

**COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY:
PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP AND
INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**



United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

**2021 INTER-REGIONAL
DIALOGUE AND STOCKTAKING
FOR ADVANCING SOUTH-SOUTH
AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION
IN THE ARAB STATES, EUROPE
AND THE CIS**

6-8 APRIL 2021

SUMMARY REPORT



Organised by the Division for
Arab States, Europe and the CIS,
United Nations Office for
South-South Cooperation
Istanbul, Turkey

Structure of the Report

First and foremost, only salient points have been reflected across the report due to space constraints, though some of which have been intentionally repeated for further considerations and follow-up. Hopefully, this report will also be very informative to other interested stakeholders.

Following the **Introduction**, **Section I** provides the key takeaways and possible opportunities from each day. It ends with some follow-up commitments from the UNOSSC Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS.

Section II provides a summary of remarks of speakers. Speakers' understanding is sought for any inadvertent omissions. All received written statements, presentations and transcripts of recordings are in file with the organising team.

Annex contains a set of background documents, including the source link to obtain the summary report of the 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation (17-19 March 2021), when it becomes available. This is to complement the discussions on Day 2.

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Introduction

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, an integrated and coordinated international response has increasingly gained its necessity in confronting this crisis at country, regional and global levels, as well as in overcoming the challenges facing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2021 UN World Economic Situation and Prospects report underscored that sustained recovery from the pandemic will depend not only on the size of the stimulus measures, and the quick roll-out of vaccines, but also on the quality of these measures to build resilience against future shocks. Appropriate policy and institutional reforms, including human resources capacities, will undoubtedly accelerate the mobilisation of resources and encourage international and regional partners to finance development efforts.

During the 19th session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration in May 2020, held under the overall theme of “promoting effective governance and institutional reform to accelerate delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals”, with particular reference to the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery, recommended actions to:

- Strengthen public sector capabilities for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Invest in the future public sector workforce; and
- Expand the use of digital technologies and address digital divides.

The Committee also stressed the importance of strengthening the capacity of institutions and re-establishing credible governance and public administration institutions in countries affected by conflict. Finally, the Committee reiterated the important role of subnational governments in delivering the SDGs, and that more efforts are needed to strengthen local government finance and financial management through concerted global actions. This is key in order to address severe budgetary challenges and financial risks, that Governments are currently facing at the subnational level.

Throughout the pandemic, countries in the Arab States and Europe and the CIS regions focused on solutions through innovations in public administration. Evidence showed that the transfer of knowledge and the ‘know-how’, especially through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, can, with minimal cost, help countries to solve some of their pressing problems. The BAPA+40 outcome document of the second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019 also underlined the imperative for sharing knowledge, experiences, best practices, and homegrown development approaches. However, today’s challenges are no longer confined to one country or region, they transcend boundaries and affect peoples and communities disproportionately. This is where collective action, solidarity, international cooperation, and multilateralism are so crucial.

South-South cooperation (SSC), as a complement to North-South cooperation, continues to play a prominent role for achieving sustainable development. Within this ever-growing space, many efforts are already under way among countries and within the UN system to leverage this form of cooperation in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as other internationally agreed development goals. The BAPA +40 outcome document also reaffirmed the role of UN system entities in this endeavour, including the UN Country Teams (UNCTs), and called on the entities to continue supporting regional and sub-regional organisations. It is worth noting that a significant number of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) and COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessments (SEIAs) carried out by the UNCTs, underline the importance of South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, and regional and inter-regional integration and cooperation, covering several sectors and themes.

Within the above overall context, **Day 1** of the Inter-regional Dialogue focused on identifying key public policy challenges and opportunities.

Day 2 deep-dove into the key outcomes of the 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation, which took place during 17-19 March 2021, and identified key opportunities and demands for strengthening national capacities for South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation in the two regions, including from the perspective of durable peace in the Arab region.

Day 3 brought together the UN system for a conversation on how to scale-up support to national and regional development priorities through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation. It also discussed the roll-out of the first ever UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development. In addition, the session provided a platform for the participants to share successful innovative approaches and examples in public policy leadership, as well as SSTC for possible adaption and/or scaling up in other countries facing similar challenges.

All sessions were enriched by renowned public policy experts, directors general for development cooperation, other senior public officials, senior and technical level UN representatives, representatives from international financial institutions, regional inter-governmental organisations, and think tanks. There were over 200 registrants from over 40 countries, across Arab states, Europe and the CIS, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America.

On behalf of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the core organising team would like to thank everyone whose support and collaboration made this meeting possible, especially under current challenging operating environment. We are particularly grateful to the representatives of those institutions that gave their valuable time to contribute to each session.

— *Zanofer Ismalebbe, Sayyora Arifdjanova, Tingwei Yin, Alyssa Chhim and Naylya Berezovskaya*



The Objectives

1. **Identify** key public policy challenges in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery, while exploring current and emerging demands for support;
2. **Deliberate** on opportunities for strengthened inter-, intra- and sub-regional collaboration, through evidence-based examples and partnership modalities, and recommend actions to overcome challenges and bottlenecks;
3. **Discuss** the role of a national architecture for South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, and key elements for making those institutions more effective and efficient;
4. **Discuss** how the UN system entities can, in a more systematic and coherent manner, support South-South, East-East and triangular efforts of partner countries both at the regional and country levels, to enhance the impact of UN operational activities for development; and
5. **Serve** as a platform for sharing experience, networking, finding synergies, complementarity and optimisation of capacities and resources towards collective actions in Arab states, Europe and the CIS.

Section I: Key Takeaways and Possible Opportunities

Day 1: Tuesday, 6 April 2021

The Opening and Long-term Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Regional and Inter-regional Policy Coherence and Integration: Challenges and Opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

- The impact of COVID-19 pandemic is beyond imaginable. The effects of the COVID-19 crisis have exacerbated the profound economic and existing social inequalities and revealed the weakness of the current economic development models. Without sustained collective action, the pandemic could leave a legacy of widening inequalities within and between nations, with the most vulnerable left further behind.
- One group of countries is recovering on the back of strong stimulus measures, while many others are sinking deeper into a cycle of poverty, unsustainable debt, and austerity due to their inability to borrow on favourable conditions, or stimulate their economies. This is a big test for the international community and the UN. It is also a test for the ability of regional, sub-regional and cross-regional integration to enhance full equality in recovery efforts.
- So far, the global development cooperation response has been too bilateral, fragmented, and compartmentalised. The multi-faceted health, humanitarian and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have made the case for a 'muscular multilateralism' stronger than ever. When the outbreak began, the UN Development System (UNDS) stood firm and worked together to tackle the immediate crisis. Now the system must help the partners to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
- The pandemic also unveiled the structural weaknesses in institutions, underlined the importance of core values of good governance, and made the challenges facing the public sector that existed before the pandemic, ever more prevalent and prominent. Some 'quick-fix' measures also resulted in overly centralised modes of policy making.
- Although each government operates in a unique context, and while there is no silver bullet in governance, exchanging ideas and sharing experience can help governments to find the best fitting solutions for their own local settings. Thus, public policy should employ flexible planning and implementation mechanisms. Tools used should also become technologically savvy and flexible.
- Responses to the pandemic so far have already shown that, with bold concerted actions, underpinned by national leadership and ownership, transformative changes are possible on a scale and at a speed, far beyond what could have been envisioned

Section I: Key Takeaways and Possible Opportunities

before. Strong social protection systems, jobs and livelihoods, digital transformation, fiscal space and debt issues, are likely to feature significantly in 2021. It is imperative to place transparency and accountability at the core in recovery efforts.

- The pandemic can only be defeated through global and cross-border coordination and collaboration. Less than 20 percent of the historic US\$16 trillion in stimulus and recovery funds has been spent in developing countries. These countries are saddled with rising debt levels, which limit their ability to provide much-needed public healthcare and social protection. Unquestionably, this highlights the need for better and deeper SSTC and collaboration.
- SSC, whether in times of the pandemic or not, is an effective tool to mobilise global solidarity, and drive progress towards achieving the SDGs. Many countries in the Global South have built thriving economies and societies, and in recent times, are driving much of the global economic dynamism. A recent study on the costing of SSC, carried out by an UN entity, found that SSTC:
 - » Generates significant direct returns to investments;
 - » Generates knowledge that is highly relevant to development contexts, which provides more efficiency in achieving results; and
 - » Mobilises domestic financing as governments realise that investment in SSTC does not only enable them to meet their development objectives, but also allows them to contribute to their international relations goals.
- Critical areas of SSTC for better recovery from COVID-19, and to the SDG-aligned development include:
 - » Building resilient economies and societies, improving the health sector, regional value chains in health-related products and services, food security, social safety nets, and water access and quality;
 - » Scaling-up financial resources through redirection of lending programmes towards health-related investment projects, and investment by multilateral, regional and bilateral, financial and development institutions in SSTC;
 - » Facilitating connectivity, as COVID-19 led to almost an entire lockdown of transportation. This is an opportunity to innovate in transportation and cross-border movement;
 - » Addressing transboundary risks in the post COVID-19 era. A time to explore the linkages between health and environment, enhancing a number of relevant conventions, and evaluate environmental agreements that deal with various risks such as the quality of water; and
 - » Prioritising sustainable and resilient recovery, providing policy solutions for green and digital recovery, promoting circular economy, and education solutions. Now is the time for countries to share best practices, knowledge and concrete solutions on topics such as the circular economy.
- There is also a significant number of very engaged private sector companies, cooperatives, women-owned associations and businesses that would be open to engage further. The three areas, in which SSC and policies on private sector development must focus on, are:
 - » Inclusive business that include the poor as part of their core operations;
 - » Digital destruction and the digital divide, which includes ensuring cybersecurity and infrastructure for connectivity; and

