

January 2011

# From Aid to Development Effectiveness: A Working Paper

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**Acknowledgements**

This paper was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA.)

**Disclaimer**

This paper is a literature review and does not reflect the views or opinions of The North-South Institute, its Board of Directors, CIDA, or anyone consulted in its preparation.

## **Acronyms**

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
CSOs	civil society organizations
CSR	corporate social responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
HLF-4	Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness
IDA	International Development Association
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	millennium development goals
NSI	The North-South Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UN DCF	United Nations Development Cooperation Forum
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WP-EFF	Working Party on Aid Effectiveness

## Abstract

In 2011, the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) will assess progress on implementing the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and its companion, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action. Some development actors have suggested that the HLF-4 presents an opportunity to shift from an aid effectiveness framework to one characterized by development effectiveness; however, no international consensus exists on what development effectiveness entails.

In 2009, The North-South Institute (NSI) conducted research on development effectiveness and suggested that development actors have conceptualized the term in four ways. First, development effectiveness, viewed as *organizational effectiveness*, resembles the current aid effectiveness framework and does not represent a fundamental shift from the status quo. Second, development effectiveness as *coherence or coordination* may require developed countries to make greater international commitments to policy coherence and may entail structural reform at the international level to ensure that institutions of global governance are more representative and coherent and that they enhance partner-country power and influence in decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation processes. Third, viewing development effectiveness as *outcomes from aid* may mean thinking differently about outcomes and measuring results. It may also present a problem for mutual accountability frameworks, because attribution of development outcomes to any one actor is nearly impossible. Finally, development effectiveness in terms of *overall development outcomes* combines the second and third conceptualizations, as well as their implications. It draws attention to the country level while raising questions about the role of aid in the overall development process – in particular, how it can catalyze alternative development resources with the end goal of discontinuing aid. This paper builds on the work of the NSI and assesses the implications of these conceptualizations.

## 1. Introduction

In 2011, the international community will meet in Busan, Korea, for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4). Multilateral and bilateral donors, partner countries, and civil society organizations (CSOs) will assess progress on implementing the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and its companion, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action.<sup>1</sup> Policymakers will decide on the framework to underpin future development assistance efforts as the 2015 deadline for the millennium development goals nears (OECD-DAC WP-EFF 2010: 2).

CSOs engaged in discussions on aid effectiveness are pushing for a new agenda in Busan - one that moves beyond aid effectiveness to a broader framework of development effectiveness. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is also considering what the post-2010 agenda might look like, recognizing that many countries and institutions that endorsed the PD [Paris Declaration] want work after HLF-4 to look at *development effectiveness* (versus aid effectiveness only) (OECD-DAC 2010a: 2).

In preparation for HLF-4, CSOs have articulated their conceptions of development effectiveness through the BetterAid platform<sup>2</sup> and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> However, there is no international consensus on what development effectiveness entails or its implications for aid policy and practice; as noted by the OECD-DAC (2010a: 2), the concept has yet to be fully defined. Various development actors have articulated the concept differently in their institutional policies and programs. Some use the terms aid effectiveness and development effectiveness interchangeably. Others argue they are distinct concepts, claiming that development effectiveness looks beyond aid and refers to overall development outcomes that result from aid and non-aid activities, such as economic cooperation, trade, and investment.

In 2009, The North-South Institute (NSI) conducted a literature review on aid and development effectiveness that culminated in an issues brief titled *Development Effectiveness: Towards New Understandings* (Kindornay and Morton 2009). It found that development effectiveness has been conceptualized in four ways: organizational effectiveness, coherence or coordination, development outcomes from aid, and overall development outcomes. As a preliminary survey of development actors' conceptualizations, this work did not include implications for international aid policy and practice. Thus, this working paper builds on the 2009 research and assesses the potential implications arising from various notions of development effectiveness.

This paper is structured in five main sections. Following the introduction, the second section briefly outlines the research strategy. The third sketches current trends in international development cooperation and describes the history of the aid effectiveness agenda. The fourth section describes and updates the four conceptualizations of development effectiveness identified in the 2009 NSI issues brief. Following each description is a discussion of the implications for international aid policy and practice. The paper concludes with a look at the future of aid and development effectiveness.

This paper should be viewed as an exploratory piece that seeks to provide some insight into current thinking and debate on development effectiveness and the implications for aid policy and practice. It does not assess the merits of the various conceptualizations, nor provide a conclusive definition of development effectiveness. The aim is not to establish four distinct categories as a theoretical framework for understanding development effectiveness; overlap exists between categories precisely because there is no clear consensus on what development effectiveness means. Debates on the subject are relatively new and evolving. As more research

is conducted, it is likely that the categories outlined in this paper will be further explored, modified, and potentially superseded by new theoretical frameworks. The aim of this paper is to inform and prompt debates on development effectiveness in the lead up to HLF-4.

A number of key themes emerged from the research:

- The concept of development effectiveness responds to many of the criticisms leveled at development efforts historically, such as: narrow focus on aid, rigid and often ineffective and irrelevant measurements of successes and failures, the need to address systemic inequality at the international level and improve partner-country ownership of development, and limited attention to and insufficient understanding of issues relating to power and the root causes of poverty.
- Development effectiveness could be an important game changer for the international aid effectiveness agenda and have far-reaching implications for global development agendas and priorities. At this point, careful examination of the concept and its implications is needed.
- Any agreement on development effectiveness is expected to be different from that of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. Development effectiveness is arguably about something more than aid effectiveness, both in design and substance.
- Aid effectiveness is still important in this context and will most certainly be a part of a development effectiveness agenda in the short and medium terms.
- Depending on how it is articulated and operationalized, development effectiveness could lay the foundation for different types of partnerships between donors, partner-country governments and institutions, CSOs, philanthropists, private-sector actors, and citizens, with implications for accountability and implementation mechanisms.
- When viewed holistically, the discourse on development effectiveness is concerned not only with particular development outcomes, but also with the processes and tools used to achieve those outcomes. Development actors emphasize outcomes and processes to varying degrees.
- A shift to development effectiveness will require different evaluation and monitoring tools, especially if it involves something more than organizational effectiveness.
- Given these considerations, policymakers should avoid rushing into an international agreement on development effectiveness to ensure that, when (and if) one emerges, it is based on international consensus and can be easily operationalized and communicated not only at the global level but also on the ground in partner countries.

## 2. Methods

Between February and May 2009 and in September 2010, NSI conducted a literature review on development effectiveness. The goal was to examine how various development actors, namely multilateral and bilateral donors, partner countries, CSOs, and academics, conceptualize development effectiveness. The review targeted literature that specifically referenced development effectiveness and included reports and evaluations, and official websites, statements, and policy documents.<sup>4</sup> It also considered non-DAC donors such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China, although public information on their aid and development effectiveness policies was limited. Nevertheless, a growing body of literature on South-South cooperation, non-DAC donors, and statements from high-level fora provide some insights into their views. Organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the

Asian-Pacific Capacity Development for Development Effectiveness Facility offer some indication of partner-country perspectives.

In addition, on 26 October, I attended a workshop on development effectiveness hosted by the OECD-DAC as part of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF)<sup>5</sup> week held in Paris, France, 25-29 October 2010. The workshop, which was widely attended by WP-EFF members, included two panel sessions and a number of smaller breakout groups that were held concurrently.<sup>6</sup> A draft version of this paper served as a background document for the workshop, and contributed to the basis for discussions. During the workshop, I participated as a panelist as well as a resource person in the breakout group that examined the implications of development effectiveness at the country level. This paper is informed by the key themes and outcomes of the workshop. I also attended a two-day plenary session of the WP-EFF, during which participants discussed their priorities and concerns for HLF-4 as well as issues relating to development effectiveness more broadly. Over this two-day period, I also conducted nearly half a dozen semi-structured interviews with partner-country members.<sup>7</sup>

Some methodological limitations must be noted. As mentioned, new debates on the notion of development effectiveness are emerging in the lead-up to HLF-4.<sup>8</sup> As such, the literature review is far from exhaustive, and future iterations of this paper will continue to incorporate emerging perspectives. Moreover, the views of partner-country representatives interviewed in Paris cannot be seen as representative of partner-country views across the WP-EFF, as only a limited number of interviews were conducted. However, interviewees provided insightful comments on aid and development effectiveness, which inform the discussion throughout. Although the analysis that follows benefits from consistent examination of official documentation, it would benefit from more interviews and survey data collected from key development actors regarding their understanding of development effectiveness. Future research will also need to consider publications in French, Spanish, and other languages; at this point, we have only looked at publications in English.

The analysis that follows is hypothetical in nature. It describes the implications of various conceptualizations *in theory*. The implications for policies, practices, and agreements among international aid actors will depend largely on how they translate, interpret, combine, and implement various notions of development effectiveness. Future research should look at the interrelated nature of the conceptualizations described below and fully explore potential implications in greater detail. Nevertheless, this working paper serves as a valuable starting point for exploring these issues.

