



PANEL 1

Brazilian cooperation for development: new paradigm for agricultural development in Africa?

Background and aims:

Brazilian cooperation is founded on several guiding principles, such as joint diplomacy based on solidarity and no imposition of conditionality, which are claimed to distinguish it from traditional forms of assistance. The horizontal character of South-South cooperation is frequently contrasted with the vertical nature of North-South cooperation, and Brazil refuses the labels of “donor” or “aid provider”, preferring to portray its cooperation programme as a mutually beneficial partnership between peers. The link between development cooperation and foreign policy is an explicit one, with diplomacy being the principal channel for setting cooperation arrangements and the Ministry of Foreign Relations or *Itamaraty* providing the institutional home for the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), which is responsible for overall coordination of technical cooperation.

Mirroring a dynamic foreign policy agenda, Brazilian cooperation has been expanding swiftly and so has the number of agencies – at federal, state and municipal level – actively involved in the implementation of development cooperation projects across a wide range of themes and issues, including agriculture and food security. As Brazilian cooperation gains global projection and starts to capture the attention of domestic constituencies, it is time to reflect on the emerging model and its particular features, and on the challenges and opportunities that it faces internally, internationally and at the local level in the developing countries where it is being put into practice.

The agriculture sector provides an interesting case study for the critical examination of Brazilian cooperation drivers, policies and practices. Brazil’s dynamic agribusiness sector has attracted global attention in recent years. The success stories of this sector include the transformation of the country’s central *Cerrado* savannah belt into the world’s most important soybean production region, which has been proposed as a model for Africa’s ‘Guinea savannah’. In addition to soya, Brazil is now the world’s leading exporter of chickens, coffee, orange juice, beef, sugar and ethanol. Growth in these sectors has been supported by sustained investment in research and development by both private and public sectors. Public investment has been led by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) and its agricultural research agency Embrapa, which has won a worldwide reputation for excellence in tropical crop science and now has a presence in several African countries. In many countries, Embrapa and other government agencies are increasingly being joined by Brazilian private-sector agribusiness investors.

However, capital- and technology-intensive commercial agribusiness is not Brazil’s only model for agricultural development. The country is also a centre of political mobilisation and policy innovation in the fields of land reform and smallholder agriculture. These mobilisations and innovations have often arisen in response to the perceived social and environmental costs of the agribusiness model, and to the search for a more inclusive approach to agricultural growth. They have been driven by farmers’ unions and social movements such as the National Agricultural Workers’ Confederation (CONTAG) and Movement of the Landless (MST) and by civil society coalitions such as the National Articulation for Agro-ecology (ANA). Pro-smallholder policies have been promoted within the Brazilian government by the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), which has now launched its own programme of international development cooperation and is engaging with several African countries.

The objectives of this panel are twofold. It aims, on the one hand, to discuss the attributes of Brazilian cooperation and reflect on the novelty of the model(s) being practiced, with reference to agriculture. Participants will be asked to reflect particularly on the challenges and opportunities facing Brazilian cooperation in the Africa context as well as on the new trends emerging under Dilma Rousseff’s administration.

The panel also aims to reflect on the implications for Brazilian cooperation of the country's diverse range of experiences in both the agribusiness and "family farming" sectors. It will explore whether Brazil is actually exporting two distinct, and potentially contradictory, models of agricultural development to Africa, or whether different Brazilian experiences can make complementary contributions to the search for an appropriate mix of subsistence, commercial, smallholder and large-farm agriculture. Participants will also be asked to reflect on the extent to which other Brazilian agricultural development experiences that have not yet been included in the country's technical cooperation portfolio could hold relevant lessons for Africa.

Guiding questions:

- What do you see as the main characteristics of Brazilian development cooperation, with particular reference to agriculture? Do such attributes make the Brazil model distinctive when compared to cooperation practiced by other countries?
- What are the explicit and implicit motivations driving and shaping Brazilian cooperation? Are these different in agriculture?
- What lessons from Brazil's agribusiness and smallholder development experiences have helped to shape Brazilian cooperation with African agriculture?
- What will be the key challenges in validating and adapting Brazilian approaches to agricultural development in African contexts?
- What new trends are expected to emerge in development cooperation, and in agriculture in particular, as the current Brazilian administration consolidates its position in domestic politics and international governance?

Panel participants:

- Dr. Arilson da Silva Favareto, Cebrap/UFABC (Chair)
- Ministro Milton Rondó, Head of Coordenação-Geral de Ações Internacionais de Combate à Fome, MRE (Speaker)
- André Dusi, Secretaria de Relações Internacionais, Embrapa (Speaker)
- Francesco Maria Pierri, Head of Assessoria para Assuntos Internacionais e de Promoção Comercial, MDA (Speaker)
- Elisa Huguene, ActionAid Brazil (Speaker)
- Langton Mukwereza, Research for Development Trust, Zimbabwe (Discussant)