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- » Financing and investment in long term development projects.
- The UN is stepping up its game to advance the SSTC agenda. The new programming instruments of the UNDS reform, emphasise “the need and importance of actively facilitating SSTC, by identifying opportunities for cross-border collaboration between countries and UN system-wide regional strategies”. At the country level, there is a renewed and empowered leadership by UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs). Increasingly, these are better networked within and across regions. The opportunity must be seized to keep strengthening the cross-fertilisation of experience and to address problems that do not respect national borders.
- The recent Common Country Analyses (CCAs) have begun including solid data-based analyses of cross-border and regional aspects that may impact the national development landscapes. Similarly, the UNSDCF outlines the UN’s role as a facilitator, broker, and supporter to position countries in the sub-regional and geo-political context through SSTC.
- Beyond the country level, the regional UNDS reform process reflects a commitment to use all the regional UNDS assets in a more unified manner, and to advance the common objective of supporting Member States in addressing cross-border, sub-regional and regional issues. The UN system continues to provide platforms and support programmes that focus on cross-border issues. These platforms and programmes promote regional integration, consolidate knowledge bases that strengthen research, analysis, and data gathering, as well as enable evidence-based policymaking, and knowledge exchanges in the regions and beyond.
- A multi-stakeholder approach is key. At the regional level, UN entities and Regional Commissions continue to create a space for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and for intra-regional dialogue among government representatives, parliamentarians, academia, the private sector, regional inter-governmental bodies, civil society organisations, youth, and other stakeholders.
- South-South mechanisms are also important for sharing experiences and technological capacity building and transfer technologies to least developed countries (LDCs). This means enhancing industrial design capacity and competitiveness in the LDCs, and drawing attention to voluntary and mutually agreed terms and conditions. This is even more relevant in the developing country context, given that these countries share common development challenges, and can draw from their common experiences.
- Finally, SSTC is also intrinsically linked to the bigger development cooperation architecture. COVID-19 showed that the capacity of the official development assistance (ODA) is weak. The total amount is practically unchanged, while there is a dramatic change between grants and loans. In these circumstances, SSC can be a vehicle to reform the overall development cooperation system. There is still an opportunity to turn one-way knowledge and policy transfer to a mutual learning experience from diverse contexts, thereby possibly setting up new patterns, and possibly benefitting even developed countries too.

Day 2: Wednesday, 7 April 2021

The Outcomes of the 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation: Reflections and Priority Actions for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, and Cross-regional Collaboration

- The DG Forum reaffirmed the critical role of solidarity, and underlined the importance of institutional capacity strengthening in every country. Countries to become effective players in SSC, they need to ensure that a set of “pillars” of a national ecosystem is in place. The pillars consist of a political will, a national strategy for SSTC, a national focal point or body for coordinating SSC interventions, and national information bases that assist in mapping the available expertise in the country, as well as performance management systems and financing mechanisms.
- To strengthen the national architecture of SSTC with the support of the UN and other development partners, a number of considerations are critical. These include resilience, determination, adequate economic and political support, competent human resources, and good cooperation mechanisms between the public and private sectors, as well as credible alliances and partnerships for positioning countries as receivers and/or providers.
- There is a need to focus on overcoming of the digital gap as a prerequisite for sustainable development and leaving no one behind. Addressing this digital divide will strengthen the ability of all stakeholders of SSC to be connected to each other. It is vital for countries to be able to create a robust marketplace of solutions, whereby providers and beneficiaries can connect seamlessly, and exchanges can happen effectively.
- SSC can support the strengthening of data collection and analysis required to sustain and preserve peace and stability, integrating environmental risk considerations, human security, climate actions, digital and technological regional cooperation. This includes strengthening regional broadband infrastructure, promoting and harmonising regional digital legislations, as well as building innovation labs.
- South-South and regional cooperation can also aid in facilitating stabilisation, reconciliation and peacebuilding. The adoption of short-term solutions can also lead to a longer-term vision and strategies for recovery and development in relevant countries.
- SSC is also critically needed in social protection to support policies, extend social safety net mechanisms, and access to basic social services by learning from each other and transferring existing tools to each country’s local context. SSC is also key in addressing intra- and inter-communal tensions and conflicts, which most of the time have a spill-over effect across the borders.
- Member States need to make clear what kinds of support they need from the UN entities. They need to be active in having a voice to shape their agenda of cooperation with UN entities, and make strategic use of the UN support. However, such a strategic approach to cooperation with the UN should not be limited to large players only, but also for smaller countries or countries that have less resources to invest. Although

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roughly 80 percent of funding for the UNDS still stems from Member States that are mostly from a small group of large OECD-Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members, it is important to keep in mind that SSTC can be a rallying point for cooperation beyond dominant schemes and expansion in alternative forms of collaboration. There are so many ways that SSTC can be embraced by stakeholders, no matter where they sit geographically. Terminology and frames have also come up again in South-South, East-East, and East-South. What all these framings do, is highlight cooperation formats behind traditional North-South schemes that are still dominated by the ODA.

- There is considerable space for more cooperation amongst other players, the UN and traditional development partners. Triangular schemes provide good examples of what a diversification of cooperation can look like. It can be pursued to facilitate adaptation of the knowledge from one country to the other, applying it to the context and making it actionable. Thus, the SSTC agenda can be embraced in many different, yet creative ways. Traditional and emerging donors have integrated triangular cooperation approaches to their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by pooling resources and know-how with their sister organisations in Europe and with the UN.
- Overall, stronger recognition on the importance of building networks and platforms at multi-county level is needed. In addition, the documentation and sharing of successful experiences, and the investment in independent institutions such as universities and research institutions, are needed to enhance documentation efforts. These can all support the advancement of SSC.

DAY 3: Thursday, 8 April 2021

The Last Decade of Action: A Response to National and Regional Demands and Priorities in the Arab States and ECIS Regions, through South-South, East-East and Triangular Cooperation

- Countries have made significant progress in achieving the SDGs, yet challenges continue to persist, as demonstrated in the UNSDCF. An array of reasons, from unresolved conflicts to different and technical regulations that make sub-regional trade difficult, reinforces the need for more joint UN capacity and analysis, high-level stakeholder engagement and stronger prioritisation of operational work.
- UN positioning regarding bilateral and multilateral cooperation processes and its engagement with the international financial institutions, should also be enhanced. Especially, in terms of joint progress analysis, while ensuring that all development partners' efforts leave no one behind. There is also a need to enhance the strategic value proposition of the UN system.
- Undoubtedly, UN entities consider SSTC as one of the modes of engagement or programmatic approaches to work with partners, both at the country and regional levels. The reformed UNDS and regional agenda of governments allow UNCTs to utilise South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation as key elements and opportunities to advance the sustainable development agenda. It can also help with the global positioning of countries as active international and regional players.
- The UN Results Groups are also tasked with the identification of possible new areas for sub-regional and regional cooperation to address countries' development needs and challenges, as well as opportunities to highlight their good practices and achievement within various areas for SSC. The regional Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs) pull together the UN system-wide expertise in response to the identified regional challenges and development issues. The IBCs also support regional exchanges of practices to enable effective cooperation, and consider the integration of SSC as a mode of work for the IBCs.
- Some of the areas for future collaboration with IBCs through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation include:
 - » The transformation of food systems to ensure the environmental and economic sustainability of food systems from farm to fork;
 - » The use of treated wastewater for irrigation and food security and also for the management of aquifer recharge; and
 - » The strengthening of national capacity in reviewing, updating, and tracking the nationally determined contributions (NDCs), as well as developing the country's monitoring systems for adaptation, and supporting Member States in developing project proposals to access climate finance and funds.

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- In close cooperation with national counterparts, the UN system can support SSC through expanding concrete funding mechanisms beyond ODA. For RCs and UNCTs, bilateral regional or global trust funds can be essential mechanisms for developing SSTC. It is also important that Member States and other stakeholders are more explicit about their needs, and what they can offer, as this assists UN entities to ensure their support is more meaningful. Furthermore, preferences of the countries regarding which country to learn from, should also guide the support from UN entities.
- The UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development and the forthcoming Action Plan are designed to support national priorities and to drive forward the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs. The strategy is not reinventing the wheel but is building on the existing frameworks to harmonise the different approaches, adopted by UN entities, in a coordinated manner.
- The new strategy can indeed provide an important impetus for some 'policy creativity' emerging from the South, which has been most recently witnessed in dealing with the pandemic. It also aims to leverage the UNDS reform, particularly the planning instruments such as the CCA and UNSDCF. Bearing in mind that there are different regional and country contexts, SSTC should also be considered as a transversal matter.
- SSTC tools and guidance need to be strengthened to aid UNCTs to identify partners and accelerate results, and demonstrate the impact of SSTC. Solutions, innovations and approaches identified and created across UN programmes have the potential to be adapted and replicated through SSTC. They all need to be documented and systematically exchanged at scale. However, there must be more incentives to operationalise and upscale SSTC, while improving access to funding.
- The UNOSSC can help with identifying the potentials for greater inter-regional policy development and cooperation on issues of strategic interest for the UN system by facilitating specific strategic inter-regional policy initiatives and the channeling of the UN System-wide Strategy and its action plan for discussion and action by Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) and IBCs.
- Member States and UN entities collaborate through innovative approaches and mechanisms that can be used, adapted, or scaled up to equip stakeholders with more tools in harnessing existing opportunities. Examples include:
 - » Capacity building of ODA management systems;
 - » UNOSSC administered Trust Funds (UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF), the India Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA) and the India-UN Development Partnership Fund); and
 - » Various other UNOSSC initiatives such as the Global South-South Development Expo, Global Thinkers Initiative, Global South-South Development Center Project, Youth4South Initiative and South-South Galaxy, which is a global platform for knowledge sharing and partnership brokering.
- Finally, in order to strengthen the link between global, regional and national levels and ensure policies, knowledge and practice form a healthy circle that feed into each other, strengthen and scale up activities that support policy, knowledge, institutional capacity, and financing mechanisms.

