

## PARALLEL SESSION

### STRENGTHENING DECENTRALIZED DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN A POST-2015 SETTING: THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

[linked to Thematic Round-Table 2]

#### Partner(s):

- **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA)**  
Contact: Ms. Caroline Lombardo, [lombardoc@un.org](mailto:lombardoc@un.org), cc: [boehler@un.org](mailto:boehler@un.org), [tuz@un.org](mailto:tuz@un.org),
- **United Cities and Local Governments** (Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy Committee, Capacity and Institution Building Working Group)  
Contact: Ms. Cyrielle Fleury [cfleury@fcm.ca](mailto:cfleury@fcm.ca), cc: [lotte.wannet@vng.nl](mailto:lotte.wannet@vng.nl)
- **UNDP, ART Initiative**  
Contact: Ms. Lurdes Gomez, [lurdes.gomez@undp.org](mailto:lurdes.gomez@undp.org), cc: [ferran.perez@undp.org](mailto:ferran.perez@undp.org).

#### 1. Summary of topic and context

Local governments, regions, provinces, districts, cities and other local entities and their associations play an increasingly important role in dealing with developmental challenges that originate outside their area of jurisdiction, ranging from job creation and migration to environment and security issues. Development cooperation among these actors has been an important modality of international cooperation for many decades. Several factors have led to a marked increase of activities and greater involvement of local authorities in the planning and delivery of development assistance: (i) rapid urbanization; (ii) emergence of more decentralized forms of governance; and (iii) positive experiences of local and regional actors as key partners in international development cooperation.

Although difficult to quantify, cooperation of this type has clearly shown the ability to facilitate cost-effective and targeted delivery of services to communities, directly responding to the challenges that affect the lives of citizens. Decentralized development cooperation engages local actors and territories and thereby can promote ownership and accountability for results and transparency vis-à-vis taxpayers and donors at the most subsidiary level. It has a unique capacity to engage different actors – including civil society, private sector, academia and cultural institutions – in horizontal and reciprocal partnerships at community level that are targeted towards strategic interventions. It also serves as an important source of resources and knowledge transfer for local and regional actors with similar challenges, through North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation and other forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Decentralized development cooperation complements activities of national governments by adapting policy-making to the local level. The mutual benefit of greater exchange of local-level solutions and

innovations to overall effectiveness and sustainability is reflected by a considerable increase in the funding that local actors receive from national governments.

Decentralized development cooperation is faced by specific challenges, often similar to those faced by national governments. Some initiatives lack: adequate project management skills and capacities; a comprehensive development framework; and clear alignment of national and local agendas. A key challenge is also to ensure greater coordination with other actors, with sufficient attention to scaling up, impact and results.

Despite the recognition of the important role of local governments in development cooperation, the total share of ODA destined to local governments remains relatively small. While its contribution to international development rests with the unique experiences on development issues directly affecting the lives of citizens, there is growing interest in quantifying this type of cooperation and ensuring synergies with national programmes of support to decentralization. Given the increasing number of initiatives and actors involved in local and other sub-national development cooperation initiatives, it is also becoming critical to better understand: (i) how multi-stakeholder partnerships at local and regional level work exactly; (ii) how the current global partnership for development has supported them; and (iii) what lessons can be learned for a post-2015 development agenda that embraces efforts by all development cooperation actors.

## **2. Key questions that will be raised during the parallel session**

The session will build on the momentum created at the 2012 United Nations Development Cooperation Forum, which recognized the evolving role of decentralized development cooperation and the need to strengthen synergies with national and multilateral actors. To examine how to capitalize on the comparative advantages of decentralized development cooperation, the session will raise the following key questions:

- 1) What are the global trends for the role of decentralized development cooperation?
- 2) What are the lessons learned from good practices of high-impact decentralized development cooperation?
- 3) How can local and regional actors engage in a more structured exchange and global policy dialogue on the future of development cooperation?
- 4) What are the potentialities of increased articulation between decentralized development cooperation and the multilateral framework?

## **3. Session structure**

The 90' session will consist of three parts:

### **1) Global trends in decentralized development cooperation**

The volume, sources, types, channels, destinations and operational practices of decentralized development cooperation, as well as its overall strengths, opportunities and weaknesses, will be examined. This will be followed by a brief discussion on implications for the role of local and regional actors in the evolving landscape of development cooperation (based on analytical study by UN-DESA on flows, impact and challenges of decentralized development cooperation; UCLG Policy Paper on development cooperation and local government).

