
Concept Note

Background

This November marks the tenth anniversary of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, a ground-breaking agreement that set out shared principles for development effectiveness and endorsed by a broad range of governments, civil society organisations, private sector and other actors. The Busan Partnership agreement led to the establishment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), a multi-stakeholder forum for driving progress on development effectiveness.

Since 2014 the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) has hosted a series of Busan Global Partnership Forums to contribute to the measurement of progress in implementing development effectiveness principles at the country level. These events have brought together policymakers and practitioners to share their experiences and explore the factors that have led to successful development outcomes that align with Agenda 2030.

This year's event will take place a year before the next GPEDC High-Level Meeting, scheduled to take place in Bern in 2022. As well as reflecting on progress in the ten years since the Busan High-Level Forum, the 2021 Busan Global Partnership Forum will focus on new and innovative thinking, ideas and practice as it looks forward to next year's Summit on Development Effectiveness.

Theme

The principal theme of the 2021 Busan Forum will be Promoting development effectiveness in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic: innovative approaches to meeting the SDGs. The pandemic has reversed years of progress on development and put key SDG targets at risk. Latest estimates suggest that an estimated 97 million more people were living in poverty in 2020¹, while COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated multiple inequalities². The poorest countries have been hit hard by falling domestic revenues, reductions in foreign direct investment, a loss of income from tourism and a significant fall in remittances³. The impact will be long-lasting with rising debt burdens compounding pre-existing challenges such as poverty and climate change. Comparatively small fiscal stimulus packages afforded by such countries combined with inequitable access to vaccines risks exacerbating a divergent recovery with the poorest countries left increasingly behind⁴.

1) WorldBankJune2021-<https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-COVID-19-global-poverty-turning-corner-pandemic-2021>

2) WorldEconomicForumOctober2020-<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/COVID-19-is-increasing-multiple-kinds-of-inequality-what-we-can-do-about-it/>

3) DevelopmentInitiatives2021-<https://devinit.org/resources/reversing-trends-leave-ldcs-behind/>

4) IMF2021WorldEconomicOutlook-<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2021/07/27/world-economic-outlook-update-july-2021>

As the only international resource explicitly focussed on poverty, development cooperation has a vital role to play alongside other resources in supporting countries to build back better and invest in a green recovery. Development cooperation itself has been affected by the pandemic, with some donors increasing their funding in response to the crisis while others have significantly reduced their contributions as a result of pressure on domestic budgets. Changes in the use of ODA, its form and the way in which it is delivered in response to the crisis has also been mixed, while the outlook of future levels and practices remains unclear. In this context, the effectiveness of development cooperation is more important than ever in ensuring that this precious resource is invested in ways that maximises a sustained impact on poverty and inequality and accelerates progress towards the SDGs.

The objectives of this year's Forum are to:

- Reflect on progress in implementing the Busan Partnership Agreement and explore the challenges of promoting development effectiveness in the context of COVID-19;
- Showcase new ideas and exciting initiatives that are delivering results at country level;
- Contribute to the discussion on how GPEDC should evolve to respond to the current context and maximise its contribution to Agenda 2030.

The Forum will explore key issues such as:

- The need to update narratives on development effectiveness to reflect current realities
 - how can key stakeholders come together to promote a new, compelling vision for this agenda?
- The importance of innovative and inclusive partnerships - what are the key principles underpinning inclusive partnerships and how can successful innovations be taken to scale?
- With poverty is increasingly concentrated in fragile states, there is clear case for increasing levels of support
 - what trade-offs do development actors face in operating in these challenging contexts?
- The world has changed significantly since GPEDC was launched ten years ago and the platform is currently completing a major review - how should its current structure and activities evolve to maximise its contribution to development effectiveness, supporting countries to build back better, and greener.

Format

COVID-19-related travel restrictions combined with unequal access to vaccines continue to pose a challenge to potential participants. To ensure an inclusive and participatory event, this year's Forum will adopt a hybrid format, combining in-person attendance in Seoul with the opportunity for participants to join online.

This year's event will capitalise on the hybrid format to make possible both high-level political participation as well as inviting contributions from social entrepreneurs, innovators and partners from all sectors involved in finding new solutions to development effectiveness challenges on the ground. The Forum will be organised around six plenaries, each beginning with a presentation from a high-profile speaker, followed by a panel discussion.
