ASIAN APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

November 28 – 29, 2012
Sydney & Canberra, Australia

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INTRODUCTION

The Asia Foundation, in partnership with the Lowy Institute for International Policy, the Australian National University (ANU), and AusAID, hosted events focusing on “Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation” (AADC) in Sydney on November 28, 2012, and in Canberra on November 29. A delegation of eight senior government officials and development policy experts from China, India, Indonesia, and Korea joined Australian counterparts at each of the three host institutions to share their countries’ approaches to and perspectives on development cooperation. James Batley, Deputy Director General of AusAID, provided special remarks at a reception held in Canberra in honor of the AADC delegation.

Organized with the support of AusAID, the three events aimed to clarify how Asian development actors operate and to contribute Asian perspectives to the international development dialogue. The events in Australia built on the successful dialogue series jointly organized by The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute since December 2010. This ongoing series brings together experts and officials from the Asia region and beyond to share perspectives and to facilitate mutual learning between and among “emerging” and “traditional” development actors. In 2011, these dialogues—held in Kuala Lumpur, Colombo, and Seoul—culminated with a widely attended side event at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan, Korea. The 2012 dialogues held in New Delhi, Beijing, and Seoul focused on the theme of pro-poor, inclusive growth and development cooperation. In 2013, the series will examine climate change and low carbon development, highlighting Asian expertise, strategies, and development cooperation approaches and providing an opportunity for South-South knowledge exchange.

Overviews of each of the three AADC events in Sydney and Canberra follow in this report. Further insights and information are available at:

- In Asia, The Asia Foundation’s weekly blog
- ANU’s Development Policy Centre website
- The Interpreter, The Lowy Institute for International Policy’s blog
This November 28 event was a closed-door roundtable discussion attended by approximately 30 high-level representatives of the Australian government, academia, and multilateral development organizations. Michael Fullilove, Executive Director of the Lowy Institute, and Asia Foundation Vice President Gordon Hein provided opening remarks, with the Lowy Institute’s Deputy Director Martine Letts and Gordon Hein closing the event.

As Australia anticipates closer engagement with Asia in light of the government’s “Australia in the Asian Century” White Paper released in October 2012, the Lowy Institute event provided an opportunity for participants to share their views on a current debate in development: the link between development cooperation and foreign policy goals.

The discussions made clear that development cooperation based on win-win principles has been a key and explicit feature of many Asian development actors’ foreign policy for many years. Asian country participants in the AADC event were unequivocal about the link, stating that development cooperation is an intrinsic component of Chinese, Indian, and Korean foreign policy. For example, government officials from China and Korea emphasized that cooperation is extended based on the stated needs and requests of the partner country and is not perceived as charity but as a mutual benefit.

Hosted by the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy’s Development Policy Centre, this public forum held on November 29 consisted of two panel sessions: “Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation” and “Asian Perspectives on Global Development Challenges.” Stephen Howes, Director of the ANU Development Policy Centre, and Gordon Hein provided opening remarks. Presentation materials and a video webcast of the event are available through the Development Policy Centre’s website.