### **3. Context**

#### *3.1 Development and Aid in a Changing World*

Over the last two decades, academics and aid officials alike have become increasingly concerned with the effectiveness of aid in achieving development goals. In 1996, the OECD-DAC donors released *Shaping the 21st Century* (OECD-DAC 1996), a precursor to the MDGs and the aid effectiveness agenda.<sup>9</sup> In 2000, international policymakers agreed on eight MDGs, which represented a concerted effort to address development and encapsulate concerns for economic well-being, gender equality, education, health, the environment, and international development cooperation.<sup>10</sup> These goals, and their corresponding targets, now underlie international development efforts. Governments (donor and recipient) continued to agree on common principles and the need to coordinate their actions on aid and development, exemplified by the World Trade Organization's Doha Declaration (2001), the United Nations

(UN) Financing for Development Monterrey Consensus (2002), followed by the 2005 Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the parallel creation of the UN Economic and Social Council's Development Cooperation Forum (UN DCF) in 2007.<sup>11</sup> These processes, among others, represent significant international efforts to achieve greater coherence among official aid actors across aid sectors. In this context, development actors, more broadly, have also become particularly concerned with the impact on development of non-aid sectors, such as trade, investment, and migration, and call for solutions ranging from greater policy coherence for development to reform of the international aid architecture.

Meanwhile a "silent revolution" is occurring in development assistance as non-DAC donors<sup>12</sup> offer development cooperation packages to partner countries on the basis of mutual partnership and solidarity (e.g., see Bogotá Statement of 2010). According to Woods (2008: 17), "emerging donors are not overtly attempting to overturn rules or replace them. Rather, by quietly offering alternatives to aid-receiving countries, they are introducing competitive pressures [and] weakening the bargaining position of western donors in respect of aid-receiving countries." The international community has seen the emergence of South-South cooperation fora, such as India-Brazil-South Africa and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Many non-DAC donors have chosen to operate outside the established aid architecture and do not abide by the Paris principles, despite attempts by DAC donors to bring them into the fold (discussed below).

Private actors are also playing an increasing role. The Centre for Global Prosperity at the Hudson Institute estimates that total private donations<sup>13</sup> in 2008 amounted to USD 233 billion, compared with USD 121 billion in official development assistance (CGP 2010: 6). Development actors are also increasingly looking to the private sector as an engine for growth in partner countries and as a potential partner, most notably through private-public partnerships. Although these actors may bring new insights and opportunities to development cooperation, they also present a challenge to coherence in an already complex aid architecture.

Concerned with maintaining progress on internationally agreed development goals, donors have sought to engage these new actors in official international aid and development discussions, through the creation of the WP-EFF, for example (Kumar and Tandon 2009: 3). In September 2009, the WP-EFF created a Task Team on South-South Cooperation. The following March Colombia hosted a High Level Event on South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development, resulting in the Bogotá Statement. The statement recognized the importance of South-South Cooperation as an "important instrument of effective and inclusive partnerships" and firmly placed South-South cooperation on the aid effectiveness agenda in preparation for HLF-4 (Steering Committee 2010). The OECD-DAC also recently hosted an informal meeting on the role of the private sector in the context of aid effectiveness (OECD-DAC 2010c). In 2008, recognizing that the evolving global aid architecture includes an increasing number of actors, the WP-EFF broadened its membership and aims to incorporate lessons on involving not only the private sector, but also civil society, municipalities, and parliamentarians in preparations for HLF-4.

### *3.2 From Paris to Busan*

The Paris Declaration was signed by over 100 countries. It represented a major step toward establishing agreement by donor and recipients on aid effectiveness, but it was not without criticism. CSOs criticized the agreement as a government-to-government accord that lacked CSO involvement<sup>14</sup> and for its technical nature, arguing that it failed to link aid processes with development goals sufficiently (ISG 2008: 2). In part, the resulting Accra Agenda for Action took an initial step toward more explicitly recognizing broader development goals (OECD 2008a; 2).

- It broadened the notion of ownership to emphasize the role of CSOs and parliamentarians.
- It recognized that aid is only one factor in achieving development.
- It stressed the importance of gender equality, respect for human rights, and environmental sustainability.
- It acknowledged the importance of assessing ~~to~~ what extent aid effectiveness is improving and generating a greater development impact.+
- It referred to the importance of South-South cooperation, setting out alternative principles, and emphasizing non-interference, equality, and diversity.

Donors and partner countries alike have difficulty understanding and operationalizing the Paris principle of mutual accountability (ADB 2008, Egan 2008: 1, OECD-DAC 2008, Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 5) and there is no broad understanding of what it entails (Steer et al. 2009: 7). Historically, mutual accountability had been the most controversial of the Paris Principles and has raised questions regarding accountability to whom and for what (Egan 2008). While the Paris Declaration emphasized accountability between donors and recipient governments, in Accra, it was agreed that all governments are first accountable to their domestic constituencies (Steer et al. 2009). According to a background paper prepared for the Second Africa Regional Meeting on Aid Effectiveness, the concept of mutual accountability offers opportunities by shifting the aid relationship from one of charity to reciprocal obligation. It is a ~~contractual~~ model of aid delivery that gives rise to a true development partnership+(Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 5).

However, despite these opportunities, the concept of mutual accountability may create tension among development partners regarding accountability to each other and to domestic constituencies. Research shows that donor demands can skew accountability away from domestic constituencies in partner countries (Steer et al. 2009: 18). Some have suggested that this problem can be mitigated by developing a shared agenda and monitoring mechanisms and, related to these, dialogue, debate, and negotiation (OECD-DAC 2009a: 3, Steer et al. 2009: 7-9). Yet, engagement of civil society and parliamentarians in these processes has been limited and varies across partner countries (Steer et al. 2009).

A final, important question (although there are many others) relates to which actors have identified accountabilities. Although many play a role in development processes, accountability is less clear for some actors, such as private foundations and private-sector actors, as well as many non-DAC donors (e.g., Brazil, India, Russia, and China), who continue to operate outside the current aid effectiveness framework. However, CSOs have been actively exploring and developing their own accountability mechanisms (Open Forum 2010a).

Although mutual accountability is an important issue for development actors, it is not their only concern in the lead up to HLF-4. Partner countries have identified several priorities, including predictable aid, use of country systems, continued policy conditionality, results-based development policies, country-driven capacity development, and reduced transaction costs (OECD-DAC 2010d). The OECD-DAC (2010a) is calling on donors to focus on areas where progress is within reach: aid untying, predictability, removal of policy conditionalities, and transparency.

CSOs have argued that the international aid effectiveness agenda should be reassessed, and reformulated around a development effectiveness agenda. Their efforts are being coordinated through the BetterAid Platform and the Open Forum. BetterAid focuses on broad issues of development effectiveness for reform of international cooperation. The Open Forum is a CSO-

led process that will identify specific principles for CSO development effectiveness and their implications for CSO development practices as well as donor and government policies.<sup>15</sup>

#### **4. From Aid to Development Effectiveness**

##### *4.1 Comparison of Aid and Development Effectiveness*

Considerable consensus exists on the definition of aid effectiveness, which refers to the ability to achieve expected impacts and stated objectives through aid. As a technical representation of this understanding, the Paris Declaration does not actually define aid effectiveness. However, according to a 2008 independent evaluation of the declaration, a definition can be extracted. Aid effectiveness is the arrangement for the planning, management and deployment of aid that is efficient, reduces transaction cost and is targeted towards development outcomes, including poverty reduction (Stern et al. 2008: vii). This definition focuses on technical aspects of aid delivery, but reviewers suggest that it is assumed aid is development oriented (although this assumption is relatively unexamined).

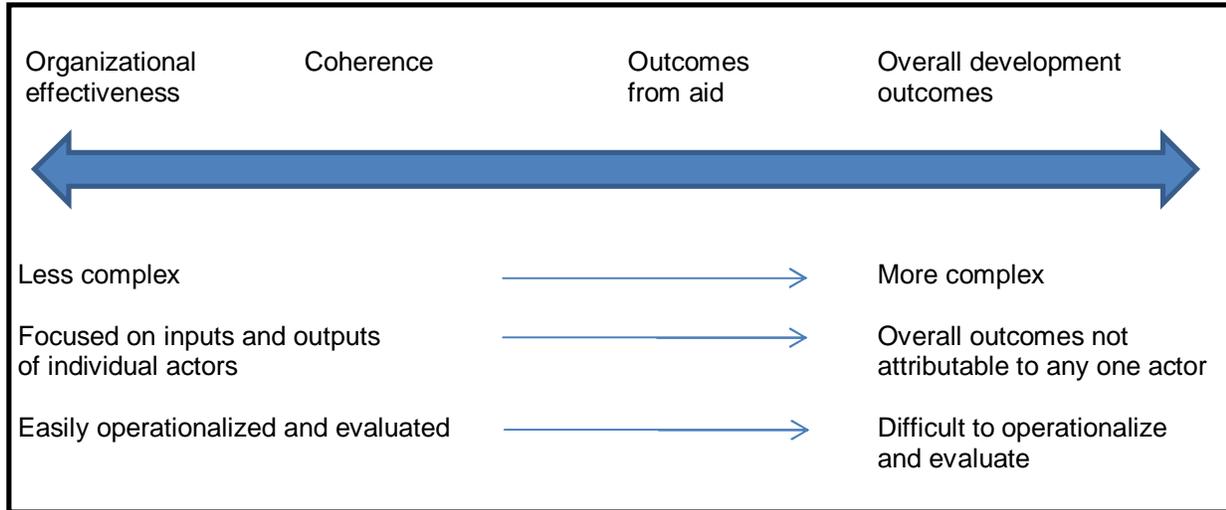
A common understanding of development effectiveness does not exist. Some actors make little distinction between aid and development effectiveness. For example, in an Asian Development Bank (ADB) working paper, Quibria (2004: 3) suggests that development effectiveness simply refers to the effectiveness of aid in development, and uses the terms development and aid effectiveness interchangeably. The World Bank has been publishing reviews of development effectiveness since the early 1990s; however, much of the discussion is framed in terms of the aid effectiveness principles and language now found in the Paris Declaration. AusAID's Office of Development Effectiveness similarly publishes an annual review, but it too focuses systematically on the effectiveness of Australian aid, rather than addressing or considering non-aid policy areas that may affect development outcomes (AusAid 2008). The United Nations Development Group, a platform that unites 32 UN organs with the objective of delivering more coherent, effective, and efficient assistance, also seems to view development effectiveness in terms of aid effectiveness principles.<sup>16</sup> Guidelines for UN country teams state that the three basic elements of country-level development effectiveness are national ownership, acting on the UN's comparative advantage, and maximizing effectiveness and accountability (UNDG 2009: 3). These components all coincide with aid effectiveness principles, particularly ownership and alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability.

