, the conclusions of the Bonn workshop will be reflected in a short, recapitulative report to the HLF Steering Committee before 27 May 2008, as well as a special **report on capacity development** with distilled messages for Accra , to be submitted to HLF organisers by mid-June, 2008.

3. Early Roundtable feedback on capacity development

What then, are the key messages to date feeding back from the workstreams in preparation for Accra?

Following is a brief annotated summary, for each Round Table, of highlighted feedback from special workstream reporting on capacity development, from the draft Progress Report and from reporting out of the Fiji, Bangkok and Kigali preparatory events. It is important to note that, although feedback from these sources is located under only one Round Table heading in this report, it frequently will have significant meaning for other Round Tables, as well.

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Roundtable 1: “Country ownership”

Country ownership is both the context and the key prerequisite for continued change on the part of donors, partner country governments and non-state actors, and has linkages with the other Roundtable themes. “*Broad based, democratic ownership*” is key to ownership. Long-term development vision needs to incorporate diverse priorities if they are to be owned in a meaningful manner by its ultimate beneficiaries. Operationally, vision needs to be coupled with an inclusive planning process (execution, monitoring and evaluation). These are neither government planned alone, nor purely technical, exercises.

Partner country authority to exercise *leadership* requires both political determination and adequate national capacities. National capacities can be targeted at the level of human capacities (having the right skills in the right place) and institutional capacities (having the right strategies, tools and systems in place).

Donor *conditionalities* can detract from domestic ownership, but donors justify setting them according to their assessment of national capacity to analyse risk, negotiate, and lead dialogue – capacities which are often particularly weak in poor or conflict/fragile situation countries.

Capacity development features prominently in many donor portfolios, however its *impact* (e.g. technical cooperation, training) is not always clear. A number of countries articulate their needs in terms of capacities for effective aid management and leadership. Both donors and partner countries need to reflect on how best to ensure that aid assistance is delivered in a manner that augments in a sustainable and nationally owned manner the capacities that strengthened ownership rely upon.

Capacity development concerns all development stakeholders – not just governments. Capacity challenges also are those that impact on the ability of broader civil society to play its role in promoting democratic ownership more fully (for example, capacities for advocacy on aid issues).

Effective leadership and sustainable capacity development may require development stakeholders to adopt a perspective that looks beyond national or sub-national levels, including “*regional ownership*” of initiatives and dialogue led by partners in a similar region (e.g. NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism).

Partner countries also stand to learn (at the level of capacity development, as elsewhere) from knowledge sharing through *horizontal cooperation* with each other. Individual countries can consider using horizontal cooperation and peer learning in a regionally-owned manner.

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Roundtable 2: “Alignment”

Public Financial Management

Successful development efforts depend upon the efficiency, integrity and effectiveness with which the State raises, manages and expends the public resources at its disposal. Improving the formal and informal rules and institutions designed to ensure these objectives and strengthening the related human and technological capacities should therefore be a major component of any national development strategy. While working towards these goals is primarily the responsibility of development partners, donors have the role of supporting these efforts in an effective manner.

Capacity development is one of the key benefits derived from the use of a partner country’s PFM system. The use of country systems brings capacity back to the forefront of the interactions among partner countries and donors, and thereby has immediate benefits at the project level. It can also form the basis of larger scale programs to enhance the institutional capacity of partner countries over the longer term. At the same time, however, the donors’ use of the systems throws into relief the differences between the increasingly frequent adoption of international good practices and the remaining challenges in actual implementation. Focussing on closing this gap helps ensure sustainable development impact. A PFM recent report highlights the lack of correlation between the the announced use of a country public financial management system and its use in practice. It recommends therefore that donors move towards a default position in the use of country PFM systems.

Donors have differing assessments of risk (from reputational, to fiduciary, to developmental) which results from different legal frameworks; internal incentives; knowledge and experience. The best risk mitigation strategy is to strengthen country PFM systems. This implies supporting countries’ own efforts to reform financially, through capacity development, and when possible, through the direct use of country PFM systems.

The PEFA framework was created in 2001 as a country led agenda and coordinated program of support from donors in relation to analytical work, reform financing and technical support. A 2007 PEFA study showed that PEFA assessments have impacted upon both governments and donors, led to a change in national PFM reform programmes in some countries and served to increase capacity for governments to review their PFM strengths/weaknesses. The capacity of country governments to take a lead role in this assessment work could be strengthened by wider dissemination of information on the PEFA framework and by donors providing assistance to the implementation of self-assessments (including training for government staff).

Once weaknesses are assessed through the PEFA framework and other diagnostic tools, donors should support collectively country work to address those weaknesses. Key drivers in support of reform (and by implication capacity development) include:

- A country-led strategy and coordinated donor support.
- Coordinated donor support.
- The government and donors must work together to establishing priorities and appropriate sequence for the reforms. Because of country specific factors, there is no model for sequencing. Some (e.g. Cambodia) have sought to sequence reforms by implementing a package of measures to achieve by increasing levels of PFM competence over a manageable timeframe.
- PFM reforms should be part of overall public sector reforms.
- Improvements in the technical capacity of institutions within government are unlikely to be sustained if there is no demand for better governance and increased accountability from outside government, including parliament and civil societies.

- Reforms to transplant international or western models are likely to fail if they do not take into account the enabling environment that makes them work. South-South knowledge sharing in particular has proven useful in addressing problems faced by countries at similar stages of development.
- Consultations and stakeholder involvement is key. Donors must remember that capacity development is not a donor activity, but a task for partner country governments.

