

Statement in the NAM Forum on the 62nd Anniversary of the Principles of Bandung*

Room XXI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

20 April 2017

Thank you very much, Ambassador Valero, Chair of the NAM in Geneva, for your kind invitation to the South Centre to make a statement at this important forum of the NAM on the relevance of the NAM in today's times on the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of the Principles of Bandung.

Today's celebration of the 62nd anniversary of the Principles of Bandung is highly appropriate because of the deeply uncertain times that we are in, and the challenges and opportunities that developing countries face.

The strong solidarity which has guided this Movement in the past decades and its founding principles that underlie such solidarity continue to be important and are even more relevant today as it was in 1961 at the founding of the NAM in Belgrade and in 1955 at the Bandung African-Asian Conference.

The South Centre, as the intergovernmental policy research and analysis think tank of developing countries, like the NAM itself, traces its roots of fostering South-South cooperation and solidarity to the Spirit of Bandung. We stand ready to continue working together with the NAM in its endeavours.

The result of the 1955 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, known as the Ten Principles of Bandung, was a political statement containing the basic principles that would guide the efforts of developing countries to promote peace and cooperation in the world. These principles are worth recalling now:

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small.
4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.
5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
6. Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers, abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries.
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.

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8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

9. Promotion of mutual interests and cooperation.

10. Respect for justice and international obligation.

As we look at our world today, these principles are deeply threatened, and yet, by the same token, their observance is even more needed.

Born out of the struggle against colonialism, and with a common aspiration to develop economically and provide better lives for their peoples, the Non-Aligned Movement remains relevant as one of the most important platforms to promote unity among the countries of the developing world which is so necessary to face their longstanding, emerging and growing challenges. This is particularly true inside the United Nations, where most of the NAM's daily business takes place, as its member states debate, agree on and advance common positions quite successfully on many issues in the multilateral arena, including on political and security issues, health, the right to development, human rights, among others.

The NAM continues to be relevant in providing support to specific member states such as Palestine which continues to face occupation and Cuba which has long been suffering from an embargo by the United States for decades. It remains a strong pillar of support for developing countries fighting against racism, occupation and neo-colonialism. NAM also takes up social and economic issues, so its coordination on these issues with the G77 and China continues to be very important.

The South Centre most recently was at the 60th anniversary of Bandung in 2015 and at the 17th NAM Summit in Isla Margarita in Venezuela in 2016. Both of these important events highlighted for us the importance of South-South cooperation, unity, and progress as exemplified by the NAM. The 17th NAM Summit Isla Margarita Declaration, with its 21 goals, and its Final Document of more than 200 pages, both provide the framework for the continued relevance and unity of the NAM in promoting development, maintaining peace, and preventing war.

Development and poverty eradication continue to be the main challenges that face the South. While the past decades have seen great strides in the development of the South, that progress has not been widespread nor equitable. It is also increasingly becoming more difficult to do so because of the many crises that developing countries are now facing such as climate change and other environmental crises; wars that impact on the peace and stability of developing countries; continuing adverse global economic conditions arising from the responses of developed countries to the global financial crisis; continuing structural economic deficiencies in international trade, investment, intellectual property, health and other policy regimes that make it difficult for developing countries to maintain their policy space for development; the rising threat of global pandemics; and the impact and challenges of the North-South technological divide and the advent of new technology-based automated modes of production on the development prospects of developing countries.

In the face of these myriad of development challenges to the South, the NAM together with other developing groupings such as the G77 and China and the many regional organizations that have emerged as an expression of South solidarity in the past decades inspired by the Bandung

and NAM spirit, are more important than ever in fostering real development-oriented South-South cooperation, unity, and progress.

To conclude, from the lessons that we have learned in working with developing countries and their organizations in various multilateral arena, including with the NAM, it is important for the NAM to continue and enhance those actions that enable it to maintain and advance its positions consistently and coherently. This is much needed especially in a world that has become much more unstable, politically and economically; where South-South solidarity and cooperation are very much in need; and where some developing countries are emerging in some areas which could provide both new opportunities and new challenges for the rebalancing of global power relationships. It is up to the NAM to grasp these opportunities and to effectively address these challenges through its greater unity and solidarity.

In this context, the South Centre looks forward to working closely with the NAM and its Member States.

Thank you.