

## KEY QUESTIONS

### the big six

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## What are South Korea's priorities for global development?

### Promoting rural development remains a key priority

The 'Framework Act on International Development Cooperation', first published in 2010 and amended in 2018, outlines the overarching principles of South Korean development cooperation and clarifies the responsibilities of different actors. The Framework Act sets out six 'basic ideas' for development: poverty reduction, human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and humanitarianism, economic cooperation, and peace and prosperity in the international community. The latest amendment added support to developing countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and protecting the human rights of adolescents as objectives of South Korea's development cooperation.

The 'Strategic Plan for International Development Cooperation for 2016-2020', Korea's second published in 2015, translates the Framework Act into concrete strategic priorities for medium-term development policy and indicative volumes of ODA. It prioritizes increasing development assistance to economic infrastructure and environmental policy issues, alignment with the SDGs, funding girls' health and education, and agricultural development. It also places a strong focus on transparency, accountability, and sustainability in development projects. The foreign ministry and wider government have started discussions on the third Strategic plan covering 2021 to 2025. These discussions are expected to continue until the plan goes through an approval process with the Committee for International Development Cooperation (CIDC) expected in late 2020.

A key priority of South Korea's development policy is to promote inclusive and sustainable rural development based on 'Saemaul Undong' (the 'New Village Movement'). Saemaul Undong was a community-based approach that South Korea applied in the 1970s to raise the standard of living in rural parts of the country. Although the movement is associated with former President Park Chung-hee, the father of impeached President Park Geun-hye, it has retained support from the current government. The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Ministry of Public Administration, and regional governments are still implementing Saemaul Undong projects. Rural development is expected to remain a priority of South Korean ODA, and Saemaul Undong will likely remain a key program for implementation.

### Key development funding priorities for 2016 to 2020:

- **Increased ODA:** Gradually increase total ODA to 0.2% of GNI by 2020 (2017: 0.14%)
- **Focus on bilateral ODA:** Maintain ratio of bilateral/multilateral ODA of 70:30 (2017: 74:26)
- **Keep grant/loan ratio:** Maintain ratio of ODA provided as grants vs. loans at 60:40 (2017: 61:39)

Within the five-year Strategic Plan, South Korea's development cooperation is guided by an annual document that outlines specific priorities, the 'International Development Cooperation Action Plan'. The 2019 International Development Cooperation Action Plan, published in January 2019, outlines five sector priorities: transport, health, environment, education, and agriculture and fisheries. The 2020 action plan will continue to prioritize transport, health and education but will also include a focus on IT, and water hygiene and sanitation (WASH), sectors where Korea has a comparative advantage. Grant assistance will be prioritized in four sectors: education, health, public administration and agriculture and rural development.

South Korea has strengthened its action related to empowerment of women and girls including through opening a UNFPA office in Seoul in February 2019 and launching the 'Action with Women and Peace' initiative, as well as strengthened efforts to tackle gender-based violence. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has committed KRW1.1 billion (US\$1 million) to UNFPA to implement Korea's Action with Women and Peace initiative.

In October 2018, the South Korea government adopted two policies to guide its future foreign relations: the 'New Northern Policy' and the 'New Southern Policy'. With these policies, South Korea plans to strengthen its engagement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India as well as expand its involvement in regional infrastructure connectivity projects (such as railways and power generation) in cooperation with North Korea, Russia, China, and former Soviet States in Central Asia. These policies will likely strength-

en South Korea's ongoing development focus on infrastructure activities in the Asian region.

In addition to its thematic initiatives, the government has become more active in global debates around development in recent years. In 2019, Cho Hyun, the permanent representative of South Korea to the United Nations (UN), was elected president of the executive board of the UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Family Planning

Association (UNFPA), and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) for 2019. Following the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan in 2011, South Korea has hosted regular 'Busan Global Partnership Forums' to bring together stakeholders to reinforce commitment to and track progress against the principles agreed. The fifth 'Busan Global Partnership Forum' is in December 2019.