Procurement

Country ownership: The essential starting point and test of real ownership of procurement reform is that the capacity has been developed to link the National Development Strategy to reforms such as those of financial management and the public service and is that it is funded within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework. Effective planning and management of the implementation of this requires a core public sector management capacity.

Broad national stakeholder engagement: Development of capacity is a process of change. To plan and implement comprehensive, sustainable change requires the involvement and active support of stakeholders in the procurement process: the national political leadership, central government agencies and ministries, members of civil society, the private sector, the media and elected representative of parliaments and national assemblies.

Realistic needs assessments and concrete, achievable performance targets: Country ownership will ensure the focus of capacity development programs will be on the country’s broad, long term needs, not the more narrow, short term donor perspectives. Existing capacities and achieving realistic future needs must be linked in cost-effective ways.

Flexible, medium-to-long term implementation: Monitoring should be opportunistic and iterative using meaningful performance indicators and targets. The management process should be linked to other areas of reform and change in the country and to the overall performance of the implementation of the National Development Strategy.

Aid information management systems

A prerequisite for the effective co-ordination and management of aid, is up-to-date information on planned and ongoing aid flows, by funding agency, sector and geographic location. The OECD, World Bank and UNDP have sought to promote a greater use of aid information management systems (AIMS). These systems are crucial to the successful implementation of the Paris Declaration, especially in the area of mutual accountability for development results and several governments have worked to establish them to track, document and analyse aid flows to their countries in a more efficient manner.

Capacity development has becoming an AIMS focal area. Weak institutional capacity, in terms of a lack of adequate ownership by the governments and the non-existence of well-established aid co-ordination procedures and policy frameworks, presents a challenge to AIMS implementation. Multiple ministries may be involved in aid co-ordination and management activities -- the lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities and overlapping mandates can seriously impede the set up of and effective use of AIMS. In many cases, the capacity of the department responsible for aid co-ordination is limited and already overstretched. Capacity needs assessment should precede the development and establishment of an AIMS.

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Roundtable 3: “Harmonization”

Technical cooperation

Preliminary findings and actions were assembled in April 2008, including several messages on capacity development in relation to technical cooperation (TC).

Optimising national policy; operational environment: Country ownership and leadership of the technical cooperation and capacity development policy agendas is uneven. National capacity development strategies often lack definition and do not clearly articulate the overall needs of all national stakeholders. Senior government officials, political groups (e.g. parliamentary selection committees) are insufficiently aware of TC and capacity development issues, with repercussions on the degree of integration of capacity development strategies into development plans and public service management reforms. Similarly, donors need to do more to respect and promote country ownership, including recognition of the growing potential for South-South and North-South-South forms of cooperation.

Recommendations in this area include:

- joint efforts to formulate and promote a regional and cross-regional TC policy agenda;
- strengthening country capacity to conduct capacity development assessments, formulate country level capacity development strategies, roadmaps and targets and TC policies, priorities and related operational guidelines;
- strengthening country capacity to design and implement TC classification and management information systems;
- design and implementation of cross-regional, regional and national TC-capacity development knowledge management, awareness raising and advocacy action plans, drawing on growing country/development partner experiences and good practice; and
- greater devolution of authority to and strengthening of development partner country offices' capacity to engage in TC-capacity development strategy and programming.

Optimizing Sector-Thematic Policy and the Operational Environment: Many findings at the national level apply also at sector/thematic levels. In particular, capacity development and technical cooperation strategies are insufficiently articulated in sector plans, sector-wide approaches (SWAs) and program-based approaches (PBAs). While TC-capacity development 'basket funds' and increased complementarity between TC and other aid modalities (e.g. budget support) have the potential to reduce transaction costs, maintaining TC variety and avoiding TC uniformity is critical. Evidence suggests that strong political commitment helps assure effective TC and capacity development outputs and outcomes. Proactive sector leadership and management, adoption of a sector SWAp and use of government systems can also enhance TC effectiveness. High level systematic dissemination of TC-capacity development good practice can help inform strategies and planning in this area.

Recommendations in this area include:

- developing methodologies and tools for joint sector capacity assessments, incorporating staff development programs for country and donor staff in their use;
- develop principles and guidelines for the formulation of partnership principles for TC and capacity development within sector or programme-based approaches, incorporating transparent assessment of country development partner and TC modalities comparative advantages; and
- develop country level guidelines for joint client surveys and organizational change advocacy strategies and mechanisms, which incorporate well-defined country and development partner roles and responsibilities.

Six good practices which support technical cooperation for capacity development:

1. *Ensure country-led planning of technical cooperation.* Technical cooperation works best when embedded within a country-led sector policy reform with clear institutional capacity development targets. Donor willingness to respond quickly and flexibly to new capacity development and TC demands enhances its effectiveness. Identification by government of long-term TC and capacity development time horizons aligned with long-term donor commitment also enhances effectiveness.

2. *Flexible and responsive technical cooperation and capacity development design.* TC works best when the sector or thematic capacity development framework is long-term, capacity outputs and outcomes are well-defined and measurable, and the design builds in flexibility and responsiveness to emerging issues and needs. A key condition is donor willingness to adjust TC modalities and to delegate decision making to sector managers and country offices. Ensuring strong alignment between TC strategies and sector capacity development priorities and measures in favour of sustainable capacity development is also critical.

3. *Embed TC within an organizational change management process.* A key finding is that TC works best and CD outcomes are more assured when embedded within a country-led and multi-level organizational change management process. A combination of organizational capacity to lead and absorb change, alongside external demand and political support is also critical. Selectively donors can help stimulate and facilitate change management through advocacy, organizational performance assessments and catalytic TC.