UNOSSC's Follow-up Commitments

The meeting has resulted in several useful perspectives and brought out possible opportunities for further exploration at different levels by different partners, both individually and collectively. Meeting outcomes will also feed into the development of the new UNOSSC Strategic Framework 2022-2025.

As the convener of the meeting, the UNOSSC Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, is committed to playing its part and collaborating with the interested partners and supporting some very strategic and catalytic initiatives, both at the regional and country levels.

Based on the 2021 work plan, the Division would be open to further engage around the following broader regional and country-level outcomes, and a tentative list of non-exhaustive activities:

Outcomes:

- Enhanced understanding of South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, and strengthened contribution of SSTC to the formulation and/or strengthening of regional, sub-regional and intra-regional policies, strategies and partnership;
- Enhanced integration of South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation into UN entities' policies, programming and partnership efforts at the regional, sub-regional and intra-regional levels;
- Strengthened institutional, human and technical capacities for South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation for implementing the 2030 Agenda; and
- Strengthened UN system capacities to facilitate the integration of South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation modalities and approaches into the UN operational activities at the country level.

Activities:

- Support regional integration efforts, sub-regional mechanisms, and neighbourhood initiatives;
- Contribute to enhanced SSTC policy coordination, sharing of experiences and good practices at the regional and sub-regional levels to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development;
- Continue mapping regional development solutions that can be replicated and scaled up by other countries and regions;
- Convene regional, sub-regional and thematic dialogues to follow-up, support innovative platforms and knowledge exchanges, and facilitate cross-regional dialogues as needed;
- Support regional and/or sub-regional SSTC efforts on humanitarian issues, conflict prevention, sustaining peace, regional stability and security;
- Provide technical advice to mainstream SSTC in relevant regional coordination and collaboration mechanisms and processes, such as the RCPs and IBCs;
- Support national stock-taking exercises and assessments of national, sub-national, and institutional capacities, coordination mechanisms, capacity gaps, opportunities and potential partnership opportunities;

Section I: Key Takeaways and Possible Opportunities

- Support capacity development for a national ecosystem for SSTC, while strengthening partnerships with emerging providers of triangular and East-East cooperation;
- Engage with RC Offices and UNCTs in countries where South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation modalities and approaches have already been integrated into the new UNSDCFs. Strengthen the capacities of UNCT members through trainings, tools and guidance, and promote the use of the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support for SSTC;
- Provide targeted support to a select number of UNCTs. For example, development of joint programmes, capacity development strategies, peer-learning, knowledge, experience and technologies;
- Engage with UN entities that have integrated South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation into their respective Country Programme Documents (CPDs) and support efforts aimed at establishing and/or strengthening national, subnational and institutional capacities, and coordination mechanisms;
- Promote the use of the most successful South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation programmes supported by UNCTs for possible scaling up in the country and beyond;
- Source, summarise and share information on existing funding opportunities for SSTC with Member States, UN entities and international organisations; and
- Promote and facilitate the use of 'South-South Galaxy', to make it easier for various stakeholders to share knowledge to identify areas where Member States, UN entities, and other stakeholders can connect on South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation.

For further conversation, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Section II: Summary of Remarks

Day 1: Tuesday, 6 April 2021

The Opening and Session 1: The Long-term Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Regional and Inter-regional Policy Coherence and Integration: Challenges and Opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Adel M. Abdellatif** emphasised that the Inter-regional Dialogue was organised against the backdrop of important processes and outcomes. These include the ongoing roll-out of the UNDS reform, approval of the UN System-wide Strategy on SSTC last year by the Executive Committee of the Secretary-General, Regional Forums on Sustainable Development in the Arab and Europe regions, and the 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation. The Inter-regional Dialogue aimed to create a space for open and constructive conversations around critical public policy challenges and how various stakeholders and partners, especially at the regional and national levels, could leverage SSTC in achieving sustainable development.

The pandemic revealed the structural weaknesses in institutions and challenges facing the public sector that existed before the pandemic, which now has become more prevalent. He also mentioned that the pandemic has been a wake-up call for all of those having a stake in the 'five Ps' of sustainable development: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Despite the challenges, the pandemic also presented a unique opportunity to reimagine the role of institutions and policymaking, and to transcend into transformative pathways that can strengthen resilience and accelerate actions in achieving the SDGs. In fact, responses to the pandemic so far have already shown that with bold concerted actions, underpinned by national leadership and ownership, transformative changes are possible on a scale and at a speed, far beyond what could have been imagined before.

MC: **Mr. Mithre Sandrasagra**, Strategic Communications Advisor, UNOSSC, New York

15:00 - 15:30

Welcome Remarks

- **Mr. Adel M. Abdellatif**, Director a.i., UNOSSC, New York
- **Ms. Agi Veres**, Deputy Regional Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, Istanbul
- **Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi**, Regional Hub Manager, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, Amman
- **Ms. Alanna Armitage**, Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA, Istanbul
- **Ms. Alia El-Yassir**, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Representative to Turkey, UN Women, Istanbul
- **Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal**, Deputy Director a.i., UN Development Coordination Office, New York

Section II: Summary of Remarks

Ms. Agi Veres underlined the importance of adopting a more holistic approach to solve some of the most intractable challenges at all levels. In this regard, SSTC is intrinsically linked to the bigger development cooperation architecture. In the ECIS region, UNDP has been a strong advocate for East-East and SSC. Together with the region's new donor partners, such as Slovakia, Czech Republic and Russia, UNDP has established systems for knowledge sharing among the countries in the region, which has helped a rapid deployment of experts during the COVID-19 crisis. This knowledge sharing is of utmost importance for countries going through similar challenges.

Over the past years, UNDP has also been working with partners to find the most innovative solutions for development challenges, including in partnership with the private sector using the Challenge Fund modalities. UNDP is covering knowledge sharing on topics such as public finance and expert deployment modalities. This partnership with the private sector, which also expands beyond the region, will most certainly continue beyond the current pandemic. Investment in SSTC by multilateral, regional and bilateral financial and development institutions, will also be vital. UNDP and the rest of the UN are also looking at innovative ways to make the SDGs self-financing.

UNDP's Regional Programme is a framework to provide support through knowledge exchange in managing and protecting regional and global public goods, cross-border programmes and externalities, as well as regional integration, coordination and operation. The sub-regional analyses of the COVID-19 socio-economic impact, covering the South Caucasus, Western CIS, and Ukraine, also reveal the common challenges that their small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face. They pertain to a general pattern of the most impacted sectors, and commonly suggest responses such as digital transformation, job growth through green investments and strong social protection systems.

Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi noted that UNDP's Regional Programme for Arab States has addressed several critical policy challenges and opportunities shared across all or some Arab countries that require multi-country and inter/intra-regional interventions and collaboration. For example, economic growth and trade, climate change, human security and violent extremism.

Historically, Arab states have shown increasing support for SSC, demonstrated by the creation of regional and multilateral channels for cooperation, including regional groupings and organisations. Despite all the progress made, the potential for SSC in Arab states remains largely untapped. The region is one of the world's least globally and regionally integrated regions. It has one of the world's lowest levels of foreign direct investment, and has low intra-regional trade among the Arab States countries. Thus, SSTC among the Arab states is pivotal for the region's long-term economic growth and achievement of the SDGs, especially for middle-income countries, LDCs and fragile countries.

The Country Programmes are complemented by scaling up successful initiatives through regional platforms and networks that enable peer-to-peer exchanges and SSTC. In addition, the regional programme consolidates a knowledge base that promotes research, analysis, data gathering and dissemination. It enables evidence-based policymaking and knowledge exchanges in the region and beyond, as well as advances awareness, dialogue and action on sensitive and emerging issues. In an age of digital transformation when UNDP, at the regional level, is searching for pathways for governments to regulate and promote digital transformation, SSC can help with enabling legal and institutional environment. Overall, SSC can assist in strengthening key sectors and digital change in SMEs, and advancing societies towards a strong and ethical digital economy.

Ms. Alanna Armitage noted that UNFPA has long recognised the benefits and tremendous impact that SSTC can bring to the development work. UNFPA has a history of successfully utilising SSTC as a mode of engagement in programming across all the issues UNFPA works on.

A recent UNFPA study on the costing of SSC, found that SSTC:

1. Generates significant direct returns on investment;
2. Generates knowledge that is highly relevant to development contexts, thus it provides effectiveness and efficiency in achieving results; and
3. Mobilises domestic financing, as governments realise that investment in SSTC not only enables them to meet their development objectives, but also contributes to their international relations goals.

UNFPA is also nurturing equally important connections across the South in civil society, academia, private sector, and youth networks. They increasingly rely on the expertise and long academic history of institutions in countries like the Russian Federation, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Romania. Particularly, in the area of population and development, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. She also mentioned global opportunities in mobilising financial support. For example, financial support from the India-UN Partnership Development Fund and the China South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund.

Furthermore, she emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that SSC is needed more than ever, and highlighted that the Inter-regional Dialogue gave the opportunity to share many remarkable accomplishments of developing countries. In addition, an opportunity to champion the enormous potential benefits that can emanate from countries working together to share solutions, and to encourage countries that have reached a higher level of income to play a larger role in financing development.

Ms. Alia El-Yassir called on the participants to unlock all possible avenues for achieving the promise of the 2030 Agenda. In the context of the Europe and Central Asia region, SSTC is particularly relevant. UN Women is committed to upscaling work through SSTC across the different pillars of their mandate, normative work, programmatic activities and coordination efforts. UN Women has included SSTC as a key driver of change in the achievement of its strategic plan objectives.

