A challenging agenda: trying to take stock of the whole aid agenda

- Impact - a dominant theme

- The history of aid, the main aid donors and why they (say they) give aid -
  - Ethics and aid-giving.
  - The “new” rights agenda
  - The changing nature of international obligation

- The short-term political, strategic and commercial influences on aid

- Public support for aid: how extensive and deep? Does it matter?

- What are the major constraints to greater effectiveness?

- How impact could be improved
20 years after Cassen
Does aid really work?

A quick sound-bite

Is this the most important question?

Increasingly not: it remains an often unhelpful “backward-looking” question
What does the evidence tell us about impact?

- The traditional focus: the impact of discrete projects - input/output data and evidence

- The question more often asked now - aid and aggregate development outcomes

- Aid and the MDGs - a key question for some - but not for others

- Suppose most aid doesn’t work? The management of expectations
NGOs and Humanitarian aid

- The (old) differentiation between emergency and development aid no longer works
- Bridging the divide between what we know and what needs to happen
- Impact matters to most NGOs and we know growing amounts about it
- Yet still too little information pro-actively placed in the public domain
Some key factors limiting aid’s impact

- Ex post, but also ex ante and systemic perspectives
- There is no aid system
- The systemic problems are amongst the most important constraints
- Lack of trust of recipients
- Problems at the recipient end: lack of commitment and capacity
- The paradox that lies at the heart of aid
Towards an agenda for changing historical aid relationships

- A step change away from reform based on the “lowest common denominator”

- An international commission on aid for the modern era

- An International Aid Office

- An International Development Aid Fund

- National Aid Implementation Agencies
INTERNATIONAL AID OFFICE

Established by agreement of donor and recipient countries

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AID FUND

Dispersed funds based on Detailed Needs Assessment

Oversight role / quality control

NATIONAL AID IMPLEMENTATION AGENCY

Undertakes aid needs assessment
Buys in expertise as required
Oversees aid disbursements

Compulsory donations by rich countries

AID RECIPIENT COUNTRY

Advice, technical assistance provided on basis of requests and payments by NAIA

Bilateral Aid Agencies
Multilateral Aid Agencies
Specialised Agencies
MFIs
Consultants and Development Specialists