

CONCEPT NOTE

G77 and China Geneva Chapter - South Centre

Brainstorming meeting in preparation of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)

12 September 2018

Time: 10.00 a.m.–13.00 p.m

Venue: Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Background

Since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among developing countries (1978), South- South cooperation has intensified significantly and increasingly engaged national and international players, fostering regional integration and strengthening its contribution to sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions. “*South-South Cooperation is increasingly critical to bolstering the productive capacities of developing countries and has positive impacts on trade and financial flows, technological capabilities and economic growth, and reiterating the importance of global partnerships (Resolution 72/237)*”¹.

Back in 1972, the UN General Assembly created a Working Group on technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) that recommended the creation of a special unit for TCDC. Two years later, in 1974, the TCDC unit was established within UNDP. A milestone event in the history of SSC in the UN was the first UN Conference on TCDC, which was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1978. The first-ever meeting on TCDC at the UN gathered 138 ministers of foreign affairs of the Global South. It adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), a robust framework of recommendations for Promoting and Implementing TCDC at UN and its member states. Over the past decades several UN resolutions and activities of the UN focused on SSC as a complementary driving force to support the individual and collective pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in the developing world.

More recently, South-South cooperation has gained greater attention in the international agenda in several key outcomes. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for instance, adopted in 2015, under Goal 17, highlights the importance of South-South cooperation as a complement to global efforts on development. Also, the UN Secretary-General report on the repositioning of the UN development system (A/72/684–E/2018/7), called for greater support to and leverage South-South cooperation. Furthermore, the importance of SSC was also emphasized in some other key major frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. SSC has been integrated in several working programmes of UN agencies as per annual requests of GA resolutions on the matter.

Marking the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 71/318 and 71/244 mandate the UN to convene a Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South cooperation (BAPA+40). The Conference will be hosted by the Republic of Argentina in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019.

Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77 and China, the largest group of the United Nations, reiterated in their forty-first annual meeting held at United Nations

¹ A/RES/72/237 - Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2017

Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2017², their position that “*South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation and reaffirmed that South-South cooperation is a collective endeavour of developing countries. Therefore, South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion, as reaffirmed in the Nairobi outcome document. In this context, the Ministers stressed that South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South. South-South cooperation, which is critical for developing countries, therefore requires long-term vision and a global institutional arrangement, as envisioned at the Second South Summit.*”

The long-standing position of the group is that South-South Cooperation is a demonstration of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, as the 2030 Agenda. As laid out in the Nairobi Outcome document, South-South Cooperation and its agenda have to be set by countries of the South and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership, and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.

The G77 and China’s 2017 ministerial statement also stated that BAPA+40 will present an opportunity to enhance the current institutional arrangements to effectively support South-South cooperation and promote South-South agenda.

The way to BAPA+40

The Second United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation will be an opportunity to discuss the progress made on SSC since the adoption of BAPA and the role of SSC in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard, particular emphasis will be placed on the role of partnerships among all stakeholders to strengthen South-South cooperation. The conference also aims at reviewing the trends in South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC), including the progress made by the international community, in particular the UN, in supporting and promoting such cooperation and identifying new opportunities, as well as challenges and suggestions to overcome them. The Conference is expected to identify the needs and policy recommendations to the challenges faced by the practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation and to generate innovative approaches.

The resolution 71/318 of the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a background note, including proposals for the overarching theme of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, and sub-themes for the interactive panel discussions, for the consideration of Member States.

Accordingly, in January 2018, the Secretary General note (A/72/711) entitled “Preparatory process of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation” proposed the “Role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities” as the overarching theme of the Conference, and the following four subthemes:

- 1. Comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation*
- 2. Challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation*
- 3. Sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories*
- 4. Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation*

² Ministerial Declaration adopted by the 41st Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 (New York, 22 September 2017). Available at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2017.htm>

In the preparations for the Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, the UN Secretary-General has been requested to prepare a “comprehensive report, consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference, no later than August 2018, reviewing the trends in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, including the progress made by the international community, in particular the United Nations, in supporting and promoting such cooperation and identifying new opportunities, as well as challenges and suggestions to overcome them.”

