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## PARIS21 Involvement at HLF4 on Aid Effectiveness

The *Fourth High Level Forum (HLF4) on Aid Effectiveness: The Path to Effective Development* will take place in Busan, Korea, from 29 November to 1 December 2011. Ministers and specialists will not only take stock of what has been advanced since the Accra Forum in 2008, but also set out a new framework for increasing the quality of aid in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Many different organisations and actors will work together to set the agenda at Busan, but possible priorities for discussion include: predictable aid, use of country systems, an end to policy conditionality, country-driven capacity development, mutual accountability, and reduced transaction costs. Meanwhile, initial discussions have identified several desirable outcomes for the meeting, including:

- Being accountable for meeting the Paris/Accra commitments;
- Agreeing on key features of high quality aid and its monitoring framework towards 2015;
- Agreeing on action towards aid's contribution to development effectiveness.

### **This note seeks opinions on how PARIS21 can contribute to the HLF4.**

PARIS21 was active in previous HLFs. At the Accra HLF in 2008 the Partnership organised a discussion as a side event on the development of national statistical systems and the role of statistics in the Aid Effectiveness agenda. PARIS21 also arranged sessions during the Managing for Development Results roundtables in Hanoi (2007) and Marrakech (2004).

Statistical Capacity Development deserves a place in Busan. Country-driven Capacity Development has been suggested as one the priorities for discussion at the meeting as is the strengthening and use of country systems (including statistics), while the most recent (2008) monitoring survey of the Paris Declaration notes that progress has been weakest in four of the ten areas originally identified, including the "creation of frameworks to monitor and account for results".

What should PARIS21 try to achieve at the event? How can PARIS21 ensure that statistical capacity development is considered and in what form? Some options are set out below. If the Board decides to pursue any — or all — of these ideas then the Secretariat will work to try to include them in Busan. But, as already noted, the agenda is being designed by a wide range of stakeholders, and there can be no guarantees of what they will decide to include. If we wish to see the work of the Partnership and the importance of statistical capacity development recognised, then we will need to call on the Partnership to lobby for these ideas at the level of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

The PARIS21 Executive Committee has recommended that the Partnership organise a side event on statistical capacity development at the HLF-4, at which participants (from beyond simply the statistical community) would discuss a *Busan Action Plan for Statistics*, which would be adopted by the whole conference.

In addition, the Secretariat welcomes advice on the following – not mutually-exclusive – options below. In particular the Secretariat would like to know whether the Board supports the following ideas and, if so, requests advice on how to proceed.

1. **Produce a report on the monitoring of the Dakar Declaration on the Development of Statistics (DDDS).** To satisfy the requirement of monitoring implementation of the DDDS, the Partnership could produce a report for Busan and use it as an opportunity to develop a new, advocacy-focused product with potentially a wide audience. The publication would report on progress towards the DDDS, raise awareness of concerns and evolving issues, advocate for both better statistics and continuing investment in capacity, and maintain interest in PARIS21 and the role of the Consortium.
2. **Include evidence on statistics-related PD/AAA commitments in the Progress Since Paris report** (one of the main reports on progress achieved in the implementation of the Paris commitments) and in particular **provide evidence to the authors** (in the DCD) **of the alignment and accountability and results chapters.**
3. **Identify relevant political agreements which may be needed to make further progress on developing national statistical capacity and provide suggestions to the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness on possible future commitments on building importance of statistical capacity to be included in the Busan outcome document.**
4. **Contribute to ongoing work on how donors can best use information generated at country level to ensure transparency and report on results achieved by aid to their taxpayers.** This could include looking at how to build upon existing international survey initiatives while ensuring that such initiatives are locally owned and contribute to strengthening capacities.
5. **Contribute to a possible plenary session on capable states to present what the Partnership has learned in 12 years working on capacity development.** This goes beyond statistical capacity development. It will consider our experience and use it to draw more general lessons for other forms of capacity development.
6. **Make a contribution to a plenary session on the importance of a high quality statistical system for development effectiveness and how aid can act as a catalyst for a stronger evidence-based decision making culture.** We all know, of course, how important statistics are to development. But it can always be useful to remind others, perhaps with a case study where specific and very tangible results of improved statistics can be highlighted. We could for example present some positive outcomes from the use of ADP tools, where they have improved the harmonisation, dissemination, and use of country-owned data.
7. **Provide examples** linked to the focus countries of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (Mali, Malawi, Ghana, Rwanda, Timor-Leste) **on work undertaken at country level by PARIS21 and how this might be a model for future engagement** with partner countries (peer reviews, Country Report on the Support to Statistics, etc.).
8. **Arrange, if possible, for a PARIS21 booth to be at the conference hall or in the conference exhibition.**

To ensure success at the HLF4, the Partnership (and not just the Secretariat) must work from all its respective countries and organisations to ensure a strong presence of the statistical community in Busan and to keep statistics in the minds of participants.