Despite the continued use of aid effectiveness principles to describe development effectiveness by some organizations, many clearly distinguish between them. NSI has identified four possible categories to serve as a starting point for understanding various conceptualizations of development effectiveness. The following section reviews this typology. These categories are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, and some development actors have understandings that overlap categories. The categories should not be understood as classifications of development effectiveness by aid actor, but rather, by conceptualizations.

Figure 1 illustrates the notions of development effectiveness, starting with more narrow understandings, namely, organizational effectiveness, moving toward broader notions, such as development effectiveness as coherence and outcomes from aid, and ending with development effectiveness as overall development outcomes. The continuum highlights the overlapping and interrelated nature of these notions. As one moves across the continuum, development effectiveness entails a progressively more ambitious agenda, but also becomes increasingly more complex, creating difficulties in terms of operationalization and evaluation. Given the

ambition and difficulties associated with approaches toward the right side of the spectrum, the likelihood of generating consensus on these notions also diminishes.

**Figure 1. The development effectiveness continuum**



An important point to consider in the following analysis is that notions of development effectiveness are implicitly based on some understanding of development. Although it is outside the scope of this paper to examine these implicit assumptions, they will inevitably lead to discussions regarding different understandings of development itself. Policymakers may need to tackle their assumptions as a preliminary step toward achieving consensus on what development effectiveness entails.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.2 Development Effectiveness as Organizational Effectiveness

Aid agencies, especially multilaterals, frequently view development effectiveness from the supply side, in terms of the effectiveness of their own policies and programs or how well they are achieving stated organizational objectives and goals. Numerous examples exist. The World Bank's 2005 Review of Development Effectiveness examines the institution's organizational performance and outputs on multiple levels, through the Bank's global programs, country programs, and individual projects (World Bank 2005). Its 2008 report similarly assesses project and country program outcomes, as well as the World Bank's work in fostering global public goods (O'Brien 2008).

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) launched its Development Effectiveness Framework in 2008. It situates its discussion of development effectiveness within the overall push for aid effectiveness, particularly within the Paris process. IDB's framework takes the OECD-DAC definition of effectiveness as a starting point, i.e., "the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance" (OECD-DAC WP-EV 2002: 20). It claims to assess its development effectiveness in terms of whether it is "doing the right things" and "doing things right" (IDB 2008: 2, 3).

The IDB sees its new Development Effectiveness Framework as moving from a focus on inputs to outputs and outcomes (IDB 2010: xv, 25). While it seeks to measure its effectiveness vis-à-vis internationally and regionally agreed development goals, its framework focuses on its

operational effectiveness. It is a supply-side framework that does not look at overall development outcomes, but rather the relevancy of IDB activities to development goals.<sup>18</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) have also published development effectiveness reports. Early UNDP reports distinguished between development and organizational effectiveness, but still focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP's own programs. According to the 2001 report, organizational effectiveness measures time-bound organizational objectives and is about results-based management. Development effectiveness measures the impact of aid and progress toward development goals; it represents the extent to which an institution or intervention has brought about targeted change and is influenced by various factors, beginning with the quality of project design and ending with the relevance and sustainability of desired results (Evaluation Office 2001: 11).

Despite this important distinction and concern for relevance, the report's discussion of development effectiveness remains confined to the development impact of UNDP itself, and does not consider external factors, such as who determines development priorities, the role of other development actors, or the impact of non-aid sectors. As discussed below, UNDP's 2003 report signaled a deliberate move away from development effectiveness as organizational performance to an analysis that looks at the final results of the overall development process and the contribution of a range of relevant players.

IFAD's 2007 development effectiveness report provides an interesting and broader definition of development effectiveness. It depends on the collective and coordinated actions of national and external actors; therefore, it is a measure of these actors' aggregate impact, with accountability for results shared by many (IFAD 2007: 4). The organization claims that its 2007 report has a broader scope than those of other organizations, on the basis that it goes beyond reporting on operational effectiveness. IFAD asserts that it is more comprehensive, draws on wider sources, and reports on results at the corporate as well as country level (IFAD 2007: iii). However, the report remains focused on development effectiveness in terms of IFAD's organizational performance.

#### *4.2.1 Implications*

This view of development effectiveness broadly resembles the OECD-DAC definition (see above). Of the four conceptualizations examined here, it is closest to aid effectiveness; it is concerned with the effective and efficient delivery of assistance. The focus on the relevance of development interventions coincides with the Paris principle on alignment. The focus is not on actual outcomes, per se, but on ensuring that interventions are relevant to development goals. There is also little attention to how these particular development goals were determined as priorities for the interventions in the first place. This understanding of development effectiveness does not imply a fundamental shift from the status quo; it coincides with the existing aid discourse and evaluation practices.

For CSOs, this approach does not speak to many of their concerns, namely the need to measure development effectiveness against actual outcomes, such as the realization of human rights and greater gender equality. In addition, if development effectiveness is conceptualized as organizational effectiveness, it begs the question as to whether the international community needs a new concept to serve as the guiding framework for development efforts. This definition is already largely captured by aid effectiveness, which is assumed to have a development-oriented intent. However, although this understanding of development effectiveness does not

represent a major shift from current practice, organizational effectiveness is still a very important component of aid effectiveness and, arguably, broader notions of development effectiveness; agencies need to be able to demonstrate they can meet objectives and deliver aid efficiently and effectively.

#### 4.3 Development Effectiveness as Coherence

Some aid actors view development effectiveness in terms of the consistency of development-related policies. This approach acknowledges that non-aid policies affect development processes, thus creating a need for policy coherence across various areas, including trade, investment, security, and immigration. The policy communities (e.g., donors, partner countries, multilateral development agencies, and CSOs) that include the issue of coherence in their understanding of development effectiveness offer a variety of policy prescriptions. As demonstrated below, these responses, which are often advocated in concert, range from whole-of-government approaches for donor countries and greater coherence across partner-country policies to reform of the international aid architecture and ensuring that partner countries have a greater say in institutions of global governance.

Some bilateral donors adopt this view of development effectiveness and underline the importance of policy coherence, while recognizing that aid is not the only factor affecting development. Whole-of-government approaches are one reflection of this perspective. An example of this approach can be seen in Sweden's Policy for Global Development (2003), which sets out an ambitious government-wide approach to equitable and sustainable global development (Sörbom and Davies 2008: 256. 6).

Duty-free, quota-free access to developed-country markets by partner countries is another example. This view tends to be supply-side driven, focusing on how donor countries can improve coherence between aid and non-aid policies, rather than calling for structural reform of international rules or bodies.<sup>19</sup>

The development cooperation efforts of non-DAC donors, while not defined in terms of the language of development effectiveness, also seem to recognize the importance of a comprehensive approach to development cooperation that combines aid and non-aid tools, which tend to be specific to country priorities and development goals. For example, at the first China-Africa Ministerial Conference in 2000, Chinese and African leaders agreed on a broad program of South-South cooperation, based on equality and mutual benefit,<sup>20</sup> that included provisions on trade, investment, debt relief, tourism, migration, health, education, and human resources development (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 2009a). Subsequent conferences have reaffirmed these commitments and broadened them to include, inter alia cooperation on issues such as peace and security, governance, and local capacity building.<sup>21</sup>

Turning to partner countries, the *Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa* (ECA-OECD 2009) points to the coherence of their policies. Although the study does not attempt to unpack the meaning of development effectiveness, it does focus on the policies that will promote development effectiveness (rather than on desired outcomes). These include supporting sustainable economic growth; investing in education, health, and gender equality; promoting good governance; and enhancing development finance (including an emphasis on domestic public resources). These issues also arose during interviews with partner-country representatives, who pointed to the need for coherence between domestic policies across departments, such as those responsible for social policy and economic planning. In fact, interviewees tended to be more concerned with the coherence of domestic policies and how donors can support them than the policy coherence of donors themselves. Many stressed the

catalytic role aid can play in harnessing alternative resources for development, a point that was also discussed at the Second Africa Regional Meeting (Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 23. 27).

