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Concept Note

**Issues and Perspectives
of the international conference of 5 December 2011 in Geneva**

**PAVING THE WAY OF A GLOBAL POLICY
OF BALANCED DEVELOPMENT AND TERRITORIAL COHESION**

**Contribution to the preparation of the G20 summit in Cannes,
of the forum held in Busan and of the world conference Rio+20**

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INTRODUCTION

The globalization of trade brings with it the emergence of the Regions as an issue. The conference organised by the CPRM (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe) in July 2006 in the Azores about Regions and globalization, by initiating a partnership with the United Nations through the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), asserted for the first time that the Regions should be development players in their own right and demanded new world governance that includes the needs and initiatives of the Regions. The first International Convention for a regional approach to development, organised in Marseille in March 2007 by the CPRM, the UNDP and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region demonstrated this by gathering some 1,200 participants from 65 countries representing 900 infra-state authorities. Convinced of the need to rethink the relationship between the levels of development and global governance, their representatives approved a declaration founding an association of the world's Regions. A few months later in Cape Town (South Africa), the statutes of the Global Forum of Regional Associations (FOGAR) were adopted.

The general meeting of FOGAR, held in Manta (Ecuador) in July 2010 decided to open itself up, beyond the networks, to all the first infra-state levels, whatever form they may take according to the various institutional systems existing in the world: Federated States, Regions, Provinces, Governorates etc.

Regions United -FOGAR thus entered a new stage in its construction, with the ambition of being the unique go-between for the States, regional integration bodies and the United Nations' system for all global policies with a strong spatial/regional impact. At the start of 2011, the Regions United / FOGAR established its headquarters in Geneva to be close to the international institutions.

After having developed its initial work around spatial governance of food safety and the role of the Regions in combating climate change through the NRG4SD network, Regions United / FOGAR now wishes to develop the notion of a regional approach to development by becoming the spokesman for a global policy of regional cohesion bringing peoples together further and allowing a better balanced and more sustainable development of our planet to be achieved. The same is true for all the world's citizens confronted with the rise in tension and conflicts of all kinds. But it is above all an ethical question of the vision that each person wishes to see of the future of our common space, involving a humanism that reconciles broad universal values with respect for the diversity of cultural identities.

On 5 December 2011, Regions United / FOGAR will invite to Geneva all of the world players in charge of development policies to debate and find innovative solutions to the limitations of the current mechanisms of international aid. We are starting from this premise: given the impossibility of satisfactorily achieving the millennium goals, we should give priority to an approach:

- Aimed implicitly at reducing disparities in the level of development between and within States, with a concern for equity.
- Giving greater involvement of infra-state authorities in implementing development policies.

