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DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
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DAC Network on Poverty Reduction

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE POVNET PLENARY MEETING

held on 16-17 November 2005, OECD, La Défense, Paris

This Summary Record was adopted at the POVNET meeting of 7-8 February 2006, subject to noting that proposals by Ireland concerning the overarching paper (item VII of that summary record) found broad support in the POVNET. This reference has been included in this summary record.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Adoption of the Agenda [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)14].....	3
II.	Approval of the Summary Record of the 14-15 April 2005 POVNET meeting [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)2].....	3
III.	Opening Remarks by Chair and objectives of the meeting	3
IV.	Joint World Bank/IMF Review of Poverty Reduction Strategies -- Presentation by the World Bank	3
V.	Task Team products	4
a)	Infrastructure [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)18].....	4
b)	Agriculture [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)19]	4
c)	Private Sector Development [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)21]	4
VI.	Cross cutting Teams	5
a)	Risk and vulnerability	5
b)	Ex Ante Poverty Impact Assessments [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)22]	5
VII.	Overarching paper [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)24]	6
VIII.	Dissemination/communication of POVNET products [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)25]	6
IX.	Looking ahead [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)26]	7

**DAC NETWORK ON POVERTY REDUCTION
SUMMARY RECORD OF THE POVNET MEETING
HELD ON 16-17 NOVEMBER, 2005**

I. Adoption of the Agenda [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)14]

1. The agenda was adopted with one addition - a World Bank presentation on the 2005 PRS Review, to follow item III - the Chair's opening remarks.

II. Approval of the Summary Record of the 14-15 April 2005 POVNET meeting [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)2]

2. The summary record of the 14-15 April 2005 POVNET meeting was approved.

III. Opening Remarks by Chair and objectives of the meeting

3. The Chair briefed members on the meeting of the DAC with Chairs of Subsidiary Bodies held on 14 November where the discussion had focused on themes for the PWB 2007-8, prioritization and organization of work and budget. Two concerns of the DAC were the breadth of work undertaken by the DAC and its subsidiary bodies and management of the budget (Part 1 and Voluntary contributions. A next step will be to identify and prioritize substantive areas of work, and proposals from the POVNET will need to be given to the DAC in time for its 14 February 2006 discussion. Ways to organize the work through subsidiary bodies would follow.

4. The Chair noted that the present POVNET meeting aimed to review all the work done so far and provide guidance to the groups on further revisions, completion and approval of each product. It would also discuss dissemination activities and consider challenges and opportunities for follow up work beyond 2006.

IV. Joint World Bank/IMF Review of Poverty Reduction Strategies -- Presentation by the World Bank

5. The World Bank team presented its findings from the 2005 review of PRSs, focusing on this year's two major themes – rebalancing accountabilities and scaling up results. The Review tries to clarify what is meant by country driven processes through ownership and broad based participation, how to support a process of mutual and domestic accountability and factors that may tilt the balance and the processes that will help to make good use of new resources for poverty reduction. Strengthening country analysis, budget processes and monitoring are key to country ownership.

6. POVNET members welcomed the presentation and analysis and noted its importance for DAC work, particularly on issues such as capacity building, governance, country ownership and accountability mechanisms. Issues needing greater attention included how to foster a long term vision and stronger institutions in fragile states or countries undergoing elections, and how to better integrate sustainable development objectives and pro-poor growth dimensions. Members highlighted stakeholder dialogue with state and non-state actors as a means of strengthening country ownership.

7. The World Bank stressed that DAC members could help the country processes by promoting a better understanding of country reality so as not to undermine domestic accountability mechanisms and to support functional country systems through capacity building. Evidence suggests that, on average, PRSP countries are doing better on internal accountability than others and have a long term vision.

V. Task Team products

a) Infrastructure [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)18]

8. Hitoshi Shoji (Task Team Leader) introduced the draft “*Guiding Principles on Using Infrastructure to Reduce Poverty*”, outlined elements of a communication/dissemination strategy for the report and emphasized that the document had the full support of the core group of the Infrastructure Task Team.

9. Members expressed their appreciation of the participatory process and the comprehensiveness of the document. Many members underlined their wish to quickly finish and publish the document to satisfy the strong demand for this document from many different parties.

10. Comments on the draft were of an editorial nature covering the use of the phrase “poor women and other disadvantaged groups”, mentioning the distinction between cost recovery, tariffs and subsidies; cross references to recommendations in other draft POVNET products and DAC Recommendations (aid untying and the 2005 Paris Declaration) and the treatment of advocacy for scaling-up ODA to specific sectors/sub-sectors.