4. *Country-Led Management of TC.* A key finding is that a minimum country TC management capacity needs to be in place, although TC can help strengthen such capacity. Development partners can facilitate, especially through harmonized funding arrangements and avoiding competition. Provision of TC within a multi-donor funding framework can also promote country management and control.

5. *Complementarity of TC and Other Support.* The broad consensus of findings is that TC works better, as part of a broader framework of CD support, including complementary infrastructure and technology. Retaining flexibility and variety in the types of TC support, including use of experts, study tours, institutional twinning is also beneficial. However, in certain circumstances, given country leadership, stand-alone international expertise can be beneficial.

6. *Embedding TC in Organizational Learning Process.* Another finding is that TC is more effective and CD outputs more likely when the sector organizations have an existing minimum capacity for use of management information and organizational learning. A second condition is a country willingness to undertake independent monitoring surveys to help inform organizational learning, which TC can facilitate. Adopting a multi-level approach to organizational learning, which TC can facilitate, is also important.

Feedback from OECD/DAC Peer Reviews

Although most donors do not have an explicit approach to capacity development, they recognise that this dimension is essential for successful development in the medium to longer term. It therefore features prominently in their development co-operation activities. Donors tend to use the DAC guidance typology of capacity development effort at three levels: creating an enabling environment, building institutional capacity and developing individual capacities.

Enabling environment. Finland for instance focuses on creating an enabling environment alongside the core issues of individual and organisational capacity development and supports the inclusion of capacity development in national development plans for this purpose. Similarly, Spain focuses its approach on decentralisation as well as empowerment of citizens and civil society at the local level. Canada CIDA capacity development projects actively involve local partners early on in the project cycle; adopt long-term perspectives, patience and perseverance in the face of uncertainty; develop innovative approaches to local

contexts and problems; and integrate capacity development within larger partner country-led programmes. Increasingly, donors try to better approach behaviour change at both the organisational and individual levels. Denmark focuses on analysing organisational change in its different dimensions. France's governance strategy emphasises actions that target "agents of change" as well as the structures of change and notes the importance of interactions between institutions and actors in constructing a context for dialogue.

Institutional capacity is an essential factor for creating the conditions for alignment with partner countries' systems and strategies. Peer reviews note that the lack of institutional capacity hampers the implementation of programme-based aid modalities, leading to the persistence of preferences for project modalities. In Bangladesh, the Netherlands retains projects as the preferred modality to support water resource management and includes an important technical assistance component due to the lack of institutional capacity and high fiduciary risk. Given its multidimensional characteristic, building institutional capacity is where donor's joint approaches are most common and effective. For instance, Finnish participation in capacity development multi-donor initiatives in Vietnam includes: i) its contributions to the pooled Comprehensive Capacity Building Programme, run by the Ministry of Planning and Information, which aims to improve the legal and institutional framework for managing ODA; and ii) support for joint efforts on capacity development in procurement through the Like Minded Donor Group's harmonisation project.

Individual capacities. Finally, donors acknowledge that educated and capable individuals are a precondition for capacity development, while recognizing that this is not sufficient in light of organisational and institutional constraints. Support to education - including professional training - is therefore a key element of their capacity building effort. Besides funding national education systems, a number of donors have set up training institutes to sustain development efforts (*e.g.* the Danida Fellowship Centre).

Finally, a number of donors are reviewing their technical assistance policy to emphasise capacity development and promote joint approaches to this effect, as illustrated below.

Technical assistance and capacity development

A number of donors are reviewing their technical assistance policy to emphasise capacity development. For instance, Germany, whose technical co-operation aims at broadly supporting capacity development, has learned through the experience that capacity development requires a systemic approach and cannot be reduced to stand-alone training measures. However, in Nicaragua and Ethiopia, large numbers of German-funded technical consultants still carry out responsibilities that seem close to "stand-alone" training. Most local sources readily admit that much remains to be done to understand how to use technical assistance in support of efficient capacity development. This issue becomes more complex in cases where local authorities request old fashioned forms of technical assistance despite its high cost. Long lasting donors like France are confronted with this problem in a number of their former colonies.

Peer reviews note some positive experiences of donor co-ordination in pooling technical assistance funds for capacity development. For instance, in Bangladesh, where most projects are jointly implemented with the Asian Development Bank, the Dutch technical assistance is usually pooled and increasingly uses local expertise. The Netherlands also supports the public financial management reform process through a silent partnership with DFID.

Some donors try to make more use of local experts, recognising that external technical advisors should be used only when local experts are not available. In addition to promoting ownership, peer reviews usually recommend employing local experts and making use of the diaspora to help build national capacity. In line with this view, the UK in its reform of technical co-operation commits to funding international consultants only when there is a clear demand from partner countries and where no nationals in the public service could provide the service efficiently at a lower cost. However, as in other cases, this review noted the persistence of a strong donor leadership role in determining and responding to technical assistance needs, which may contradict partner countries' ownership and hamper national capacity building.

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Roundtable 4: “Managing for development results”

Managing for Development Results (MfDR) delineates a paradigm shift from focusing on inputs and immediate outputs to focusing on performance and achievement of outcomes and impacts. A distinct feature of MfDR is that it is evidence based. Performance information is used for improved decision-making. Four features constitute the core elements of any “MfDR cycle”:

- Agreement on results and setting of concrete goals, targets and strategies;
- Decision-making on measures (budgeting, contracting, design, operations, incentives etc.) necessary to achieve these goals and targets;
- Monitoring and evaluation, benchmarking and reporting on whether the allocated resources are making the intended difference and as a precondition for a evidence-based readjustment of policy measures and resource allocation;
- Feedback of performance information into decision-making.

