Advancing South-South Cooperation: Provider Perspectives

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Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
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INTRODUCTION

Organized jointly by the Korea Development Institute (KDI) and The Asia Foundation (TAF), the “Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation” (AADC) dialogue series brings together development experts and government officials from the Asia region and beyond to share perspectives and to facilitate mutual learning between and among “emerging” and “traditional” development actors. After a planning meeting in Seoul in December 2010, KDI and TAF convened three workshops over the course of 2011 in Kuala Lumpur (March), Colombo (June), and Seoul (September). The 2011 dialogues culminated with a side event at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in November in Busan, Korea, the world’s largest and most important gathering for discussing issues of international development and foreign aid. The conference edition of “Emerging Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation,” authored by participants in the AADC series, was released at the HLF-4.

In 2012, The AADC dialogues focused on the theme of development cooperation and pro-poor inclusive growth. Over 40 participants convened in both New Delhi (March) and Beijing (June) for the fifth and sixth meetings in the dialogue series. An authors’ workshop and a public conference, both held in Seoul, followed in November. In 2013 the first dialogue in Seoul highlighted climate change mitigation, low carbon development, and green growth strategies. In August, the complementary issues of climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and disaster management were discussed in Vietnam and a final authors’ workshop was held in Bangkok in December. In 2014, the theme was Social Mobility in Asia, featuring dialogues in Sri Lanka and an author’s meeting in Seoul in November.

In 2015, the dialogues focus on the future of South-South Cooperation in the region. The first dialogue, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (May 2015), featured the perspective of partner countries, while this second dialogue focuses on provider perspectives. This report intends to cover the proceedings and outcomes of the Jakarta meeting, featuring presentations and discussions by regional government officials, policy specialists and development experts.

OBJECTIVES OF DIALOGUE SERIES

- To clarify and raise awareness of how Asian development actors operate: their objectives, principles, motivation, and funding levels.

- To contribute Asian views to the international dialogue on development cooperation effectiveness and architecture, particularly in connection with follow-up to the HLF-4 and the shaping of the post-2015 global development agenda.

- To promote mutual interest, learning, understanding, and opportunities for collaboration between and among development partners.

- For 2015: To make specific policy contributions and recommendations from Asian actors on how SSC can be better governed, managed, and measured for increased impact and development effectiveness.
Sandra Hamid, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation, Indonesia, and moderator for the opening session, expressed her hope that the dialogue would channel ideas and increase support for international cooperation amongst southern countries. She encouraged both government to government and civil society to civil society interaction and welcomed the discussion on Indonesia’s position and challenges regarding SSC.

In his opening remarks, Taejong Kim from Korea Development Institute delivered his utmost gratitude to all parties involved throughout five years of collaboration. He mentioned the attendance of great veterans and new faces in the conference following the previous meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He asserted that international cooperation can be achieved through communication, good people, and good intentions. Moreover, the awareness for emerging South-South Cooperation is essential to foster further cooperation in addressing the challenges, innovations, and ambitions of the region by pursuing graceful works and learning from best practices in the perspectives of international relations. He added that international dialogues are very important to raise understanding between experts and countries on the issue of South-South Cooperation.

Gordon Hein, from the Asia Foundation, remarked on the diversity of experience and countries represented at the meeting. He highlighted the history of the Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation (AADC) program and praised it as a platform to discuss international development cooperation with various institutions, experts, governments, practitioners and other stakeholders. He noted this historical significance of holding the meeting in Indonesia, referring to the 1955 Bandung Asia-Africa Summit, which is considered the original SSC forum.

Rizal Sukma, CSIS, commented that South-South Trilateral Cooperation (SSTC) serves as an important platform to contribute to regional public goods in the area of international development cooperation. He noted Indonesia’s growing commitment in SSTC as part of its greater responsibility in global affairs. As Head of the Working Group on Foreign Policy, Mr. Sukma stated his interest to insert SSTC into Indonesia’s foreign policy and development strategy as a whole. He suggested that Indonesia SSTC should be managed by a single entity rather than the present more complex structure. He hoped the discussion at the meeting would advance the SSTC agenda.
Moderated by Dylan Davis Country Representative of The Asia Foundation Korea, the session featured:

- **Shafiah F. Muhibat** Senior Researcher, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia.
- **Dong-young Kim** Director, Global Economy Research Task-Force, Korea Development Institute.