Development effectiveness as coherence is also broadly captured by concerns over policy coherence for development in the OECD-DAC and UN DCF. In preparation for HLF-4, the OECD-DAC has hinted that policy coherence for development may be a critical part of the development effectiveness agenda. While recognizing that development effectiveness has not been fully defined, the OECD-DAC states that "most countries see it as a discussion that encompasses all factors that support development - aid, countries' own resources, *policy coherence for development*, the private sector etc" (OECD-DAC 2010a, emphasis added). At the Workshop on Development Effectiveness, it was similarly recognized that aid is one tool to achieve development effectiveness among many. The debate on development effectiveness brings the issue of policy coherence for development to the forefront of policy discussions. In this context, participants felt that aid has a catalytic role to play in harnessing more resources for development.

The June 2010 Secretary-General's report on the UN DCF called for developed countries to ensure that policies across sectors support internationally agreed development goals and for partner countries to engage more with beyond-aid issues (ECOSOC 2010: 6). The UN DCF takes a broad view of policy coherence, which includes:

- a focus on whole-of-government approaches for donors *and* recipients
- coherence between the development programmes of several donors
- coherence between donor and recipient strategies

In their articulation of development effectiveness, CSOs have also indicated the importance of policy coherence for development. BetterAid has called on governments to:

study the feasibility of a convention on development cooperation to strengthen commitments to internationally agreed development goals, *enhance policy coherence for development from the international to the national level*, address common standards for adherence, and improve international coordination among all actors towards effective responses to both immediate and long term development challenges and demands (BetterAid 2010a: 7, emphasis added).

It is unclear how such a convention would add value to existing international agreements and commitments; however, CSOs have suggested establishing a UN Economic and Social Security Council, which would be broadly representative<sup>22</sup> and have a mandate to "monitor the social and environmental quality of development, coordinate policy between international institutions, build consensus among development actors, and promote sustainable development" (BetterAid 2010a: 7).

#### 4.3.1 General Implications

The concept of development effectiveness as coherence can have various implications for international aid policy and practice. In the examples above, aid actors emphasize different aspects of coherence, demonstrating that development effectiveness as coherence could have a wide range of implications. Donors often refer to the coherence between their aid and non-aid policies, an approach that relies on the political will of developed countries to ensure internal coordination between various policies that affect development. The UN DCF, the Multilateral Review of Development Effectiveness in Africa, and interviewees all point to the importance of coherence across policies within partner countries. Mechanisms to ensure this include poverty

reduction strategy papers and regional and national development plans. These strategies and plans also provide a mechanism through which donors can harmonize and align their own strategies, implementing the Paris principles. However, the implications of development effectiveness as policy coherence in terms of aligning aid and non-aid policies, both within donor countries and at the international level, are less clear.

#### 4.3.2 Implications for Donors

It is unclear how articulating development effectiveness as coherence would provide a more successful framework for achieving policy coherence for development now than in the past. Indeed, policy coherence for development is not a new idea and continues to pose a challenge. The OECD-DAC has been advocating greater policy coherence since the early 1990s (OECD-DAC 2009b: 10). Despite DAC-donor commitments to the policy coherence agenda, most recently in the OECD 2008 ministerial *Declaration on Policy Coherence for Development* (OECD 2008b),<sup>23</sup> DAC peer reviews continue to find ~~no~~ considerable variation in the extent of members' political commitments to [policy coherence for development] (OECD-DAC 2009b: 10).

While donors tend to take a more holistic development approach in some instances, for example, often coordinating between multiple departments in work with fragile states or in the form of preferential trade agreements,<sup>24</sup> they have been less willing to ensure development friendly policies in other areas that are more politically sensitive, such as immigration and border control and agricultural subsidies. Only some donors – e.g., the United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden, and the European Community – have been successful in establishing mechanisms for coordination, as well as monitoring, analysis, and reporting on the development impacts of non-aid sectors (OECD-DAC 2009b: 10).

Despite challenges in the past, the time may be ripe for renewed commitments to policy coherence for development. As mentioned, the international development field is changing. Non-DAC donors offer development cooperation packages to partner countries that include trade and investment provisions. Greater policy coherence for development may be one way for DAC-donors to ensure their continued relevance in the development process. It may also provide an additional incentive for partner countries to engage in DAC-donor initiated international processes, such as the aid effectiveness agenda. Finally, many DAC-donors are concerned with demonstrating results and ~~value-for-money~~; ensuring that non-aid policies do not undermine aid efforts is one way to address this concern.

Development effectiveness as coherence could require donor countries to make specific commitments in terms of policy harmonization across both aid and non-aid sectors. Although often politically challenging domestically, this might provide further incentives for donors to consider renewed action on politically sensitive issues, such as immigration, balance of trade issues, the removal of non-tariff barriers, and agricultural subsidies, which are key concerns of partner countries.<sup>25</sup> Such an agenda would require new mechanisms and incentives to coordinate aid and non-aid policies at the national level, unavailable in most donor countries,<sup>26</sup> although the United Kingdom's Trade Policy Unit, which includes policymakers from development and trade departments, and Ireland's Inter-Departmental Committee on Development are examples. In this context, CSOs are potential allies and can help donors engage with and inform the public on the importance of policy coherence for development.

#### 4.3.3 Implications for Governments and Private-Sector Actors

Development effectiveness as coherence may also raise questions for private-sector actors. These stakeholders engage in development processes in a variety of ways, for example, as

philanthropists, through public-private partnerships, domestic investment, and foreign direct investment. Although it is outside the scope of this paper to fully explore the role of the private sector in development processes and the implications of development effectiveness for these actors, a few points are worth mentioning.

If coherence means that donors should ensure that aid and non-aid policies coincide, then should private-sector actors be subject to the same obligations? For example, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has recently come under fire over investments in agribusiness giants, Monsanto and Cargill, companies that have faced fierce criticism from environmentalist and community groups concerned with their agricultural model and its implications for small farmers and the environment (Vidal 2010). In addition, private foundations are governed by varying degrees of regulation; transparency and reporting on their aid activities is relatively weak compared with that of official DAC-donors (Marten and Witte 2008: 20). However, the coherence concept of development effectiveness might encourage these organizations to be more transparent and ensure coherence across corporate practices that affect development.

Outside private foundations, the private sector is also under increasing public scrutiny and pressure to adhere to best practice standards that may contribute to development.<sup>27</sup> Some companies have responded with greater attention to corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, Ruggie (2008: 17), UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, notes that "a company cannot compensate for human rights harms by performing good deeds elsewhere." Ruggie and the UN Human Rights Council have affirmed a "corporate responsibility to respect human rights" and that this responsibility "exists independently of States' human rights duties" and "applies to all companies in all situations" (Ruggie 2010: 12, 13). Although this is generally not a legal obligation, except where domestic legislation exists, Ruggie notes it is an "expected" standard in almost all voluntary CSR initiatives. Yet, many individual CSR efforts are "ad hoc" and researchers, CSOs, and community leaders have raised further concerns about the transparency and effectiveness of enforcement and remedy measures attached to umbrella voluntary initiatives, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, and the UN Global Compact (see, for example, Williams 2004, SCFAIT 2005, Global Witness 2007, PDAC 2007, IHRB 2010). Development effectiveness as coherence could require governments to endorse such initiatives, support their improvement and implementation, and, possibly, penalize companies that fail to meet their commitments.

In other instances, the responsibilities of private-sector actors operating overseas may be directly tied to state duties. Industry oversight is commonly held to be the responsibility of host governments. However, coherence may imply that donors should play a greater role in supporting and strengthening the ability of partner-country governments to hold private-sector actors - domestic companies as well as multinationals operating within their country - to minimum standards of working conditions, human rights, gender equality, environmental protection, etc. Developed-country governments could even implement domestic legislation to this effect. For example, the *Alien Torts Claims Act* of the United States allows civil law challenges against American companies that violate human rights abroad. Another possibility is national legislation that imposes human rights standards on official development assistance (including procurements and public-private partnerships) and public support for domestic companies abroad. This would create obligations for governments to ensure that all companies financed by their national development budget, or supported publicly through export credit agency loans or public pension plan investments, for example, meet legislated standards.

#### 4.3.4 Implications for Institutions of Global Governance

Thus far, we have focused on policy coherence in terms of the actions countries or organizations can take alone, or in concert, to promote greater coherence across their aid and non-aid policies. Although such initiatives are welcome, partner countries have historically advocated reform of the development cooperation architecture and structural change to the multilateral system. Partner countries have called for a more equitable and representative system of global governance through forums such as the Group of 77 (G77).<sup>28</sup>

In addition to an approach to development effectiveness that seeks coherence at the level of agents, a further agenda might look at the impact of non-aid sectors from a multilateral, structural and political perspective. This implies a restructuring of the institutions of global governance to be more responsive to development concerns and ensure coherence between, for example, the World Trade Organization and various UN organs. Despite the creation of initiatives aimed at greater coherence across the multilateral system, partner countries continue to seek reform.<sup>29</sup> At the first Africa Regional Meeting on Aid Effectiveness, South/South Cooperation and Capacity Development (March 2010), countries agreed that the development architecture should be made more transparent, accountable, participatory and responsive to the needs of developing [partner] countries+(Africa Regional Meeting 2010b: 2).