The development of a “performance culture” is not an easy task. Usually a lot of effort is required to create internal preconditions for MfDR through targeted organizational and human resource development. Even where there is strong leadership, MfDR in partner countries is often still weak, for reasons of lack of capacity to plan, budget, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programs. Results-based monitoring is still assessed to be the weakest link in the overall national governance systems of many countries and budgeting, financial reporting and auditing remain discrete exercises. The systems of many countries remain focused on inputs and compliance issues and are only gradually moving to measure output.

A priority for MfDR is to develop results-oriented frameworks that, building on sound statistical systems and open access to information, produce data on progress towards desired inputs, outputs and outcomes.

Any effort to develop serious capacity in the public sector to fully manage for results will have to start with a deep assessment of the existing capacity. “Diagnostic reviews are an important – and growing – source of information to governments and donors on the state of country systems in partner countries. Partner countries and donors jointly committed “to integrate diagnostic reviews and performance assessment frameworks within country-led strategies for capacity development” (Paris Declaration). Such diagnostic tools allow partner countries to conduct an assessment to provide them with a clearer view on capacity gaps, pursued actions and possible request for donor’s support. Such an assessment may serve as an entry point for a broader in-country discussion on MfDR.

Statistics and capacity development

Every step of the decision-making process — from (a) identifying emerging issues to (b) informing the design of policy and setting targets to (c) forecasting future trends to (d) monitoring policy implementation and overall progress and finally to (e) evaluating policy impact — requires timely, good-quality, relevant data. As such, statistics play a central role in holding governments and donors to account, in managing for development results, and in advancing aid effectiveness.

While the international development community has come to recognise the need for basing policies on sound and transparent evidence, some developing countries have encountered difficulties in building the capacity to produce, analyse, and use data. Furthermore, many countries find themselves caught in the vicious cycle of under-performance, under-use, and under-funding of statistics. Development partners have

estimated that — in sub-Saharan Africa alone — some US\$200 million per year in addition to national expenditures are required to finance the comprehensive building of statistical capacity on the continent.

Several international initiatives are attempting to address these issues and fill the capacity and funding gaps. At the Second International Roundtable on Managing for Development Results (MfDR), held in February 2004, the international community agreed a “Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics” (MAPS) which outlined six actions intended to improve the availability of data in the short term and build institutional capacity to produce, analyse, and use statistics in the long term. The first and central element of the MAPS was support to the design and implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS). The NSDS provides a robust framework and action plan for building the country’s statistical capacity to meet both current and future data needs. In particular, the aim is to align the statistical development strategy with wider poverty-focused national development programmes and strategies.

Following recommendations at the Third MfDR Roundtable in February 2007, development partners supporting statistical development have recently launched a World Bank–managed “Statistics for Results Facility” whose aim is to accelerate the strengthening of statistical systems in developing countries and thereby stimulate sustained improvement in the availability of and access to reliable statistics in order to better measure and manage for development results.

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Roundtable 5: “Strengthening mutual accountability”

The 2007 Hanoi Round Table in Managing for Development Results included a specific session on capacity-development experiences in various regions. Some emerging key lessons identified were:

- demand and ownership are critical to creating and sustaining systems;
- the importance of understanding the policy and organizational context as well as the technical aspects;
- leadership and champions are needed;
- laws and regulations are not sufficient; and
- while reliable data are essential, system designers must be careful about data demands and “overdesign”.

The guiding principle when designing systems should be whether and how they will be used and capacity development support needs to be tailored accordingly. Associations and networks can help facilitate knowledge sharing and support capacity development. However, capacity development can be supply-driven; where demand is weak it is important to raise awareness through a selective approach that can have a demonstration effect. Capacity development in evaluation and monitoring needs to be simple, user-led, and outcome-focused. The important role of civil society, the private sector and professional associations is important.

“Evaluation Capacity Development” (ECD) is of growing importance in the new development and aid context, both to meet domestic and mutual accountability needs. The DAC Evaluation Network has, as part of its mandate, a role to “promote and support ECD in partner countries”. The Evaluation Network suggested that further practical insights from experience in the field should be sought to inform the work and a study on ECD experiences in West Africa has recently been launched. The study aims to put together the current knowledge on ECD initiatives in West Africa; to learn from what has been done or tried and; to explore the reasons of success or failure, in order to provide insights based on practical experience. It is envisaged that the study will feed into an expert meeting on the topic to take place in the first half of 2008, and for results to feed back to the Evaluation Network and actors in the region. The study will aim to

provide an overview and analysis of the existing experiences in selected African countries, mainly francophone. It will primarily be based on a limited number of field surveys and interviews with key actors involved in the process in their countries. The study will also examine current knowledge on capacity building in general, and ECD in particular, from literature and documentation available, in order to analyze how the situations and processes described in the field relate to theory.

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Roundtable 6: “Role of civil society in advancing aid effectiveness”

Ownership should be understood as democratic ownership, which means that citizens’ voices and concerns must be central to national, regional and local development plans and processes, through legitimate and open mechanisms involving parliaments and civil society, including women’s organisations.

Donors should commit to untying of all aid, including food aid and technical assistance.

Technical cooperation remains largely unaligned to partner country priorities and is supply driven. The focus on results achieved are seldom clear and well documented lessons learned need to be much better integrated. Donors should commit to making 100% of technical cooperation demand driven and aligned to national strategies, with recipients monitoring the extent to which this is achieved. This will require donors to change their policies, guidance and incentives and to set out clear implementation plans that partners can monitor.

Partner countries must exert stronger leadership in determining priorities and strategies for capacity development.