Panel I on “Asian Approaches to Development Cooperation” compared and contrasted the objectives and modalities of Australian, Chinese, Indian, Indonesian, and Korean development cooperation. In his presentation, Hyunghwan Joo of Korea’s Ministry of Strategy and Finance described the three pillars of his country’s official development assistance programs as “content” (sharing knowledge and experiences), “comprehensive support” (ranging from policy consultation to technical assistance), and “concentration” (targeting particular geographic regions and sectors). Going forward, Korea aims to expand partnerships with developed donor countries, multilateral development banks, and the private sector, among other development actors. Xiaojing Mao of the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, a research institution under China’s Ministry of Commerce, followed with an overview of China’s approaches and recent developments, including the country’s first White Paper on “China’s Foreign Aid” released in April 2011. Based on the principle of mutual benefit, Chinese development cooperation emphasizes economic development and combines aid with trade and investment.
Panel I also featured Raden Siliwanti of Indonesia’s National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS). She highlighted her country’s engagement with South-South and triangular cooperation. Sharing with other countries is enshrined within Indonesia’s constitution, making Indonesia’s approach to development cooperation less a matter of financial flows and more of a mutually beneficial process based on South-South knowledge sharing. Sachin Chaturvedi of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries, a think tank under India’s Ministry of External Affairs, outlined the key elements and historical timeline of India’s development cooperation. He referenced the regional and sectoral distribution of its various components that include Lines of Credit, half of which go to Africa, and the country’s flagship Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation program. Notably, in 2012, India launched the Development Partnership Administration within the Ministry of External Affairs in order to coordinate India’s development assistance. To close Panel I, Annmareae O’Keeffe of the Lowy Institute and the ANU Development Policy Centre presented on the implications of Asia’s changing landscape for Australian aid. She looked at geostrategic dimensions, as well as poverty reduction and the overarching objectives of Australia’s aid program. Further details can be found on her post in The Interpreter, The Lowy Institute for International Policy’s blog.

Panel II offered insights into “Asian Perspectives on Global Development Challenges.” ANU’s Arianto Patunru, previously with the University of Indonesia, considered regional and global challenges such as the financial crisis, food and energy security, and good governance and public services. Taking China’s involvement in Africa as an example, Wenping He of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences discussed the significance of infrastructure in global development, as well as the opportunities and challenges in targeting it as a development cooperation focus area. Wonhyuk Lim of the Korea Development Institute spoke on the current Millennium Development Goals, whose year 2015 deadline is fast approaching. He described the “Bellagio Goals,” which the Korea Development Institute and the Centre for International Governance Innovation have proposed to the United Nations as a set of goals, targets, and indicators that can build on the Millennium Development Goals beyond 2015. Finally, ANU’s Robin Davies discussed various facets of international public goods relevant to development. These included vaccines, climate change mitigation, and infectious disease surveillance and control regimes. He discussed emerging Asia’s contributions to the development of these public goods and ways for international cooperation to support these efforts.
AusAID

Moderated and opened by Paul Wojciechowski, Assistant Director General for Multilateral Policy and Partnerships at AusAID, this November 29 event at AusAID headquarters allowed the visiting Asian experts and AusAID staff to discuss a wide range of issues pertaining to the evolving global development landscape. Julia Niblett, AusAID’s Assistant Director General for Asia Strategies and Partnerships, and Gordon Hein provided closing remarks.

2015 marks the deadline set by world leaders in 2000 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight targets and indicators for addressing global poverty. Since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals, Asian countries have been both leaders in achieving the targets as well as critics of their relevance in a rapidly changing global context.

Australian development experts have been keen to hear more in-depth Asian perspectives on what the years beyond 2015 will and should entail. At the AusAID event, the visiting Asian experts and AusAID staff discussed current challenges like rising inequality, climate change, management of global public goods, and peace and security—issues which beg attention yet fall outside many aid frameworks. Additional areas of discussion included: evolving patterns of global poverty; the effectiveness and relevance of the current Millennium Development Goals; infrastructure financing; and the role of the private sector, private philanthropy, and global forums such as the G20 in furthering development goals.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In May 2013, The Asia Foundation will be partnering with ANU, the Lowy Institute, and the University of Melbourne to host a conference on the theme “Beyond the Millennium Development Goals: The Future of International Development in Asia and the Pacific.”

Alongside these discussions on the post-2015 global development agenda, The Asia Foundation and the Korea Development Institute are continuing to work together on their ongoing AADC dialogue series. The 2013 dialogues, the first of which will be held in Seoul in April 2013, will examine climate change and low carbon development, highlighting Asian expertise, strategies, and development cooperation approaches and providing an opportunity for South-South knowledge exchange.
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