

Development in Brief



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2015: A pivotal year for international cooperation

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The year 2015 is expected to be a pivotal one for international cooperation. Firstly, the Millennium Development Goals are to be phased out and replaced by a much broader Post-2015 Agenda containing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Secondly, the framework for development financing enshrined in the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 is to be overhauled with a view to the financing of sustainable development. Thirdly, the ODA or Official Development Assistance (measurement) system is being reformed. Fourthly, there are plans to ratify a new global climate treaty.

Close links between the various processes

International negotiations show a number of different interdependencies. Clearly, a new global system of goals cannot be implemented without giving consideration to the question of financing. However, opinions differ on whether the ambition of the goals should depend on or determine the financing available.

In addition to the mobilisation of private funds, the provision of ODA will once again be crucial with respect to the financing of sustainable development. The target for donor countries to spend at least 0.7% of their gross national income on Official Development Assistance is based on a definition of ODA that is currently being assessed by the OECD. The discussion revolves around the question of whether ODA reporting should include more dimensions of development, as well as , more agents and instruments of development financing than it has in the past. Reforms in this direction would make even more sense if the ODA measure is to be used to monitor the financing of a Post-2015 Agenda.

Climate-related goals and financing are primarily being addressed in connection with the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Nevertheless, climate change also plays an important role in the Post-2015 Agenda on account of its ambition to integrate goals relating to development and sustainability, including climate-related issues. This also makes drawing a distinction between the topics of climate-related and development financing seem outdated. Instead of differentiation, the focus should be on synergies. Measures should ideally help meet both development and climate-related goals, making it impossible to clearly assign them to one camp or the other.

Prospects for a strong integration of processes

The four processes are very closely related in terms of their subject matter. That is why there is a lot to be said – in theory at least – for combining them into a single process.

On the other hand, there are a lot of strong political arguments for keeping the various negotiations separate. There is, for example, the question of to what extent the modalities of one process can be tailored to another, if at all (for example the ODA debate at the level of the OECD and negotiations regarding the financing of sustainable development at the level of the UN). Furthermore, often only certain initiatives are given the authority to reach agreements on goals for their respective fields. The UNFCCC, for example, is widely regarded as the only legitimate forum for setting climate-related goals. Finally, closer integration would also entail substantial risks. This is because the larger the overall process, the greater the risks of never-ending rounds of negotiations, reaching an

agreement on the least binding and lowest common denominator or even failure.

The main obstacles to both an agreement within the individual initiatives and close coordination between them are currently (i) the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and (ii) the levels of commitment involved. The G77 countries and China construe the CBDR principle to mean that industrialised countries are required to fulfil their global responsibility mainly by financing development and reducing emissions. All developing countries are exempt. On the other hand, the OECD member countries in particular insist that there are now more than just two groups of countries in the world, and the up-and-coming economic powers should play more of a part. This difference of opinion is hindering the discussion regarding the Post-2015 Agenda and the creation of a new framework for the financing of sustainable development. It has long been a sticking point for climate talks.

However, in some respects this political stalemate only reflects the high stakes involved in the climate protection process. The future climate treaty will be legally binding, while the SDGs for example are only politically binding and therefore do not entail the same degree of commitment. It may therefore be entirely reasonable to fence robust agreements on climate off from any less binding arrangements.

Conclusion

Negotiations on the four processes are likely to continue running in parallel for political reasons. This would at least allow the international community to quickly come to agreements in those areas where there is enough of a consensus. Hopefully, the processes are at least integrated enough to ultimately produce a coherent overall system. ■