In 2008, a statement by the G77 and China similarly claimed:

Progress must be made on enhancing the coherence of the international economic architecture, particularly the interplay of the multilateral trading system and the international financial and monetary systems. There is a need for more inclusive and transparent governance of global economic relations, with an adequate voice and participation of developing [partner] countries in international economic decision-making. (UNCTAD 2008: 2; see also South Centre 2008).

Such an agenda would mean enhancing the representation and voice of partner countries in existing intergovernmental organizations, as well as establishing or improving on mechanisms of coordination.

#### 4.3.5 Other Considerations

A vision of development effectiveness that employs coherence as a means to achieve development outcomes could be subject to many of the same critiques as previous development initiatives, depending on the political will of governments to formulate, implement, and enforce the policies. Although policy coherence may be a useful tool, it is just that: a tool. As such, it does not address CSO critiques of the aid effectiveness agenda that centre on the limited link between efficient aid (and its measurement) and development outcomes, such as the realization of human rights and improvements in gender equality.

It is unclear how actors would effectively measure policy coherence against development outcomes (the question of *whose* development outcomes remains). The problem does not lie in the assessment of policy coherence for development per se,<sup>30</sup> but rather in linking the effects of increased coherence with development outcomes. As discussed below, it is nearly impossible for donors to identify causality between their actions and development outcomes, given the number of factors that affect development.

Another important consideration is where the thrust for such an agenda of development effectiveness as coherence might emerge. The WP-EFF has engaged with the concept, but

policy coherence for development requires political support from the highest levels of governments and is beyond the mandate of the WP-EFF.<sup>31</sup>

#### *4.4 Development Effectiveness as the Development Outcomes from Aid*

In this view, development effectiveness is about measuring outcomes in relation to aid interventions. It looks specifically at outcomes, rather than at policy areas or the efficiency with which each aid dollar is spent. The distinguishing feature between this category and the next (overall development outcomes) is that it does not focus on aid *and* non-aid policy areas. This notion of development effectiveness presents a complementary agenda to aid effectiveness; it refers to the outcomes aid seeks to achieve and by which it will be measured, whereas the latter refers to how aid is delivered (Tujan 2009). This concept can be seen in organizations such as UNIFEM and the OECD-DAC, and also in CSO understandings. Two CSO coordinating groups are working on development effectiveness: the Open Forum, which focuses specifically on CSO development effectiveness, and BetterAid, which provides a more general view. As recently as September 2009, CSOs located their conception of development effectiveness in this category. Through the BetterAid platform, CSOs have shifted toward a view of development effectiveness as overall development outcomes, discussed below (BetterAid 2010a), although the Open Forum remains focused predominantly on outcomes from aid.<sup>32</sup> This shift exemplifies how understanding of development effectiveness is changing.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the OECD-DAC have referred to development effectiveness in terms of specific outcomes of aid. While UNIFEM tends to use the terms development effectiveness and aid effectiveness interchangeably, it sees gender equality as a determinant of development effectiveness, arguing that it must be considered in all stages of development interventions (UNIFEM 2008). Although the OECD-DAC has not explicitly articulated its understanding of development effectiveness (as opposed to effectiveness *per se*), it indicates that consideration of human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability is important to development effectiveness. The report on its 2007 workshop, *Development Effectiveness in Practice*, states that *attention to these issues enhances development effectiveness+and that by addressing these concerns, development goals can be achieved* (OECD 2007: 1).

Although CSOs participating in the Open Forum see themselves as development, rather than aid actors, the most recent articulation of their view of development effectiveness (Open Forum 2010b), does not include attention to the policy coherence issues, outlined above; instead, it focuses on the effectiveness of their activities.<sup>33</sup> In a draft international framework for CSO development effectiveness,<sup>34</sup> CSOs clearly place human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, social justice, and democratic ownership at the heart of development.<sup>35</sup> While recognizing the importance of operational effectiveness, CSO development effectiveness principles are value-based, process-oriented, and are an expression of the development outcomes CSOs seek to achieve, as well as a framework to achieve them (Open Forum 2010a: 3). CSO development effectiveness focuses on empowering beneficiaries to choose freely how they will develop (Open Forum 2010a: 2).

##### *4.4.1 Implications for Defining Outcomes*

Conceptualization of development effectiveness as development outcomes from aid could have potential implications in terms of what should be measured. The development field has created a host of indicators, indices, and evaluation methods to measure inputs, outputs, outcomes, etc. Each actor has its own assumptions about the most important elements and directions for development. For many, development is not only about desired outcomes, but also the process

by which goals and priorities are defined and achieved. This dynamic may present difficulties for defining development outcomes.

An obvious choice to measure development outcomes may be the MDGs. Indeed, some commentators have suggested that development effectiveness is the achievement of sustainable development results related to MDGs that have country-level impacts that have discernable effects on the lives of the poor+ (Stern et al. 2008: vii). One interviewee similarly suggested that development effectiveness is about achieving results articulated in the MDGs and other national development goals, suggesting that development effectiveness is already a part of the aid effectiveness agenda because the Paris process makes reference to the MDGs.

However, such an approach to measuring outcomes is not without problems. The MDGs have been criticized, for example, because they measure progress at the aggregate level and often say little about local development outcomes or the impact of aid interventions on the most marginalized groups. Some suggest development goals should be inherently linked to the international human rights framework, rather than employ partial targets, such as the MDGs. Others claim the MDGs discriminate against certain regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, because they do not take into consideration initial levels of development.

Rather than searching for pre-existing indicators, perhaps a more important consideration in this context is to look at who defines outcomes and how. This draws attention to issues relating to process and power. How participatory, inclusive and representative are processes that lead to the identification of desired development goals? Do measurable outcomes reflect the goals originally identified? For example, while poverty reduction strategy papers offer one mechanism against which to measure development outcomes, many critics argue that they do not reflect a nationally owned, democratically derived development vision, but rather, are tailored to meet IMF/World Bank policy prescriptions (see, for example, Cammack 2002; Ferguson 2006; Weber 2006).

Representatives of the WP-EFF, participants at the OECD-DAC Workshop on Development Effectiveness, and interviewees stressed the importance of nationally derived development goals as the basis for measuring outcomes, as well as internationally agreed development goals, such as the MDGs. During the WP-EFF plenary sessions, representatives agreed that aid must move past one-size-fits-all approaches. They emphasized the importance of country and regional context, as well as the need for donors to take different approaches with development partners based on country context.

Despite commitments to nationally defined development goals, a number of challenges remain. A study conducted by the UK-based Overseas Development Institute on mutual accountability at the country level found that national development plans and decisions regarding aid effectiveness practices included input from CSOs and parliamentarians to varying degrees (Steer et al. 2009: 7. 8). An understanding of development effectiveness as outcomes from aid would likely require better mechanisms to ensure that such outcomes are identified and prioritized through a participatory and inclusive process, to result in broad national ownership.

#### *4.4.2 Implications for Measuring Results*

A conceptualization of development effectiveness as outcomes from aid would also necessitate a new framework for measurement: aid actors would assess their results not only in terms of the efficient delivery of aid, but also its effect on overall development outcomes.

At the international and national levels, development is measured by a variety of indicators and indices, such as the MDG targets, economic growth, and the UNDP Human Development Index. Although these indicators are important for assessing overall trends, they do not attribute development outcomes to any one intervention, such as aid, or any one actor. They also do not take into consideration country-specific political and socioeconomic situations which are important indicators of development in themselves.

Rather than looking solely at inputs, outputs, mechanisms for the effective delivery of aid, and the relevancy of an intervention to particular development goals, a new framework would need to assess aid efforts against *actual development outcomes*. This approach is clearly not without challenges. For example, the ADB Development Effectiveness Report purports to assess results at four levels: overall progress on development objectives, ADB's contribution, operational effectiveness, and organizational effectiveness (ADB 2010). The first level measures development outcomes based on indicators, such as the MDGs, growth, regional cooperation and integration, governance, and the environment.<sup>36</sup> Level two focuses on ADB's outputs. ADB's contribution to development outcomes is measured through special evaluation studies prepared by the Independent Evaluation Department, project completion reports, and technical assistance completion reports. This means that while the ADB can measure its effectiveness in terms of whether it has met stated targets and specific outputs, it cannot identify its actual contribution to overall development outcomes. This is a fairly well recognized challenge; while linking aid interventions to development outcomes is highly desirable, it is nearly impossible given the range of factors that affect development (see, for example, Evaluation Office 2003, Flint et al. 2002).

As previously discussed, it is also very difficult to attribute development outcomes to aid interventions, let alone any particular aid actor. It remains unclear how aid actors might be held accountable for development outcomes from aid (outside existing mechanisms under the Paris process) when attribution is nearly impossible.

#### *4.5 Development Effectiveness as Overall Development Outcomes*

This view of development effectiveness is the most comprehensive of the four categories. It overlaps other notions, seeing development effectiveness as a measure of the overall development process and outcomes, rather than specific outcomes attributed to aid. Here, aid is not the central focus; rather, its ability to catalyze and complement alternative development resources is emphasized. This more holistic view draws attention to the country level, taking into account all factors affecting the development process as well as how desired development outcomes are decided. Actors that employ this understanding recognize that development outcomes cannot be attributed to any one actor or intervention. Different actors have proposed a variety of approaches to achieve the desired outcomes, all of which are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, and could be pursued together to achieve development effectiveness.

