

Engaging China in the New International Development Aid System

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With rapid economic development and increasing impacts of the development models of the emerging countries, especially that of China, the international aid system is experiencing great changes. In order to maintain their leading roles, Western countries are making all efforts to adjust their own international development aid policies and cooperate with the emerging countries, including China. Meanwhile, besides the discussions on the development aid agenda led by OECD-DAC members, various talks on this topic are also going on within the non-traditional development regimes such as G20 and BRICS.

More importantly, China, along with other emerging countries, is trying to break Western dominance on international development cooperation through institutional mechanisms such as the BRICS Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. However, the Western developed countries are still the main providers of the ideological framework and financing of development aid so far.

When China is playing its role in formulating the international development aid agenda, it is inevitable to have to communicate and collaborate with the developed countries as well as the international development aid system dominated by the Western countries. Therefore, based on the principles presented by China's President Xi Jinping "both international and domestic resources, both international and domestic rules", we propose the following recommendations on how to engage China in the new international development system.

First of all, China should increase its say by participating actively in various discussions on the international development agenda. At present, the post-2015 development agenda is being hotly discussed within UN system, in regional for a and among NGOs and the mainstream narratives on international development are experiencing great changes. More attention is being paid to development effectiveness instead of aid effectiveness. The roles of emerging countries, civil societies and private sectors in the global development agenda have been much better recognized. New development issues such as development effectiveness, accountability and global partnerships have emerged in development narratives.

At present, the topics under discussion are still influenced to a great extent by Western ideology and China is absent on most of those occasions. We propose that China should participate actively in all discussions on the post-2015 development agenda by all means, especially in the discussion platforms within the UN framework. China can increase its familiarity with the new and emerging changes in international development and lead a series of interactions through those platforms. By doing so, China can improve its image of being a responsible country and

increase its voice in global governance. What's more important, China can interact with all the developing countries, traditional development cooperation providers and the international development system through the platforms of the UN system. As a result, China's international development policies can acquire necessary international legitimacy through negotiation, which can increase China's voice in global governance and positively influence the global development agenda.

Secondly, China should advocate for international development cooperation with Chinese characteristics, based on its own development experience. Since the new century, China has quickened its foreign aid activities. With the enhancement of South-South cooperation, China has been active in many developing countries, especially in Africa, and has become more and more visible. China has been recognized as an "emerging donor" although it started providing foreign aid as early as the 1950s. The name of "emerging donor" has two implications: on one hand it implies the historical involvement of China's foreign aid which surged since 2000 after a decrease from the 1980s to the 1990s. On the other hand, it also implies the peculiarity of China's development cooperation.

China's development cooperation is different from traditional donors in policies and methods. For instance, China insists on a non-interference policy and mutual-benefits at the policy level while it combines development aid with foreign trade and investment on the practical level. Those discrepancies not only make China a new power challenging the traditional international development regime, but also draw heavy criticism from the western academia. In fact, what makes China attractive to other developing countries is the native experience of how China has achieved rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation. China can provide distinct and extremely magnetic experience on the issue of how to promote development effectiveness in developing countries.

Accordingly, China should pay more attention to studying and refining its own experience in order to engage more effectively in international development talks. China should make intellectual contributions to the global development debate by systematizing its special development cooperation knowledge based on its own development experience with Chinese characteristics. First, China should insist on its own experience, principles and demand-driven practices. China should call for new changes in the international development governance system based on the attractiveness and influence of its experience. Moreover, China should promote research on international development in order to foster a group of specialists who can systematize the Chinese experience with international scope and disseminate it to the international community.

Thirdly, China should strategically build up new cooperation and partnerships with other emerging countries, developing countries and traditional donors. Different countries have different proposals on global development and international development issues. Even the Western countries have conflicts, even though their interests are quite similar. The core of international development cooperation is the financial commitments of every country on the issue of environmental protection and poverty reduction. Therefore we should reach an agreement on the specific sums to be committed with other emerging countries on the international development agenda when the leaders of those countries meet at the summit meetings of BRICS. Then, we should reach agreements with developing countries on the

regional forums including the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the China-Caribbean Forum on Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. Thirdly, we should make agreements with the Western donor countries through joining various multilateral plans, new partnerships and G20 discussions which are dominated by Western countries. Besides, it is feasible to promote the establishment of global effective development partnerships by engaging in triangular cooperation with traditional donors. Some scholars analyzed the possibility of doing triangular cooperation with Germany and the European Union and held that we could build up new development partnerships through triangular cooperation. Some other scholars argue that China's foreign aid has put much emphasis on the country level, but neglected the regional level, and this situation could be improved by triangular cooperation. We hold that we should enhance South-South cooperation and communication with traditional donors through multilateral channels. Triangular cooperation may be a feasible way to build up global partnerships for effective development in the field of development research and on specific projects. In this process, there may be some pressure for the third party including African countries. Therefore triangular cooperation should emphasize the nature of partnerships instead of the donor-recipient relationship.

To sum up, under the new global circumstances, in order to develop a new global development partnership, it is not only necessary for the traditional donors to reflect on their established notions, scope and methodology of development so as to adapt to the new and emerging conditions, but also to present a higher requirement for the engagement of the emerging powers such as China. China should contribute its voice on global affairs and grasp the opportunity in global development to participate actively in a series of international development processes such as the discussions on the post-2015 international development agenda and the establishment of global partnerships for effective development. China should claim its legitimacy of policy narratives on the international level and further shape the global governance framework in order to help shape the future global development agenda.

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