11. The Chair concluded that he would review the revised version to be prepared on the basis of these comments and decide whether that revised draft was now ready for transmission to the DAC for adoption¹. On that basis, the infrastructure document will be submitted to DAC for final approval. It will not be subject to approval by the OECD High Level Meeting (HLM).

b) Agriculture [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)19]

12. Tim Mahoney, Co-chair of the Task Team, outlined the process and key messages emerging from the work of this group. The full draft report on agriculture will be circulated to POVNET members by mid-December with a view to seeking approval at the February POVNET meeting.

13. Members appreciated the key directions of this work and looked forward to seeing the full draft report. POVNET comments covered a number of issues including liberalizing OECD markets and price volatility; more in depth treatment of barriers to productivity growth in agriculture; more nuance to the discussion of pathways out of poverty; and more field level guidance on issues such as monitoring systems and public expenditure reviews, promoting stakeholder dialogue, sector wide approaches, better donor co-ordination and attention to agriculture in donor funding.

c) Private Sector Development [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)21]

14. Cerstin Sander (United Kingdom), the task team leader, introduced the draft report [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)21] which includes an overview and the six Hot Topic papers prepared by the Private Sector Development Task Team.

15. The main messages coming out of this work can be clustered in three areas: i) encouraging private sector development (for example, removing barriers and reducing risks to encourage entrepreneurship and using market-based approaches); ii) working with developing country partners (including private sector development in PRSs, linking private sector development programmes with governance programmes and using gender analysis tools); and iii) looking at donors' own operations

1. The Chair of POVNET has since reviewed the revised draft and agreed that it may now be considered as approved by POVNET and that it may now be transmitted without further ado to the DAC for approval.

(making private sector development a central component of country strategies, improving co-ordination and harmonisation and building up analytical capacity for private sector development).

16. The draft report was well received, and comments focussed on the draft overview. There were requests for a more balanced summary in the overview of the Hot Topic papers on informality and enhancing women's access to markets. The risks to the poor from greater international linkages should be more prominent as should sequencing reform processes, to create opportunities for the poor. Several suggestions for specific rephrasing were also proposed.

17. It was agreed to revise the overview, based on the comments made, and to circulate a new version to the POVNET members. If agreement can be reached by written procedure, the report can then go directly to the DAC for endorsement at its 14 February 2006 meeting. Otherwise, the draft report will be resubmitted to the 7-8 February 2006 POVNET meeting.

VI. Cross cutting Teams

a) Risk and vulnerability

18. Timo Voipio (Finland), on behalf of this group, underlined the cross-cutting nature of the risk and vulnerability theme. The group has interpreted its main role during the present mandate of POVNET as contributing to the work by the other task teams and to provide tailored contributions to the overarching paper. The group has also commissioned a series of background papers which have helped to clarify the policy linkages between risk and vulnerability and pro-poor growth and the instruments being applied. Mr. Voipio emphasized that the group is interested in continuing its work during 2006 and that it would like to see risk and vulnerability and human security as one of the main themes under a future POVNET mandate.

19. Members confirmed that risk and vulnerability issues have an important role to play in pro-poor growth strategies. The discussion focused on how donors are supporting risk and vulnerability programmes. Donor support in this field is now expanding and there is a need for further innovation and exchange of experience. One opportunity is to bring up risk and vulnerability issues during budget support dialogues.

b) Ex Ante Poverty Impact Assessments [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)22]

20. Wolf Dio (Germany), Team Leader, introduced the work of the cross-cutting team, highlighting the rationale, value added, scope and basic steps for carrying it out ex ante poverty impact assessments (PIAs). A summary document had been circulated in advance of the POVNET meeting for discussion [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)22] and a longer draft "guidance note" was also provided [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)23]

21. The presentation was well received by POVNET members. It was agreed that the summary note would be revised to take on board comments and then circulated again for the 7-8 February 2005 POVNET meeting for approval. Five members expressed interest in piloting the method (NL, CH, IRE, JP and SWE). Lessons from the pilots would be integrated in the draft guidance note and circulated, possibly by Fall 2006. It was also agreed to join forces with the ENVIRONET on strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) as much as possible.

22. The discussion covered a number of points including engagement by partner countries; links to the PSIA and other approaches could be clarified further in the next round and lessons drawn from them; clarification of the level at which the PIA can be applied (e.g. sector, programme, SWAps, budget support level and at national, regional or local levels); and links with PARIS 21 might be established in light of data gaps in many partner countries.