Donors and partner countries need to set out a clear, visionary agenda for the future (2010 and beyond) addressing central concerns to aid and charting the path towards the next global aid agreement and beyond.

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Roundtable 7: “Aid effectiveness in situations of fragility and conflict”

- **Weak national capacity in government institutions constrains aid effectiveness** (e.g. alignment on national priorities which are sometimes ill-defined and national systems which are often weak) **and development at large.** Weak state capacity limits the ability to fulfill key state functions (e.g. security, domestic revenue mobilization) and deliver services. This is critical as fragile states are falling behind in terms of reaching the MDGs; Fragile States are where one out of the world’s six billion people live, but where half of the world’s children die before the age of five, one third of all people surviving on less than 1\$ per day live, and one third of all maternal deaths occur. Effective service delivery can be a source of legitimacy for the state, although at times effective service delivery and legitimacy can be at odds.
- **Such key state functions and services are *de facto* often outsourced** in the most challenging fragile states, at least temporarily. Examples abound in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste, and range from shared sovereignty (the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo) and shared management (Liberia’s Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme), to the outsourcing of key state functions (customs management by Crown Agents in Mozambique) or the delivery of services in sectors such as education, health and water. There can be benefits to such outsourcing, such as mitigating the

humanitarian impact of war or bad governance; stabilization; opening humanitarian and political space in situations of political deadlock or lack of will to reform; managing fiduciary risk). However, opting for direct service delivery because of weak state capacity and accountability to society will not in itself contribute to remedying such weaknesses. Outsourcing can in fact undermine state capacity and legitimacy, unless it is done in ways that aim to build national capacity in the process, that focus on advisory technical assistance rather than executive positions whenever possible, that inform and empower local authorities whenever possible, that are framed by sector and regional policies where they exist, and that invest in strengthening priority functions such as public financial management and procurement systems (often a bottleneck to everything else).

- **Fragile states can also be characterized by weak national capacity society-wide**, which means civil society may have a limited ability to keep government institutions in check, hence limited accountability. The same can be said of Parliaments.
- **Technical assistance has a key impact on turn-around.** Program/project aid and budget support may be the wrong answer in environments where the civil service and the budget process have corroded and constrain aid absorption (Collier): Strengthening national capacity and institutions is a critical task at hand. Fragile states present particular challenges that make the skills and experience of technical assistants from developed countries not always relevant, especially in technical areas. Ways to tap into relevant and context-sensitive technical assistance includes promoting South-South cooperation and programs to encourage the return of diasporas.
- **Fragile states are often characterized by divided societies and non-representative governments.** Capacity strengthening in leadership training for government officials and community leaders can complement technical capacity building, creating space for appropriate political settlements and reconciliation at the community level.

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Roundtable 8: “Enhancing results by applying the Paris Declaration at sector level”

The shape of capacity development at the strategic level has tended to shift as funding levels grow for the sectors. In the health sector, there has been a notable shift from planning to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Measurement of results and progress require reliable statistical and information systems which are often insufficient.

The coordination and harmonization of increasing number of donors at the sector level requires local management and leadership capacities (ownership) which are often weak. In the health sector the lack of health personnel (generated or worsened by HIV AIDS crisis, lack of incentives, migration...) locally is a major constraint in implementing health programs at all levels (national, local). Major funding for specific programmes that require more qualified personnel (e.g. HIV/AIDS) tend to attract the limited existing qualified staff, thereby reducing the number available for general health care. This sometimes contributes to distorsion effets in salary structures across sectors.

Many countries complain about the lack of or insufficient donor funding for capacity development, whether through projects or programme-based approaches. Capacity development does not always have the political, technical and financial support needed to make it a local priority.

The fact that there is too limited use of country systems or negative outcomes from using local country systems (e.g. drugs) reinforces the need for building or strengthening reliable country systems with strong human and technical capacities.

Recommendations at the sector level include:

- Make sure that donors provide sufficient resources for capacity development and ensure that capacity development is incorporated in all sector or sub-sector approaches (project, programme-based approaches).
- Ensure the link between sector initiatives/investments and policy reform and regulatory frameworks. Key is the link between sector or sub-sector approaches and public sector reform (civil service, public financial management, information and statistics). Training and the retention of professionals is a pre-condition for successful sector programs (to address health personnel shortage for instance). The development of reliable procurement systems is a critical condition for ensuring effective aid in the health sector.
- Capacity development is needed broadly at the country level - not just in the public sector but also in the private sector and civil society (NGOs, communities) which are major players in most sectors (esp. agriculture, infrastructure, but also health and education). Capacity development is needed at all levels, including districts where inputs are critical at the sector level for designing, implementing and measuring results.
- Reduce the use of international technical assistance and untie aid as much as possible in sector programs. The use of local technical assistance needs to be developed based on needs and articulated with long term strategies and appropriate funding.

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Roundtable 9: “The changing aid architecture: Implications for aid effectiveness”

Capacity constraints, particularly at the field level are among the main challenges for providing effective aid for the non-DAC providers of development assistance. Often, embassies are understaffed with a limited number of development specialists, and there are limited capacities to orient staff on general aid effectiveness issues.

Non-DAC providers of development assistance stressed the challenge of building capacities and institutions to manage aid effectively, particularly in programming techniques and subsequently collecting data and strengthening reporting and monitoring-evaluation systems.

Better alignment of emerging donor guidelines with country systems is also key to improving their implementation. Also noted is the challenge of ensuring coherence within government and line ministries so as to avoid duplication when delivering aid and the challenge of creating incentives for staff that are sufficient to change staff behaviour and promote aid effectiveness practices.

