Memo to the Board of AgriCord
September 2012

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

- can farmers’ organisations contribute to aid development effectiveness?
- are we (supporting farmers’ organisations) on the right track?

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Pre-Paris to post-Busan – the journey towards more effective aid

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) depends on effective development aid. But despite significant amounts spent over many years, it has long been clear to those involved in development cooperation that aid policies and practice have been woefully ineffective. Efforts to alter this state of affairs date back at least a decade, to the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 and the subsequent High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011).

Harmonisation was the main theme emerging from Rome, with donors agreeing to align their assistance with each other and with recipient countries’ own priorities. Paris introduced monitorable actions and indicators of harmonisation. There was also recognition that partner countries should have ownership of development policies. Mutual accountability for both donors and recipients was stressed too. Accra endorsed an agenda to accelerate progress towards the Paris targets, not least by providing some predictability of aid flows and untying aid. And finally, recognising the enormous changes in the geopolitical and development landscape since 2002, Busan encompassed more participants and broader forms of development cooperation. BRICS countries were included for the first time, albeit on a voluntary basis, and private sector and civil society organisations were brought in too.

Focus is now clearly on the recipients of aid, rather than the concerns of donor countries. The move to include civil society and the private sector as well as governments and state institutions recognises the fact that they too represent a country’s populace and that, without the participation of non-state actors, it is impossible to achieve true ‘democratic ownership’ of development aid efforts.

The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation

Busan’s outcome had three major elements: shared principles to achieve common goals, monitorable actions to reach those goals, and recognition that progress required continuing action (‘the road ahead’). In order to monitor the actions, a set of ten indicators and appropriate targets were chosen in June 2012 by the post-Busan Interim Group and approved by the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF). Covering a range of areas, the indicators include the enabling environment and the role of civil society organisations, transparency, mutual accountability, untied aid, the role of the private sector, and women’s empowerment. They now provide an internationally shared basis for a global monitoring framework for development assistance.

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3 The UN International Conference on Financing for Development.
WP-EFF has set out how the monitoring framework is to be implemented, outlining important roles for non-government and non-state actors. Civil society organisations will use their networks and capacity to engage people to increase the democratic ownership of aid. This will make the development aid process more transparent and mutually accountable between donor and recipient.

Key implementation arrangements include country dialogues where a wide range of stakeholders – government and donor representatives, CSOs, parliamentarians, local authorities and private sector representatives – will review how support is provided and used. This will fulfil the need for quality assurance. There will also be a global helpdesk maintained by the OECD and UNDP to enable stakeholders to find out how the agreed methodologies are being implemented. It will also provide information on the monitoring processes.

**Agriculture and rural development assistance in the post-Busan era**

Agriculture and rural development are at the heart of achieving MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger), as most of the poorest people in the world live in rural areas. Busan commitments have important consequences for stakeholders in rural development, because non-state actors will join the efforts to make aid more effective. Aid will become more localised, with more resources being channelled to and through local actors. And civil society will be empowered to use aid in ways that best serve local needs.

Civil society organisations and the private sector are already crucial to rural development efforts towards better productivity, processing and marketing, and social inclusion. Many farmers’ organisations (particularly those involved with agriculture-related businesses) are actually working as both civil society groups and as part of the private sector, and they will have important roles post-Busan.

Rural development is notoriously difficult to monitor, as change takes place over large, often remote, areas. For this reason, as the Global Donors Platform pointed out in a recent Evidence Paper, farmers’ organisations can and should play important roles in monitoring and accountability systems. With their dispersed grassroots membership, they have the geographic reach to consult and monitor widely.

On the other hand, some farmers’ organisations are not yet able to carry out these functions. They may have only limited experience of budget tracking and analysis, of consultation, advocacy, policy-making and negotiation. They may have limited awareness of the technical aspects of agricultural policy and struggle to access the latest evidence from which to formulate an informed position. They (and other non-state actors) therefore need capacity development if they are to play their part effectively.

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4 Farmers’ organisations take many different forms, and the term is used here to embrace the whole gamut of producer groups, organisations for rural women and young people, self-help groups, farming cooperatives, farmers’ unions and committees etc.
How farmers’ organisations and AgriCord can contribute to the post-Busan agenda

As actors in development, farmers’ organisations can have considerable power, especially when they set up platforms, networks, national federations and regional groupings. They are important too as organisations of individual farmers, because it is their members who are the final beneficiaries of rural development aid programmes. It is widely recognised that farmers’ organisations are effective agents of development for their members. But how can they build their capacity to take on the new roles envisaged by Busan?