An independent review of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) refers to two forms of effectiveness: operational and development (Flint et al. 2002). According to the review, operational effectiveness is based on performance measures of the direct and attributable result of projects, but has little to do with overall development outcomes. Development effectiveness, on the other hand, refers to the overall development outcome, which, while highly relevant in assessing any aid program, cannot be directly attributed to any one actor's activities. Development outcomes result from national and international forces, including aid interventions by various actors, the availability of domestic resources, good governance, global commodity prices, regional stability, and many other determinants. Discerning exactly which factor has led to a positive outcome may be extremely difficult. This is

why the DFID review suggests that it is virtually impossible to illustrate a direct link between DFID's activities and progress toward the MDGs, despite its various contributions.<sup>37</sup> The authors suggest that accountability for development outcomes lies with all actors: governments, international agencies, CSOs, and the corporate sector.

For similar reasons, UNDP's 2003 *Development Effectiveness Report* (Evaluation Office 2003) shows that UNDP interventions cannot explain progress on development outcomes in any given country or sector; responsibility rests with all development partners. This report signaled a deliberate move from development effectiveness as organizational performance, toward a broader analysis that looks at the results of the development process and at the contribution of relevant players to overall development progress. This means assessing what works and what does not, then determining how aid flows can complement these factors. It also means that trade and global policies must better reflect development concerns to meet the MDGs. In summary, the report argues that development effectiveness is (or should be) about the factors and conditions that help produce sustainable development results - to make a sustained difference in the lives of people. It is measured in outcomes, such as meeting human development goals and generating growth (including the quality of growth, equity, participation, and sustainability), rather than in terms of how money is spent. Moreover the report argues that there is no one-size-fits-all set of policies; the right combination of trade liberalization, foreign direct investment, aid interventions, and so on is country specific and depends on history, geography, culture, etc. By combining elements of categories two and three, the UNDP approach creates a potentially coherent, integrated view of development effectiveness.

In 2004, the evaluation office of the African Development Bank (AfDB) produced a paper on possible approaches to the institution's annual review of development effectiveness. Following DFID reviewers and UNDP, the paper (AfDB 2004) distinguished between development effectiveness and organizational effectiveness. It argued that, combined, these forms of effectiveness constitute corporate effectiveness.<sup>38</sup> Here development effectiveness refers to accomplishments at the country level, which are achievements in respect of less attributable, longer-term outcomes and impacts, to which the agency's efforts are ultimately aimed and to which it contributes, but which are beyond the manageable, controllable interests of [an] agency alone. The AfDB cites the MDGs as one indicator of development effectiveness and also suggests the use of the International Development Association (World Bank) indicators, which measure areas, such as incomes, poverty reduction, growth, and the governance and investment climate.<sup>39</sup> The AfDB's Evaluation Office argued for a triple A+ approach: alignment, aggregation and attribution. Yet, this approach is still oriented toward a focus on aid outcomes and organizational effectiveness. It stresses alignment with county objectives, meaningful aggregation of evaluative data, and attribution of country level outcomes to AfDB activities.<sup>40</sup>

In preparation for HLF-4, CSOs have also articulated their approach to development effectiveness in relation to overall development outcomes through the BetterAid platform. They stress the need to focus explicitly on the relationship among aid, finance, and trade agendas (BetterAid 2010a, b). CSOs see development effectiveness as rooted in a notion of development that is defined by human rights, decent work, gender equality and women's rights, environmental sustainability, inclusive democratic power sharing, mutual accountability, and coherent national and global governance (BetterAid 2010a: 2. 3). According to BetterAid:

Development effectiveness is about the impact of development actors' actions on the lives of poor and marginalized populations. [It] promotes sustainable change that addresses the root causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality, marginalization and injustice.

The poor and marginalized populations are positioned as the central actors and owners of development, challenging many of the current approaches to aid effectiveness.

The 2010 Reality of Aid<sup>41</sup> Report, *Aid and Development Effectiveness: Towards Human Rights, Social Justice and Democracy* (Reality of Aid 2010), stresses three main tools or processes for achieving development effectiveness:

- Human rights, social justice and empowerment, and, related, the adoption of the rights-based approach to development
- Reform of development partnerships based on solidarity, sovereignty and mutuality
- Transforming the aid architecture and ensuring policy coherence for development

During WP-EFF week, many participants argued that aid must be situated within the broader development context and emphasized the importance of development outcomes, such as gender equality and the realization of human rights. A variety of tools were suggested to achieve these goals. Similar to Reality of Aid, many partner-country representatives pointed to the importance of value-based partnerships and the human factor in achieving development results. They discussed the need for donors to ensure that representatives in the field are educated in aid effectiveness principles, to ensure that they understand and carry out commitments on ownership and mutual accountability, for example.

All interviewees pointed to the importance of this human factor in determining the nature of development partnerships. For example, some spoke of the amicable, often informal nature of their interactions with other Southern partners, seeing this dynamic as an important factor in building mutual understanding and trust. Most stressed value-based relationships and the need for donors to be more flexible in their engagement with partners.

Rather than focusing on policy coherence for development per se, members at the WP-EFF stressed the catalytic role of aid in harnessing other resources for development, in particular, those from the private sector. Members recognize the importance of the policy coherence for development agenda; however, the mandate of the WP-EFF is improving development assistance. As such, participants used aid as their entry point into discussions on non-aid development tools.<sup>42</sup> Related to this, many participants stressed decreasing aid dependency and developing beyond-aid strategies and strategies for aid exit.<sup>43</sup> In relation to development effectiveness, one panelist at the Workshop on Development Effectiveness suggested that aid's contribution to development effectiveness could be measured by its decreasing relevancy to partner countries (Ngwira 2010).<sup>44</sup> Here aid can play a vital role by leveraging alternative development resources, which in the long run should proportionately decrease its relative importance to partner countries.

Many participants at the workshop, as well as interviewees, stressed that the concept of development effectiveness shifts the focus of aid discussions to the country level.<sup>45</sup> From the partner-country perspective, this view is not surprising. For partner countries, aid is one input among many in the development process; partner-country concerns with, e.g., domestic resource mobilization, good governance, and harnessing alternative sources of development finance, reflect this reality. The country-level focus makes development effectiveness about overall development outcomes, rather than outcomes from aid.

#### 4.5.1 General Implications

As an approach that combines and deepens many aspects of development effectiveness - namely attention to country context, development processes and tools, and outcomes from aid

as well as other development interventions - this view reflects many of the implications outlined above. It raises questions regarding how greater policy coherence could or should be achieved and how it affects various actors, particularly the private sector. As explained, one view of coherence focuses on coordination across aid and non-aid sectors in countries, while another emphasizes structural reform of the development cooperation architecture. Moreover, because this concept focuses on overall development outcomes, it has the potential to connect policy coherence more explicitly to broader development goals and outcomes, unlike the concept of development effectiveness as coherence, where development outcomes are only implicitly linked. However, the same issues arise in terms of defining outcomes and attributing results.

#### *4.5.2 Implications for Donor- and Partner-Country Governments*

Depending on how development outcomes are defined, certain goals will have priority. How to determine these priorities is a debate that is not new to policymakers or academics. In the 1980s, development thinking centred on the pursuit of economic growth, while the 1990s saw a neo-institutional turn, linked with increased attention to good governance and state capacity building (Fukuyama 2004, Evans 2005, Chhotray and Stoker 2009). Development effectiveness as overall development outcomes, will mean prioritizing certain areas over others; however, the challenge for aid and development actors will be identifying which sectors and interventions are the most important for achieving development outcomes, a debate that is already ongoing and shows no sign of concluding.<sup>46</sup>

One approach to this problem may be greater attention to national ownership. This means moving away from one-size-fits-all, and often externally determined and driven, policy frameworks and allowing greater flexibility in the identification of development priorities at the country level. A true commitment to national ownership means that development cooperation policies should be differentiated to reflect unique country (and regional) contexts. This view was elaborated by WP-EFF members across donor, partner, and CSO constituencies, indicating some appetite within the WP-EFF for differentiated approaches. The International Network on Conflict and Fragility, a subsidiary body of the OECD-DAC, and the associated Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations are an example of this shift (OECD-DAC 2009c).

At the country level, inclusive participation in political decision-making processes should help governments, including donors, identify and prioritize the development outcomes that matter to marginalized and affected groups. As noted earlier, signatories to the Accra Agenda for Action have already committed themselves to a broad understanding of ownership under the Paris process that emphasizes the role of CSOs and parliamentarians. These efforts may need to be stepped up to include empowering and strengthening the voices of the most marginalized. Indeed, an enhanced version of the current principles and mechanisms embodied in the Paris process may provide one way to identify and prioritize development outcomes. Alternatively, UNDP suggests that a rights-based approach to development effectiveness is important in this context, as it focuses on outcomes and processes, implying a closer examination of ownership, participation and fair representation (Evaluation Office 2003: 7).<sup>47</sup>

The discussion above also has implications for partner-country governments. Development effectiveness requires that partner countries improve their governance and resource management (of both aid and non-aid resources), ensure broad participation in the defining of national development goals, and, as two interviewees put it, enable people to fulfill their development aspirations and improve their quality of life. A background document on mutual accountability prepared for the Second Africa Regional Meeting stated that such improvements would require a %major change in the way the development process is organized... [including] a

dramatic increase in transparency... [and a shift] from post hoc accountability when things go wrong, to involving communities up front in the development decisions that affect them+(Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 7).