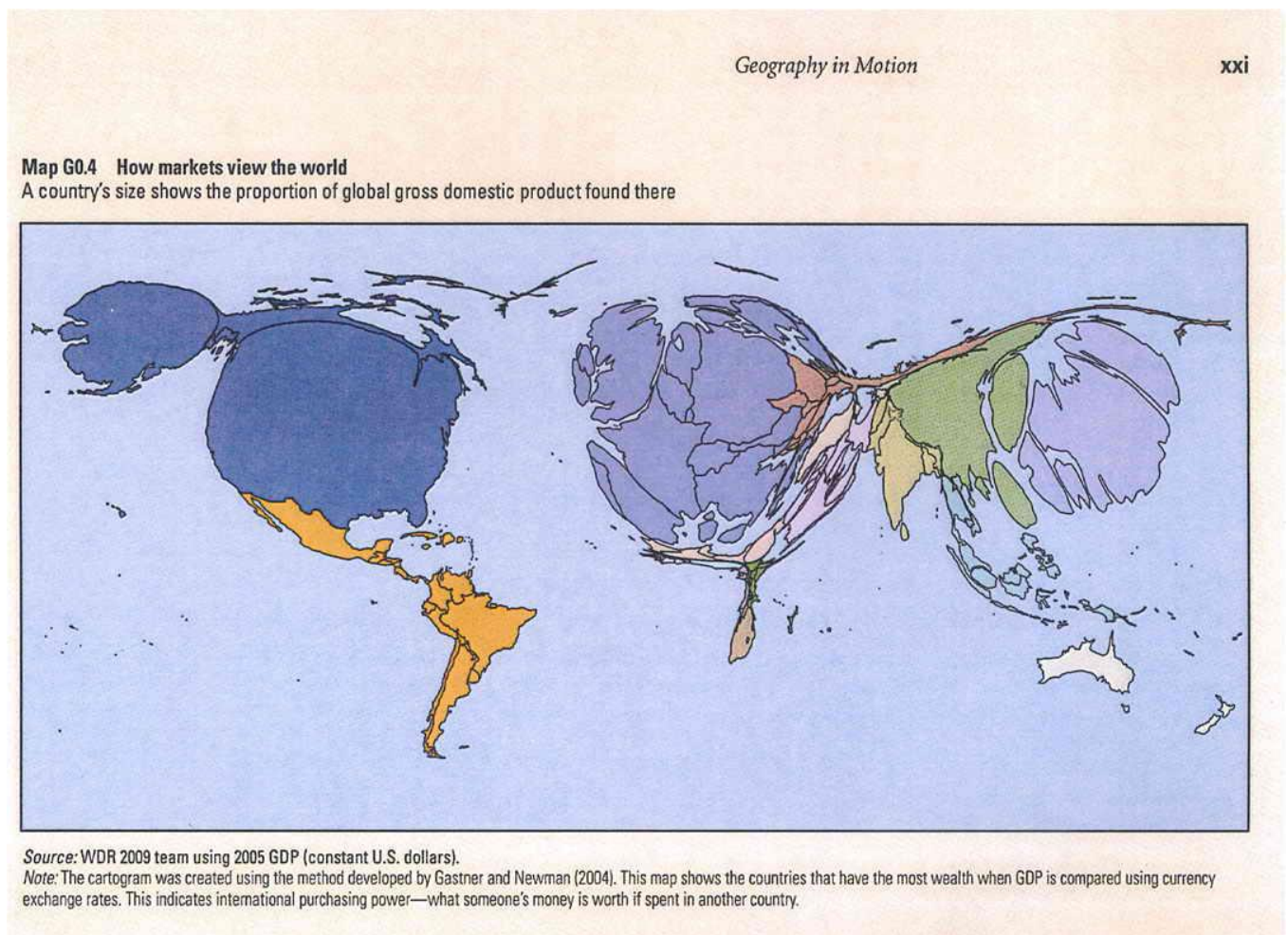
Our November 2010 contribution called "Aspiring for a global policy of regional cohesion" identified all the risks created by development that is over-concentrated on metropolitan approaches only. Although they may undeniably bring about some growth, they leave aside many national and infra-national areas which sink even deeper into poverty and under-development, thus increasing the human suffering that charitable initiatives find hard to relieve. The map below shows that the globalization of trade is a key element for growth but also deepening territorial discrepancies.

The diagnoses currently applied by the main international institutions in charge of development show the need for development which is more balanced spatially, in particular within the framework of the preparation of Rio +20. Although an imbalance may be a positive driving force where it remains

moderate, it hampers development once it becomes excessive and carries with it the seeds of a large part of the conflicts to which the world is currently exposed. The inability of current development policies to resolve these planetary imbalances must be drawn on to invent and open up new avenues and new methods.

Any development mechanism must go hand in hand with public governance, as close to the ground as possible, responsible for managing it. However, it is this what is currently lacking, leaving a significant proportion of the population and our common space without sufficient political and administrative management. But to advocate such a direction, there is a requirement that the governance of the system of aid at the international level is itself irreproachable in its contents and the coherency of its interventions.

It is to promote this new direction that the Regions of the world wish to open up these initial proposals to debate.



Source: Report on the development in the world –World Bank 2009

I- THE MILLENNIUM GOALS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AID: MAIN OBSERVATIONS

1. Contrasting results in terms of outcomes

Just four years from the 2015 deadline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the observations by experts concur on the progress made in terms of development at the global level. The 2010 report drawn up under the aegis of the UN paints a mixed picture of the results obtained so far. Some progress has been recorded, but it remains insufficient compared with the goals set, within a context of economic, food and energy crises which exacerbate inequalities and increase the challenges of development aid.

Providing basic human needs:

The reduction of poverty continues to make progress, despite notable setbacks following the economic slowdown of 2008-2009 and the food and energy crises. However, hunger in the world continues to increase. In Africa, around a quarter of children under five are underweight, mainly due to a lack of food and nutritious food, unsafe drinking water, poor care and eating habits. Experts estimate that 1.4 billion people still lived in extreme poverty in 2005. The effects of the world financial crisis may well be long lasting. Poverty levels will be slightly higher in 2015 (or even up to 2020) than if the economy had continued to grow at the same rate as before the crisis.

