



Preparing for the next High-Level Meeting

Background document for Session 1: “Delivering development better to make progress on the SDGs – preparing for the next HLM”

21st Steering Committee Meeting, 7-8 July 2021

This document presents a proposal for the political vision for the next GPEDC High-Level Meeting (HLM3) by the Global Partnership Co-Chairs. It supports Steering Committee members’ discussion on the political ambitions and objectives of the Meeting (Part I) as well as practical considerations related to the preparation of the Meeting (Part II).

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Introduction

The third High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership (HLM3), planned for late 2022, aims to provide new impetus to a principle-based, evidence-led approach to sustainable development. The Co-chairs' proposal is to frame it as a “**2022 Summit on Development Effectiveness**” and to attract officials across governments and all partners for development at the highest political level to take critical steps to strengthen the impact of development co-operation to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

At the 20th meeting of the Steering Committee in December 2020, members stressed the importance of the Summit to demonstrate how the effectiveness principles can unlock and scale up solutions to development challenges in different country contexts. Members supported a focus on how ‘whole-of-society’ approaches in development co-operation can positively impact development. There was consensus that a succinct political outcome should reaffirm existing commitments and be the basis for an ambitious and inclusive roadmap to ramp up progress toward the SDGs in the Decade of Action.

PART I: Political Vision and Objectives

1. What new realities will shape the future of development effectiveness? (Context, Rationale)

- **Development co-operation and finance are under unprecedented stress.** The concurrent COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and economic shocks are having catastrophic effects, especially on vulnerable populations. They continue to amplify inequalities, contributing to a rise in global poverty and food insecurity. Financing remains volatile and stretched. ODA is a vital source of development co-operation, but only represents a fraction of the resources needed to realise the SDGs. This is exacerbated by increasing debt in developing countries. In this time of uncertainty, development effectiveness is more important than ever. There is urgency to make ODA and other development financing work harder in support of the SDGs and harness the political aspirations of all partners to be more effective and impactful.
- **Building forward together in more effective ways will require more capacity and collective action to strengthen trust among all actors.** Development actors are increasingly striving to make development co-operation more effective and inclusive. Their collaboration, inspired by a ‘whole-of-society’ approach, builds on the distinct role of national governments and provides a route to strengthen the trust and energy needed to deliver sustainable development for all. It is vital to invest in resilience and capacity of national governments to drive sustainable development. This includes strengthening inclusive dialogue at country level that rallies citizens and partners around shared objectives.
- **The fragmented development landscape challenges current effectiveness storylines and influences what the GPEDC can offer in future.** The impact of governmental, multilateral, civil society, private, philanthropic and other actors’ development efforts depends on their ability to co-ordinate, harmonise and tailor approaches to respond to country priorities. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this obvious. This comes with a range of practical challenges for all actors involved, including the balancing act between ‘whole of society’ action and government leadership, ensuring transparency and accountability in complex settings and tensions between results and capacity building, among others. These trade-offs require urgent attention.

2. What should be the main strategic objectives for the Summit?

The Summit will encourage **Ministers and other representatives at the highest level to agree on how to do development better to deliver the 2030 Agenda**. This will be based on insights from GPEDC Action Dialogues and approaches and evidence emerging from the 2020-22 GPEDC Work Programme, with sight of a new monitoring proposal through which all involved actors will be held accountable for their actions. Based on this, and noting that the strategic objectives of the Summit will be sharpened as the above-mentioned work evolves, political leaders would commit to building forward better and regaining ground on the 2030 Agenda through:

a) A more systemic and rigorous use of the effectiveness principles across all development efforts

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only led to hard-won development gains being lost, but also to a renewed awareness of the continued validity and relevance of the effectiveness principles. Ongoing work in the GPEDC demonstrates how greater effectiveness can help make more resilient and sustainable progress towards the SDGs with the limited resources available, including at sectoral level. Inclusive ownership by diverse actors is at the heart of this effort. This makes for a strong case for ensuring that all delivery efforts and partnerships supporting the delivery of the 2030 Agenda are country-led, inclusive, well-capacitated and building on efforts that strengthen trust among partners. This requires a clear political commitment from all actors to signal a change in the way they partner and by putting the effectiveness principles more firmly at the heart of the global development agenda and the SDG follow-up and review process.