Communicating to the public and parliament the results of country’s development assistance is special challenge. As it is easier to demonstrate the results of project-based interventions, it was felt more difficult to demonstrate visible results from programme-based approaches, budget support and other practices current in the aid effectiveness agenda.

Non-DAC providers of development assistance are interested in learning from established donors on ways to become more reliable and predictable donors. Establishing triangular partnerships with DAC donors was identified as a practical way for sharing experiences.

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4. Capacity Development in the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)

The Accra Agenda for Action is in the middle of an iterative editing process. The current AAA draft (see Annex 2) is dated 18 March 2008 and is the only official draft of reference for the Bonn workshop. The next official version of the AAA (12 June 2008) will be produced on the basis of all commentary (including that of the Bonn workshop) received over the intervening two-month timeframe. The deadline for receipt of this commentary is 27 May.

Strong encouragement has already been heard (consultative forums; regional participatory events) in support of AAA messages that are of greater political interest (the AAA is a ministerial statement) and that provide a stronger platform for partner country inputs and priorities, including those of capacity development.

A number of sources have asked that capacity development be given more prominence generally in the AAA and particularly that it merits its own separate paragraph, proportionate to the modest length of the AAA political summary. Similar calls have been made for capacity development messages that better represent partner country priorities and direction.

Based on the feedback obtained from the multiple workstreams noted in this report, the range of potential messages in capacity development for the AAA could include the following:

- Capacity development should be a major objective of most aspects of national development that are supported by the donor community. Capacity development is the ultimate objective of all development cooperation and merits a clear statement of jointly defined longer term **vision** and that can inform all thematic and sector actions undertaken in this area.
- At the country level, partner countries and donors need to identify the pervasive **systemic issues** that undermine capacity development and agree on joint action to address incentive systems, governance weaknesses and accountability mechanisms.
- In specifically operational terms, capacity development funding actions often can be most conveniently coordinated by partner countries and donors at the level of **sectors**, where capacity development vision can be practically generated, then implemented and monitored.
- **Technical cooperation** is one of the most immediately actionable topics of priority importance to partner countries and donors. Current studies on this topic can inform work on a charter of jointly defined principles and expectations for this special form of development cooperation.
- Strengthening country-level capacities requires that partner countries lead in choosing capacity development actions that fit their needs and aspirations. This includes South-South forms of cooperation, which can be more appropriate to the local context and more cost efficient.
- Partner countries and donors need to systematically accompany capacity assessment and action with a programme to independently measure progress in implementing capacity development at the country level.
- Partner countries and donors may wish to consider the establishment of a sustained and collaborative effort, perhaps in form of a Joint Venture, for promoting the fuller translation of capacity development policy into practice throughout development cooperation.

ANNEX 1:
KEY REFERENCES TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE PARIS DECLARATION

- Paragraph 3 priorities for action: (i) “Strengthening partner countries’ national development strategies and associated operational frameworks (e.g., planning, budget, and performance assessment frameworks). (ii) Increasing alignment of aid with partner countries’ priorities, systems and procedures and helping to strengthen their capacities.”
- Paragraph 4 commitment to address “Weaknesses in partner countries’ institutional capacities to develop and implement results-driven national development strategies.”
- Paragraph 7: “In fragile states, as we support state-building...we will ensure that the principles of harmonization, alignment and managing for results are adapted to environments of weak governance and capacity.”
- Paragraph 15: “Donors commit to respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it.”
- Paragraph 17. “Using a country’s own institutions and systems, where these provide assurance that aid will be used for agreed purposes, increases aid effectiveness by strengthening the partner country’s sustainable capacity to develop, implement and account for its policies to its citizens and parliament. Country systems and procedures typically include, but are not restricted to, national arrangements and procedures for public financial management, accounting, auditing, procurement, results frameworks and monitoring.”
- Paragraph 19. “Partner countries and donors jointly commit to: (i) Work together to establish mutually agreed frameworks that provide reliable assessments of performance, transparency and accountability of country systems (Indicator 2). (ii) Integrate diagnostic reviews and performance assessment frameworks within country-led strategies for capacity development.”
- Paragraph 20. Partner countries commit to: “Undertake reforms, such as public management reform, that may be necessary to launch and fuel sustainable capacity development processes.”
- Paragraph 22. “The capacity to plan, manage, implement, and account for results of policies and programmes, is critical for achieving development objectives — from analysis and dialogue through implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity development is the responsibility of partner countries with donors playing a support role. It needs not only to be based on sound technical analysis, but also to be responsive to the broader social, political and economic environment, including the need to strengthen human resources.”
- Paragraph 23. “Partner countries commit to integrate specific capacity strengthening objectives in national development strategies and pursue their implementation through country-led capacity development strategies where needed.”
- Paragraph 24. “Donors commit to align their analytic and financial support with partners’ capacity development objectives and strategies, make effective use of existing capacities and harmonise support for capacity development accordingly. (Indicator 4)”

- Paragraphs 25-27 deal with partner-donor commitments to strengthen public financial management capacity.
- Paragraphs 28-30 deal with partner-donor commitments to strengthen procurement system capacity.
- Paragraph 37: “The long-term vision for international engagement in fragile states is to build legitimate, effective and resilient state and other country institutions. While the guiding principles of effective aid apply equally to fragile states, they need to be adapted to environments of weak ownership and capacity and to immediate needs for basic service delivery.”
- Paragraph 46. “Partner countries and donors jointly commit to work together in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and demand for results based management.”