The lack of access to education constitutes another major obstacle in improving the living conditions of the populations.

Constructing the basis of sustainable economic development:

During the last ten years, and thanks to the removal of custom duties, the developing countries and the LDCs have seen their access to the markets of the developed countries increase (80% of imports from developing countries admitted free of import duties in 2008 compared to 54% in 98).

Despite the economic downturn, the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is up right around the world. Internet is continuing its expansion, even if this is at a slower pace than last year. However, most of the world's population has no access to it. At the end of 2008, 23% of the world population used Internet (1.6 billion) compared with 15% in the developing world (UN source). Mobile phones are offering new communication possibilities which are crucial in those Regions that until now had no access to the ICTs. In sub-Saharan Africa for example, a region where the penetration of telephone landlines does not exceed 1%, penetration of mobile phones is now much more than 30%. There is no question about the role of mobile technologies as development tools, including in managing disasters.

Even though it remains worrying, the rate of deforestation appears to have slowed thanks to replanting schemes combined with the natural expansion of the forests.

2. Increasing inequalities, in particular, in the poorest Regions

This intermediate review must be nuanced by the fact that it is based on an overall view of progress and setbacks which mask strongly contrasting situations leading to a worrying exacerbation in the inequalities between the populations of different Regions: Inequality between the world's Regions (a falling back by sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia), between countries, but also and above all growing inequalities at the infra-state level between the various Regions, and in particular between urban and rural areas.

Thus, for example, it is reported that only half of the developing world's population uses improved sanitation with daunting disparities between urban and rural areas, with only 40% of the rural populations covered.

In all the developing Regions, children in rural areas run a higher risk of being underweight than children in urban areas. In Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in some Regions of Asia, this disparity grew wider between 1990 and 2008.

It is the most vulnerable populations which are the hardest hit by climate change although they have contributed least to its origin. The risks of mortality, disablement and economic losses due to natural disasters are increasing right around the world, and in particular in the poorest Regions.

3. The effectiveness of official development assistance called into question

Official Development Assistance covers support (loans and grants) given to developing countries whether in the form of gifts for debt relief or aid per se, whether humanitarian, bilateral or multilateral.

3.1 Significant amounts but which remain below the commitments made in 2000:

The amounts of official development assistance (ODA) granted by the developed countries registered increases between 2000 and 2009 despite the financial crisis.

In 2009 ODA came to 120 billion dollars representing 0.31% of the total national income of the developed countries. This constitutes a slight rise compared to 2008 but a slight fall (2%) in gross amounts (122 billion in 2008). The increase between 2008 and 2009 was however mainly due to new loans (+20%), grants having only increased by 5%.

For 2010, the commitments are around 126 billion dollars (2004 constant prices) and highlight a deficit compared to the commitments made at the Gleneagles summit in 2005 by the members of the G8. Experts consider that Africa, in particular sub-Saharan, will receive only 11 billion of the 25 planned, due in large part to the poor performance of certain European donors which send a large proportion of their aid to this continent.

Moreover, most of the increase in aid has not given rise to a real transfer of resources within the developing countries' economies. It is above all debt relief, and not programmable aid which has been affected by the increase in aid.

For most donor countries, aid is way below the 0.7% of GNI set by the United Nations. In 2009, just 5 countries had achieved or exceeded their goals: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. In 2009, the largest donors, in terms of volume, were the United States, followed by France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan.

In 2008, the largest contributors of bilateral aid were the United States (21 billion USD on average 2004-2006 i.e. 30% of the total), Japan (7.8 billion), the United Kingdom (7.4 billion), France (6.9 billion) and Germany (6 billion). The largest multilateral donors were the European Union (8.7 billion i.e. 40% of the total) and the International Development Association (IDA) (6.6 billion i.e. 30% of the total multilateral total).

3.2 The geographical allocation and above all purpose of aid in need of much improvement: making the allocation of aid more objective and strengthening structural aid.

Overall, ODA has increased in many countries where the needs are the greatest. The ODA concentrates on the poorest countries (the least advanced countries receive around a third of the aid total) and for mainly social aid projects to the detriment of structural aid.

