



Policy Brief

NUMBER 6, 2006

Overview

This policy brief is an outcome of the sixth annual EU–UNU Tokyo Global Forum, “Doing More, Better and Faster: A Global Partnership for Eradicating Poverty”, held at United Nations University on 31 March 2006. Recognizing the insights and suggestions of the expert participants, this brief outlines the most salient features of EU and Japanese policies for establishing a global partnership for poverty eradication within the framework of the UN Millennium Development Goals. While stressing the significance of efficient and results-oriented aid, multilateralism, and the interplay between democracy, development and human rights, the brief elaborates further potentials for collaboration in development policies between the EU and Japan.

Policy Brief written by
MARTINA TIMMERMANN, HELENA
STERWE and PRAKHAR SHARMA
© United Nations University, 2006
ISBN-10 92-808-3021-X
ISBN-13 978-92-808-3021-7
ISSN 1814-8026

Licensed under the Creative Commons
Deed “Attribution-NonCommercial-
NoDerivs 2.5”

A Global Partnership for Eradicating Poverty: Prospects and Potentials

IN SEPTEMBER 2000 AT THE UNITED NATIONS Millennium Summit, world leaders agreed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of measurable targets for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. The MDGs include a commitment to halve poverty and hunger by 2015.

In setting a common agenda for development co-operation, the MDGs have provided a practical plan of action to counteract poverty, hunger and disease, and to promote international development. Projections alone, however, do not constitute results. More needs to be done, better and faster, because six years after the summit approximately one-sixth of humanity is still living in absolute poverty, and the gap between rich and poor is not only blatant, but widening.

Uneven population growth and increasing inequalities in income distribution and unemployment enfold within them widening gaps in housing, education, healthcare and other basic amenities of civic life. These developments, in turn, feed terrorism and religious fundamentalism, and thereby increase the risks for unabated crisis and conflict. The imperative for poverty eradication and development is as pressing as ever and warrants immediate, serious and sustained action.

It is also obvious that the challenges of today’s world can not be met by one single entity alone; global co-operation and collaboration between the key actors of the world—most of all, the OECD, the United States, Japan and the EU is required. They need to form a global partnership and harmonize their ongoing (as well as future) efforts towards poverty reduction if the MDGs are to be met by 2015.

Japan and the EU have, so far, led the way as donors for developmental assistance worldwide. To achieve an even higher impact, however, it is urgent to further harmonize and coordinate their development policies as part of a global partnership for poverty eradication.

What are the prospects and potentials that allow the UN, the EU and Japan to better and more quickly contribute to poverty reduction? In what policy areas can the EU and Japan harmonize their efforts to meet the MDGs? To find plausible

answers to these questions, the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan and the UNU jointly organized the sixth annual EU–UNU Tokyo Global Forum, “Doing More, Better

- Ensuring collaboration among key actors, such as the World Bank, IMF and bilateral donors, on matters of public expenditure and financial accountability.

Japan and the EU could create a greater impact by harmonizing and coordinating their development policies

and Faster: A Global Partnership for Eradicating Poverty” held at United Nations University on 31 March 2006.

EU Development Policy

The European Consensus for Development commits the entire Union to development. By and through this policy, the EU has taken over a prominent role in the ongoing process of development collaboration. For the first time, the EU is pursuing a strategy that focuses specifically and only on Africa. This strategy rests on three main pillars: 1) strengthening policies for peace, security and good governance; 2) supporting policies that aim at sustainable economic growth; and 3) promoting policies and interventions in support of reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The consensus stresses that trade is essential for development and the eradication of poverty. Recognizing this important link, the EU passed its “Everything but Arms” initiative, which grants products (except arms and ammunition) from the 50 least developed countries duty and quota-free access to the vast EU market.

Prominent features of the European Union Consensus include:

- Complementing aid and assistance with opportunities for collaboration among global actors and local implementers within a well-defined and mutually-agreed-upon framework.

- Enhancing greater political will, mutual respect and understanding among countries to improve and enhance donor coordination.
- Emphasizing the nexus between development, human rights and democracy as crucial for building new partnerships and modifying existing policies accordingly.
- Underlining the effectiveness of trust funds for development.
- Accentuating the importance of democracy and human rights not just as goals, but also as means for development.
- Strengthening efforts in fighting corruption and lack of transparency.
- Promoting good governance and stressing aid effectiveness, budget support and the auditing of public expenditures.
- Fostering institution- and capacity-building in reform processes.
- Addressing migration issues with a particular focus on women, child-trafficking, refugees and brain-drain in developing countries.
- Supporting measures for more and better social and health education.

