

Assessment of the Reform of German Development Cooperation Pursuant to the New BMZ 2030 Strategy



For a world without hunger

Background

In its new strategy, [BMZ 2030](#), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) offers its solutions to a world in turmoil. According to an internal report, the strategy's purpose is to modernise German development policy and to show how it can improve in order to remain relevant and effective in the future. Between December 2018 and June 2019, interdepartmental working groups within BMZ developed proposals to reform Germany's development cooperation, including its planning processes, policy instruments, regional and topical areas of focus, and the result and impact orientation of development policy as a whole and of internal cooperation and communication. After parts of the strategy became public, including through reporting by German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Minister Müller officially presented the new strategy on 2020-04-29. The latest version is subtitled: "Rethinking, Rerouting". The updated list of partner countries has now also been published, encompassing fewer countries and divided into new categories.

Welthungerhilfe's assessment of the above is as follows:

- With its new strategy, BMZ is laying claim to a participative role in German politics and at the international level. In these times of increasing pressure on development cooperation, this is a good thing.
- The BMZ strategy introduces a new partnership model that organises partner countries into three categories, including the new designations of "global partners" and "peace and nexus partners" as well as the familiar category of bilateral-cooperation partners, though reduced in number, with the latter now prioritising "reform partners".
- The shift towards a more strategic and focussed approach is to be welcomed. However, this focus should be placed squarely on the least-developed countries (LDC) and on the fight against hunger and poverty. To achieve a world without hunger, it is important to remain involved in bilateral cooperation—both technological and financial—in the countries most affected by hunger while promoting an agriculture- and nutrition-based economy that helps fight poverty. The long-term trend sees global hunger and poverty concentrating in the LDCs. As a key donor country and strong political partner, Germany should set an example in following Agenda 2030 and its guiding principle of "leaving no one behind".
- The countries selected as reform partners enjoy relatively well-developed economies; only one third of the reform partners number among the LDCs. German development cooperation is tied to results, including with regard to macroeconomic reforms.

- For the nexus and peace partners, the focus is on conflict, refugees, and migration. It remains unclear whether the sectoral priorities for cooperation with these countries will change. The following countries have been categorised as nexus and peace partners: Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Chad, the DR Congo, and the Central African Republic.
- Germany's foreign, domestic, and economic interests also play a role in the new categories because they focus on countries that are attractive for German investment or that are relevant to migration, for example as transit countries or countries of origin.
- Although BMZ claims that the percentage of LDCs in terms of total partner countries will grow, this proportional increase must be weighed against the reduction in the total number of partner countries. The fact is that the following LDCs are no longer partner countries: Burundi, Myanmar, Guinea, Haiti, Laos, Liberia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste. Eight of these LDCs rank as *serious* on the Global Hunger Index.
- On the international stage, Germany has committed to spending at least 0.15 percent of its gross national product on the least-developed countries. This obligation is recorded in Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Actual figures have so far fallen short of this target and could sink even lower in the coming years due to the cessation of governmental cooperation with several LDCs.
- It is of key importance that agriculture, food security, and land rights retain their priority under *Eine Welt ohne Hunger*, a German special initiative for a world without hunger. Ending hunger while promoting wealth, democracy, the rule of law, and productive employment throughout the world should also be in Germany's interest. After all, this proved to be the recipe for peace in Europe, and it can do the same in other parts of the world. For example, the struggle for increasingly scarce resources, like water and fertile land, has destabilised the Sahel, where terrorist groups are now expanding beyond the point of military containment. In a nutshell: When it comes to development cooperation, agricultural policy makes for effective peace policy.
- Regarding development cooperation with nexus partners, it is important to ensure that the mandates and functions of humanitarian actors and the military remain separate in order not to endanger development-aid workers. Blurring these lines runs contrary to the humanitarian imperative and the primacy of anti-poverty measures in development policy.
- In BMZ 2030, alignment with human rights remains on the periphery with its classification as a quality criterion. The alignment with and implementation of human-rights instruments must remain central to development cooperation. All projects and programmes must be orientated towards human rights, with relevant standards being strictly applied and regularly monitored during planning and implementation.
- The strategy was developed without adequate opportunity for input from civil society. During implementation, BMZ should consult non-governmental organisations again, for example when drafting strategy papers on the subject matter or when defining sectoral priorities in the partner countries. BMZ should enhance the role of non-governmental organisations as they work in the partner countries at the grassroots level, strengthening civil society and learning what the people need. In areas where governmental development cooperation is being reduced, it is up to civil-society organisations to help implement human rights and, as permitted by circumstance and strategy, to carry on with programmes in politically difficult contexts.

- The inclusion of “2030” in the new strategy's name has the political benefit of signalling support for the Sustainable Development Goals set out in Agenda 2030. However, this has no bearing on interdepartmental cooperation in Germany or at the global level. BMZ can and should play a defining role, but it should do so in conjunction with other departments.
- The strategy portrays development policy as the answer to future issues, and it undoubtedly has important roles to play as a facilitator, trailblazer, financier, and adviser. However, this can only work in tandem with other areas of policy, for example active peace and climate policy.
- The strategy is characterised by paternalistic expressions (“We set..., we lead..., we direct...”). Coordination with partner countries receives no mention. There is reference to harmonisation with the EU and France in the partner countries, but this issue should be settled in Brussels and Paris beforehand.
- The strategy does not acknowledge the effort being made on the African continent to take development into their own hands. This includes the African Union’s (AU) Agenda 2063, which represents the African vision for the socio-economic transformation of the continent, and the AU Development Agency (AU DA), which is the implementing institution established in 2018.
- Systemic thinking is still lacking, as recently reinforced by the coronavirus pandemic: We need a change in the way we produce, trade, and consume food; that is to say, we need to transform our food systems. Waste, unfair trade, greenhouse-gas emissions, high resource use, the destruction of nature, and irresponsible supply chains—all of this exacerbates hunger throughout the world. The rapid-relief programmes established to fight the coronavirus pandemic are important but cannot come at the expense of long-term programmes for health, nutrition, and education. The coronavirus pandemic is raising the pressure to now take serious measures that make our food system fairer, more sustainable, and more resilient to crises.
- BMZ should give greater weight to the principles of aid effectiveness. The latest assessment by the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) in 2018 found Germany relegated to the middle of the pack. The principles are:
 - Ownership: The autonomy of developing countries should be reinforced
 - Alignment: Donors should make use of the cooperation countries’ institutions and align their programmes with the partner countries’ strategies and procedures
 - Harmonisation: Donors should reconcile and harmonise their programmes and procedures with each other
 - Managing for results: Measures should be geared towards results, letting donors be evaluated by the results of their development-aid efforts
 - Accountability: Donor and cooperation countries should be jointly accountable to the public and their parliaments for their development-aid efforts

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