The main beneficiaries of ODA in 2006 were: Nigeria (11.4 billion USD i.e. 11% of world ODA), Iraq (8.7 billion), Afghanistan (3 billion), Pakistan, Sudan, Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Vietnam (1.8 billion), Tanzania (1.8 billion), Cameroon (1.7 billion). (OECD sources)

This geographical concentration of the allocated funds strongly begs the question of the criteria and fairness of the allocation among the territories of official development assistance. From this point of view, the weakness of the international system needs to be underscored.

Another weak point of official development assistance: it is increasingly directed towards charity-type work (carried out in the short-term and immediately communicable) to the detriment of structural aid (financing of infrastructure) essential for the basis of sustainable development.

This is especially true for multilateral aid with structural projects now being financed by bilateral aid for projects involving regional interests (the example of a country such as Cambodia shows that it is mainly bilateral cooperation that contributes intentionally to infrastructure efforts: the building of the road network by China, the rail network by Australia, the sanitation systems by Japan). As for multilateral aid, it finances above all the social approach to development, through funding of NGOs (Bilateral aid covers the operations that a donor country makes directly with a developing country or a national or international non-governmental organisation working in the development field. Multilateral aid relates to aid activities financed through the ordinary budget of the multilateral development institutions). The consequence of these mechanisms is a blatant lack of coordination on the ground particularly highlighted at the last G20 in Korea.

Two types of support emerge, involving different financing bodies:

- The structural support, which includes two components: the bilateral within States and multilateral funded primarily by the World Bank, the European Union and development banks;
- The capacity building assistance, under the advice and technical assistance for the implementation of projects, funded primarily by United Nations agencies, the UNDP in particular.

However, to achieve the MDGs within the context of the persistent and growing inequalities described above, policies and structural-type interventions must be adopted pro-actively aimed at eradicating these persistent and growing inequalities between rich and poor, between those living in rural areas in remote areas or in shacks and the better off urban populations and between those who are disadvantaged by their geographical location, gender, age, disability or ethnic group. Moreover, this structural aid must not be the sole preserve of bilateral initiatives that are often conditioned by the well understood economic or political interest of the donor country. It must also find its place as part of multilateral interventions conditioned only by the development need of the beneficiary country.

3.3 A still yet crude yardstick of the effectiveness of aid:

In this respect, the effectiveness of aid is traditionally measured by GDP (or GNI). This "average" indicator, one of the only ones quantified reliably and uniformly globally, however presents defects that have now been widely discussed: the gap between the statistical measurement of the socio-economic

realities and the perception of these realities by the populations and the distortion between the average measurement of GDP and the reality of the infra-state regional disparities. The increase in GDP reflects a change in average income which is usually accompanied by an increase in the number of the poorest people (shown by the increase in the number of people living below the poverty line in many countries, including western ones).

The GNP indicator shows its limitations especially in a context of climate change, in which the market prices do not reflect the impact of the induced environmental costs. The most detailed statistical approaches such as those used by the World Bank (World development report 2009) identify a panel of "main indicators" relating to geography, urbanisation, regional development, international integration and they develop a fuller thematic point of view, but still tricky to interpret. The experimental approaches by the UNDP presented in the Human Development Report 2010 show finally the interest of working with a human development indicator adjusted to inequalities using a gender inequality indicator and a multidimensional poverty indicator.

These more recent works show very clearly that the challenges of the present require a new perspective for the policies. The lack of a strong correlation between economic growth and improvements in terms of health and education, confirmed in the UNDP report, forces us to rethink our intervention models. The technological improvements and the changes to the structure of society now allow us, even in the poorest countries to realise significant gains in other fields. The circulation of ideas between countries is accelerating. The development of innovation has manifestly allowed countries to improve health and education at a very low cost.

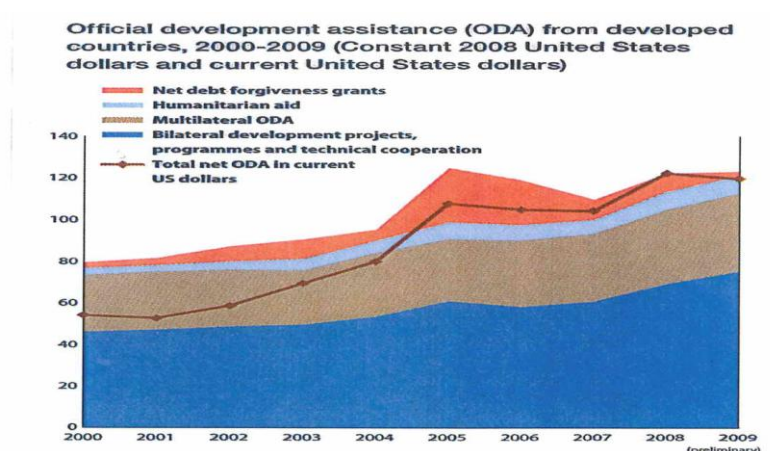
The statistical indicators are important to design and assess policies aimed at ensuring the progress of societies. If the measurements are misleading, the decisions may be inappropriate. Designing appropriate indicators is necessary for improved results and putting forward other points of view likely to speed up social progress.

