ADVANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE in International Development

Making Market-based Approaches to Development Work for the Poor

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Breakout: Governance and the Post-2015 Agenda: Measuring Impact

Building on previous seminar's Outcome Statement, which urged the inclusion of a governance goal in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, this panel discussed the current status of negotiations; the evolving debate on governance within the draft Sustainable Development Goals ("**SDGs**"); draft Goal 16 on accountable institutions, peaceful and just societies; and proposed indicators to track progress. Panellists were all in agreement regarding the critical role of good governance in creating the enabling environment for sustainable development. Two panellists shared perspectives from South Sudan and Yemen of the various development challenges facing those countries (conflict, exploitative natural resource extraction and poverty) which stem from governance deficits and non-inclusivity.

Key Points from the Session

1. **For many countries, progress on sustainable development will necessitate progress on governance outcomes.** From Yemen to South Sudan, countries face conflict and poverty which is directly linked to a failure of governance. For example, a lack of inclusiveness undermines the legitimacy of ruling governments, promotes citizen unrest, exacerbates ethnic tensions, and contributes to a feeling that the government is a "black box," unaccountable to its citizens. Weak rule of law also prevents countries from sustainably utilizing natural resources in a way that benefits the citizenry. By addressing these deficits, good governance can create the enabling conditions for sustainable development.

2. **Issues of measurement will be key to successful implementation of Goal 16's governance targets.** Significant progress has been made in measuring crucial aspects of governance, via indicators and data developed by multilateral organizations (such as the World Bank), non-governmental organizations (such as Transparency International), regional and national mechanisms (such as the African Peer Review Mechanism). However, significant gaps do exist. Whether the finalized agenda utilizes global or national targets and indicators will have important implications for the choices that countries will make in implementing the SDGs.

3. **There is a tension between tailoring actions to the local context, which necessitates nationally-owned strategies, and accountability for global targets on governance.** Although many multilaterals and large international NGOs focus on national governments, significant improvements result from focusing on local governments and civil society. Similarly, countries can and should draw on existing local traditions and institutions to improve governance outcomes. However, the consequent emphasis on contextualization and nationally-owned strategy can undermine broader accountability to the global community. Since the post-2015 agenda is intended to be universal, the chosen indicators and targets for measuring governance should strike the appropriate balance between the national and global levels.

4. **Emerging donors in Asia offer an alternative vision of the donor-recipient relationship, with potential to alter the landscape of international development.** New donors such as China and Korea engage with recipient countries in a model that emphasizes peer-to-peer learning and respects national sovereignty. However, this "non-invasive" approach is not easily reconciled with the need for monitoring and accountability. It is also not clear whether non-interference can have a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the governance of recipient

countries. The post-2015 agenda may serve as a helpful focal point for these emerging donors to engage with recipient countries on issues of governance.

Emerging Questions

1. What is the potential effect of technology on governance and measuring impact? Can developments such as e-government, mobile phone usage, and satellite communications promote transparency and accountability?

2. How can national sovereignty be reconciled with global accountability, particularly in the context of the emerging donor landscape?

3. How can improvements in governance at the local level be effectively harnessed to spur sustainable development?