Issue Notes for the AGM 05 Business Meeting:

Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)[1]: An Overview[2]

Presenter: Dr. Christoph Kohlmeyer, Co-Chair of the GDPRD
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development (BMZ)

---

1. Background

There is a growing consensus among international development partners including the World Bank, EU, FAO, IFAD, Regional Development Banks and major bi-lateral agencies, that national and global poverty reduction targets will not be met unless poverty in rural areas is reduced. Many agencies have recently taken stock of their experiences and redefined their approaches and commitments to poverty reduction and economic growth in rural areas and agriculture.

The global consensus on the strategic directions needed to deliver rural poverty reduction is, however, fragile. There are differences in development policies, the nature of intervention and institutional arrangements that need to be addressed in order to achieve lasting impact. Effective and systematic lesson-learning between agencies and a consensus among stakeholders on what works and what works less well in rural development is lacking. Besides, the situation of rural poor people is changing fast, with increased connectivity to markets, increased migration and far greater livelihood diversification than in the past. Reduction of duplication, overlap of effort and competition is an essential prerequisite for sustained and effective development.

It is recognized that no single agency can address the needs of the rural poor in a world of competing agendas and limited financial resources. Three-quarters of the world's poor live in rural areas and the numbers will only decrease in the years to come if developing agencies and developing countries "Get the Rural Development Agenda Right".

The objective of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development is to reduce poverty and enhance economic growth in rural areas in developing countries through improved donor cooperation, collaboration and coordinated dialogue with partner countries. In order to achieve this, members have agreed on joint activities at three levels:

2. The need for improved donor collaboration with special focus on rural development

The rural context brings particular challenges. Rural development is not a 'sector' in the conventional sense but is characterized by complexity, variability and the involvement of multiple players including the state, the private sector and range of civil society players. The lives of rural

[1] For further information, contact the Secretariat of the GDPRD at: platform@rdxxl.org
[2] Proposed originally for discussion by Jim Harvey (DFID) & Christoph Kohlmeyer (BMZ) on behalf of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development during Rural Week 2004 in Washington DC

poor people are affected by policies and decisions made at local, national, regional and international levels. Donor support is not limited to financial aid but addresses a wide range of capacity building, policy and sectoral reform efforts. Co-ordination in rural development is not straightforward.

In the past, donor partnerships have played a vital role in the successes of agricultural development. Today, progress could be made through a small number of co-ordinating efforts: agreeing on specific targets and priority problems; agreeing on conditionality; agreeing to use common co-ordinating mechanisms for donor intervention; agreeing on common monitoring procedures; and developing robust systems for sharing results and knowledge. However, changes are slow, so in order to make a real impact before 2015 it will be necessary to revitalize efforts to bring donors together around agriculture and rural development.

3. Possible approaches and action towards improvement

Practical approaches for improved interaction at various levels

On donor co-ordination at the regional and global levels:

- Support global forums for lesson sharing and policy dialogue - which is the primary purpose of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development.
- Establish co-ordination mechanisms to exchange knowledge on the performance of specific policies.
- Establish a framework for donor consultations on new policy proposals and actions.
- Replicate the rural forum and focus on specific regions involving more national partners in the process.
- Apply best co-ordination practice in international forums e.g. with the CGIAR

On partnerships between donors and government:

- The best co-ordination mechanism is clear policy and committed leadership by the partner country – support this!
- Let national governments do the management of their development process on the basis of the poverty reduction strategy, PRSPs becoming a *de facto* instrument for development co-ordination at the country level.
- Support partner countries to build government capacity to mobilise and use donor support effectively.

On donor co-ordination in country:

- Make it mandatory for donors to conduct joint missions, joint reviews, joint analytical work and joint interventions.
- Let donors act as a single homogenous partner in development on the basis of a jointly agreed country support programme.
- Definition of a code of conduct for local co-ordination including joint evaluation of donor programmes.
- Make Consultative Group meetings held in country effective.
- Donors should get down to the community level and learn together from community-based planning and action.
- Apply these principles to all areas of donor activity – not just around major financial aid flows.