The Millennium declaration represents the most important promise ever made to the world's most vulnerable people. The MDG framework for accountability derived from the Declaration has generated an unprecedented level of commitment and partnership in building decent, healthier lives for billions of people and in creating an environment that contributes to peace and security. The question now is to know how to speed up the changes produced during the last decade.

3.4 An insufficient coordination of the aid

The UN entrusted the residents coordinated by the UNDP with the coordination on the field of the aids attributed within the framework of the UN system. The next graph shows, however, that 70 % of the aid comes from bilateral mechanisms when the multilateral aid coordinated by the UNDP only represents 8 % of entire aid.

In order to deal with these weaknesses, informal groups of information exchange between donors have been set up by the World Bank on some territories (ex. Casamance). These steps pave the way of more complete coordination forms.



3.5 The end of the North / South model

The globalization of trade and sometimes, the very fast development of emerging nations, have led to a deep reconfiguration of the world economic geography. As such, the models based on North / South approaches appear to be outdated. China establishes itself today as a major player for the aid to the African continent or to the South East Asian countries.

A new approach for the development aid has to be reinvented and to support:

- The plurality of players of this policy, in the North as in the South;
- The interdependency of those players;
- The convergence of their interests, leading to the emergence of a “cooperation” logic striving for replacing the traditional logic for unilateral aid.

II - THE NEW DEVELOPMENT MOMENTUM: SEMANTICS AND COMMITMENTS

Given these observations, all the partner countries and international organisations have expressed a common desire to increase the effectiveness of development aid to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

At the second high-level Forum on the effectiveness of aid in 2005, the participating countries and organisations restated the need for an increase in the amount of aid and endorsed the Paris Declaration on the effectiveness of development aid. This requires a strengthening of control over the aid by the recipient countries and encouraging the donors to align themselves with the national development strategies of these countries. An emphasis is also placed on the need for management based on results as well as accountability of the donors and recipient countries as to the results obtained following the implementation of the development policies. To increase the effectiveness of aid, it is also important to reduce its fragmentation and harmonise the actions of the various donors. The assessments of the implementation of the Paris Declaration (2006 and 2008) showed some progress but which remained too slow. The Accra Action Agenda was adopted at the third high-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness organised by the OECD, the Government of Ghana and the World Bank. It aims at strengthening the momentum brought about by the adoption of the Paris Declaration and, in particular, underscores the importance of the use of national systems and local resources in implementing development actions.

At the fourth high-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that will take place at Busan from 29 November until 1st December 2011 (prepared by the Korean authorities, in partnership with the UNDP, the World Bank and the regional organisations), the Working group on aid effectiveness will report its findings on the third follow-up survey of the implementation of the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda. Besides making a simple assessment, a new framework will be proposed for improving the effectiveness of aid and goals for after 2015 will be set out. This will involve assisting the partner countries in strengthening their structures and the operation of their institutions so that they can design and implement their own development strategies.

Aiming at evaluating and emphasising the role of the local level in development and following a proposal made by the government of Senegal, the second international seminar on aid effectiveness took place, with the participation of the FOGAR, on 9 February in Dakar.

The objective of this seminar was to discuss the importance of the infra-national levels, local structures and local stakeholders of the partner countries in strengthening the effectiveness of development aid. A third Conference on this subject will be organised on 3 and 4 March 2011 for Latin America.

The G20 has come out in favour of development by adopting in Seoul, last November, the Seoul Consensus on development for shared growth as well as a multi-year action plan for development which emphasises the need for strong, balanced and above all inclusive growth. Here again, the ownership by the partner countries of the development policies is viewed as a factor for the success and effectiveness of aid. In its multi-year plan, the G20 emphasises the importance for development, of infrastructure, private investment, access to markets, the development of human resources as well as access to funding. An assessment of the Plan's application will be carried out by the G20 Working group on Development.

