EVERYONE GAINS FROM INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

Why co-operate with developing nations? The finance, knowledge and ideas that flow through development co-operation stem from solidarity, a moral imperative to help our fellow humans, as well as from a very rational quest for mutual benefits. We will not be able to achieve fairer and more inclusive economic growth in our societies without greater global sustainable development.

The challenges we face today – climate change, widening inequalities and conflicts, among others – are not contained within national borders. Neither are the solutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement are grounded in the understanding that tackling major systemic problems and the political, economic, social and environmental crises confronting the world requires greater international co-operation.

Citizens worldwide are voicing their frustration and challenging leaders to act for climate and global justice. Those citizens live in wealthier countries where globalisation has left people and groups behind, in small island developing states that face the immediate threats of global warming, in authoritarian societies where expressing dissent carries great personal risk, and in poor countries that will suffer the most from climate change. They are the shareholders, the stakeholders and the partners of co-operation for development. Yet governments struggle to engage them meaningfully, to tell the complex and politically charged story of co-operation in compelling words that speak to all generations, and to respond to citizens’ own aspirations.

The 2019 Development Co-operation Report calls on providers of development co-operation to change course. We need a new narrative that goes beyond the rhetoric of “us” and “them”, we need to demonstrate how development co-operation contributes to better lives by supporting peace building, through quality early childhood programmes that give equal opportunities to girls and boys, or by building more autonomous administrations capable of cracking down on tax evasion.

We also need more resolute action by the development community to constantly improve their policies, adapt them to changing geopolitical and technological realities, and uphold the highest transparency and accountability standards.

Development co-operation cannot create a perfect world, but it does help create a better one. OECD governments and their agencies need to show, through greater actions and investments, that development co-operation is fit to take on 21st century challenges, and that it is open to working with diverse actors. The OECD will champion this report’s call to action, with the ultimate goal of fostering better lives in all parts of the world.

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