Another important implication of development effectiveness as overall development outcomes pertains to the role of aid in the development process. As mentioned, members of the WP-EFF stressed the catalytic role aid can play in harnessing alternative resources for development as well as the need to develop strategies for aid exit. Following the October 2010 WP-EFF meetings, these discussions continued at the Second Africa Regional Meeting, which provided some insight into African partner-country views on the future role of aid in the context of development effectiveness. A background paper prepared for the meeting argues that Africa must improve domestic resource mobilization, trade, and investment to meet its development goals and that aid can play an important role in this process (Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 23. 27). The paper articulates an agenda to end aid dependence, which speaks to both how aid can play a catalytic role and what a strategy for aid exit might entail. This approach is worth quoting at length:

Dependence-avoidant aid would have a number of features. First, assistance would shift towards areas that help mobilise alternative source of development finance - including domestic revenue-raising, trade, capital market development and microfinance. Second, aid activities would be limited in time and avoid crowding out other players. Though simply stated, these changes would involve a profound rethink of what aid should be spent on, and how it should be delivered.

If the role of aid under development effectiveness as overall development outcomes is to catalyze other resources to decrease and eventually eliminate aid dependency, then both partner countries and donors (DAC and non-DAC) will need to develop and implement strategies to achieve this end. Although it is clear from the WP-EFF plenary sessions that these topics are, at least provisionally, on the agenda for HLF-4, it is less clear how partner countries will engage non-DAC donors on these issues outside the Paris process. There may be benefits to engaging with non-DAC donors (specifically the BRICs) individually outside the Paris process as this would recognize the distinctive relationship between these countries and Africa, but also allow for the establishment of principles to protect Africa's interests (Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 32). Key issues that African countries might pursue in this context include, for example, the use of local inputs, applying clearer environmental and social safeguards in infrastructure projects, encouraging participation in national aid coordination mechanisms and improving transparency. Increasing the use of local inputs, in particular, might be one strategy for reducing aid dependency in the long term by building local capacity, generating employment opportunities and developing the private sector.

#### *4.5.3 Implications for Accountability*

UNDP suggests that a view of development effectiveness as overall development outcomes has important implications for how we think about accountability. According to UNDP, accountability is central to development effectiveness and must be established when failures occur (Evaluation Office 2003: 7). UNDP does not offer any clear frameworks, however, for how mutual accountability would operate, nor does it draw out implications for policy coherence and the impact of non-aid sectors on development processes. These areas continue to require future exploration. Given the number of actors and factors contributing to overall development outcomes, ~~the~~ democratic ownership+and expanding inclusion and participation in assessing both aid and development effectiveness, as suggested by CSOs (BetterAid 2010a: 7), may be a useful way to begin operationalizing development effectiveness as overall development

outcomes and improving accountability. As discussed above, enhanced Paris principles and the rights-based approach may provide a possible way forward.

## **5. Conclusion and Future Considerations**

The implications of the various conceptions of development effectiveness vary. Development effectiveness as organizational effectiveness resembles the current aid effectiveness framework and is not a fundamental shift away from the status quo. Development effectiveness as coherence may require developed countries to make greater international commitments to policy coherence for development. For others, it entails structural reforms related to international cooperation to ensure institutions of global governance are more representative and coherent and enhance partner-country power and influence in decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation. The conceptualization of development effectiveness as outcomes from aid may mean thinking differently about internationally accepted definitions of %outcomes+and measuring results. It may also present a problem for mutual accountability frameworks, because attribution of development outcomes to any one actor is very difficult. The final conceptualization, development effectiveness as overall development outcomes, combines the previous three, as well as their implications. It draws attention to the country level while raising questions about the role of aid in the overall development process, in particular, how it can catalyze alternative development resources with the end goal of aid exit.

Although interest in development effectiveness is growing, it is unclear to what extent it will feature in discussions at the HLF-4. CSO momentum is clearly strong, and the WP-EFF has engaged with the concept. The Workshop on Development Effectiveness provided a useful starting point for launching discussion in the WP-EFF. However, in the open plenary sessions that followed the workshop, no clear consensus emerged on what development effectiveness entails exactly, its implications for the WP-EFF and development cooperation more broadly, and whether it should be made the overarching theme for HLF-4. Moreover, should development effectiveness become the theme for HLF-4, a truly international agenda would also depend on the engagement of partner-country governments, DAC donors, non-DAC donors, and other private-sector actors and on their willingness to expand on the aid effectiveness agenda.

The HLF-4 provides an obvious opportunity to engage multiple stakeholders in development effectiveness and perhaps move toward joint commitments. However, the WP-EFF is not the only forum for these discussions, and it is unclear whether it is the appropriate or desirable mechanism to launch a development effectiveness agenda. The WP-EFF is mandated to improve aid effectiveness; thus, many of the issues addressed above, such as policy coherence for development, are outside its current mandate. By situating the debate within the WP-EFF, there is also the risk that the concept of development effectiveness will be subsumed into discussions on aid, rather than serve to embed aid within the broader development context.

Although the WP-EFF is not universally representative, it does include a broad spectrum of donors, recipient countries, multilateral institutions and CSOs among its membership. It has proved effective as a forum to generate interest and consensus around issues relating to aid effectiveness and best practices based on concrete evidence and technical analysis through its cluster working groups,<sup>48</sup> and many partner countries see it as a place where they can engage donors in longstanding issues on a level playing field. Yet, there is an obvious need to ensure wide participation and buy-in on development effectiveness. Emerging development actors, such as private foundations and the BRIC countries, are not fully engaged in the WP-EFF. A key challenge is how to bring these actors into discussions on development effectiveness (as well as aid effectiveness). Some commentators suggest that the UN DCF and the UN Financing for

Development process are more equitably representative forums and should be involved more in discussions on aid and development effectiveness (BetterAid 2010a: 4).

The opportunity to strengthen international commitments toward development effectiveness will require agreement on minimum starting points based on what is meant by the term. This working paper has suggested four ways in which development effectiveness has been conceived and used and some of the implications of these various approaches. Further research is required to address how various actors, including DAC and non-DAC donors, partner-country governments, CSOs, and private stakeholders understand and are prepared to work with these approaches.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which was sponsored by the OECD, was signed by donors and partner countries in 2005 following the first High Level Forum on Harmonisation in Rome, 2003. It included commitments and implementation targets in five areas: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability (OECD 2005). In 2008, signatories met in Accra to assess progress toward these goals and strengthened commitments to improve the delivery of aid through stronger country ownership of development, greater predictability, better use of country systems, changing the nature of conditionality, and deeper engagement with CSOs (OECD 2008a).

<sup>2</sup> The BetterAid platform represents over 700 development CSOs from both the North and South. It is coordinated by the BetterAid Coordinating Group (BACG), which is made up of 28 CSO networks and international non-governmental organizations. BACG is coordinating CSO preparations on HLF-4; it has two seats on the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and is also on its Executive Committee (see [www.betteraid.org](http://www.betteraid.org)).

<sup>3</sup> Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness ([www.cso-effectiveness.org/](http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/)).

<sup>4</sup> We reviewed official documents from multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, regional development banks, the OECD-DAC, United Nations organs, including the Development Cooperation Forum. We also examined documents from DAC donor countries, CSOs, and high-level events focused on aid, South. South cooperation, the millennium development goals, etc.

<sup>5</sup> The WP-EFF is a multistakeholder forum that brings together policymakers and aid practitioners from donor and developing countries and multilateral development agencies, as well as CSO representatives. This inclusiveness makes it distinct from the OECD-DAC. The WP-EFF monitors progress on implementing the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action, aims to improve partnerships between aid actors, and serves as the principle discussion forum on issues related to aid effectiveness (OECD-DAC 2010b).

<sup>6</sup> The breakout groups looked at the implications of development effectiveness in four ways: implications at the country level; implications for aligning policies; implications for relations in development cooperation; and implications for the international framework.

<sup>7</sup> Except for one interviewee from academia, WP-EFF members interviewed were generally responsible for development cooperation, the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda in their country, or both.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, in March 2010, African countries agreed to create the African Platform on Development Effectiveness, which will be owned and led by African countries and facilitated through the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development Planning and Coordinating Agency. The work plan is not yet available (see NEPAD 2010).

<sup>9</sup> See Stern et al. (2008: v). The World Bank's Comprehensive Development Frameworks, and the IMF's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers were also important precursors and reference points for commitments and indicators in the Paris Declaration.

<sup>10</sup> The goals include: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other disease; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development (UN 2010).

<sup>11</sup> The Doha Declaration (2001) recognized the special circumstances facing developing countries, confirmed commitments to development, and launched multilateral trade negotiations in agriculture, services, market access for non-agricultural products, trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights, inter alia. Of note, it included trade facilitation provisions for developing countries (WTO 2001). At Monterrey, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies and aid recipients pledged themselves to a broad development agenda, recognizing the need for developing countries to own poverty-reduction strategies and donors to continue to increase support for these endeavours. The Paris Declaration and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action commit donors and partner governments to a broad, common agenda aimed at improving the effectiveness of aid. The UN DCF provides a space within the United Nations system for various development actors to come together and discuss development issues of common concern, although there is still very limited participation by non-state development actors.

