

The Paris Declaration - an historic step toward improved assistance

In March 2005, a major summit meeting was held in Paris, resulting in an agreement that has partially revolutionised development assistance. In order to maximise the positive effect of assistance, increase administrative efficiency and improve co-ordination, 120 donors, partner countries and international organisations agreed on the [Paris Declaration](#).

This decision means that donors and recipient countries should improve their reporting of results, developing countries will assume greater responsibility, and that donors must co-ordinate their efforts much more.

Increased assistance. Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in assistance to poor countries. This has helped poor people to work to improve their living conditions, and resulted in a decrease of the percentage of the world's population living in extreme poverty from 28 per cent in 1990 to 22 per cent today. During this short period, the developing countries as a group showed results that took Sweden 100 years to achieve.

Increased burdens. However, the increased development cooperation has also led to pressures on poor partner countries that have increased in response to donor demands and preferences. Assistance was often divided, with thousands of prioritization and reporting requirements and conditions by donor countries.

Each year, recipient countries were forced to deal with thousands of travelling officials who wanted to discuss their countries' extensive contributions and the thousands of projects these supported. At the

same time, it became increasingly clear that partner countries needed to be given time for increased planning and implementation of their strategies to reduce poverty. Development cooperation measures had to be more adapted to the situations of poor countries.

Important commitments. Recent years have witnessed intensive international cooperation between the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and other donors and partner countries to solve these problems. One result of this is the Paris Declaration.

This Agreement Declaration contains a number of commitments that are to be implemented by both donor and partner countries. The objectives are to:

- Increase partner countries' ownership of, and responsibility for, the assistance
- Adapt the assistance to the prioritizations and administrative systems of the partner countries.
- Promote democratic trends and increase transparency in recipient country administration.
- Increase access to social services for the public, and protect its security. For example, by supplying medical and health care, education and a functioning and fair judicial system.
- Coordinate and simplify donor procedures.
- Improve the reporting of the results of poverty reduction.
- Mutual responsibility for reporting and follow-ups.

At the same time, the Paris Declaration meant that the parties formulated twelve indicators to enable them to monitor and measure the progress made.

Clearer ownership

1. Recipient countries should produce their own development strategies, and assume clear responsibility for poverty reduction.

Donors and recipients must adapt

2. Reliable structures in partner countries that all donors can follow.
3. Assistance flows should be adapted to national priorities in the recipient countries.
4. Increased capacity for receiving assistance thanks to assistance co-ordination by the donors
5. Donors should use the recipient countries' administrative systems.
6. Increase administrative capacity of each recipient country by avoiding parallel structures when implementing the assistance.
7. Assistance should become more predictable for recipient countries.
8. Assistance should not be bound by conditions.

Better co-ordination

9. Donors should co-ordinate their assistance and simplify their assistance procedures.
10. Donors should share information and analyses (a short concrete example of why this is important)
11. Common framework and methods for donors to report the results of their assistance.

Mutual responsibility

12. Mutual responsibility for feedback and follow-up by both donors and partner countries.

Updated 12 Oct 2006