Japanese Development Policy

The Japanese development policy focuses on Official Development Assistance (ODA). ODA is considered to be crucial for any efforts to erase poverty, provide decent quality of life, and contribute to human security. The

About the Authors

Dr. Martina Timmermann is Academic Programme Officer and Director of Studies on Human Rights and Ethics in the Peace and Governance Programme at United Nations University in Tokyo. Since July 2006, she has been seconded to UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) in Bonn, Germany.

Helena Sterwe, MA Public Policy and Organization, MA International Business and Economics, MA Advanced Business Development, was an Intern in the Peace and Governance Programme at the United Nations University in Tokyo from April to July 2006.

Prakhar Sharma was a Visiting Research Fellow in the Peace and Governance Programme at the United Nations University in Tokyo from May to August 2006.

Japanese approach to ODA emphasizes ownership and self-help efforts as instrumental tools for poverty reduction. More recently, Japan emphasized the need for an “efficient use” of ODA, while at the same time cutting down on the overall amount of Japanese aid.

Prominent features of recent Japanese ODA include:

- Ensuring collaboration among global actors and local implementers.
- Acknowledging the central role of the United Nations in fighting for security and against poverty.
- Pointing to the value of the concept of human security as a viable response to military and (especially) non-military threats.

the prospects and potentials for creating a viable global partnership for eradicating poverty and meeting the MDGs within the next decade.

The MDGs emphasize the merits of taking a holistic view of development, laying a greater focus on efficiency, and making development cooperation more result-oriented.

This recent emphasis on a holistic approach to development can be seen as one of the greatest advantages of the MDGs. As a consequence, closer links between developing and developed countries have increased the incentives for efficient assistance. Beyond that, the process has also created a new foundation for legitimacy: a shift

Development cooperation is a preventive means to combat global terrorism and to achieve and maintain (human) security

- Emphasizing the crucial role of peace and comprehensive security for and within the process of development.
- Underlining the importance of international co-operation and international investment for conflict prevention.
- Accentuating efforts to achieve peace building and consolidation.
- Promoting global management of environmental policies as a means to foster a fair and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Fighting HIV-AIDS, malaria, TBC, avian flu and other pandemics (such as maternal mortality).
- Providing technical support to developing countries with problems of environmental degradation.
- Giving priority to Africa.

Prospects and Potentials for a Global Partnership

With regard to the multiple challenges and actors involved, it is vital to explore

away from the focus on the scope of financial aid that donor countries were providing, towards a results-oriented approach that emphasizes the effectiveness and sustainability of the assistance provided. As Hugh Richardson stated: “with the increase in result-oriented assistance by donors, it stands to reason that efficiency is the new legitimacy-base for donors.”

The recent focus on good governance, the fight against corruption, and the greater use of auditing, as seen in both European and Japanese development policies, aims to contribute to a favorable environment for scrutiny and accountability in a democratic setting. The particular call for more transparency by both the EU and Japan underlines the pertinence of this policy trend. It also indicates that there is a growing awareness on the side of the donors that their contribution to efficient and sustainable

development work can increase their international reputation and political influence. Higher transparency of aid-giving mechanisms also contributes to identity-building. Countries want to belong to the club of the successful, i.e., effective and efficient donors, and to distinctly distance themselves from inefficient, ineffective and non-sustainable aid.

The negative side of this trend is that donor countries may use this approach to decrease their overall aid/donation levels.

Interlinking policies, ensuring transparency

Efficiency can be achieved by interlinking policies and ensuring transparency. The nature of hunger, ill health and poverty has not changed, but there are new approaches to meeting these challenges. This, in turn, affects the features of any global partnership for eradicating poverty.

First of all, it is considered crucial and indispensable for successful development work to more closely interlink conceptual approaches with practical implementation. Here, again, a hierarchy of priorities between different policy areas has developed, accompanied by an increased politicization of policy issues that were previously perceived as either separate or “neutral” subjects.

Thus, there is a new nexus of security, human rights and development issues—a trend that was most prominently underlined by the UN Secretary General and that is obviously reflected in the MDGs themselves. Theoretically, each goal is equal in relevance; in reality, however, they obviously suffer from trade-offs and differing priorities.

In addition—and derived from the international political security situation—there has been a change of perception regarding the relevance and role of development assistance in national foreign policies. This trend clearly influences the overall framework and preconditions for establishing a global partnership for poverty eradication, and further influences the discourse in development politics, putting development on a par with security.

