

Busan and beyond: South Korea and the transition from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness¹

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The fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4), held in Busan, South Korea drew the largest number as well as the most diverse group of participants ever. This paper examines the shift towards a new global development cooperation paradigm at the Busan HLF-4; the new global partnership that emerged from Busan; and what South Korea brought to the global discourse on development cooperation as an emerging donor.

Although it is premature to argue that a new paradigm was established at Busan, there was a clear political momentum for a shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness, a change which was advocated and promoted particularly by new actors such as South Korea. The Busan HLF-4 and the post-Busan process have highlighted the global role of new actors, with South Korea exemplifying through its own experience how aid can help bring about development, contributing to the global discourse on development cooperation and playing a bridging role between traditional and emerging donors. The changing dynamics of the world including the global financial crisis and climate change suggest that the global challenges are different from what had been expected when the HLF process and MDGs were begun in the beginning of the 20th century.

Thus, we recommend that global development cooperation discourse and activities that had been led by traditional Western donors need to find more effective ways of incorporating new actors and different modalities of development cooperation since the global challenges we face are grave. New development partners can bring to the table lessons, energies and capacities deriving from their own dramatic success in alleviating poverty and attaining development and their visibility as global development actors.

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