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Summary:

Development Cooperation for Achieving the 2030 Agenda: Convergence and Divergence of Official Development Assistance and South-South Cooperation

Side Event at 6th Biennial High-level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum, 22 May 2018, organised by the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) and the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)

By bringing together political practitioners and researchers this side event aimed at generating a focused and research-based debate with a political orientation to develop new knowledge and foster shared understandings on the quality of development cooperation. In his introductory words, **Stephan Klingebiel** highlighted the relevance of this discussion when pointing to the lost momentum of the effectiveness agenda. In their remarks, the six panelists¹ related to the following questions:

- 1) **How have the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs changed global development cooperation?**
- 2) **What is the current state of development cooperation in terms of convergence or divergence between providers of SSC and OECD DAC donors?**
- 3) **What are the priorities of recipient countries for improving the quality development cooperation?**

When referring to the *first question*, **André de Mello e Souza** emphasised the successful and from a normative perspective desirable bottom-up process that had led to the 2030 Agenda. There was a broad consensus among the panelists, however, that different to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the universality, complexity and more vague definition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) complicate their implementation and monitoring, such as the creation of systemic criteria and solid evaluation. In this way, **Uwe Gehlen** emphasised the urgent need of action and need to focus on outcomes to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Also during the discussion participants demanded

1. more institutional oversight to guide the creation of shared norms, standards and procedures and to lead actors towards shared expectations,
2. a scaling-up of public investments instead of only private investments, which are seen as investments that come along with new challenges, and
3. more accountability of all actors but particularly of governments.

In view of the *second question*, all panelists shared the understanding that “the Global North” and “the Global South” are much more differentiated today than 40 years ago. Some regarded this as a cause for more dichotomy and fragmentation of approaches in development cooperation. Specifically in view of BAPA+40, **Elizabeth Sidiropoulos** called for more reflection on the principle of solidarity among actors from the South, pointing to the example of trade barriers that are not only maintained by Northern partners but also applied among Southern partners. **Qi Gubo**, in contrast, spoke of growing convergence when outlining that many Southern countries relate to the SDGs in their national strategies. Also **Vitalice Meja** argued against the perception of a growing divergence and used the case of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) to exemplify that all principles of the GPEDC can also be found in South-South Cooperation (SSC). He further highlighted the

¹ André de Mello e Souza (Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brazil), Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa), Qi Gubo (China Agricultural University, China), Milindo Chakrabarti (Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India), Vitalice Meja (Reality of Aid Africa Network), Uwe Gehlen (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Shamshad Akhtar (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

experiences of Southern partners with the private sector, which also **Shamshad Akhtar** regarded as important lessons that were already learned who further emphasised the momentum of SSC, which in her view has been delivering beyond expectations. **Milindo Chakrabarti** considered the debate on divergence or convergence not relevant at all, instead emphasised a shared learning from the MDGs that showed trickle-down theory has failed and that the world needs to shift from maximising private profit towards a joint maximization of public and private profits.

In regard to the *third question*, the panelists underlined the need to “no longer do business as usual” but to contribute to a better predictability of resources. Some panelists demanded partner countries to operationalize and implement the principles and standards that they adopted, for example, under the umbrella of the GPEDC, and to leave “high politics” out of such settings. Others pushed the view that “development cooperation 2.0” needs to conform with an integrative approach that allows mutual learning but at the same time demanded more reflection on funding and unequal power relationships.