UN Women focuses on three main areas of work for the achievement of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE):

1. Data, evidence, knowledge and solutions;
2. Strengthening national institutions, especially in terms of exploring new partnerships and new sources of financing; and
3. Supporting non-state actors' policies and capacities to leverage SSTC.

Many of the countries have important knowledge and expertise on GEWE to share. Because of SSTC, UN Women has already seen impressive results. For example, in Albania, where the Government over the past five years has increased its allocation of the national budget expenditure to GEWE, from one percent to nine percent, amounting to almost half a billion Euro. Through programming, Albania also has been sharing its best practices and expertise with a broad range of countries across the region and beyond. For example, with Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Ukraine, and Egypt.

Section II: Summary of Remarks

She invited the participants to discuss and identify ways to strengthen development effectiveness through increased commitment, action and mutual accountability in all parts of the world. She also underlined that SSC should serve to ensure the outreach of all individual and collective policy initiatives, as well as developmental efforts at the local, national, regional and global levels are all gender responsive and inclusive enough, to make sure that no one is left behind.

Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal stressed that from vaccines to fiscal responses, the pandemic has exposed a breadth of global problems that require global solutions, and yet, so much of the response has been driven by nationalism and insularity. Less than 20 percent of the historic US\$16 trillion in stimulus and recovery funds has been spent in developing countries. Debt levels in some countries increased and that limited their ability to provide to the much-needed public healthcare and social protection. This throws into stark relief the need for better and deeper SSTC and collaboration. Going beyond the response to the call from BAPA+40, the UN is stepping up its game to advance this agenda. The new programming instruments of the UNDS reform emphasises “the need and importance of actively facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation, by identifying opportunities for cross-border collaboration between countries and UN system-wide regional strategies”.

At the country level, there is a renewed and empowered leadership by RCs and UNCTs. Increasingly, these are better networked within and across regions. The opportunity must be seized to keep strengthening the cross-fertilisation of experience and support, in order to help address problems that do not respect national borders. The recent CCAs, which is the analytical foundation for the UN’s work, have begun including solid, data-based analyses of cross-border/regional aspects that may impact the national development landscapes. Similarly, the UNSDCFs outline the UN’s role as a facilitator, broker, and supporter to position countries differently in the sub-regional and geopolitical context, through SSTC and engagement at the sub-regional level. Beyond the country level, the regional UNDS reform similarly reflects a commitment to use all the regional assets of the development system in a more unified manner. Especially, to advance the common objective in better supporting Member States address cross-border, sub-regional and regional issues.

She distinguished the critical areas for SSTC to ensure a better recovery from COVID-19 and move forward to a SDG-aligned development include:

- 1. Building resilient economies and societies** through SSC initiatives in health, strengthening regional value chains in health-related products and services, in improving food security, social safety nets, education solutions;
- 2. Sharing policy solutions and enhancing policy space** through UN’s joint Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs), creating the foundation for a better recovery and looking at a cooperation agenda to share solutions that are green, digital, as well as support inclusive and cohesive societies; and
- 3. Scaling-up financial resources** through redirection of lending programmes towards health-related investment projects from the New Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), or looking to see how regional funds can boost liquidity. For example, through the Arab Monetary Fund.

Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe provided an overview of expected results and informed the participants on the background for the Inter-regional Dialogue, and the desire to create the space to elevate the conversation and facilitate the identification of key inter-, intra- and sub-regional opportunities, as well as country level policy, programmatic and partnerships ventures that can be advanced through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation. All three sessions aim at connecting the interface between policy and practice at all levels.

Recalling some recent data, he noted that this meeting would also explore entry points for pursuing this form of cooperation in a more systematic, coherent and institutionalised manner by the UN system, since references to SSTC, cross-regional collaboration and regional integration can already be found in UNSDCF's and COVID-19 SEIAs, carried out by the UN system. He also mentioned that relevant follow-ups of the meeting will be supported through the 2021 Work Plan of the Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS.

Session 1 set the overall context for the regional and national development actors, to meet the global challenges through ambitious policies and coherent actions, both at the regional and inter-regional levels, in achieving the 2030 Agenda. More specifically, the session explored key public policy challenges in the context of the COVID-19 response and recovery. It also looked at lessons emerging out of country level SEIAs carried out by the UN system, the tools and types of support that have been useful in addressing these challenges. Moreover, it highlighted the emerging demands that require coordinated and coherent efforts and recommended actions to overcome challenges and bottlenecks. This session also discussed the potential of South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation to enable stronger regional integration, especially as countries recover from COVID-19 response and recovery.

Dr. Ebtessam al-Ketbi stressed on the main regional and sub-regional challenges in the post-COVID-19 era which require specific attention of public policy leaders including in the areas of science, technology, medicine, and health. The road to combat the pandemic has become a key point in international relations, governance standards and measurement of state power, as well as

15:30 - 15:35

Overview/Expected Outcomes

- **Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe**, Regional Chief, Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, UNOSSC, Istanbul

15:35 - 16:20

Context Setting

Moderator: Ms. Aruna Gujral, Advisor to the Deputy Director-General, FAO, Rome

- **Dr. Ebtessam al-Ketbi**, President, Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi
- **Prof. Gyorgy Hajnal**, Director, Institute of Economic and Public Policy, Corvinus University of Budapest; President of the Steering Committee, Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee); Research Professor, ELKH Centre for Social Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Budapest
- **Ms. Ulrika Modéer**, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), UNDP, New York

Section II: Summary of Remarks

the states' ability to adapt to rapid shifts. It has also provided the opportunity to improve crisis and emergency management and interact in an innovative way.

She also noted that the Middle East will not be the same after COVID-19. The pandemic, along with the drop of oil prices, caused significant hardships in the region. Especially in regard to SMEs and small retail companies, leaving the field for big and government companies to expand, fill the vacuum and seize the available opportunities. The pandemic, despite its severe implications and consequences, should have been a catalyst for more regional cooperation in medical and relief areas, with the goal of exchanging expertise, reducing the pressure on national health care system, infrastructure, and de-escalating tensions in the region. However, it has proved hard to separate health from politics.

Recovery from the pandemic should not be subject to regional and international balances of power. This is a big test for the international community and the UN. It is also a test for the ability of regional, sub-regional and cross-regional integration to enhance full equality in recovery from the pandemic and sharing of vaccines by all nations, in a way that serves the achievement of short and long-term development priorities. Thus, cooperation between individual states, the UN and international organisations, is essential to overcome the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and take just and balanced measures to enhance a healthy international environment.

She concluded by saying that 'separation of tracks' policy can mark the start of a road map for regional, sub-regional and trans-regional cooperation. It is not necessary to solve all problems first in order to cooperate. Countries in the region can cooperate in the exchange of medical expertise and logistics, after intensifying vaccination campaigns and communicating safety protocols, even if they have not yet settled other outstanding political and security issues.

Prof. Gyorgy Hajnal, noting the opportunities for cooperation created by the COVID-19 crisis, highlighted the complex and bi-directional interactions and tensions between mainstream public governance principles and practices on the one hand, functional pressures, political opportunities and the broader socio-economic crisis, on the other. He noted that the year 2020 had, to some extent, called into question the universal and unconditional validity of this mainstream canon of public governance. The challenge is, firstly to fill the gaps in available knowledge regarding the above tension between democratic governance and crisis management. Particularly, in a scientifically founded and credible manner, while reconciling their tensions as much as possible. Secondly, to draw intellectually and politically valid conclusions, yet culturally legitimate context sensitive ones, to guide future public administration development and reform.

He was also of the view that the COVID-19 crisis offered an excellent opportunity to not only those seizing the opportunity to extend and entrench their powers, but to intellectual and professional communities, institutions and individuals devoted to improving the cause of effective public governance. There is also an opportunity to turn one-way knowledge and policy transfer to a mutual learning experience, that embraces the lessons from diverse contexts and understands their implications. An opportunity that not only sets up new

- **Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin**, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva
- **Ms. Karima El Korri**, Cluster Leader, 2030 Agenda, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Beirut
- **Dr. Mario Pezzini**, Director, OECD Development Centre, Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary General on Development, Paris
- **Mr. Sahba Sobhani**, Director, Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development, Global Finance Sector Hub, UNDP, Istanbul

patterns of South-South, but also of triangular cooperation that possibly benefits developed European nations too. NISPAcee is ready to play an instrumental role in this exercise.

Ms. Ulrika Modéer stated that COVID-19 is a socio-economic whirlwind, tearing up hard-won development gains. Without sustained collective action, the pandemic could leave a legacy of widening inequalities within and between nations, with the most vulnerable left further behind. The pandemic has devastated sustainable development finance. There is a serious risk of a sharply diverging world. Social protection, jobs and livelihoods, fiscal space and debt issues are likely to feature particularly in 2021. So far, the global development cooperation response has been too bilateral, fragmented, and compartmentalised. Thus, the multi-faceted health, humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have made the case for a muscular multilateralism stronger than ever.

She noted some of the key policy issues that UNDP is advocating as the Technical Lead for the socio-economic response to COVID-19, in partnership with the UN system. These policy issues include universal basic income, ending fossil fuel subsidies, advancing digitalization and leveraging SSC. UNDP is strongly committed to fostering SSC in line with the UN's System-wide Strategy and the agreements reached at the 2019 BAPA+40 UN Conference. Moreover, she underlined that COVID-19 has heightened the importance of an integrated and coordinated international response at country, regional and global levels, in order to tackle development challenges facing the 2030 Agenda. When the outbreak began, the UNDS stood firm and worked together to resolve the immediate crisis. All stakeholders must assist partners to address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. Impacts if left unchecked, will prevent the world from achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin reflected on the role that UNECE plays in addressing challenges affecting greater inter- and intra-regional collaboration, and highlighted the complexity of the UNECE region in providing the potential for learning, peer learning, and exchanges of knowledge, and regional and sub-regional cooperation. This comprises of South-South, East-East, and triangular cooperation to which UNECE is very committed to.