ANNEX 2: ACCRA AGENDA for ACTION

(First Consultative Draft - Version 18 March 2008)

*As the first consultative draft of the Accra Agenda for Action, this document will be revised to reflect the comments from the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and the regional preparatory events organised for Accra. A revised penultimate draft will be circulated by the middle of June for review by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness on **9-10 July 2008**. For more information on this process, please consult the Accra High-Level Forum website: www.accrahlhf.net*

Preamble

1. At the Paris High-Level Forum in 2005, a broad segment of the international community committed to reform the delivery and management of aid. Today, 4 September 2008, we Ministers of developed and developing countries who are responsible for promoting development and Heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions, meeting in Accra, have assessed progress and identified needed action to broaden and deepen the implementation of the commitments many of us undertook in the Paris Declaration. We welcome all the countries that have associated themselves with this undertaking.
2. We note that in recent years, major changes have taken place in the international aid system. There is an increasing diversity of development approaches and development partners, together with the ongoing involvement of the partner countries, bilateral donors, and the multilateral institutions that has enriched the development process. The Paris principles are providing a solid platform for accelerated progress on gender equity, environmental sustainability, respect for human rights, and good governance that is fundamental to good development results.
3. We recognise the large, substantive, and distinctive role played by civil society organisations as development actors, but also as aid donors, recipients, and partners. We value the contributions being made by global funds, including private foundations, and their support for and engagement with country-led assistance programs. We welcome the financial aid and cooperation offered by countries that are drawing on their own recent development experiences as aid recipients, and in particular the opportunities for south-south cooperation that have grown in recent years.
4. Three years after the Paris Declaration, we are beginning to see many positive changes to aid practices that have led to more effective use of aid resources, and to the forging of productive development partnerships between and among partner countries, donors, and civil society. At the same time, we acknowledge that we have not met all of our objectives, nor have we stretched ourselves enough to make the difficult policy and procedural changes necessary to improve aid delivery and management for greater development impact. We can and must do better.
5. We look ahead to the Doha meeting on *Financing for Development* later this year (2 December 2008), to the upcoming G-8 meetings in Italy next year, the MDG Call to Action, and the Monterrey Consensus Review to join common cause with these international efforts to strengthen the underpinnings for inclusive and sustainable development and to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

STATEMENT OF RESOLVE

6. We have reviewed progress in implementing the Paris Declaration, measured ourselves against the commitments and targets that we had set for 2010, shared good practice in increasing the impact of aid, and identified bottlenecks that hamper further progress. We have agreed on this Accra Agenda for Action

to strengthen the Paris Declaration framework and respond to the emerging opportunities and challenges of the complex international aid system, and to achieve better development results.

7. We believe that the framework to improve aid effectiveness and development impact offered by the five Paris principles — ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, and mutual accountability — is fundamentally sound. At the same time, we take these principles as a useful guide that requires flexibility and adaptation, when applying to the differing needs of individual country circumstances, and different stakeholder groups such as civil society organisations. Thus this Accra Agenda for Action should be read as supplementing, and not substituting for, the Paris Declaration framework.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

8. While we resolve to continue promoting progress on all the commitments of the Paris Declaration, we have drawn on the 2008 Paris Monitoring Survey, the Progress Report on implementing the Paris Declaration, the Paris Declaration Evaluation Report, the work underlying the preparation of the nine Roundtables, the reports from the regional preparatory events for Accra, the CSO and multistakeholder regional consultations, [and input from the Accra Consensus Group] to identify a set of Priority Actions for endorsement by Ministers at Accra.

Strengthening country ownership of development

9. Experience shows that aid is most effective when it supports countries' own development efforts and policies to which leaders, officials and citizens are truly committed. To this end, partner countries will:

Deepen their ***ownership*** of the development process by engaging their ***citizens, civil society organisations, and parliaments*** more fully in planning, implementing, and assessing their development policies, programmes and budgets.

Step-up efforts to ***record all external as well as domestic resources in budget documents***.

Strengthen linkages among annual budgets, medium-term expenditure frameworks, and national development policies.

10. Many partner countries have to meet an array of ***conditions on aid*** and a plethora of benchmarks measured by layers of indicators before aid funds are disbursed. We will build on the progress made in developing good practice on conditionalities including those undertaken by the Bretton Woods institutions by reaching agreement by [December 2010] on an ***International Code of Conduct for transparently implementing conditionality*** with a view to:

Improving the design of conditions so as to make them more effective at promoting ownership, and achieving results from mutually agreed reform measures.

Streamlining and harmonising the application of conditions so as to support more predictable disbursements.

Diminishing the number of overlapping conditions.

Improving alignment with country priorities, systems, and procedures

11. Technical co-operation efforts remain largely uncoordinated and supply-driven; their linkage to the partner country needs assessed through diagnostic tools and analytical studies remains weak; the focus on results to be achieved is seldom clear; and well-documented lessons learnt need to be better reflected in operational projects and programmes. Donors will provide clear guidance to their staff on how to address these long-standing issues that have hampered ***capacity development***. Partner countries will:

Assert stronger leadership in ***determining priority programmes of capacity development***, especially those needed to improve country systems (e.g. public financial management, procurement and managing for development results).

Work with donors to develop operational strategies to strengthen, ***build the capacity of, and increase the use of country systems*** (including in public financial management, procurement, safeguards, and managing for results).

12. In the area of public financial management, donors and partner countries will adopt the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability framework as the core tool for assessing performance and measuring progress within a multiyear plan for public financial management diagnostics.