*DEFINING SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION*

**Shafiah F. Muhibat** described Indonesia’s position as a major recipient of external support and international aid and an SSC provider. She also noted that one of the key drivers of Indonesia’s SSC is the principle of solidarity which can be traced back to the Bandung Spirit from the 1955 Asia-African Conference. Dr. Muhibat said it is hard for the Indonesian government to translate this driver into policy, although in 2010 the government had created a new office – The National Coordination Team on South-South and Triangular Cooperation – under the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas). She stated that development cooperation is also an important component for enhancing trade relationships with partners. Dr. Muhibat also explained that much of Indonesia’s SSC is actually SSTC – which relies heavily on international donors e.g. Germany, Japan or international institutions. Concluding her presentation, Dr. Muhibat explained that Indonesia’s implementation of SSC/SSTC has generally been fragmented and has not delivered optimum benefits due to poor coordination among the line ministries involved and the unclear procedural standards and regulations for implementation and evaluation.

**Dong-young Kim**’s presentation of “Toward More Effective Knowledge Sharing in South-South Cooperation: Case of Modularization of Korea’s Development Experience Studies” addressed knowledge sharing as a pillar of SSC, and a “third leg” to the financial and technical development in the field of International Development. Dr. Kim also promoted the South Korean Ministry of Strategy and Finance’s knowledge sharing programs which disseminates South Korea’s development experience with other developing countries through policy consultations. Dr. Kim emphasized that incorporating tacit knowledge – such as general, specific and idiosyncratic context that could only be understood by local agents – was necessary to improve knowledge sharing. He concluded by suggesting case study methodology as a way to utilize tacit knowledge and to increase the effectiveness of the programs.

**Discussion:**
The discussion mainly sought to give an explanation on the two themes: first, the exact boundaries and definition of South-South Cooperation, and second, provider-recipient challenges on the implementation of SSC, especially on the Modularization of Knowledge Sharing Program. On the first matter, Dr. Muhibat posited that countries engaged in SSC should settle the boundaries and exact definition domestically. While
comparing each country’s experience on SSC would enrich one another, whether it is taken in the form of foreign policy, or not, SSC implementation – from planning grand strategies, deciding SSC architecture models, to coordination between ministries – should be solved within domestic politics. On the second matter, Dr. Kim argued that SSC/SSTC models shouldn’t be seen only as provider-recipient relations. He added that there should be another role, a third party that facilitates cooperation between the providers and the recipients – for example in the Knowledge Sharing Program the availability of repositories for the producer and consumer of knowledge. Lastly, Dr. Kim concluded the discussion by saying that countries – represented by their respective governments – should identify and specify their specialized sectors for knowledge sharing.

**PARTNER COUNTRY SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF SSC**

In this session, panelists discussed the views of partner countries engaged in SSC. What recommendations do they have for Asian providers? What are their sectoral priorities and how can Asian providers better address these? What can Asian providers do to make resource management easier for partner countries? Moderated by Anthea Mulakala (Director, International Development Cooperation, The Asia Foundation) the session featured:

**Swarnim Waglé**
Honorable Member, National Planning Commission
Government of Nepal

**Heng Chou**
Adviser to the Government at the Council of Ministers
General Director of Cambodia Rehabilitation and Development Board (CRDB)