The EU, for instance, has issued a number of policy documents over the past three years that indicate a return

Speakers at the sixth annual EU-UNU Tokyo Global Forum, “Doing More, Better, and Faster: A Global Partnership for Eradicating Poverty”

Mr. Giampiero Aldaheff, Secretary General, SOLIDAR

Amb. Bouna Semou Diouf, Director, Tokyo International Conference on African Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP

Mr. Karel Kovanda, Deputy Director-General, DG External Relations, European Commission

Mr. Hervé Lefeuvre, Senior Development Policy Officer, European Policy Office of World Wildlife Fund

Mr. Nobutaka Machimura, Member of the House of Representatives, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Prof. Andrew Mack, Director, Human Security Centre, University of British Columbia

Ms. Luisa Morgantini, Member of the European Parliament, Chairwoman of the European Parliament Development Committee

Mr. Hiroyuki Nagahama, Shadow Minister of the Environment, Member of the House of Representatives, Japan

Prof. Izumi Nakamitsu-Lennartsson, Professor of International Relations, Hitotsubashi University

Dr. Ligia Noronha, Director, Resources and Global Security Division, The Energy and Resources Institute, India

Dr. Michael Reiterer, Minister, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan

Mr. Hugh Richardson, Deputy Director-General, Europe Aid Cooperation Office, European Commission

Mr. Robert Robinson, Regional Representative in Japan, UNHCR

Dr. Monica Serrano, Professor of International Relations, Centro de Estudios Internacionales, El Colegio de Mexico

Amb. Dr. Takahiro Shinyo, Director-General, Global Issues Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

Prof. Kazuo Takahashi, Professor of International Relations, International Christian University, and Visiting Professor, United Nations University

Prof. Ramesh Thakur, Senior Vice Rector, United Nations University

Mr. Andreas Zumach, Geneva Correspondent, Die Tageszeitung

to traditional thinking on security and stability, while long-term poverty reduction is losing ground as the primary objective. Critics warn that this trend could well open the doors for inadequate use of development funds for security purposes, and advise close monitoring of the manner in which funds are spent.

In sum, development cooperation is increasingly being seen as a preventive means to combat global terrorism and to achieve and maintain (human) security. And it is for this reason that

ment policies at the multilateral level, the political objectives may vary fundamentally from country to country, thus impeding effective implementation and leading to serious “implementation lags”. (In fact, the very term “implementation lags” has become a ubiquitous reference for struggling development efforts worldwide.)

As a consequence, there is an obvious risk that governments will use the MDGs as a “legitimacy outfit” to dress up their other nationally beneficial objectives, observers have

EU and Japanese development policies should focus on generating employment and proliferating trade

critics see the danger of infringing on the original purpose of development assistance by reducing development to a “means” rather than pursuing it as an “end”. Maintaining a high level of transparency, therefore, is crucial in order to ensure that the actions and purposes of aid and assistance can be carefully scrutinized and evaluated.

Diplomatic policies, political implementation

In spite of the various approaches and efforts towards building a global partnership for eradicating poverty, the political influences on implementing the development policies still seem to be the biggest obstacle. Even among the vanguard of the donor countries that have been testing various human rights and democracy assistance projects in different parts of the world, there is still no consensus on methodologies nor benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of such projects. Whereas there may be agreement on a certain policy or on the priority of develop-

ment policies at the multilateral level, the political objectives may vary fundamentally from country to country, thus impeding effective implementation and leading to serious “implementation lags”. (In fact, the very term “implementation lags” has become a ubiquitous reference for struggling development efforts worldwide.)

As a consequence, there is an obvious risk that governments will use the MDGs as a “legitimacy outfit” to dress up their other nationally beneficial objectives, observers have

Harmonizing EU–Japanese Development Policies

Policy recommendations in response to demands to better harmonize EU and Japanese development policies need to take into account the challenges of development politics and to explore the common grounds between Japanese and EU policy so as to find room for synergies and complementary activities. Poverty-reducing development is not a linear process: it is a multifaceted process that involves and influences different areas of development policy simultaneously. Four major policy fields provide room for further co-ordination and harmonization of EU–Japanese development policies:

Trade and employment in development

On the path towards a global partnership for poverty eradication, trade and employment have central roles in the development matrix.

With the WTO in mind, it is apparent that trade has become a central issue. It is important to note, however, that while trade must guide the

ture projects that particularly benefit Japanese construction companies. However both the EU and Japan stress that democracy is the central aspect of development policy, so it would be beneficial to more strongly integrate their approaches. Sufficient common ground seems to exist because of the mutual understanding that ODA should be made more efficient, transparent and

We urgently need to change our lifestyles to sustainably manage resources and the natural environment

dialogue, it does not automatically lead to development. It is also important to note that the debate on the benefits of trade, and especially the question of who benefits, is widely normative in nature. Development assistance is an act of consciousness, and is designed in a certain way to benefit targeted actors.