13. While development is a medium- to long-term undertaking, donors' time-horizon for committing aid is typically short term. This undermines partner countries ability to appraise, plan and manage public expenditure and hampers the emergence of public expenditure review and accountability systems in partner countries. Predictable and sustained funding of development needs of partner countries over the medium-term will require actions at different levels from both donors and partner countries. To this end, we will reach agreement by **[December 2010]** on actions that ***increase medium-term predictability*** by:

Increasing the proportion of aid committed on a rolling three-year basis and improving the timeliness of disbursements.

Proposing practical modalities for publishing reliable country-by-country timetables for aid commitments and expenditures.

Designing innovative disbursement modalities, including pooling of donor funds to smooth out agreed financing flows.

14. In line with adapting the Paris principles to the specific needs at the country level, in situations of fragility and conflict, we will pursue the achievement of international objectives on state-building and peace-building and to adopt a whole-of-government and whole-of-system approach to development that integrates all relevant actors, both national and international, in the areas of diplomacy, development, and defence. Further, we commit to better aid allocation in terms of (i) mobilising staff more rapidly; (ii) making resource flows more predictable; (iii) ensuring continued support for a sustained period of time; and (iv) ensuring the deployment of high-quality staff to these situations.

15. A broad range of partner countries continue to identify tied aid as a critical limiting factor in strengthening ownership, and facilitating national capacity development. Donors will strengthen their efforts to untie their aid in accordance with the 2001 DAC Recommendations on Untying Official Development Assistance to the Least Developed Countries. Donors will continue to make ***progress on untying aid*** by [*Expanding their use of locally sourced procurement*] / [*Extending the current DAC recommendation on the Untying of aid*] / [*Establishing and monitoring progress towards reaching a target for Paris Declaration Indicator 8 on Untying Aid*].

16. Recognising the civil society organisations contributions to and accountability for aid effectiveness, commensurate with their growing role as aid donors and partners, we will work to agree by **[December 2010]** on a joint statement of ***Good Practice on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness***.

Harmonising and streamlining aid delivery at country level

17. The Paris Declaration identified the need to take concrete and effective action ***to integrate global programmes into partner countries' broader development agendas***. Nevertheless, global vertical funds continue to proliferate, encouraged by their political appeal in donor countries. In this respect we underline the importance of developing good practice principles. We call on funders of and stakeholders in global programmes to give serious analytical and decision-making attention to whether collective action requires earmarked global financing, or whether the alternative of financing effectively through an existing institution has been sufficiently explored. Should new, earmarked financing mechanisms be needed, we

call on funders and stakeholders to apply these principles in practice and align and harmonise pro-actively, and ensure results and accountability frameworks are put in place.

18. The evolving international aid system is characterised by excessive fragmentation of aid at the country and sector level, and the Paris Declaration called for a pragmatic approach to division of labour that increases complementarity and reduces the transaction costs of managing and delivering aid. To help secure the benefits of more effective division of labour, address aid fragmentation, and deliver aid more effectively, we will agree by [**December 2010**] on *Good Practice Principles for Complementarity and Division of Labour, drawing from the EU Code of Conduct*. To accelerate progress in this direction, donors will support partner countries in developing their *aid management systems*, including mapping donors to country priority sectors in national development strategies.

19. We will develop and implement harmonised methodologies for assessing *climate risks* in the sectors that are most vulnerable to climate change risk and variability. We will work closely with interested partner countries to institutionalise and broaden the use of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs).

20. The cost of reaching agreement among donors on legal aspects of joint financing operations is typically high, especially on partner countries when it leads to delays in disbursements. We will build on the recently launched Legal Harmonisation Initiative to facilitate the process of reaching these agreements, including through using flexible model documents and responsive decision taking by senior legal and policy staff.

Achieving and demonstrating development results

21. *Stronger incentives* are needed in donor organisations and in partner countries to articulate the clear and concrete outcomes that are expected from alignment and harmonisation plans and to focus management and staff efforts on time bound actions to achieve these outcomes. Donors agree to undertake a detailed review of policies, procedures and regulations in our respective institutions to improve incentives for implementing the Paris Declaration agenda.

22. We will invest more in measuring, delivering, and *communicating results* from development activities and in demonstrating that the role of donor and partner country leadership and political will is very important. We agree to work closely with partner countries to develop cost effective results management instruments to promote harmonisation and alignment, foster improved aid predictability and management of aid resources, and improve reporting to parliaments and citizens. We will also invest more in gender disaggregated data as a way of increasing the impact of aid.

Strengthening mutual accountability for development

23. At the country level, we will implement strengthened *mutual accountability mechanisms*, drawing on such emerging best practice as institutionalised reviews of local harmonisation action plans and country assistance strategies, Results & Resource Partnerships (RRPs), and independent advisory groups; and we will also broaden participation in the process to include parliaments, civil society, and other stakeholders.

24. At the international level, we will work to reach agreement by [**December 2010**] on ways to rationalise existing *international monitoring mechanisms* to create a collaborative, complementary, and credible system of mutual accountability, while strengthening the voice of partners and the use of evidence based analysis.

LOOKING FORWARD

25. We are directing the senior management of our respective Ministries, institutions, and organisations to organise, implement, and closely monitor these actions. At the international level, we call on the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, an international partnership hosted by the OECD-DAC, to propose by [**March 2009**] arrangements for *taking forward the Accra Agenda for Action*, including monitoring its progress.

26. Consistent with the focus on implementation, we plan to meet again for a *Fourth High-Level Forum* in **December 2011** to review progress in achieving the commitments and targets agreed in the Paris Declaration and in carrying out the actions agreed in the Accra Agenda for Action. We request the Secretariat of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness to table a progress report in time for the Fourth High-Level Forum, and we call on all participants to continuously improve the framework for the implementation of the Paris Declaration in order to respond to the challenges that arise both before and after that event.