In responding to COVID-19 through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, one should look at three key pillars:

- 1. Facilitating connectivity**, as COVID-19 led to almost an entire lockdown of transportation. This is an opportunity to innovate in transportation and cross-border movement;
- 2. Addressing transboundary risks** in the post COVID-19 era. A time to explore the linkages between health and environment, enhancing a number of UNECE conventions, and evaluate environmental agreements that deal with various risks such as the quality of water. It is clear that water access and quality have become such important issues; and
- 3. Prioritising sustainable green resilient recovery.** Now is the time for countries to share best practices, knowledge and concrete solutions on topics such as the circular economy.

UNECE has made the circular economy as the theme of the Commission's session in April this year. There is already a wealth of solutions and experiences that are emerging. The circular economy is really important for SSTC, not only as a topic for the developed countries and for economies in advanced stage, but rather as a topic whereby sharing expertise, and knowledge from other countries, can in fact put countries on the path to greener and more resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section II: Summary of Remarks

Ms. Karima El Korri stressed that the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD), a multi-stakeholder event organised annually by ESCWA, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the UN entities, provides an inclusive and participatory platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, and for intra-regional dialogue. What has clearly transpired from this year's edition of the AFSD and the 2020 Arab Sustainable Development Report (ASDR), is a shared sense of urgency. The Forum also identified the entry points for transformation and progress on the SDGs. What was quite striking, especially in the current context and focus on national interests, is the call for regional action. Individual country experiences were shared, but more needs to be done to put those practices and solutions on the table for learning and collective thinking about their impact and sustainability. This was also evident in the emphasis of terms such as 'solidarity', 'regional funds', 'regional value chains' and the focus on 'trends', seen in the response to the pandemic in the Arab region.

The Forum discussed longer-term recovery from COVID-19 and the progress on the SDGs, through bringing up issues such as partnerships and mainstreaming a human-rights people-centred approach. Whether it be in terms of the civic space, engaging with civil society and citizens, or addressing the role of the private sector. Issues also included contextualising the SDGs and adapting sustainable development efforts in conflict and humanitarian settings, rethinking the concept of youth empowerment in terms of decent work, shared prosperity, physical and mental well-being, innovations and financing sustainable development, as well as climate action and climate financing. Collective action and cooperation are not only critical in tackling transboundary issues, but they are particularly essential in a region with so many common challenges. Those challenges also require venues that promote dialogue and plant the seed for collaboration, whether bilateral, sub-regional or regional.

Dr. Mario Pezzini suggested to consider SSC in rethinking the current model of international cooperation. He believes the current model does not work properly anymore. There are many evidences that suggest this is the case. The pandemic revealed that the capacity of the ODA is weak. While there is a dramatic change between grants and loans, the total amount is practically unchanged. In these circumstances, SSC can be a vehicle to reform the overall cooperation system. Today, actors are much different than in the past, in that they are not traditional actors of cooperation. This is because they do not only provide financing, but also information, knowledge, and policy coherence. A global agreement on investment that is applicable to everybody cannot be designed in terms of traditional development cooperation. It cannot be created solely on the views of the developed countries that hold the decision-making power around the table.

In SSC, not only are the actors different, but so are the objectives. There needs to be exchanges of information on how to address issues such as when the children do not go to school, as well as gender equality and macroeconomic policy issues. There needs to be tables that are trustable, where there are discussions between equal parties with the same voice. Maybe the time has arrived to sit down and rethink the overall system and consider SSC as innovative tool in the world of policymaking.

Mr. Sahba Sobhani stressed on three areas where SSC and policies on private sector development have to focus on:

1. **Establishing inclusive business** that includes the poor as part of the core operations. This is going to be a very critical area of work. The COVID-19 crisis has created a bit of an opportunity for local producers to being able to respond to demands, and not just rely on global value chains at a lower cost. This is one area that really requires policies that support more inclusive business activity and inclusive procurements. Governments can make effort to include SMEs as part of their consumer targets in meeting the needs of informal enterprises.

2. **Overcoming digital destruction and the digital divide**, including ensuring cybersecurity and infrastructure for connectivity. 70 percent of people in developed countries use the internet versus 19 percent in LDCs. This digital issue has played a critical role in the pandemic response and recovery. This has been part of UNDP digital strategy in supporting governments and is an opportunity for public policy and support. Moreover, how to build back better the next generation of skilled people is related to this. Using experiences from India, and from countries in Africa can be shared and learned from.
3. **Financing for development.** Stakeholders need to ensure that this is the channel for global green economic recovery, and for various interventions that include the poor. It is a very important part of how stakeholders should be thinking about the future of blended financing. Stakeholders should not only look at low hanging fruits, for example, by just focusing on mitigation efforts, but also explore opportunities for adaptation. Other examples include resilient agriculture and other business models that are needed for proper disaster proof housing. There is an incredible number of very engaged private sector companies, cooperatives, women-owned associations and businesses that are working together, that would be open to engage.

Mr. Elborni Salhi emphasised that since the beginning of the pandemic, the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation has allocated all its capacities to support the countries of the South in coping with the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has found all support from its strategic partners such as the IsDB and the UNOSSC to implement several important projects. Also, the efforts were directed towards improvement of the Agency's capacities to make its interventions more efficient and adopt new cooperation mechanisms.

Two projects were launched in cooperation with the IsDB:

- The first one with the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation, aims to provide institutional support to the Agency in developing its capacities for the preparation of technical cooperation, policies and strategies, in coordination with various national structures; and
- The second one aims to promote Tunisian expertise and establish new partnerships with the expert community in the countries of the South, to exchange experiences and successful development solutions.

The agency is keen to continue responding to a variety of requests for technical aid, and assist in coping with the difficult health and economic conditions that the world is experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The agency will make its interventions more efficient and adopt new cooperation mechanisms as needed. The pandemic clearly demonstrated the need to strengthen cooperation between the countries of the South. Especially, to limit the negative effects and consequences of the virus. The pandemic also revealed the importance of continuing joint initiatives.

16:20 - 17:20

Challenges and Opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

- **Mr. Elborni Salhi**, Director-General, Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation
- **Mr. Malek Al-Breazat**, Head, Department of Cooperation with Arab and OIC Institutions, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan
- **Dr. Alikhan Baimenov**, Chairman of the Steering Committee, Astana Civil Service Hub
- **Mr. Joshua Phoho Setipa**, Managing Director, UN Technology Bank, Gebze

Section II: Summary of Remarks

Mr. Malek Al-Breazat noted that the past decades witnessed a wave of SSC in the field of investment. There is an increasing number of international investment agreements signed between developing countries. These agreements are seen as tools to facilitate the increase in the flow of investment between countries. A multi-layered and multifaceted network of international investment instruments has been established. This includes signing international investment agreements (IIAs), bilateral investment treaties (BITs), double taxation treaties (DTTs), bilateral and regional preferential trade and investment agreements (PTIAs), and many other multilateral agreements.

Despite the remarkable progress that has been made to date, achieving the SDGs by 2030 will require enormous financial resources. This far exceeds current allocations available through governments and multilateral agencies. While some countries in the region have begun to restructure funds and other mechanisms to facilitate SSC, the policy and institutional environment in the region still needs to be further developed. Especially, if the knowledge about institutional arrangements and financing modalities for SSC, and the level of using these tools, remain low. Therefore, the region needs investment reforms that would aid in reducing regulatory and administrative restrictions, while modernising investment policies. In this regard, SSC plays an essential role in bridging the investment gap in developing countries.

Countries in the Arab region played a vital role to support the healthcare, economy, and food security for several countries. They accumulated a lot of experiences and attracted investments in food security, as well as were able to offer support to several countries and their people. Jordan is engaged in cooperation with Southern countries, to assist each other, especially during the pandemic. There have been reforms in many areas such as finance and investment cooperation between Southern countries, as well as in addressing environmental and economic issues. Jordan is also establishing a quality health care system and is keen to share its successes in this area with other countries. International cooperation plays a vital role, specially for the G77 countries and the Gulf area. Particularly, in responding to the challenges of the pandemic, Jordan organised several cooperation initiatives between the countries, provided medical items to their neighbours, and shared its experience and expertise. This reaffirms the value of regional cooperation, as an important tool for fast response and crisis management.

Dr. Alikhan Baimenov, focused on the most innovative public policy approaches in the context of COVID-19, to inform governments in addressing similar challenges and scaling up solutions through SSTC. He noted that in the search for effective response and recovery, countries should be spreading humanity beyond national borders. Although each government operates in a unique socio-economic and cultural context, and while there is no silver bullet in governance, exchanging ideas and sharing experience can help governments to find best fit solutions for their own settings. However, it is worth placing transparency and accountability at the core, so that prompt decision making excludes any possible abuse related to corruption, or citizens' rights and freedoms.

It is also important for governments to be open to new ideas and encourage flexible planning and implementation mechanisms, allowing them to apply best practice in the short term. To support this, Astana Hub was the first to establish 'Peer-to-Peer Learning Alliances' based on the OECD methodology. This included a 'Virtual Alliance' launched in response to the pandemic. The experience and knowledge of exchanging tools should also become technologically savvy and flexible for successful adaptation in other countries. It is also important for governments to consider breaking down the silos, and applying the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Therefore, the development of cooperation

with civil society, participatory citizenship, and an inclusive economy, should be taken to the next level. If SDGs promise to leave no one behind, then governments should leave neither an innovative idea, nor initiative behind.