In the current economic climate, the least developed countries (LDCs) are particularly vulnerable. This vulnerability is increased by their very high levels of debt. The various development players underline the importance of coming up with different development strategies according to the type of country and its level of development (LDC, Developing Country - DC, Highly Indebted Poor Countries - HIPC). The Brussels' Programme of Action for the LDCs was adopted at the third United Nations' Conference on the LDCs and covers actions for the period 2001-2010. This especially concerns taking action to combat extreme poverty and integrating the LDCs into the world economy. The fourth United Nations Conference on the LDCs will take place at Istanbul from 9 to 13 May 2011. The implementation of the Brussels' Action Plan will be assessed there, the problems of the LDCs will be identified and a new strategy for the 2011-2020 period will be established.

When the United Nations created the LDC category, 25 countries were included. Today they number 49 of which 34 are in Africa. They represent a population of around 630 million people, i.e. about 10% of the world population but account for less than 1% of the total world income. Although some countries are at various stages in catching up the industrialised countries, others remain trapped in under-development. Moreover, these countries are made more fragile by their debt burden which can represent a substantial part of their gross national income.

All of these initiatives seem to us to be going in the right direction provided they also integrate new implementation methods on the ground involving the infra-state levels in their governance and their realization. This is what lies at the heart of the proposals that we will debate at the 5 December 2011 conference.

III - TOWARDS A GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY BALANCED AT THE INFRA-STATE LEVEL: GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

1. The fight against inequalities must include the emergence at the global level of development policies at the infra-state level

Countries' development processes, in the globalized context that we are experiencing, lead to the geographical concentration of resources and wealth production, and to an increase in inequalities between and within infra-state Regions. International awareness of these issues is gaining ground, in particular, thanks to the work carried out by the international bodies.

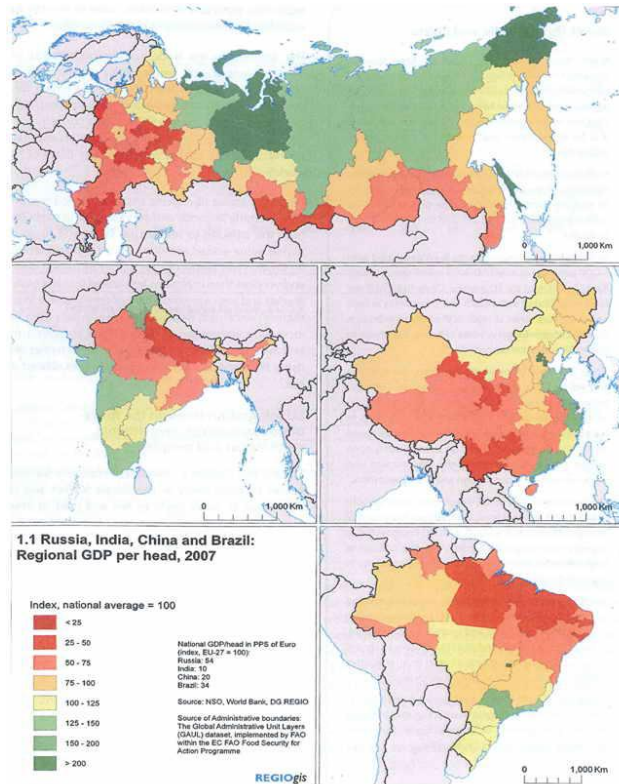
The World Bank's 2009 World Development Report thus shows the phenomena of geographical concentration at work in the Regions as the countries develop. Manufacturers have a preference for choosing certain locations: towns, coastal areas or countries that have a rich network of economic relations. As these countries develop, the most successful adopt policies which make living standards more uniform across space. These concentration effects may turn out to be highly counter-productive by leaving the peripheral Regions, in particular the rural areas far from the cities connected to the "world network", removed from the growth. Although the economic expansion of some Regions already in possession of some advantages they have managed to exploit is also profitable to the Regions located close to these high-performing places, there is no economic fallout for the Regions further away from these economic centres.

This observation makes the implementation of structural infra-state policies aimed at improving the basic infrastructure and connections between the Regions necessary. Thus, currently, the debate about the geographical disparities of development often begins and ends with a study of targeted intervention at the spatial level. The report insists on the requirement to enlarge the scope of action of public authorities: "institutions that unite, infrastructure that connects, and interventions that target" are needed.

