Chakugan Taikyoku: Challenges & dilemmas in the 'new aid agenda'

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This presentation

- Where did the 'new' aid agenda come from?
- What is the 'new' aid agenda anyway?
- Tensions within the agenda
- Some main challenges & dilemma
- Can/how can these tensions and challenges be addressed?

Where did 'new' agenda come from?

Substantial evidence-base emerging that:

- aid effectiveness undermined by lack of ownership, conditionalities not resulting implementation
- highly projectised aid (due to donor accountability fears) not delivering less corruption, but expensive & causing institutional damage

Thus, aid might be part of the problem: unintended consequences of fragmentation, lack of coherence & state avoidance → undermining governance in long term...

What's the 'new' aid agenda anyway?

Different things to different people, but includes:

- Focus on government ownership
- Results orientation
- Alignment of donors with government policies & systems
- Donor harmonisation of programmes approaches, funds
- Focus on political context/economy analysis?

Embodied in moves to PRSPs, modalities such as SWAP, GBS…

Tensions within the agenda

- Aid modalities vs donor behaviour principles
- Harmonisation vs alignment
- Results vs process
- Quality of policy vs ownership
- Rewarding good performance vs building better performance

Challenges & Dilemma

- Mechanistic approach to aid instruments whether GBS, PRS or projects
- Harmonisation → ganging up or harmonising the wrong direction
- Reinforces upward accountability to donors
- Alignment to what? Multiple, weak, bad or non-existent systems or policies

continued…

- Concerns about legitimising abusive regimes
- Results monitoring how far down the causality chain?
- Eligibility criteria- minimum standards or direction of change
- Aid as minor player – neither in growth, nor intervention/$: trade, security, drugs, national profile…

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Can these tensions be addressed?

Yes to some… no to others. But how?

- By clarity around objectives & trade-offs
- By distinguishing means from ends e.g. GBS, PRS, or projects as means only
- By using 'do no harm' approaches e.g. shadow systems alignment
- By greater realism, honesty & timeframes
- By programming base on potential development benefits as well as risks/cost

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Comments & questions?

Thank you

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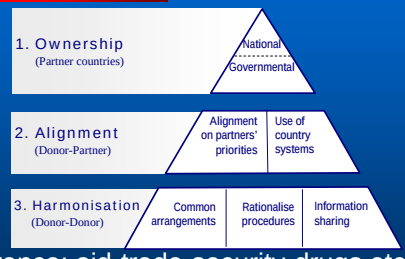
Handout

Defining H&A:



Plus coherence: aid-trade-security-drugs etc

- This cuts across aid instruments/modalities

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