**Swarnim Waglé** presented on “The New Landscape of South-South Cooperation: Perspective of LDCs.” The strong emergence of Southern Countries, such as China and India, as the major producers in the world, offers new space for symmetric partnerships through SSC. The expansion of the middle class in 132 Southern Countries lends well to an SSC model of development. SSC provides a different type of relationship which differs with the old mechanisms of the OECD partnership. Nepal, as a recipient, is shifting its focus towards building hard infrastructure in order to foster employment and entrepreneurship within the country. However, Nepal lacks sufficient capable bureaucrats to execute the vision of infrastructure development. Mr. Waglé further commented that knowledge sharing holds potential as a capacity building component of SSC, apart from funding. At the same time SSC plays a critical role in humanitarian and disaster aid. Urgent times require rapid actions by SSC providers who often excel over traditional providers in terms of speed and efficiency. Mr Waglé concluded that SSC will play a major role in the development of Southern countries and in many cases replace traditional aid as the preferred mode of cooperation.
Heng Chou shared his insights, on “Promoting the Effective Use of SSC and TRC in Cambodia.” Cambodia has undergone sustained economic growth of 7-8% during the last decade and at the same time the aid landscape is changing with increased support of countries in the region such as China, Malaysia and Thailand. Cambodia’s development cooperation is evolving and the government is considering these different cooperation models. Mr. Heng emphasized that SSC should promote cooperation between developing countries and complement traditional aid. He pointed to key areas such as knowledge exchange, technology, and skills transfers. He recommended increased effort for better coordination between SS countries. It is also important to emphasize proper monitoring and assessment of SSC projects in order to achieve effective results. He believes that these principles are just as important as SSC moves forward.

Discussion circled around the rise of SSC as the new alternative to the traditional method of North-South Cooperation (NSC). The audience discussed the possibility of overlap amongst the two modalities which could spark friction amongst countries. SSC could provide funds for knowledge sharing, but in most cases, technical experience is facilitated by northern countries. Both SSC and NSC have merits and benefits for member countries. SSC could offer a better alternative for humanitarian aid compared to the traditional aid donors which requires complicated and most of the time rigid decision making processes before assistance is executed. Members should not dismiss the experience of traditional donors such as The World Bank and ADB, but there are emerging actors and mechanisms creating more choice and opportunity for partner countries.

In this fourth session, the panelists discussed the theme “Core Challenges: Asian Strategies for Addressing Global Priorities. Moderated by Meloney Lindberg (Country Representatives, The Asia Foundation, Mongolia) the session featured:

- **Jambaldorj Tserendorj** Secretary to Council, International Cooperation Fund, Mongolia
- **Ni Jianjun** Deputy Director, Institute of World Economic Studies, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations
- **Pungky Sumadi** Expert Staff for Development Affairs & Commodity Sector Infrastructure, Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas)

**CORE CHALLENGES: ASIAN STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING GLOBAL PRIORITIES**
H.E. Jambaldorj Tserendorj’s presentation on “Mongolia’s International Cooperation Fund: It’s Contribution in Advancing SSC” discussed Mongolia’s foreign policy contribution to the region on security and good governance issues, and Mongolia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA) newly established International Cooperation Fund (ICF). Ambassador Jambaldorj expressed Mongolia’s desire to build friendly bilateral ties in the region and join multilateral regional forums such as ASEAN Dialogue Partner, APEC and East Asia Summit. Amb. Jambaldorj also explained Mongolia’s initiation of the “Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Security in Northeast Asia” – which aims to be a prominent mechanism to ensure stability and peace in the region – and “Asian Partnership Initiatives for Democracy” – which was devised during Mongolia’s chairing of the Community of Democracies in 2011-2013. More recently, in 2013, the Mongolian MFA established its ICF dedicated to supporting emerging democracies, sharing its experiences on democratization, and addressing global and regional issues. The ICF is funded by the state budget, grants, and contributions from various development partners including foreign governments, international organizations, as well as domestic and foreign private enterprises.

In his presentation, “Strengthen South-South Cooperation: China’s Concrete Support and the SDGs,” Ni Jianjun addressed China’s growing SSC portfolio, ranging from temporary aid projects to mutually beneficial long term initiatives. China has contributed to global poverty reduction to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Furthermore, China is committed to support the SDG agenda, through participation in several global governance forums such as the BRICS Development Bank, the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Silk Road Development Fund. Mr. Ni noted China’s recent contributions to SSC through the South-South Climate Cooperation Fund and the International Development Knowledge Center.