Mr. Joshua Phoho Setipa observed that, if there is one thing that COVID-19 has highlighted, it is the centrality of SSC towards inclusivity and working together. Especially, in solidarity to strengthen, or to resist nationalism. Discussions around vaccines in Europe and other parts of the world, have given a sense of what could go wrong, particularly, if multilateralism does not prevail. The Technology Bank, as a repository of technologies for LDCs, is a clear illustration of the importance of technology in transferring knowledge and tools from North-South, as well as from South-South to ensure attainment of the SDGs. Moreover, the Technology Bank serves as a conduit for capacity building for LDCs to enhance their science, technology, and innovation policies to be responsive to new challenges. However, it is also important to note that building such capacities will not be enough, it should be accompanied with the transfer of much needed technologies to LDCs on voluntary and mutually agreed terms and conditions. In this context, SSC mechanisms for sharing experiences on technological capacity building and transfer are very important. This could be more appropriate in the developing country context, given that these countries share common development challenges, and can draw on their common experiences.

In 2020, the Technology Bank launched the Technology Access Partnership as a joint initiative with UNDP, UNCTAD and WTO, to support least developed and developing countries. Particularly, for these countries to gain equitable access in deploying technologies relevant for the manufacturing of medical equipment specific to COVID-19, which includes ventilators and diagnostic kits. The regulatory assessment and framework in countries are equally important. They are very central to achieving capabilities to be able to respond to these emergencies. Since December 2020, the Bank has launched the Academies of Science in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Lesotho. More will be launched in other developing countries. This is very important to assist in strengthening and making the case for SSC. Although the development partners in the North are also equally important, experience has also shown that there is a lot of potential for continuing to invest in building networks within and between the developing countries, to drive this strategy of SSC.

Day 2: Wednesday, 7 April 2021

Session 2: The Outcomes of the 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation: Reflections and Priority Actions for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, and Cross-Regional Collaboration

Discussions focused on unpacking the key outcomes of the DG Forum and identifying key opportunities and demands for strengthening national capacities for South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation in Arab states, Europe and the CIS. Core challenges and opportunities that affect the establishment and/or strengthening of the national architecture for South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation were also discussed. The discussion aimed at strengthening the link between public policy process and SSTC efforts. The session also provided a space for deeper discussion for sustainable peace in the Arab region.

Mr. Tarik Iziraren elaborated on the main conclusions and recommendations of the 12th Edition of the DG Forum. He underlined that the development cooperation practitioners took stock of how SSTC have performed since the start of the pandemic, assessed progress towards implementing the BAPA+40 outcome document, and exchanged views on ways and approaches to strengthen the cooperation in light of new trends and opportunities, as well as the evolving challenges that development cooperation may face in the medium-to-long term future. The Forum reaffirmed the critical role of solidarity, called for deepening SSTC partnerships, and highlighted the importance of strengthening the institutional capacities in the countries of the South. Moreover, BAPA+40 outcome document recommendations provided plenty of policy guidance, how to strengthen the capabilities of the South in terms of establishing policies and enhancing the expertise capacities, as well as how to evaluate and assess SSTC.

15:00 - 15:20

The Outcomes of the 12th Edition of High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation

- **Mr. Tarik Iziraren**, Deputy Director, Policy and Partnerships, UNOSSC, New York

These recommendations should be advanced through multi-stakeholder partnerships. For example, the partnerships that UNOSSC has established with the IsDB, the South Centre, and Japan International Cooperation Agency to support countries and enhance their capacity, are very important. There is a need to focus on overcoming the digital gap as a prerequisite for sustainable development and leaving no one behind, as well as a need to reconsider the role of triangular cooperation as an emerging trend. But the question is, how can one use SSTC in addressing this huge challenge? Many countries of the South already have well-developed ICT capacities, and there is a need to find ways to transfer these knowledge and experiences to other countries of the South.

Finally, triangular cooperation has emerged as an important tool for sustainable development from the BAPA+40. Partners from the North were able to showcase what triangular cooperation can achieve. Therefore, there is a very forward-looking recommendation from BAPA+40 outcome document that can help stakeholders to move forward with this modality of partnership. The UNOSSC is also part of the Global Partnership Initiative (GPI), and working very closely with all partners to make sure that triangular cooperation is really an important element of the SSC architecture in achieving the SDGs.

H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Methqal focused on public policies undertaken by the national institutions, which were supported and/or led by the Moroccan Agency. He addressed the challenges that they faced in response to the pandemic. Morocco stayed active in promoting SSC, and implemented multiple initiatives during the pandemic, including the creation of the national fund to provide direct aid, which doubled efforts in equipping hospitals. The national fund contributed to support of SMEs and companies to adapt to lockdown, which in essence provided a lifeline for companies to continue their business operations. In April 2020, Morocco, in collaboration with the African Heads of States, launched an initiative to provide a framework for sharing more experience and support, including humanitarian aid. For example, they provided medical products to 21 African countries, shared medical products and experience in adopting the healthcare system to the COVID-19 situation.

COVID-19 has seen Morocco making lots of new milestones. A successful example that can be shared through SSC is vaccination in Morocco. The pandemic accelerated structural reforms, including the digitalization of the public administration and private sector, e-signature, social security, further development of the health sector, social protection reform, and a more competitive banking sector through introducing digital tools. Furthermore, the national eco-system has also been improved to advance triangular cooperation.

Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Abro recalled that the concept of the 'national ecosystem', which was initiated by the IsDB and South Centre, and shared during the BAPA+40 Conference, stresses the importance of capacity building for strengthening and creating the ecosystems of SSTC. As part of the pandemic response, Djibouti had opportunities to exchange knowledge, experiences, and support from different Southern countries, as well as IsDB and UNDP. On this issue, Djibouti adopted the National Solidarity pact to frame the response of its technical and financial partners. Djibouti also hosts the Intergovernmental Authority on Development for East Africa, which implements regional strategies, including for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts.

15:20 - 16:30

Reflections and Perspectives

Moderator: Dr. Carlos María Correa, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva

- **H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Methqal**, Director General, Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation (AMCI)
- **Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Abro**, Deputy Director, Social and Cultural Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Djibouti
- **Ms. Aliya Aghazada**, Deputy Director, Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA)
- **Mr. Jan Sliva**, Director, Czech Development Agency (CzechAid)
- **Mr. Ahmed Faruk Diken**, Senior Technical Cooperation Coordinator, MENA & Europe, Regional Cooperation and Integration Department, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Jeddah
- **Ms. Maria Misovicova**, Chief, Capacity Development and Partnerships Section, Strategy and Programme Management Division, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok
- **Dr. Sebastian Haug**, Researcher, German Development Institute (GDI-DIE), Bonn

Section II: Summary of Remarks

The strategy revolves around four programmes:

1. Conflict Early Warning Mechanism and Response Mechanism, a platform for Member States to exchange information to anticipate and prevent conflicts;
2. Preventive diplomacy and mediation;
3. Transnational security with the Center of Excellence for Combating Violent Extremism based in Djibouti; and
4. Good governance.

Ms. Aliya Aghazada reaffirmed that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to international development and cooperation. AIDA is actively working to improve and expand these activities. So far, the country has provided humanitarian, financial and technical assistance to about 120 countries, and more than 3 million people have benefited from this assistance. For example, a special session on the prevention of COVID-19 in last December by the UN General Assembly under Azerbaijan's Chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

In terms of SSC, AIDA was engaged in implementing the IsDB's Alliance to Fight Avoidable Blindness project. As part of this project, about 300,000 people were examined in several African countries, and about 56,000 people were operated on, free of charge. In addition, the professional level of 177 local doctors has been increased via trainings. AIDA is interested in international cooperation, especially in the exchange of experience in various fields to enhance its own capacities.

Mr. Jan Sliva provided an overview of the practical mechanisms and operational approaches to promoting development cooperation by the European agencies, such as CzechAid. He emphasised that CzechAid responds by pooling resources and know-how with their sister organisations in Europe and with the UN. They also make sure they use what they have in the most efficient way, in regard to partnerships. COVID-19 still has the entire global community in its grip, and can only be defeated with a global approach and cross-border coordination. CzechAid is part of Team Europe, which is a new grouping that combines resources from the European Union (EU), its member states, and its financial institutions for development cooperation. It is managed by the European Commission.

The Czech Republic has relatively recent experience with economic and social transitions, and it passes on the experience and the know-how to all the countries where it is active. Particularly, in the countries of the 'Eastern Neighbourhood' or the so-called 'Eastern Partnership'. The other dimension is cooperating with the UN, where CzechAid has vast and enriching cooperation experience through the projects by the EU in Georgia, Bosnia, and other countries, through the established Czech-UNDP partnership for SDGs. This partnership has supported 215 initiatives and focuses on expertise on demand, as well as the Challenge Fund exporting innovative solutions from the Czech Republic's private sector and NGOs.

Mr. Ahmed Faruk Diken stressed on the key takeaways from the DG Forum:

1. The pandemic provides opportunities to strengthen resilience and preparedness;
2. SSTC has an important role to play in making this happen by providing the mechanisms of results-oriented exchanges among countries; and
3. Closing the digital divide is recognised as one of the critical success factors for enhancing SSC. This will strengthen the ability of all stakeholders to be connected to each other, particularly during such crises when stakeholders could not connect with each other physically. This is vital to create a robust marketplace of solutions whereby providers and beneficiaries can connect seamlessly, and exchanges can happen effectively. The critical success factor also relies on the availability of financial resources.

To boost SSC and achieve the recommendations of the BAPA+40 outcome document, the IsDB has begun exploring the possibility of using the concept of 'Awqaf' from Islamic Finance to channel revenues of investments towards SSC. Moreover, the IsDB has also been part of some of the exchanges that have taken place among its member countries through its 'Reverse Linkage' mechanism. For example, approving several projects that connect countries to share expertise in the production of high-performance face masks, expertise in strengthening the capacity of their medical labs and health facilities, in terms of identifying and treating COVID-19 cases, and connecting countries to share expertise on using artificial intelligence in the mapping of COVID-19 cases.