<sup>12</sup> I use the term non-DAC donors to refer to the supposed emerging donors. Many of the so-called emerging donors are not new, but rather returning to the scene after a hiatus (see, for example, Hammad and Morton 2009). Woods (2008: 1206) points out that China's aid program reaches back to the 1950s.

<sup>13</sup> Includes foundations, corporation, private and voluntary organizations, volunteerism, universities and colleges, and religious organizations.

<sup>14</sup> Kharas and Linn (2008: 3) estimate that the Paris Declaration excludes more than half of all aid to developing countries when private foundations, NGOs, humanitarian groups, and non-DAC donors are taken into consideration. According to the South Centre (2008: 8), it does not have universal approval in the developing world.

<sup>15</sup> Through the CSO Reality of Aid Network, the BetterAid platform is currently conducting consultations designed to lead to further development of CSOs' conceptualization of development effectiveness and identify key issues for CSOs to address with donors and partner-country governments. The consultations will inform the CSO policy position on development effectiveness and provide the basis for discussions with the WP-EFF.

<sup>16</sup> They also emphasize the importance improving gender equality and taking a rights-based approach, for example. The main principles of the UN's rights-based approach include universality and inalienability, indivisibility, interdependence and inter-relatedness, non-discrimination and equality, participation and inclusion, accountability and rule of law. In practice,

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programs should intentionally further the realization of human rights, use human rights standards to guide all stages of the development process, strengthen duty-bearers to meet obligations and rights-holders to claim rights, take into consideration local contexts, and enable beneficiaries to become empowered owners of their own development (UNDG 2003).

<sup>17</sup> During the OECD-DAC Workshop on Development Effectiveness (26 Oct. 2010, Paris, France) an interesting debate arose regarding this very issue. Some participants felt that development is no longer controversial, that ~~we~~ (it was not clear who this entailed) know what it is, and that development is spelled out in national development strategies. Others, however, pointed out that development is (and will likely remain) an inherently contested concept, encompassing different meanings across space and time.

<sup>18</sup> The IDB recognizes the inherent difficulty in linking outputs to outcomes is difficult stating that ~~no~~ every effort has been made to link outputs with regional goals, but it should be noted that their relationship is imperfect at best, and the achievement of an output does not necessarily mean that it will affect the related outcome because of other intervening factors+ (IDB 2010: 52).

<sup>19</sup> However, some countries, notably the United Kingdom and Sweden, also focus on enhancing developing-country voices in international institutions.

<sup>20</sup> South. South cooperation is often strongly related to the interests of the donor country, including high levels of direct investment and locking in resources (see, e.g., Reality of Aid Management Committee 2010).

<sup>21</sup> For example, the latest China. Africa Action Plan (2010. 2012) acknowledged active local exchanges between China and Africa, and resolved to promote further exchanges and cooperation across various levels of government (Forum on China. Africa Cooperation 2009b: sec. 2.3.3).

<sup>22</sup> It would include governments, bilateral and multilateral donors, private foundations, parliaments and civil society.

<sup>23</sup> This declaration committed OECD countries to take development concerns into consideration in the drafting of environmental, agricultural, trade, migration, and economic policies, inter alia.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the US African Growth and Opportunities Act and the EU Everything but Arms Initiative offer preferential trade to African and least-developed countries, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> In the 2008 Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China, developing countries expressed the need to advance a development-friendly multilateral trading system, pointing to the centrality of agriculture and, in particular, the reduction of domestic support programs (UNCTAD 2008).

<sup>26</sup> According to the OECD-DAC (2009a: 10), achieving policy coherence for development requires three phases: setting and prioritizing objectives; coordinating policy and its implementation; and monitoring, analysis, and reporting.

<sup>27</sup> Best practices often address themes like decent work, reclamation and remediation of industrial development sites, and benefit-sharing and other equity arrangements with traditional land-owners based on their consent that a project ensues.

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<sup>28</sup> The Group of 77 (G77) was established in 1964 by 77 developing countries and serves as the largest intergovernmental organization of developing states in the United Nations. It provides a mechanism for developing countries to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system, and promote South-South cooperation for development (G77 2010).

<sup>29</sup> For example, formal relationships exist between the World Trade Organization and the International Labour Organization (see WTO 2010).

<sup>30</sup> The OECD-DAC includes progress on policy coherence for development in its peer review process. However, this process is not without its own problems. For example, reviews are carried out by other DAC countries, which means they face the same legitimacy and representativeness issues facing the OECD.

<sup>31</sup> During the workshop many WP-EFF members recognized that policy coherence for development is beyond the mandate of the WP-EFF. Instead, they tended to focus on aid as a catalytic, as discussed in section 4.2.

<sup>32</sup> It is important to note that many of the same CSOs are engaged with the BetterAid platform and the Open Forum and share similar views on development effectiveness in general. However, development effectiveness, as it has been articulated by the Open Forum, focuses on CSO development activities; references to donor- and partner-country governments are centred largely on their role in creating an enabling environment for CSOs to achieve their development effectiveness. As such, I have situated the Open Forum articulation of development effectiveness under outcomes from aid.

<sup>33</sup> The focus on non-aid policies is one of the key differences between this articulation of development effectiveness and development effectiveness as overall development outcomes.

<sup>34</sup> The draft is a result of consultations with thousands of CSOs in more than 60 countries in all parts of the world. See Tomlinson and Wanjiru (2010) for more information.

<sup>35</sup> CSOs have agreed on eight key principles: respect and promote human rights and social justice; embody gender equality and equity while promoting women's and girls' rights; focus on people's empowerment, democratic ownership and participation; promote environmental sustainability; practice transparency and accountability; pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity; create and share knowledge and commit to mutual learning; and commit to realizing positive sustainable change. More than 160 CSOs from 82 countries agreed to these principles at a global assembly of the Open Forum, held in Istanbul, 28-30 Sept. 2010 (Open Forum 2010b). They will be integrated into an international framework for CSO development effectiveness to be presented at the HLF-4.

<sup>36</sup> ADB uses a variety of indicators, such as the World Bank's World Development Indicators, the OECD World Energy Outlook, and regional statistics estimated by various United Nations organs (see ADB 2010: 7. 9).

<sup>37</sup> However, this may be possible for small countries where DFID is the major donor.

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<sup>38</sup> It is worth noting that the paper recommended a model similar to the one used by the ADB, which measures effectiveness at several levels, including overall indicators at the country level, and operational performance (including technical assistance, etc.).

<sup>39</sup> As mentioned, measuring outcomes via poverty reduction strategy papers and MDGs may be problematic. These processes are not explicitly linked to the international human rights framework.

<sup>40</sup> AfDB has only released one report following the 2004 publication, the *2008 Annual Review of Evaluation Results* (AfDB 2009). The report does not employ the Triple A approach outlined above, but instead focuses on findings and lessons learned from 14 evaluations, including high-level evaluations at the country and sectoral level, for example, and project level evaluations. It is unclear why the evaluation did not take the Triple A approach.

<sup>41</sup> Reality of Aid is a collaborative, non-profit initiative that brings together non-governmental organizations from the North and the South.

<sup>42</sup> In this respect, one might argue that parts of the WP-EFF discussions implicitly employ development effectiveness as outcomes from aid, rather than overall development outcomes.

<sup>43</sup> Background documents for the Second Africa Regional Meeting on Aid Effectiveness, South-South Cooperation and Capacity Development similarly addressed these issues, pointing out that the job of development assistance is to do itself out of a job (Africa Regional Meeting 2010a: 23).

<sup>44</sup> Ngwira pointed out that programming and monitoring should look beyond measuring the MDGs, to emphasize exit indicators: i.e., reduction in dependence on aid [or put differently] not reduction in the levels of aid but reduction in [the] proportion of resources given by donors to partner countries (Ngwira 2010: 3).

<sup>45</sup> Although outside the scope of this paper, this approach to development effectiveness runs the risk of ignoring international structural determinants of development outcomes. See Weber (2007) and Halperin (2007) for excellent accounts of the methodological and historical limitations to this development paradigm, respectively.

<sup>46</sup> For example, some promote the private sector as a means to achieve development goals (see, e.g., Kharas 2010: 5, Nelson 2010) while others emphasize the fulfillment of human rights (see, e.g., OHCHR 2006, Khan 2009). Of course this issue is not necessarily a question of either/or; many donors, such as the United Kingdom, for example, work in both areas.

<sup>47</sup> The main principles of the UN's rights-based approach include universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and inter-relatedness; non-discrimination and equality; participation and inclusion; accountability and rule of law. In practice, programs should intentionally further the realization of human rights, use human rights standards to guide all stages of the development process, strengthen duty-bearers to meet obligations and rights-holders to claim rights, take into consideration local contexts, and enable beneficiaries to become empowered owners of their own development (see United Nations Development Group 2003: 1. 3).

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<sup>48</sup> The WP-EFF has five clusters that focus on: ownership and accountability; global partnership on country systems; transparency and responsible aid; assessing progress; and managing for development results. In additions, two task teams focus on the health sector and South. South cooperation. The clusters and task teams focus on evidence-based, technical analysis in their area to provide the WP-EFF with best practices and solid evidence for policymaking.

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