Pungky Sumadi spoke on “Promoting Financial Inclusion” in the Indonesian context. He noted that more than 2 billion people around the globe do not have access to financial services. Indonesia’s score in financial inclusion is the lowest in Asia. The 2014 World Bank report shows that only 20% of Indonesia’s adults have accounts in formal financial institutions. The Indonesian Government’s plan is to make the financial sectors inclusive and to catch up with the global agenda. Promoting financial inclusion is a strategy to mobilize domestic sourcing of funds, particularly for priority sectors such as infrastructure and food security. He described several initiatives which Bappenas is leading including agriculture insurance, Islamic financial system, and postal saving. These are the three main programs for the next five years. Mr. Sumadi also added that Bappenas has contributed to SSC by sending a team to Myanmar to help its government set up a similar financial system.

Discussion:
Participants wanted more details on Indonesia’s knowledge sharing on financial inclusion with Myanmar. Mr. Sumadi explained that a Myanmar official had heard a presentation from Bappenas on postal savings and then invited a team from Indonesia, funded by the GIZ, to present their ideas in Myanmar, as well as begin their research on whether Myanmar’s government could apply the program. Mr. Ni was asked to clarify on China’s SSC infrastructure initiatives and on China’s Climate Change and Global Green Agenda. Mr. Ni indicated that some projects were also intended to help fuel China’s slowing economy. Amb. Jambaldorj pointed out that Mongolia is still shaping its policy on how to use the ICF most effectively. Ms. Lindberg added that Mongolia is a young democracy with a unique experience that can be shared with other nations.
In this session, panelists sparked the discussion on how Asian providers are managing and governing their SSC. What are the institutions in place to ensure efficiency, accountability, and transparency? How are domestic constituencies engaged? What is the role of local civil society? This session also discussed national forums for development cooperation. Moderated by Robin Bush (Team Leader, Knowledge Sector Initiative) the session featured:

**Gulshan Sachdeva**
Chairperson, Centre for European Studies, School of International Study Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

**Chng Tze Chia**
Assistant Director (Asia Pacific) for Technical Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

**Gulshan Sachdeva** presented on the “Evolving Institutional Structures of Indian Development Cooperation.” China, India, Brazil and South Africa represent the rise of non-traditional donors as an alternative to traditional aid by the OECD-DAC. SSC is a major policy of the Indian government and India asserts that its aid is ‘different’ and demand-driven without conditionality. By 2014, India was providing 176 Lines of Credit to 62 countries and conducting training through ITEC for 10,000 personnel from partner countries, annually. The numbers are promising, but relatively small compared to major western donors. Even though development cooperation has been implemented since the 1950’s, India had no professional agency for aid management until the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) was established in 2012. The Ministry of Finance established the DPA in a bid to create a clear legal framework for aid management and allow assessment of the impact of aid. DPA also encourages the involvement of civil society in aid management, by facilitating a forum for NGOs. Dr Sachdeva concluded that a concerted effort by these stakeholders will be important for India’s role as a provider, especially for the future of SSC.

**Chng Tze Chia** presented “Singapore’s Cooperation Programme: Attempts at Addressing the Twin Deficits of Development”. Founded in 1992, the SCP believes that human resource development is more effective, compared to monetary aid, to create growth. Money, in reality, comes with the risk of corruption and ambiguous impact. Therefore, SCP prioritizes capacity building programs over grants or soft loans. The first deficit of development is funding which becomes more unreliable over time due to fluctuations of economic cycles. Skills and knowledge sharing are more sustainable and prevent an overreliance on aid. The second deficit is the presence of strong leadership and good governance. SCP aims to address these deficits by sharing Singapore’s developmental experience with fellow government officials from other countries in order to foster a favorable environment for growth, development and prosperity. SCP manages around 300 programs a year with customized features to meet the needs of partner countries. So far, 100,000 participants from over 170 countries have benefitted from the SCP.
**Discussion** focused on the challenges faced by the SCP and DPA as they manage and implement SSC. SCP still lacks a clear benchmark for evaluation since cooperation is targeted to fit the needs of recipients. Regarding financing, recipient countries are responsible for a portion of the training cost, with the exception of Least Developed Countries, which receive full support from Singapore. Singapore is not a member of the OECD-DAC but believes that SCP complements the traditional form of OECD aid. In India, DPA promotes extensive communication between the government and the civil society. There are some tensions, however, as the government also suffers pressure to control the action of NGOs, which are sometimes perceived as jeopardizing the economic environment of India.