VII. Overarching paper [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)24]

23. Sunil Sinha (Consultant to POVNET) presented the draft paper on “*Promoting Pro-Poor Growth*”. He mentioned that the paper confirmed the main message from the DAC 2001 Poverty Reduction Guidelines regarding the multidimensional character of poverty and the inter-linkages between the pace and pattern of growth. He emphasized that the paper still needs work to make it read more like “DAC guidelines”.

24. The DAC Chair, Richard Manning, suggested that the value added of this work of POVNET was to build and present a broad consensus on new ways of thinking about pro-poor growth, which could be presented to the 2006 HLM. He also emphasized the importance of a good communication strategy around POVNET products, noting the need for co-ordination without overloading field level staff.

25. Members felt the paper was a good attempt to bring some clarity to pro-poor growth - a controversial issue for at least 50 years. It was seen as an improvement over the previous draft and a good structure. At the same time, it needs more focus on the main policy messages, needs to be shorter and clearer and needs to be more precise concerning the main audience. Members made suggestions concerning key and supporting messages that should form the focus and structure of the next version.

26. Issues raised in the discussion included the need to differentiate among countries given the wide range of development challenges; explain the rationale for particular work on agriculture, infrastructure and private sector; strengthen treatment of the markets; elaborate on policy trade-offs and sequencing, rules of the game and governance issues (connecting up with GOVNET work on some of these issues); and highlight the roles of donors in advocating and promoting pro-poor growth. Members welcomed Ireland’s articulation of the key messages and agreed to use these as a basis for further discussion in the Steering Group.

27. Outcomes and next steps: The steering group on the overarching paper will meet on 18 November to consider the POVNET discussion and requirements for the next draft. That draft will be submitted to POVNET in February 2006. In parallel, and on the basis of those discussions, the Secretariat will synthesize the main policy messages for an information note for the Senior Level Meeting (SLM) on 7 December [DCD/DAC(2005)50/REV1] as well as for the draft chapter 2 on pro-poor growth in the 2005 Development Co-operation Report [DCD/DAC(2005)52/CHAP2].

VIII. Dissemination/communication of POVNET products [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)25]

28. The secretariat introduced this item highlighting some key points to bear in mind while considering dissemination strategies: (i) Dissemination is about communicating clear messages and making a difference. There are many tools for doing this but the value of publications is the discipline it imposes on groups to produce clear messages. (ii) Most POVNET members are already active in disseminating new thinking as they interact through their normal channels in headquarters, field agencies and at international events. It is important to maintain the momentum beyond the publication and DAC approval process. (iii) Co-ordination of dissemination will be important so that messages are consistent across the different groups and events.

29. The discussion included comments in the following areas; it is important first to decide who is the audience and then develop communications tools for the different target audiences; high priority should be given to providing guidance targeted to country offices where the impacts may be the greatest, and involving partner countries in further discussions and testing; a dedicated and interactive website can be an important tool of a dissemination strategy; and activities already planned by task teams can be integrated in the broader strategy.

30. It was agreed that members would send information to the secretariat (Ebba Dohlman) on upcoming events and that a draft dissemination plan, building on the broader DAC communications strategy, would be circulated to the POVNET for its February 2006 meeting. The secretariat will also consult with ITN concerning website improvement.

IX. Looking ahead [DCD/DAC/POVNET(2005)26]

31. Members held a preliminary exchange of views on future work themes for the 2007-8 period, based on the above referenced note. The DCD Director (Michael Roeskau) suggested that an important theme for 2007-8 would be to start turning the guidance and principles into practice, testing if we have the right tools and approaches and sharing lessons of experience.

32. Members generally felt the way the suggestions were set out in this note, while still broad and in need of more precision, was a useful way of grouping issues. All three groups -- implementing the pro-poor growth (PPG) guidance developed under the present work stream, deepening and broadening poverty reduction efforts, met with general support.

33. Comments and suggestions covered a variety of themes and issues including: the value of finding a central or unifying theme (such as PPG in the present biennium) such as pro-poor budgeting outcomes; the importance of putting into practice the guidance now developed on promoting PPG, focusing on poverty reduction strategies and developing best practice notes; rotating the focus from economic to other dimensions of poverty including the broader risk and vulnerability agenda; and the value of putting a poverty or PPG lens on trade, but at local and regional as well as international levels. Members emphasized the value of developing joint work proposals such as on institutions or fragile states with other subsidiary bodies (e.g. GOVNET), other parts of the development Cluster (e.g. DEV) or other OECD Directorates (e.g. Trade).

34. The Chair concluded that we should continue reflections in order to both be responsive to DAC interests and priorities as well as to be in a position to prepare a revised note with more developed proposals for the February 2006 meeting of POVNET.

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DE LA PAUVRETE**

**16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005
OECD, La Défense, Salle des Nations**

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