The work carried out by the European Commission for its most recent report on cohesion offers, besides Europe, an interesting analysis of the regional inequalities within the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) compared to those of the main developed countries, showing the importance of a balanced development goal within the territories for ensuring growth, national political cohesion and economic and social cohesion. The work by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has also shown within Latin America highly detailed analyses about the worrying rise of disparities between the infra-state levels which lead to economic and social tensions and generate massive migration, whence the importance of providing the infra-state levels with the means to assure their own development.

The World Bank's 2009 reports and that on the contribution of decentralisation policies to growth make similar observations but relatively different recommendations. According to these reports, the three instruments for integration comprised of the institutions, the infrastructures and the incentive policies are prerequisites for a developing country to have access to the benefits of the spatial concentration of production. Concentration is thus stated as the rule for facilitating access to the market and mobility. Convergence is the goal but there is the question of the scale on which this concentration should be made. The World Bank for example identifies the systems of equalisation or redistribution as a potential brake on these effects of scale. It is on this fundamental point that the approach differs for example from that implemented for the past 20 years by the European Union through its cohesion policy.

The map below illustrates perfectly the infra-state discrepancies existing in the BRIC's, with wealth gaps ranging from 1 (dark-red) to 10 (dark-green). This reflects the development imbalances that persist and worsen even in these countries with the highest growth rates. The benefits of growth focus on the most attractive and well connected to global networks territories.



Source : 5th EU cohesion report

2. Structural aid at the infra-state level is a key for achieving balanced and sustainable development of the Regions

The work of the OECD on the economy of Regions has come up with a dual observation:

- The inequalities between Regions and within Regions are now greater than the inequalities between countries: it is therefore at the infra-state level that the issue of the reduction of inequalities and sustainable balanced development of the Regions lies;
- growth at the infra-state level plays a major role in national growth: the more the Regions are given the opportunity of mobilising and exploiting their assets and resources, the more national wealth increases; as part of the overhauled development policies (of which the main principles are the effectiveness of aid, partnership, the development of the abilities of the beneficiaries and their accountability), the implementation of structural actions at the infra-state level emerges as an important lever for major development.

The political and social interest of such an approach appears to us to be undeniable. All the so-called developed countries have long included it in their internal political mechanisms: firstly federated States such as the United States or Germany have for a long time set up equalization systems which guarantee the ability of each of their federated States or Länder to assure their own development goals while remaining linked to the national dynamics. Their development is based on this polycentric approach. China, in a completely different political context, develops through the five-year plans implemented by its provinces, planning methods which are based as much on the intrinsic potential for growth of its Regions as on fairly sophisticated equalization mechanisms between development opportunities. The European Union, for its part, has patiently constructed, in particular at each successive enlargement, a sophisticated

system of differentiated grants between Regions which guarantees equal treatment while offering to the infra-state Regions, in all their diversity, the tools for assuring and taking responsibility for their own growth.

The central issue, sometimes abandoned or challenged by the most developed countries, is at the heart of the concerns of emerging nations, facing the imbalances created by their recent growth. As such, the South-South cooperations are essential to support the countries towards more equitable models for their peoples.

3. Some broad principles of this policy

3.1 Making the beneficiary State accountable for the implementation of the provisions of a real national plan for the development of the territory.

It is at this level alone that questions of scale and strategy must be dealt with since who better than the national level is able to judge the balance between overall growth and the potential of the Regions and between fairness and effectiveness? There is no opposition between the approach called for by the World Bank in favour of the effects of concentration and the desire for balanced development. Everything is a question of scale and extent. Due to the diversity of situations in the world, a practical approach would suggest settling this question by drawing up a national strategy associating most of the economic, social and institutional, national and international players.

There are many advantages to such an approach:

- It allows true national cohesion and a dialogue around shared goals to be constructed;
- It stimulates the reform package which may accompany the implementation of national sectoral plans;
- It favours the coordination of official development aid as underscored by the Seoul consensus adopted by the G20;
- It allows the necessary adaptation of the national territory to the challenges of globalization according to the actual abilities of the Regions, beyond the metropolitan areas alone which are only one of its component parts;
- Finally, it encourages the streamlining and effectiveness of public and private investment.

3.2 Giving priority to structural aid:

Certain factors are very important for the development of a region, such as the infrastructure, the level of education of its inhabitants (which can raise employability) and the ability to attract private investment. Official development policies must enable priority to be given to the development of infrastructure to increase connections between Regions and with the markets, making the region more attractive and allowing it to exploit its own potential. A local approach lacking this dimension runs the danger of failing quickly as it will be too firmly entrenched in its own isolated logic and incapable of interacting. In these conditions a country is better able to integrate its social requirement and to achieve the millennium goals without depending permanently on a life support machine.