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### MEASURING AND ASSESSING SSC

In this session, panelists discussed how provider countries are measuring the impacts of their assistance and new development in this area. Moderated by **Shafiah F. Muhibat** (Senior Researcher, Centre for Strategic and International Studies) the session featured:

- **Siriporn Wajjwalku**  
  Associate Professor  
  Thammasat University, Network for International Development Cooperation

- **Dinur Krismasari**  
  Senior Representative, JICA Indonesia

- **Miranda Tahalele**  
  PhD Candidate  
  Australia National University

**Siriporn Wajjwalku** presented research on “Thailand's Best Practice: Aid Effectiveness or (Foreign) Policy Effectiveness?” She mentioned that the lack of a proper evaluation methods should be the priority of partner countries as well as providers. Her research involving Thailand and partner countries proposes applying five criteria (policy relevance, partnership, achievement, satisfaction, and sustainability) for measuring the effectiveness of SSC. Partner countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) assessed the indicators on SSC projects with Thailand and attempted to find a common ground for a framework. The study revealed variation amongst partner countries in terms of how some indicators were interpreted. A second round of studies is continuing to refine these indicators. Thailand believes that SSC is important to ensure a good relationship with neighboring countries. Thus, development cooperation is seen as a cornerstone of the country’s foreign policy. However, the implementation of a proper measurement and evaluation is still missing in practice. Dr Siriporn stated that SS countries should decide which evaluation tool is preferable for them that would represent the interest of both, partners and providers. Standardization will be a continuing challenge due to the diversity of SS countries.
Dinur Krismasari discussed “Measuring the Impact of JICA’s Assistance on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.” The emergence of SSC has strengthened the cooperation between JICA and Southern countries. However, measurement of SSTC remains a challenge. Ms. Krismasari cited the good practice of JICA’s TRC with Timor Leste-Indonesia using the Indonesian Evaluation Guideline formulated with JICA’s evaluation framework as reference. In particular, she noted that it is important to assess the demand and needs of the beneficiary country and share its goal through carrying out an ex-ante evaluation at the beginning of the project and an ex-post evaluation afterward, to demonstrate the real impact of the program on the society. She concluded that a joint evaluation among three parties (provider, beneficiary and JICA) is necessary to promote ownership of the partnership.

Miranda Tahalele presented on “Indonesian South-South Cooperation: To Move beyond Old Rhetoric?” Indonesian SSC has evolved, 60 years since the Asia-Africa Conference, into one of the priorities of Jokowi’s Nawacita. Indonesia emphasizes knowledge sharing as its main focus. However Indonesian SSC is challenged due to the absence of a dedicated team at the ministerial level, which has led to poor evaluation processes. Issues such as the lack of data, indicators, and framework, as well as a vague chain of command, remain the biggest challenges for the government of Indonesia. Thus, Indonesia should begin with the establishment of a dedicated team for SSC at the ministerial level to clarify budgetary issues and the chain of command. Furthermore, the utilization of regional forums and joint monitoring systems would be key to ensuring a proper assessment of the impact of SSC.

