

“Public Private Engagement in the GPEDC: Fit for Partnering?”

European Development Days – Panel Discussion
7 June 2017

Inclusive partnerships are essential for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While the Addis Ababa Action Agenda achieved commitments on financing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), innovative modalities and inclusive partnerships for development are called for in order to keep development effective. Yet, there is still untapped potential regarding the level of public private engagement. Recent findings of the Monitoring Report published by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) show that in more than 70 percent of developing countries, the government and the private sector express equally strong interest in strengthening public-private dialogue. This underlines the importance of the Global Partnership as a platform for dialogue in order to explore and share experiences of good practice as well as challenges encountered regarding development-oriented partnerships. A panel discussion at the European Development Days in Brussels explored both obstacles and opportunities for scaling up public-private collaboration in implementing the SDGs and which actions could be taken by the Global Partnership to further engage the business sector as a partner in development cooperation. The panel was jointly organized by the European Commission and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, representing the German GPEDC Co-Chair.

The discussion was opened by OECD-DAC Chair Charlotte Petri Gornitzka and DEVCO Deputy Director-General Klaus Rüdichhauser. In their introductory remarks, both speakers underlined the importance of multi-stakeholder-partnerships as a vital instrument for implementing activities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As Charlotte Petri Gornitzka pointed out, the SDGs cannot be realised without contributions by the private sector, and this requires a better understanding of the driving forces and evidence on the positive impact of public-private engagement.. Klaus Rudischhauser emphasized the GPEDC’s decisive role as a platform for dialogue, where governments, foundations, civil society organizations, the private sector and other development partners can come together on an equal footing in order to discuss new ways and modalities for a joint implementation of the SDGs. He also underlined the importance of including the private sector as a development partner. These points were taken up and further developed in the panel discussion. Among the panelists were representatives of transnational and local enterprises

(SAP Germany and KK Fresh Produce Exporters Ltd Uganda) for the private sector, civil society organizations (Eurodad) and donor agencies (German Investment Facility – DEG).

The discussion among the panelists and the approximately 50 participants was based on practical examples and first-hand experience in public-private engagement for development. The exchange focused on challenges and needs for an increased private sector engagement and lined out possible entry points for further GPEDC activities. The participants highlighted the importance of trust-building, joint risk management and investing in partnering skills and capacities as the most important elements for scaling up public-private engagement in development cooperation. The participants agreed that economic business interest and achieving the SDGs are not mutually exclusive but can indeed go together if appropriate checks and balances are in place. This conclusion was underlined by DAC-Chair Charlotte Petri Gornitzka in her closing remarks when she stressed the need for further engagement of the Global Partnership in strengthening cooperation with the private sector and called for a practical approach in implementing joint activities. This corresponds with the priority areas spelled out in the GPEDC's new Work Programme (2017-2018) which includes the strategic goal to scale up private sector engagement leveraged through development cooperation. A first working session with the objective to start detailing the concept and a roadmap for the implementation of this strategic focus did also take place in the margins of the European Development Days.

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