The issues of employment follow a similar pattern. Employment is a powerful means, as it provides people with a sense of purpose, dignity and the satisfaction of a decent way of life. While employment does not automatically lead to poverty reduction, it can—and arguably should—be the starting point, and may be combined with or followed up by trade. Therefore, to ensure progress towards development, EU and Japanese developmental policies should focus equally on generating employment and proliferating trade.

Making ODA more efficient and democratic

One major difference between Japanese and European development policies is to their differing views on the role and design of official development assistance. Japanese ODA has been criticized for focusing on infrastruc-

ture projects that particularly benefit Japanese construction companies. However both the EU and Japan stress that democracy is the central aspect of development policy, so it would be beneficial to more strongly integrate their approaches. Sufficient common ground seems to exist because of the mutual understanding that ODA should be made more efficient, transparent and

Making progress in agriculture

As the WTO negotiations have demonstrated, agriculture policy is an internationally highly embattled field, and there is no doubt that much has to be done by the EU and others to contribute to more international fairness and to improve local production processes.

To meet the requirements for change, the EU has been pursuing two main paths: i.e., debating its trade policy with civil society, including environmental NGOs, trade unions and employers' organizations, and quantifying the impact of its policy on people.

Not only with regard to agriculture, a change in consumption patterns is a vital requirement for a global partnership on poverty eradication. It is a simple fact that we consume three times

more than what the planet offers as a sustainable biological life-support system; thus we urgently need to change our lifestyles. Concomitant with this is the need to recognize the importance of sustainably managing resources and the natural environment as key objectives of the MDGs. In fact, this should be the crucial starting point for joint EU and Japan cooperation initiatives.

Beyond changing consumption patterns and recognizing environmental governance, it is equally essential to stress the ethics of good governance, manifested in the fair production and trade of agricultural products.

Promoting multilateralism

One crucial weakness in the global system regime that needs to be dealt with is the proclivity of policies translating into unilateralist interventions. The EU has two policy measures for addressing this. The first is the “Everything but Arms” initiative, mentioned earlier. The second is the EU policy to provide access to generic medicines, especially the antiviral drugs needed to combat the HIV/AIDS virus.

It is essential to realize that the enormous developmental problems in the world cannot be addressed by just one or two entities. Global collaboration of unprecedented magnitude is required. For development measures to be effective, they must be coherent with each nations’ actions in all policy fields, domestic as well as foreign.

In this regard, it might be worth taking a closer look at the Japanese foreign policy concept of “comprehensive security”, which has been particularly focused on economic cooperation and development assistance as a means of creating sustainable security, stability and prosperity in and for Japan. It was more or less complemented by the more recent focus on human security.

Policy coherence

Both Japanese and European policies advocate the need for policy coherence. With increasing interdependence between policies and programmes, it is crucial that one policy does not contradict another. The EU and Japan should support policy initiatives that complement other positive interventions for development and increase their institutional exchange and communication.

Selected speakers at the sixth annual EU-UNU Tokyo Global Forum

		
Mr. Hiroyuki Nagahama, Shadow Minister of the Environment, Member of the House of Representatives, Japan	Ms. Luisa Morgantini, Member of the European Parliament, Chairwoman of the European Parliament Development Committee	Ambassador Bouna Semou Diouf, Director, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Programme, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa
		
Ambassador Dr. Takahiro Shinyo, Director-General, Global Issues Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan	Mr. Karel Kovanda, Deputy Director-General, DG External Relations, European Commission	Dr. Liga Noronha, Director, Resources and Global Security Division, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), India



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY

“Advancing Knowledge for Human Security and Development”

The United Nations University is an organ of the United Nations established by the General Assembly in 1972 to be an international community of scholars engaged in research, advanced training, and the dissemination of knowledge related to the pressing global problems of human survival, development, and welfare. Its activities focus mainly on the areas of peace and governance, environment and sustainable development, and science and technology in relation to human welfare. The University operates through a worldwide network of research and postgraduate training centres, with its planning and coordinating headquarters in Tokyo.

INSIDE:

Policy Brief

*“A Global Partnership
for Eradicating
Poverty”*

Improved co-operation
and co-ordination between
Japan and the EU could
help to eradicate poverty.

United Nations University Press
The United Nations University
53-70, Jingumae 5-chome
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8925
Japan

