

Aid effectiveness and health sector development in Bangladesh

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Foreign assistance for global health reached nearly US \$30 billion in 2010, driven largely by funds to combat infectious diseases in poor countries. However, concerns have been raised about the high proportion of global aid going to health and its effectiveness in relation to alternative vital social needs such as education and gender equality and competing development priorities like food security, water and climate change. The paper is a case study on *the effectiveness, or otherwise, of foreign aid to the health sector in Bangladesh*, against the background of the challenges of the global economy and the history of the country's aid experience and culture. The paper will look at the impact of major health sector programmes, such as the Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Programme (HNPS) 2003-2011, in terms of: (1) the ways that donors can contribute to sector and economy-wide development objectives; and (2) the roles that national actors – policy-makers and non-governmental and civil society organisations – can play to increase the impact of aid on progress towards development goals. Particular attention will focus on the introduction of a coordinated Sector-wide approach (SWAp)¹ in the health sector in contrast to the traditional donor-driven project approach which could result in fragmentation and costly overlaps; at the same time while the sector-wide programme approach can be cost-effective, it can also entail problems of disbursement and stakeholders coordination. Analysis of aid effectiveness will also be linked to specific commitments made by donors (and recipients) at meetings of the parties to the OECD-sponsored 'High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness', from Paris through Accra to Busan – i.e. country ownership, harmonisation of donor efforts, and alignment of such efforts with national development priorities. Recommendations will be offered on how aid can deal with challenges faced by policy-makers and improve institutions and governance at national level; increase the effectiveness of policies and actions of various donors (bilateral, philanthropic foundations and multilateral organisations); and enhance coordination with public agents and the private sector.

¹ Single consolidated sector programme in comparison to the earlier 5-year programme with over 120 different projects