b) Collective action to scale up trust and capacity for multi-stakeholder action at country level

An inclusive and sustainable recovery will depend on a shared understanding of how to respond to new risks, trade-offs and tensions in partnership at country level. This requires continued multi-stakeholder dialogue to rally all actors around agreed actions that are guided by the 2030 Agenda and national development priorities. Concerted action by all stakeholders will be needed to address persistent and new effectiveness challenges and ensure a focus on agreed development priorities and on helping those furthest behind first. Underpinned by collective approaches to accountability, this can bring a much needed push to harness the strengths of governments, citizens and other partners to deliver greater impact and advance faster on the pathway to sustainable development.

c) The launch of a solutions-oriented policy narrative on development effectiveness for a new era

A tailored, context-specific application of the effectiveness principles and past commitments will be essential to inform new policy approaches by different actors. This relates to two dimensions: (i) a 'deepened' understanding of how the principles can help adapt policies, systems and operations in ways that address effectiveness tensions in different country contexts and (ii) 'broadening' the scope of the effectiveness agenda (e.g. beyond ODA or to cover priority issues e.g. climate, youth). A new solutions-oriented, policy-based narrative on effectiveness, and how this manifests in varying contexts, can provide the contours for a future GPEDC work programme and cement the relevance of the GPEDC in future.

3. What should be the main elements and contours of the political outcome of the Summit?

Co-chairs propose to explore different options, with a preference for a concise political declaration in the form of a communiqué (5-6 pages maximum). Its main ambition would be to reflect the political achievements of the Summit, in line with existing commitments and a new ambition to deliver on them. The declaration would build political momentum for the Global Partnership as an inclusive, multi-stakeholder go-to platform for effectiveness solutions for the 2030 Agenda. Setting the right level of ambition and tone, the declaration would:

- ✓ In line with existing commitments, commit to fast-tracking development effectiveness across all delivery efforts and agree on new priority areas for action to help rebuild and achieve the 2030 Agenda (1st Summit objective), encouraging stakeholders to take responsibility and help create enabling conditions for more effective partnerships
- ✓ Encourage joint action to scale trust and capacity at the country level (2nd Summit objective), by institutionalising ‘Action Dialogues’ to foster learning and knowledge sharing on development effectiveness and informed by insights from the 2020-22 GPEDC Work Programme
- ✓ Launch a new monitoring framework/process and other tools and guidance emerging from the 2020-22 Work Programme to better drive such action and learning (2nd Summit objective) and
- ✓ Re-launch a strengthened Partnership, informed by findings of the GPEDC review and proposed contours for a future GPEDC work programme (3rd Summit objective).

Questions for discussion

- What do you expect the third High-Level Meeting to deliver at the political level?
- With this in mind, do you agree with the proposed political vision, including objectives and contours of a political outcome? Are there elements missing?
- Do you have specific suggestions on whether and, if so, how to ‘deepen’ the understanding of how the principles should be applied in a new global context and to ‘broaden’ the scope of work?

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PART II: Preparing the Summit

Going from vision to reality requires broad ‘buy-in’ from partners, most notably the Steering Committee itself, and clarity on the practical steps. This will ensure a successful Summit and future for the Global Partnership. The second part of this session will therefore provide Steering Committee members with an opportunity to discuss what defines success and practical steps to prepare for it together. This should build on Committee members’ lessons learned from previous GPEDC Meetings, keeping in mind the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on preparations.¹

1. The political engagement process

The participation of all constituencies at the highest political level is a key success factor for the Summit. Their engagement will depend on the appeal of the Summit’s rationale and objectives and incentives to participate. This includes the perceived urgency of the issues discussed (‘effectiveness more important than ever’), linkages to bigger processes (such as progress on the 2030 Agenda), the level of ambition and the ability to champion action, as well as visibility/speaker roles and participating as a decision-maker in the political process.