Discussion touched on the issue of how to measure the political objectives of SSC, especially every MIC countries have a unique approaches to it. The government of Thailand believes that SSC is a foreign policy tool to strengthen its relationships with neighbouring countries in the wake of the upcoming ASEAN Community. It is important for Thailand to start within its small circle in order to assert its involvement before moving further on to the bigger stage, which is the G-77. Japan’s practice received several comments regarding the motives of their involvement, along with Indonesia, in SSC with countries such as Timor-Leste and Palestine. Apart from development reasons, the cooperation with Timor Leste and Palestine was influenced by political motives, in a hope of promoting peace. The influence of politics is inevitable in building cooperation with other countries. Regarding M&E, JICA also encounters some difficulties in assessing cooperation since in some cases, providers’ interests are not aligned with the needs of the recipient countries. There are pressures to conduct a comprehensive M&E as a form of accountability to budgets that also looks beyond project approach. Presenters concluded that perhaps two sets of indicators may be necessary for measuring foreign policy and technical outcomes within the development cooperation.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

In this second session, the panelists discussed the theme “Coordination and Collaboration.” Moderated by Scott Kleinberg (Acting Director, Office of Donor Engagement, Policy, Planning & Learning Bureau, USAID) the session featured:

Christophe Bahuet  
Country Director, Indonesia, United Nations Development Programme.

Chen Mo  
Assistant to the Dean, Emerging Market Institute, Beijing Normal University
Christophe Bahuet’s presentation “Coordination and Collaboration: Why would the south want it?” examined converging and diverging trends between SSC and NSC. He questioned whether there was a real gap or if this was a matter of perception. He listed 4 sets of obstacles to coordination and collaboration: political or ideological differences, the inclusive or arm twisting approach to gain Southern provider participation in global policy forums; the biased system of governance led by the OECD, and the capacity differences between the development cooperation infrastructure in DAC and non-DAC countries. He also identified positive converging trends including: more opportunities for dialogue and cooperation as SSC increases, more inclusive global forums, a shared interest in M&E, and partner country-led demands for data and transparency. He stressed that for the gap to be bridged, collaboration should be understood by all as a two-way street, not only about SSC providers joining, but also about ODA providers learning from SSC experience. UNDP has a role to contribute to this rebalancing, particularly in the context of the SDGs.

Chen Mo’s presentation on “Infrastructure Building in South-South Cooperation: Chinese Experience and Foreign Reality,” discussed China’s efforts to address the infrastructure gap, particularly in Asia. He mentioned three advantages China has in the infrastructure sector: First the experience of cooperating with world-class institutions, like The World Bank, ADB, JICA, has allowed China to build up its own technology base and expertise. Second, Chinese construction is both low-cost and efficient, thanks to its highly disciplined workforce with an appropriate education. In addition, China insists on a non-interference attitude towards other countries’ domestic issues. However, the Chinese experience has its limitations. Infrastructure building in China occurred in a period of rapid growth. China’s economic growth has been achieved at a cost to the environment, and its labor protection record has not been impressive. Chen Mo indicated that China has and can continue to collaborate with others on infrastructure projects such as the Te Mato Vai Water Project in the Cook Islands, jointly with New Zealand and China’s initiatives to build new multilateral investment institutions, like the BRICS New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Discussion:
Participants were interested in new modalities for cooperation including recent MOUs signed between China and the US on development cooperation and new Asian-led banks such as New Development Bank and Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. Participants agreed that it is interesting to note how these new financial institutions interact with traditional donor led institutions such as The World Bank and how they will impact the global governance of international cooperation. Mr. Bahuet also explained UNDP’s evolving coordinating and facilitating role between South-South and North-South Cooperation.
After Taejong Kim, Managing Director, Development Research and Learning Network, KDI School of Public Policy and Management, and Sandra Hamid, Country Representative, The Asia Foundation, Indonesia welcomed participants, H.E. Dra. R.A. Esti Andayani, Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia provided a keynote address. She highlighted Indonesia’s long history of SSC which includes initiatives in family planning, agricultural, good governance, and capacity building for Pacific countries. She mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is currently devising a grand strategy to enhance Indonesian contributions to SSC. As always, Indonesia is open for any cooperation on the principles of mutual respect, equality, non-conditionality, sustainability, experience and knowledge sharing. After concluding her keynote speech, H.E. Dra. Esti Andayani was given a token of appreciation and friendship from Taejong Kim and Gordon Hein.

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