The draft outcome document will be prepared by co-chairs to be nominated by the President of the General Assembly. Negotiations on the draft outcome will begin in November 2018. Active engagement of the G77 and China and coordination in the process will be crucial to ensure an outcome that reflects the longstanding positions of the group and the group’s involvement in shaping how the UN system can further strengthen its support for South-South Cooperation in a manner that is shaped by the South so as to provide opportunities for developing countries in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Objective

Given the important role of Geneva as the place where several multilateral negotiations processes relevant to the achievement of the SDGs take place, such as on trade, development, health, intellectual property, and environment, the Geneva Chapter of the G77 and China has a unique role to play in ensuring that the development discourse and perspectives that the group carries and puts forward in UNCTAD in relation to the role and use of South-South cooperation and its complementarity with North-South development cooperation are fully reflected in the negotiations and outcome of BAPA+40. This can be done through the G77 and China Geneva Chapter being able to actively engage in and work with the New York Chapter in developing the group’s positions and putting these positions forward in the context of the BAPA+40 negotiations.

In this context, the G77 and China Geneva Chapter, with support from the South Centre, will hold a brainstorming meeting with the aim to provide a platform for the Group’s members to brainstorm on and discuss the opportunities and challenges on the role of SSC in the contexts of the 2030 Agenda in view of the forthcoming Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. Senior officials from the UN Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the agency serving as the secretariat for the BAPA+40 process, the South Centre, and UNCTAD will be invited to speak during this workshop.

Background Documents:

- Adopted Decision on the theme and sub-themes of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (A/72/L.47, 6 April 2018)
- Note by the Secretary-General: Preparatory process of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (A/72/711 – 29 January 2018)
- South-South cooperation: resolution adopted by the General Assembly [on the report of the Second Committee (A/72/425/Add.2)] (A/RES/72/237 – 20 December 2017)
- Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development (A/72/425/Add.2 – 7 December 2017)
- Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation: resolution adopted by the General Assembly (A/RES/71/318 – 28 August 2017)

Relevant Historical Documents:

- Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978)
- Nairobi Outcome Document of the United Nations High-level Conference on SSC (2009)

Tentative Programme

10:00 – 10:30 Opening Session

H.E. Mr. **Farukh Amil**, Permanent Representative of the of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and Chair of the G77 and China Geneva Chapter

Prof. Dr. **Carlos Correa**, Executive Director of the South Centre

Dr. **Mukhisa Kituyi**, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (TBC)

H.E. Mr. **Carlos Mario Foradori**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Argentine Republic to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

10:30-11:00 The role of UN Agencies and Southern IGOs in the promotion of South-South cooperation to achieve the 2030 Agenda

Mr. **Jorge Chediek**, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and UN SG Envoy on South-South Cooperation (Video Message)

Ms. **Yuefen Li**, Senior Adviser, South-South Cooperation and Development Finance

Dr. (Ms.) **Rashmi Banga**, Senior Economic Affairs Officer & Officer-in-charge, Unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration Among Developing Countries, Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, UNCTAD

11:00-11:30 Lessons and Opportunities for South-South Cooperation: Digital Cooperation and Development Financing

Dr. **Jovan Kurbalija**, Executive Director, Secretariat of the UN Secretary General High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation

Mr. **Torbjörn Fredriksson**, Chief of the ICT Policy Section at the Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD)

11:30-12:45 Brainstorming Discussion with delegations:

Moderator: Mr. **Vicente Paolo Yu**, Programme Coordinator, South Centre

- The role of SSC in achieving Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and other related multilateral outcomes of 2015: challenges and opportunities
- What outcomes should G77 and China seek from BAPA+40 and what developed countries are expected to push
- The role of Geneva G77 and China delegations in supporting BAPA+40 process

12:45 – 13:00 Wrap up and closing remarks