## **2) Good practices of high-impact solutions at local and regional level**

Illustrative cases of decentralized development cooperation will be discussed to outline how interventions were tailored to achieve concrete results in supporting local and regional economic and social development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Special emphasis will be placed on how to change policy and scale up solutions based on lessons learned from the characteristics and practices of the cooperation, such as local and regional ownership, reciprocity of partnerships and peer-to-peer exchange to strengthen capacity development. The respective strengths of different partners, including bilateral and multilateral partners, and the promotion of policy coherence and inclusiveness will be of particular interest.

## **3) Local and regional governments in the post-2015 development agenda**

This part of the session will serve to explain how the involvement of local and regional governments in international policy dialogue on development cooperation has contributed to their acknowledgement as key development actors and their potential role in a post-2015 setting. Participants will then engage in an interactive discussion on how the global partnership for development has influenced decentralized development cooperation, how it has linked up with multi-stakeholder partnerships at local level (including Agenda 21, Habitat, MDG Acceleration Framework etc.) and how lessons should be reflected in a renewed global partnership for development that will underpin the post-2015 development agenda. This part of the discussion will also identify ways to strengthen complementarities between decentralized development cooperation and multilateral efforts to support it as an important instrument for sustainable local development.

## **4. Expected outcomes**

The expected outcomes of the session are: (i) an overall view of global trends regarding decentralized development cooperation; (ii) lessons learned from good practices of high-impact decentralized development cooperation; (iii) recommendations on more structured ways of exchange of local and regional actors; and (iv) recommendations on how national governments and multilateral organizations can better support local and regional authorities in their decentralized development cooperation efforts. The outcome will feed into the ongoing preparations for the next Development Cooperation Forum, to be held in New York in July 2014. Launched in 2007, the DCF is a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together decision makers from donor and programme countries, Southern partners, civil society, philanthropic foundations, the private sector, parliamentarians, local governments and international organizations, to achieve more coherent and effective development cooperation.

## 5. List of suggested speakers

The list will be updated upon confirmation of TBC speakers.

### Opening

Opening remarks by chair: Antonio Vigilante, Director of the United Nations Office and the UNDP Representation Office in Brussels

Introduction to session and moderation: Jantine Kriens, Chairman of the Board of Directors VNG

### Part 1: Global trends in decentralized development cooperation

Lead presentation: Agustí Fernandez de Losada, lead author UN DESA study on DDC flows and trends

Short interactive discussion (*reactions to key findings of analytical work*)

### Part 2: Good practices of high-impact solutions at local and regional level

Interactive round table discussion with the following participants:

- Boubacar Bah, President of the Association of Municipalities of Mali (AMM), Mayor of the Commune V of Bamako
- Nomveliso Nyukwana, Mayor of Emalahleni municipality, South Africa
- Philippe Cichowlaz, Deputy General Director in charge of International Relations and European Affairs, PACA
- Eduardo Tadeu Pereira, President of the Association of Brazilian Municipalities (ABM)

### Part 3: Local and regional governments in the post-2015 development agenda

Presentations:

- Hannah Ryder, Team Leader for Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, Department for International Development UK
- Johannes Krassnitzer, ART Programme Specialist, UNDP
- Berry Vrbanovic, Emeritus Past President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Councillor of Kitchener
- Angelo Baglio, Head of Unit Civil Society and Local Authorities of DG DEVCO, European Commission

Closing:

Conclusions by the Rapporteur, Isam Akel, Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)

Closing of the session by the moderator

## 6. Key dates up to 2016

The fourth Development Cooperation Forum will take place in July 2014 in New York, with the objective to advance global dialogue on the future of development cooperation in the post-2015 era.

In preparation for the 2014 DCF, three high-level symposiums will be held. The first took place in June 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, focused a renewed global partnership for development.

The second symposium, on 24-25 October 2013, in Montreux, Switzerland, will discuss the future role and shape of development cooperation in light of the anticipated broadening of the post-2015 development agenda beyond the focus of the MDGs to sustainable development.

The third symposium (first quarter 2014, Germany) will explore further the role of accountability in implementing a post-2015 development agenda. It will focus on bringing greater clarity on an effective accountability mechanism contained in the global partnership for development and how effective development cooperation will be featured in a post-2015 global development agenda.