

Statement of the South Centre*¹

UN High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation

Nairobi, Kenya

3 December 2009

Mr. President of the Conference, Heads of Delegation, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chairman of the Board of the South Centre, H.E. former resident Benjamin W. Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Executive Director of the South Centre, the South Centre is pleased to participate in this Conference, and congratulates you on the successful negotiation of the outcome document.

We thank the hospitality of the Republic of Kenya and also extend our appreciation for the excellent work of the United Nations South-South Unit and the UN secretariat in New York and Nairobi in preparing for this Conference.

Mr. President,

The need for strategic and united collective action on the part of developing countries in the international arena has long been recognised. From the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation thirty years ago to the reaffirmation of the principles of South-South cooperation by the Group of 77 in September 2009 to today's High Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation; from the establishment of South-South political and economic cooperation mechanisms such as the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the various Southern regional cooperation and economic integration organisations, as well as the South Centre as the multilateral intergovernmental thinktank of developing countries, South-South cooperation is an essential element in the South's development process and in multilateral North-South dialogue and global governance.

¹ Presented by Vicente Paolo Yu III, Programme Coordinator, Global Governance for Development, South Centre.

We believe that South-South cooperation will increasingly become a defining element of the future. Its principles and concepts serve as important benchmarks for shaping not only South-South but also North-South relations at the global, regional, and national levels. These will also shape the ways in which the countries of the South achieve their respective development goals and objectives.

In this regard, the basic framework and principles for South-South cooperation have already been articulated by the South. For example, the Havana Programme of Action, the Marrakech Plan of Implementation of South-South Cooperation and the Doha Plan of Action taken together represent a comprehensive framework for intensified cooperation among developing countries. The principles for South-South cooperation were adopted by the foreign ministers of the Group of 77 in September 2008 and supported by the Heads of State and Government of the XVth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in July 2009.²

At the core of South-South cooperation is the belief that achieving development is the South's own responsibility, and that such development can only be achieved under conditions of fundamental equity, social progress, respect for sovereignty, and equal economic and political relationships with developed countries. It lays the foundation for an effective and productive engagement by the countries of the South with each other and with the developed countries and for ensuring that developing countries' development needs and objectives are placed at the heart of multilateral policy discourse and governance.

Mr. President,

In this regard, a key element of South-South cooperation at the multilateral level is that of South-South policy coordination in the context of multilateral policy discussions and negotiations. Multilateral cooperation, premised on

² See the Ministerial Declaration of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, 25 September 2009 (see <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm>, para. 70), reaffirming the adoption at its 32nd meeting (26 September 2008) of the South-South cooperation principles recommended by the Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-XII), 10-13 June 2008. These South-South cooperation principles were supported by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at its XVth Summit in Egypt in July 2009 (NAM Doc. No. NAM/2009/FD/Doc.1, para. 358).

South-South cooperation and North-South engagement, is necessary for the global community to be able to effectively address the multiple challenges and crises that define our times, such as the systemic flaws in the global governance structure, climate change, the global financial crisis, trade relations, and the growing development gap, among other things, in ways that will be economically, politically, socially and ecologically equitable, fair, and sustainable

To do this, there must be a sharing of experiences, a common dialogue, an active engagement, by the countries of the South with each other and with the countries of the North in order to find common but differentiated and equitable approaches to address these challenges. Such engagement, premised on effective South-South policy coordination, works best in a context where the forum and the modalities allow full play for developing countries to participate in multilateral decision-making, the best example of which is the United Nations.

Finally, South-South cooperation needs to be strengthened and supported through a strengthening of the South's own cooperation institutions, including the Group of 77, the NAM, the South Centre, and the various regional and inter-regional institutions. Within the United Nations, specific agencies or units on South cooperation, such as the South-South Unit, play vital roles in supporting South-South cooperation and making it effective on the basis of the principles of South-South cooperation and hence should also be supported and strengthened.

Mr. President,

As we move forward to a new era of South-South cooperation, the South Centre stands ready, within the limits of its capacity and mandate as the intergovernmental thinktank of developing countries, to support South-South cooperation initiatives and to work with partners in the South, the North, and multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, to ensure the effectiveness of South-South cooperation in achieving the South's development objectives.

Thank you, Mr. President