The political outcome should be of particular interest when considering how to engage Ministers and other representatives at the highest political level. Political engagement for the outcome would have to start at senior technical level to engage administrations and organisations and make the case for why Ministerial sign-off is required. Past experience has also shown that negotiated outcome documents are resource-intensive and run the risk of leading to long documents with little renewed commitment or political uptake.

Within this context, the Co-chairs have a preference for a concise political declaration in the form a communiqué (see part 1 on the content) and propose to lead the ‘political track’ together with the Steering Committee members to ensure early engagement with Ministers and senior officials from all constituencies and regions. Co-chairs are keen to hear from Steering Committee members how they would like to pursue the political engagement effort in run up to the Summit, and what experiences they can share in this regard.

Questions for discussion

- What type of political outcome would you favour to ensure ministerial level participation?
- Which preparatory and engagement process do you foresee, in particular for your constituency?
- How will you be able to support the political track?

2. The format of the Summit

Since the COVID pandemic, the world has changed drastically from physical to virtual presence and interactions. It is still hard to assess when pre-COVID-like travel will be possible again and how attitudes towards conference missions will have changed, in particular in the development sector, where the emphasis on lowering the environmental footprint of large conferences has also increased. While there are only few examples of similar types of meetings available to date, the Committee can learn from emerging lessons in run up to the Summit. In either hybrid or full-virtual formats, preparations could include a series of technical virtual webinars spanning over a period of time on certain themes and for regions or constituencies, using

¹ Discussions on the ambitions of the event will have to take into account funding availability. Funding sources will need to be discussed as preparations progress and are separate from GPEDC standard funding.

innovative formats. The Committee would also have to consider how to engage Ministers at the Summit in the political outcome. A brief overview of pros and cons of each approach follows below:

| <u>'Hybrid' meeting</u> (some in-person and some virtual participation) | <u>Full virtual meeting</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions more immediate, captivating • More fluid, responsive negotiations around political outcome • Attendance/participation serve as 'signals' of engagement • Travelling to destination typically ensures engagement for duration of event • Opportunities for networking, sharing ideas • Side-events and social opportunities | <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunities for engagement – ease of access etc. • Adaptable format, could be spread over a longer period, again increasing access • Increased possibilities for high-level participation • Less environmental impact |
| <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Mixed' attendance may impact runs-of-show • Challenges engaging across time zones | <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of 'screen-fatigue' • No wider networking/social opportunities • Persistent/greater challenges across time-zones |

Questions for discussion

- Which Summit format will be most conducive to ensure a successful meeting in fall 2022 (hybrid, virtual, in person) and why?
- For each format, what do you consider to be the main obstacles for the Summit organisation?
- How can you support the organisation of the Summit, also in case it is 'stretched out' over a certain period of time?

3. Tracks of work for the Summit

It is proposed that the preparations of the Summit generate the following deliverables, associated with four preparatory tracks:

Political Track: Political Declaration (see above)

Communications Track: To engage stakeholders in the run up to, during and after the Summit, it is proposed to invest in positive storytelling, sharing of valuable practices and success stories and systematic learning and sharing of experiences to accelerate action. Concrete products could include an updated dynamic website, capturing the products and processes related to the various Action Areas of the Work Programme, and increased use of the interactive Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP) for Members to enable knowledge sharing, advocacy and outreach, as well as more streamlined interaction.

Technical Track: A synthesis report to capture key findings from the Action Dialogues and the new monitoring framework and process.

Organisational Track: Preparations of the summit itself, including programme development, logistics, such as stakeholder invitation and registration, travel and related coordination efforts.

Questions for discussion:

- Do you agree with the deliverables? Are there others you would foresee to be included?
- To which deliverables would you like to actively contribute?