By basing itself on shared strategic guidelines and by stating the principles and priorities adopted by the national bodies, a structural policy must enable the whole territory to take better control of its development opportunities, encouraging an increased concentration of the goals to increase the effectiveness of the aid granted. Such a structural policy managed nationally must enable a convergence of the bilateral and multilateral aid on a single structure thereby making national governance accountable. It is on this condition that a structural policy can then be coordinated with the infra-state levels for complementary development policies which are closer to the ground.

3.3 Establishing the infra-state levels and making them accountable:

The infra-national authorities may, through proactive regional development policies, have a significant impact on economic activity and the distribution of the population. Subject to having access to the market, the infra-state players are the best placed to assess and exploit the advantages of the Regions through integrated development policies. They alone can carry them out effectively in enhanced conditions, close to the population and the economic and social players and able to provide responses that best match the expectations on the ground and the challenges of involving public and private players.

We must therefore strengthen the exchange of experience, and support the growing competence of local actors, so they can adapt the "best practices" from other territories to the specifics of their own. It is good to move from a logic of using logic of cooperation.

Globalization does not only bring balance:

- It allows some countries to catch up, gradually bringing themselves up to the standards of developed countries;
- but as we have seen, it is causing a large part of the world to sink further into under-development where political and ethnic tensions and tensions due to climate and food are to be found. This is sometimes the case for whole countries and is more often the case in large infra-state Regions removed from the main currents of development, unable to benefit from the minimum conditions for dealing with their own development challenges. This lack of intermediate structures, between the national and local levels in development countries is, according to us, Regions United / FOGAR, one of the fundamental reasons explaining the inability of international aid to assist these Regions in making economic and social progress.

4.The 5 December 2011 conference

On the basis of these observations, the experience acquired by the infra-state levels throughout the developed world and the demands of the infra-state levels which are beginning to emerge in some developing countries, our conference will be held within the framework of the preparation of Rio+20 and aims to debate the outlines of implementing such a global ambition based on:

- The creation of truly national development strategies enabling improved coordination of bilateral and multilateral aid around shared goals; as well as a better cooperation between Regions, overcoming the traditional distinctions, which are meaningless today.
- The promotion of basic structural policies enabling the bases of a development policy to be developed
- The creation of integrated, multi-year infra-state development plans allowing the various facets of a global approach to be taken into account:
 - o Economic development and innovation
 - o Education and training;
 - o Rural development and food security;
 - o The conservation and promotion of natural resources and ecosystems;
 - o An integrated plan for combating and adapting to climate change;
 - o ...
- The promotion of new levels of governance adapted to taking into account these issues through the strengthening of the capacities and development of local democracy.

Beyond the debate, this means setting up a network of players, both institutional and academic ones, dedicated to this ambition.

CONCLUSION

The members of Regions United / FOGAR express their wish to take a full part in the emergence and accompaniment of these movements, whether in constructing these policies, experimenting or contributing to their implementation at the infra-state levels. All of these elements will be submitted for debate at the 5 December 2011 conference in Geneva in order to:

- Gather the opinions of the main global bilateral and multilateral donors on this new conceptual approach to development policies;
- Debate the various facets of these integrated approaches and their contribution to the millennium goals;
- Highlight the most remarkable experiments carried out in this field on the various continents;
- Formalise North-North South-South partnerships between infra-state authorities to experiment initial approaches around the world in coordination and partnership with the donors;
- Adopt a working agenda for the pursuit of these goals within the global agenda.

In this context, Regions United / FOGAR could intervene on four components:

- An analytical component on the role of Regions in a context of a globalization process and regional inequalities;
- An "advocacy" function in major conferences, so that the territorial dimension is included in the multilateral declarations, in the governance systems and financing mechanisms;
- "Sharing experiences";
- "Consulting / expertise" to support local actors in the acquisition of skills.

The Regions therefore seek:

- To be associated more systematically in the main discussions on changes to development policies and aid effectiveness, whether at the global level or within regional integration bodies;
- To be progressively acknowledged as an inter-governmental organisation (IGO) within the United Nations system and in particular ECOSOC in order to contribute to the various discussion stages on aid issues;
- To set up new multi-partner pilot programmes which include the strengthening of the infra-state levels at the global scale.

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