As a coalition of agri-agencies, AgriCord has long been working to boost the capacity of farmers’ organisations in the developing world. AgriCord works primarily through peer-to-peer collaboration between organisations, in North-South and South-South arrangements. Mobilising funds from developed countries and international institutions, it coordinates development assistance through its Farmers Fighting Poverty programme.

The programme provides support to empower farmers’ organisations in four key ‘work areas’: organisational strength and inclusiveness, institutional development, policy elaboration and advocacy, and farmer-led economic development. Each work area encompasses a set of development achievements. Farmers Fighting Poverty is unique in that it tackles the whole range of capacities needed by a farmers’ organisation to play an effective role in agriculture and rural development. Monitoring of the FO capacities in the work areas is carried out by standard outcome indicators, which are recorded for each project into an online database. The development indicators can be consolidated for the entire Farmers Fighting Poverty Programme including crosscutting concerns such as gender and environment.

The relationship between AgriCord’s Farmers Fighting Poverty deliverables and the Busan indicators is shown in a table overleaf. There are clear links to eight of the ten indicators. It could be argued that there is also a link to indicator 5 (Development cooperation is more predictable) as, although this is not reflected in work area deliverables, it is an aim of AgriCord to provide long-term support wherever possible. AgriCord is currently investigating practical impact measurement approaches that can be implemented together with FOs. The aim is to provide evidence of strong contribution that the developed FO capacities make for the ultimate impact in the farmers’ livelihoods.

AgriCord thus provides a fusion of experience, programmes and networks highly applicable to the post-Busan landscape. It has already proved itself capable of channelling aid to and through farmers’ organisations for local development interventions in line with the Busan indicators and targets. And its ongoing capacity-building programmes will make farmers’ organisations better able to join in policy dialogue as well as monitoring implementation, as envisaged by Busan.

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5 An agri-agency is a specialised development agency steered by farmer organisations.
Table showing links between Farmers Fighting Poverty deliverables and Busan Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFP Work Areas</th>
<th>Work Area deliverables relevant to Busan</th>
<th>Connection to Busan Indicators (FO = farmers’ organization)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Area 1:</strong> Organisational strength and inclusiveness</td>
<td>- Representativeness, accountability and local membership base</td>
<td>Representative, inclusive and accountable FOs can contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment. They can act as genuine interlocutors representing rural people to state and government actors. <em>Relates directly to indicators 1 and 9 and indirectly with others</em></td>
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<td>- Empowerment of women, young people and specific vulnerable groups</td>
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<td><strong>Work Area 2:</strong> Institutional development</td>
<td>- External networks and partnerships</td>
<td>Networks and partnerships with a range of actors (CSOs, the private sector and state/government) allow FOs to engage in multi-sectorial dialogue. An enabling environment for CSOs is needed and should take into account the particular needs of FOs. <em>Relates mainly to indicators 2, 4, 7 and 9</em></td>
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<td>- Formal alliances and agreements</td>
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<td><strong>Work Area 3:</strong> Policy elaboration and advocacy</td>
<td>- Participatory policy formulation</td>
<td>Participatory policy formulation means generating proposals and interacting in policy dialogue based on the needs and aspirations of rural people. This enables them to ‘upload’ problems to the decision-making level so that policies will ‘download’ solutions. <em>Relates to indicators 1, 2, 4, 7 and 9.</em></td>
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<td>- Joint advocacy of family farmers on food security</td>
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<td><strong>Work Area 4:</strong> Farmer-led economic development</td>
<td>- Development of farmer-led enterprises</td>
<td>FOs providing agricultural services (for agricultural production, processing and marketing) can be seen to have two roles – as CSOs with local membership and as private enterprises engaged in value chains in both local and international markets. Their potential for implementing development programmes to improve production and market access is well known. On the other hand, they engage with the private sector and can be a channel for aid to them and through them, from both state and private sector programmes. <em>Relates to indicators 3 and 10.</em></td>
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<td>- Improved farmers’ access to production inputs and processing, handling and marketing services</td>
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<td>- Fair access to land, water, credit and other resources</td>
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**Busan Indicators**

1. Development co-operation is focused on results that meet developing countries’ priorities.
2. Civil society operates within an environment which maximizes its engagement in and contribution to development.
3. Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development.
4. Transparency: information on development co-operation is publicly available.
5. Development co-operation is more predictable.
6. Aid is on budgets which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny.
7. Mutual accountability among development co-operation actors is strengthened through inclusive reviews.
8. Gender equality and women’s empowerment.
9. Effective institutions: developing countries’ systems are strengthened and used.
10. Aid is untied.