



High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

1-3 December 2009, Nairobi, Kenya



Press Release

UN opens high-level meeting to boost South-South cooperation on 1 December in Nairobi

South-South Conference to highlight interaction among developing countries and their higher profile in world economy and decision-making

(United Nations New York, 24 November) The most important UN meeting on South-South cooperation in decades will highlight growing political and economic ties within the developing world, as countries from the South assume leading roles in decisions on hot global issues ranging from economic recovery to food security and climate change.

Hosted by Kenya and taking place at the UN's Nairobi headquarters, the 1-3 December conference will seek to promote and sharpen the benefits of mutual support among developing and transition economies, as well as maintain support for the process from the developed world through "triangular" cooperation. Negotiation of an outcome document continues this week at the UN in New York.

Participation in the **High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation** is expected at Head of State and ministerial levels. UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and UN Development Programme Administrator Helen Clark are among the senior officials who will attend.

Shaping global governance and the world economy

Correlated with the new economic heft of the developing world is the rapid pace of South-South trade and investment. Two new reports of the Secretary-General (A/64/321 and A/64/504) highlight the current trends:

- South-South merchandise trade has grown by an average 13.4 per cent per year since 1995, reaching \$2.4 trillion, or 20 per cent of world trade, by 2007. Exports from emerging market and developing countries have grown to about 40 per cent of the overall world total.
- During the same period, the South-South share of African exports grew by an average of 7 per cent a year, and combined annual African exports to India and China rose to about \$40 billion.
- Total outgoing flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) from developing nations hit a record \$253 billion in 2007, constituting about one-eighth of the world total. More than 40 per cent of developing country FDI is invested in the economically vulnerable least developed countries (LDCs).
- Developing countries have become increasingly important sources of development assistance. If pledges are met, total flows could reach \$15 billion by next year.

These South-South success stories, the Secretary-General indicates, are leavened by other difficult and destabilizing trends. These include sharp economic reversals in many countries in 2008-9, difficulties in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, an increase in the number of the malnourished to exceed one billion, and the ominous impacts of climate change.

The developing world is assuming an ever-more integrated and influential role in reaching decisions in these problem areas.

The UN's 1978 **Buenos Aires Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries** was an early milestone. Major developments in South-South cooperation date back even further, to the preceding decade. New international agreements in the 1960s that have helped to shape world events ever since include the formation of the Group of 77 developing countries (G77), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Since 2008, the kinds of discussions on global economic policy once carried out in the relatively exclusive G8 club of countries are taking place in the more inclusive G20, and both the Secretary-General and the UN General Assembly are driving home the point that the consequences of the economic crisis are felt by another "G" group -- the G-192. They point out that all countries feel the effects of the crisis, and need to be involved in setting the terms of recovery and reform.

With world hunger growing, 26 developing and developed countries met at the G8 summit in L'Aquila, Italy, in July to agree on a forceful and comprehensive action plan on food, backed by commitments for increased ODA for agriculture. These principles were more widely endorsed by UN Member States last week in Rome, at the Summit on World Food Security.

Recognizing the complexity of climate change negotiations and the limited time before talks resume this December in Copenhagen, the Secretary-General convened the largest-ever climate change summit during the September General Assembly. Arriving at a response to perhaps the biggest global challenge of our generation will entail a North-South partnership, and both sides have been taking steps to move closer to agreement.

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