He emphasised that for countries to become effective players in SSC, they should have in place a set of pillars of a national ecosystem, consisting of:

1. A political will;
2. A national strategy for SSTC;
3. A national focal point or body for coordinating SSC interventions;
4. National information bases that help to map the available expertise in the country and the needs and capacity gaps which can be addressed through SSC; and
5. Performance management systems and financing mechanisms.

Ms. Maria Misovicova shared some insights from the 3rd Asia-Pacific Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and on the role of SSC in 'Building Back Better' from COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific, that may be of interest for the Arab states and ECIS regions. In the Forum, Directors General from over 30 Asian and Pacific countries highlighted three policy areas for further collaboration and strengthening at the regional level.

1. The need to ensure greater access to information and innovation through leveraging regional, sub-regional and national cooperation. Such greater access to information and innovation was required especially in the areas of health and emergency management, food and nutrition, trade in pharmaceutical and health supplies, and ensuring the continued flow of the supply chain in times of crisis;
2. The need to promote exchanges of SSTC good practices, knowledge, and experiences. In this respect, the Forum highlighted the need to maximise and scale up the use of existing regional and sub-regional SSC mechanisms and knowledge platforms to achieve greater effectiveness, whilst engaging with the private sector; and
3. The necessity to better align and match available resources with needs. In this regard, the Forum highlighted the need for both the providers and users of SSTC to work together in matching the available technical cooperation support with the requirement of the countries in need, focusing on the vulnerable countries and populations.

At the regional level, ESCAP has been providing a regional platform in facilitating SSTC among its 62 Member States and Associate Members to address development challenges and opportunities. Historically, SSTC has assisted in shaping their technical assistance programme, informing their research and analysis, and underpinning their intergovernmental and consensus building work. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided countries with a unique opportunity to focus energy towards building back better, while maintaining SSTC at the centre of its work. She reaffirmed ESCAP's commitment to continue working with UNOSSC and other development cooperation partners, to scale up SSTC for the benefit of least developed, landlocked and small island developing states in Asia-Pacific, as well as their interest to engage better with the countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Section II: Summary of Remarks

Dr. Sebastian Haug reflected on how to strengthen the national architecture for SSTC through support provided by the UN or other development partners in COVID-19 and beyond. In particular, by recalling his forthcoming study on the UN entities' mainstreamed support for SSTC. At the outset, he mentioned that the North-South divide has been blurry in the Arab States, Europe and the CIS regions, and went on to present the following.

First, terminology and frames have come up again in South-South, East-East, and East-South. There are many ways of framing inter-state cooperation in the Arab states, Eastern Europe and the CIS. What all these framings do, is highlight cooperation formats behind traditional North-South schemes that are still dominated by the ODA. The latest numbers show that roughly 80 percent of funding for the UNDS still stems from Member States mostly from a small group of DAC members. It is important to keep in mind that SSTC can be a rallying point for cooperation beyond dominant schemes, and expand alternative forms of collaboration. Thus, SSTC can be embraced by stakeholders in different ways, regardless of where they sit geographically.

Second, is about ownership. Member States should be in the driving seat when collaborating with the UN. And that means, Member States need to make clear of what they want. For example, Turkey as a programme country has made very strategic use of UN support for institutional cooperation capacity. A strategic approach to cooperation with the UN is not limited to large players only, but also an option for smaller countries or countries that have less resources to invest. For instance, in Honduras, a small Central American country, the government has drafted and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UN system and the UNOSSC, mainly to clarify respective roles in SSTC processes. This MoU sets out how parties understand South-South on one hand, and triangular cooperation on the other hand. And it makes sure that the UN does not take up too much space, and that UN entities put an explicit focus on strengthening Member State institutions instead of following their own agenda. Thus, ownership on SSTC means that programme countries need to be explicit about what they want from the UN and set the terms of collaboration accordingly.

And third, there is considerable space for more cooperation amongst other players. The UN and so-called traditional development partners and triangular schemes, provide good examples of what a diversification of cooperation can look like. For instance, in Mexico, both the EU and the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) have been supporting the Mexican Foreign Ministry in strengthening the national cooperation architecture. Notably, the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID). Currently, AMEXCID and GIZ work together in Guatemala, a third country to replicate this institution support for Guatemala's government. This is an example where a traditional donor supporter scheme has been translated into a triangular scheme. Specifically on institutional support for international cooperation architecture.

H.E. Ambassador Imad Zuhairi noted that occupation and its related illegal practices, accompanied by very hard circumstances and consequences resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, certainly make the economic, financial and development situation more complex. However, resilience, determination and adequate national economic system, strong support from top leadership, competent human resources, as well as good cooperation mechanisms and credible relationships between public and private sectors, have enabled PICA to place the State of Palestine as one player in development,

16:30 - 17:25

Durable Peace in the Arab Region: Role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation

- **H.E. Ambassador Imad Zuhairi**, Director General, Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA)

both as a contributor and a provider. The Palestinian diaspora has also supported the government in its measures to face the pandemic, but such assistance should not be considered as alternative to the obligations by the occupying power.

The financial challenges and the hindering of access within and from the State of Palestine, to the external world in introducing a comprehensive strategy at the national level for SSTC, are only some of the remaining challenges. Thus, calls for enhancing international cooperation instead of international competition are fundamental. There is a need for international cooperation that focuses more on global and collective well-being, instead of individual and national interest, while ensuring national security is part of the collective global security. He also stressed the importance of investing to grow the social protection scope by expanding health access and basic social protection to cater for the maximum number of populations.

Ms. Najat Rochdi noted that the unprecedented health, economic and social crisis that the world has faced since last year due to COVID-19, has severely hit Arab countries and undermined their efforts to achieve the SDGs. In some cases, the progress made over the last decade, particularly in reducing poverty crisis and ensuring food security, has been lost, thus fuelling tensions. The effects of this crisis have exacerbated the profound economic and existing social inequalities. It revealed the weakness of the current economic development models, especially the lack of diversity of the economy, the heavy reliance on external markets and sources of finance, as well as the lack of social protection systems for the most vulnerable. These are severely constraining the recovery of countries in the region, and halting progress towards meeting the 2030 Agenda. COVID-19 has also challenged the simple connection between countries in the region, and between the region and the world. This is severely impacting the economy and leading to a massive loss of jobs.

At the regional and international levels, SSC could facilitate the scaling-up of so much needed finance to improve regional integration of Arab countries and to support new regional platforms with more coordinated positions in negotiations. For example, for vaccine supply and production, food supplies, and medicines. While the policies adopted so far by the countries in the region have focused on strengthening national health systems, much more needs to be done in enhancing human capital, employment, and social protection systems. This is a must in order to sustain peace. In that regard, SSC offers a unique opportunity and has a crucial role to play in sharing lessons, transferring knowledge and leveraging resources, whilst also promoting innovations and the sharing of expertise. This would lead to an accelerated plan for recovery and resilience in all the countries in the Arab region, especially those struggling with conflict and fragility. Therefore, SSC would enable a better positioning of the Arab region in the global policymaking arena.

SSC is also critically needed in social protection to support policies to extend social safety nets mechanisms and access to basic social services through learning from each other and localising existing tools to each country's context. For example, central registry and cash assistance to strengthen social justice. SSC is also key in addressing intra- and inter-communal

- **Ms. Najat Rochdi**, UN Deputy Special Coordinator, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Lebanon
- **Mr. Mohammed Elrazzaz**, Regional Integration Expert, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Barcelona
- **Ms. Georgette Gagnon**, Assistant Secretary-General, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Libya
- **Mr. Arkan El-Seblani**, Head, Regional Team on Anti-Corruption and Integrity, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, Amman

Section II: Summary of Remarks

tensions and conflicts, which most of the time have a spill over effect across the borders. The world has witnessed effective mediation of some countries in the region, and the facilitation of dialogue between different political forces and factions, and the convention of peace talks between conflicting parties.

In that regard, the strong engagement of Arab women in peace processes and conflict prevention in some countries of the region, is a great asset and good practice to benefit from. Ultimately, SSC between the countries in the region, can foster building strategic partnerships beyond cooperation and peer learning. Especially in order to co-create, co-generate knowledge, co-support the most fragile countries and co-produce, in winning the race between the virus and the vaccines, towards a more inclusive, resilient and greener recovery in the region.

Mr. Mohammed Elrazzaz stressed that the UfM, an intergovernmental organisation of 42 countries, through its institutional framework and governance, and its role as a platform for global, regional, sub-regional and local multi-stakeholder partnerships, acts as a unique regional chapter for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It fosters effective dialogue among its member states through SSTC modalities.

The UfM is committed to strengthening its role in advancing these frameworks of collaboration within the Euro-Mediterranean region. It will continue addressing human and sustainable development challenges based on a balanced and positive agenda of action, equal footing governance and variable geometry. The examples of UfM-labelled projects and programs that foster SSTC are many. It is expected that the envisaged results would contribute to peace and prosperity in the region. As part of UfM's response to the integration challenge in the region, and the need to boost South-South integration, the UfM Secretariat will launch its first Progress Report on Regional Integration next month to share the key findings and policy recommendations of the Report, which was prepared by OECD.

Ms. Georgette Gagnon stated that stabilization and peacebuilding have been the focus of the UN's development and political work. Libya has faced challenges resulting from divided state institutions, lack of public policies and worsening economic hardship which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic as evident in collapsing infrastructure, compromised social protection systems and government services that have not operated well for many years due to armed conflict and political instability.

