Working Together to Make Aid More Effective

Description

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House of Commons International Development Committee
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The International Development Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for International Development and its associated public bodies.

Summary
If the millions of people still living on less than $1 a day are to be lifted out of poverty donors need to provide more effective aid not simply larger quantities of aid. The UK has performed well against almost all of the targets in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the central agreement in this area, but global progress has been patchy and slow. The Accra High Level Forum in September is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on this lack of progress. The UKâ??s Department for International Development should aim to make progress there in two key areas: the division of labour among donors; and developing country ownership of the development process.

The principle of ownership-that the development process should be led by developing countries themselves-is critical to the success of international commitments on aid effectiveness. Aid should be driven by need and demand. DFID should commit to achieving a technical assistance portfolio which is 100% coordinated and demonstrably demand-driven. The Accra High Level Forum should lead to more effective mechanisms to monitor progress against a greater range of targets linked to ownership. DFID must consistently define ownership as a democratic process which fully involves parliaments, civil society and citizens.

Efforts to make aid more effective depend on credible evidence which links particular actions with better development outcomes. Large pieces of this evidential base are missing. DFID must ensure that it is not simply joining a plausible consensus but has done the research to prove to us and, equally importantly, the taxpayer that its approach delivers more effective aid. Without it, DFID is operating on well-intentioned guesswork. Credible monitoring and evaluation of development impact is needed to show objectively that aid can make a difference. DFID should actively support independent and recipient-led monitoring and evaluation initiatives and should submit to-and encourage other OECD donors to submit to-reviews conducted other than by peers.

Cooperation with other donors cannot simply be on DFIDâ??s terms. Working with others to make aid more effective requires a certain flexibility of approach. DFID has so far found this difficult to achieve. It needs to reassess its engagement on aid effectiveness with other donors so as to give greater priority to effective coordination over promotion of its own way of working. Joint working between DFID and other donors, and indeed DFID working through other donors, is likely to become a more frequent occurrence. This has implications for the scrutiny performed by this Committee. DFID must work proactively to ensure that we have meaningful oversight of all of its work, however the budget is spent.

The principles contained in the Paris Declaration are as applicable to new donors, such as China, India and Brazil, as to other donors. DFID must seek opportunities to share with new donors its own experience of working towards more effective aid but also to support efforts by developing countries to draw new donors into a recipient-led dialogue on aid effectiveness.

Implementing the Paris Declaration requires some changes in the way DFID operates. Staff buy-in is crucial to the success of any change programme and DFID must ensure its frameworks for assessing staff performance make aid effectiveness targets a priority.

Tags

1. aid effectiveness

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