
Colombia

Towards a More Institutionalised Architecture for South-South Cooperation



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Colombia recognises the role of South-South Cooperation in helping to meet the national development goals as well as to promote the exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned among developing countries.

Introduction

South-South cooperation is widely recognised to have a key role in the relationship among the countries of the South. The world has changed significantly since the Millennium Development Declaration and the drafting of the MDGs and is poised for new trajectory after adoption of SDGs. Developing countries are changing the dynamic of multilateralism by expanding their participation and influence in the negotiations and decisions on core issues in the international agenda, such as climate change, international trade and development finance (Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America, 2015). In order to face these new challenges, some countries have created an institutional architecture to promote international cooperation and contribute significantly to their countries' development.

Colombia has faced important challenges associated with its position at the international and regional system. But, it has been observed that Colombia is increasing institutionalisation of its public policy on international cooperation, a process that has made an important progress in the last ten years. The need for sectoral and geographical diversification of the international economic integration has been perceived both in positive and negative terms. The

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South-South and Triangular cooperation has been given importance in the promotion of the relationship with Africa, Asia and the Pacific, one of the key objectives of the National Government in Colombia.

Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (APC)

Colombian Presidential Agency of International Cooperation (APC) was created in 2011 as the Government Agency in charge for technically managing, guiding and coordinating all public, private, technical and non-refundable financial international cooperation received and granted by Colombia. Among its lines of actions, APC-Colombia has a mandate to design, implement and evaluate the bilateral programmes and regional strategies of South-South and triangular cooperation.

Colombian Roadmap for International Cooperation 2015-2018 Recently, Colombia has developed the “Roadmap for International Cooperation 2015-2018” which is based on four key elements:

- Colombia’s National Development Plan,
- Colombia’s foreign policy priorities,
- Presidential mandate to work on a possible post-conflict scenario,
- Guidelines from APC-Colombia’s Board of Directors.

These key elements have been made in synergy with different stakeholders from the public, private and third sector.

Key Strategic Objectives for Colombian International Cooperation

Colombian International Cooperation focusses on establishing a lasting peace

through international cooperation received by Colombia in three areas: peace-building, sustainable rural development, conservation and environmental sustainability. These are the first key objectives. Apart from these three thematic areas, the government has also included innovation, science and technology as cross-cutting themes. The three thematic areas are discussed below:

- Peace-building is related to topics such as assistance to victims of conflicts, demobilisation and reintegration;
- Sustainable Rural Development includes closing gaps between the city and the countryside, creating life alternatives and productive opportunities, and providing access to markets for workers in Colombia’s rural areas; and
- Conservation and environmental sustainability is mainly focussed on reforestation, conservation, mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Colombian International Cooperation aims to share valuable knowledge that provides tangible benefits for the development of Colombia and its partners via South-South Cooperation. For this purpose, APC-Colombia works on the identification, design coordination of the South-South Cooperation initiatives within the framework of the bilateral programmes, regional strategies, strategic alliances and dialogue and consultation mechanisms.

Colombian Mechanisms for International Cooperation

- Colombian International Cooperation works through a traditional channel of the cooperation via dialogue among neighbouring countries, based on

existing cooperative agreements on technology, science and technology, culture and education among partner countries. So far 25 agreements have been signed with different countries around the world, mainly in Latin America.

- Colombian International Cooperation is designed on regional strategies that focus on cooperation with specific partner country and in areas depending on the country's demand. Right now, Colombia is consolidating the regional strategies with Mesoamerica and the Caribbean as well as developing other strategies with South-East Asia, Africa and Eurasia.
- Colombian International Cooperation is designed to provide cooperation through strategic alliances, which refer to a win-win arrangement with a partner from the public or private sector, civil society, international community or academia in order to increase the benefits of South-South Cooperation. Some examples of these alliances are the ones made with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
- Colombian International Cooperation is carried forward through dialogue and consultation mechanisms with partners that gather member countries with the aim of reaching agreements on issues of mutual interest and ultimately promoting the development of the nations. Colombia has played a leading role in boosting cooperation with groupings such as the Pacific Alliance, the Ibero-American General Secretariat,

and the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation.

International Cooperation and Assistance Fund (FOCAI)

In order to fulfil the goals of its South-South Cooperation, Colombia has allocated specific funding through the International Cooperation and Assistance Fund (FOCAI). The total budget of this fund in 2014 was about US\$ 3.5 million. South-South Cooperation for Latin American countries accounts for almost 40 per cent of the budget, while the other 35 per cent was allocated to cooperation with Asia, Eurasia, Middle East and Africa. Finally, 8 per cent of the total budget was addressed for humanitarian aid to countries such as Turkey, Philippines, Jordan, Somalia, Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala, Palestine, Mali, among others. Colombia has provided assistance for socioeconomic areas related to early childhood care, overcoming poverty and malnutrition; disaster risk management that includes disaster risk management plans, inter-institutional coordination and attention to communities; peace-building and social harmony; and entrepreneurship development, etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it needs to be underlined that Colombia recognises the role of South-South Cooperation in helping to meet the national development goals as well as to promote the exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned among developing countries. Therefore, it has established a well-structured institutional framework to promote South-South Cooperation. The

main role from the technical side is played by the APC-Colombia that leads the coordination of international cooperation in the country. However, this coordination has been made in synergy with different stakeholders from the public, private and other sectors. In addition, Colombia is aware of the importance of international cooperation and specifically, the South-South Cooperation, for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and supporting Colombia's candidacy to OECD.

References

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India has announced a number of initiatives in the direction which include doubling of India's contribution for Common Fund for Sustainable Development Goals, taking up small projects in the small countries through the permanent mission for the UN, capacity building and training programmes in areas including cricket and skill development. India is further focused on achieving sustainable development goals and climate change issues. India's focus was that assistance to smaller states should be demand driven rather than donor-driven. It was also announced that India has launched of a US\$50 million Commonwealth window to the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. This contribution is in addition to US\$100 million pledged in 2017 for the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, thereby increasing India's multi-year contribution to US\$150 million.

Source: India Pledges \$50 Million More to UN Partnership Fund, *Inter Press Service*, 28 April 2018