In this context, the main challenges are to strengthen State institutions, and governance and accountability structures. Related challenges are weak data collection and management systems for evidenced-based policy making and lack of receptor capacity with a need for uptake of good practices and adoption of best policies requiring a strong public service with a highly qualified, skilled, and equipped workforce. These challenges provide opportunities for South-South and regional cooperation, which can support bridging these gaps and facilitate stabilization, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. In recent months, Libya has seen positive developments for stabilization and peacebuilding with the new interim government of national unity, agreement and advancement on key economic and development priorities and a commitment to hold national elections by the end of 2021.

Libya is at a point of achievement of short-term gains that can lead to a longer-term vision and strategies for durable peace, reconstruction and sustainable development. Three areas of the humanitarian-peace-development continuum offer opportunities for SSTC:

1. **National reconciliation** - establishment of Libya's high national reconciliation commission provides opportunities to share best practices and models;

2. **Ways to support regular and legal migration**, since Libya is both a transit and a destination country noting that Morocco may provide a useful model for Libya, which is considering developing a strategy for migration; and
3. **Economic diversification** and moving from total reliance on oil production to clean energy and other areas. Electricity, clean solar energy production and integration into the African and European electric power grids could be an area for cooperation with Morocco, Tunisia, and several other countries in the region.

Mr. Arkan El-Seblani stressed that corruption has a corrosive effect on trust in institutions, and there are examples of where widespread corruption resulted in losing trust and created openings for radicalised and violent movements to destabilise peace. He also noted that failure to promote good governance and the strengthening of institutions has continued to create fragile states, even after three decades of achieving peace.

He further noted that the value of SSTC has been very high for promoting the anti-corruption agenda in the region. UNDP and other international organisations have facilitated the establishment of the Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network regional platform, which brought together 49 ministries and anti-corruption agencies from 18 countries and 28 leading NGOs dealing with governance and anti-corruption issues. The network assisted to accelerate the introduction of certain reforms, and facilitated the sharing of expertise on complex issues related to promoting transparency and accountability. This includes integrity measures on customs, and the creation of space generating knowledge on sensitive issues. UNDP and WHO are supporting the establishment of the Global Alliance for Anti-corruption, Transparency and Accountability in Health, to aid in sharing the knowledge and jointly design responses that have worked in similar contexts.

Triangular cooperation modalities should be pursued to facilitate the adaption of knowledge from one country to the other. Beyond just sharing knowledge, but rather taking it to certain areas of development work and making it actionable.

DAY 3: Thursday, 8 April 2021

Session 3: The Last Decade of Action: A Response to National and Regional Demands and Priorities in the Arab States and ECIS Regions, through South-South, East-East and Triangular Cooperation

The session reflected on the efforts of the UNDS entities to prioritise national and regional development through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation. The efforts are guided further by the UNDS reform and the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2020. Key elements of the UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development, approved by the Executive Committee of the UN Secretary-General in 2020, and the forthcoming Action Plan for the UN System-wide Strategy on SSTC, were introduced at the outset.

MC: Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, Deputy Director, Programme and Operations, UNOSSC, New York

15:00 – 15:10

UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Key Elements

- **Mr. Tarik Iziraren,** Deputy Director, Policy and Partnerships, UNOSSC, New York

Within the overall context of UN operational activities for development, conversations reflected on how country and regional level policy, programming, partnerships and advocacy priorities, can be further advanced through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation. This includes through the operationalisation of the UN System-wide Strategy, and activities emanating from the UNSDCFs, COVID-19 SEIAs, SERPs, and relevant regional processes. Finally, the session also provided a platform for the participants to share successful innovative approaches, and examples in public policy leadership and South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation, for possible adaption and/or scaling up in other countries facing similar challenges.

Mr. Tarik Iziraren provided an overview of the key elements of the UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development. The strategy was formulated in response to the exponential growth, in scale and clear recognition of SSC, in contributing to the transformation of the norms and principles of international cooperation. The BAPA+40 outcome document also stresses the need to reinvigorate the UNDS in supporting and promoting SSTC, aiming at implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Developed through the participatory and inclusive UN Inter-agency Mechanism for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, with over 30 entities, the strategy aims to galvanise a coordinated, coherent and contextualised approach to policy, programmatic, operational and partnership support of SSTC, in order to further increase impact across UN activities at national, regional and global levels. It is designed to support the national priorities of countries of the South, under national ownership and leadership, and drive forward the 2030 Agenda and the Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs. Implementation is governed by each entity individually, based on its mandate and programme of work.

In terms of the different levels of engagement, the UN system's support will ensure alignment with international, regional, and national normative frameworks, as well as with national plans and priorities, regional efforts and agreements, and country level efforts through the UNSDCF. The RCPs would aid in adapting the strategy and its action plan to the specificity and context of the region. The UNSDCF, CCAs, capacity assessment and support to capacity building, stakeholder engagement and programming, are identified as areas to integrate SSTC within the UN system at country level.

The action plan will include a set of system-wide deliverables, activities, and indicators. The progress in the implementation of the strategy will be reported through existing mechanisms. For example, in the annual State of South-South cooperation report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

Moderator of the session, **Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son** noted that the strategy is not reinventing the wheel, but it is building on the existing frameworks to harmonise the different approaches adopted by agencies, funds and programmes. Essentially, harmonising different approaches in a coordinated and coherent manner to advance and accelerate the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. She also noted that there is a very clear objective of leveraging the UNDS reform, particularly the planning instruments such as CCAs and UNSDCF. However, bearing in mind that there are different contexts, there is a need to contextualise action plans and approaches in order to move forward.

Dr. Sabine Machl noted that the country has made significant progress in achieving the SDGs. Yet, challenges remain and those are highlighted by the UNSDCF. Challenges include high levels of poverty, persisting inequalities, unresolved conflict, an ageing population and high levels of out-migration, and low levels of productivity and competitiveness. Many of these challenges can only be addressed through sub-regional, regional, and global cooperation. An array of reasons, from unresolved conflicts to different and technical regulations that make sub-regional trade difficult, reinforces the need for better joint UN capacity and analysis, higher levels of stakeholder engagement and the prioritisation of work operationalisation.

15:10 – 16:20

'Leadership Reflections' on enhancing the impact of UN development system's support to national and regional priorities through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation within the overall context of UN Development System Reform

Moderator: Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, UN Development Coordination Office, Istanbul

- **Dr. Sabine Machl**, UN Resident Coordinator, Georgia
- **Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey**, UN Resident Coordinator, Kazakhstan
- **Mr. Anders Pedersen**, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Jordan
- **Ms. Nathalie Fustier**, UN Resident Coordinator, Saudi Arabia
- **Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh**, UN Resident Coordinator, Kuwait
- **Ms. Alanna Armitage**, Co-Chair of Issue-Based Coalition – Adolescents and Youth (Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, UNFPA, Istanbul)
- **Ms. Alia El-Yassir**, Co-Chair of Issue-Based Coalition – Gender Equality (Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia and Representative to Turkey, UN Women)
- **Mr. Vito Intini**, Co-Convenor of Issue-Based Coalition - Macroeconomic Management and Social Protection (Regional Lead Economist and Inclusive Growth Team Leader, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, Amman)
- **Ms. Roula Majdalani**, Co-Convenor of Issue-Based Coalition – Climate Change (Leader, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA, Beirut)

Section II: Summary of Remarks

The UNCT promotes a unified approach through the regional IBCs, which offer an important basis for broader engagement beyond the South Caucasus sub-region. In the sub-regions, both the selection of theme and format can assist in bridging sub-regional barriers for dialogue. Especially, in terms of response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in dealing with climate action and environmental emergency management. The UN Migration Network established in Georgia last year, is already engaging with the government and the civil society. The network is also involved in the regional exchanges of practices that enable effective cooperation towards the objectives of the Global Compact on Migration. In addition, an internal exchange of experiences and lessons learnt between UNCTs in Georgia and Ukraine, is being facilitated.

The UN Results Groups that coordinate the work on specific outcomes are also tasked with the identification of possible new areas for sub-regional and regional cooperation. This will assist in addressing both the developmental needs and challenges of Georgia, as well as opportunities to highlight Georgia's good practices and achievements within various areas for SSC. This would also improve the UN positioning on the EU bilateral cooperation processes, and its engagement with the international financial institutions. Especially, in terms of setting country priorities, joint progress assessment and ensuring that all development partner efforts leave no one behind.

Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey reflected that a combination of having a reformed UNDS, and a government with a regional agenda and a global engagement, allows the UNCT in Kazakhstan to utilise the South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation effectively. Kazakhstan is an upper middle-income country. Thus, similar context needs to be identified for learning in the journey towards renewable energy transitions, or when it comes to inter regional water management for sustainability. Sometimes the country is part of several economic and social commissions, or in the focus of competing UN agencies. The coordination of country plans with non-resident agencies is also a challenge.

An essential step in overcoming these challenges, is to strengthen the contextual analysis in parallel to geographic connectors. There is a need to enhance the strategic value proposition of the UN system. As a country team, there is a need to adopt all of these approaches in order to maximise the impact and simplify the relationships for the government. This will allow government to maximise their leverage and delivery to the people they serve, together with the UN entities. The UNSDCF is a fundamental tool and process to unify all relevant stakeholders, not only in the analysis, but also in the formulation of the UN Results Groups, and the identification of joint work plans. Having the UN Info 2.0 type of mechanisms in place will make it easier to share knowledge, and to identify the areas where all relevant stakeholders can connect on South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation.

Examples of where Kazakhstan has focused on its South-South and regional programmes include:

1. The Astana Civil Service Hub;
2. The global Spotlight Initiative, focusing on eliminating violence against women and girls, and has potential for SSC; and
3. The establishment of Kazakhstan's Agency for International Development Assistance with a focus on triangular systems. It reaffirms a demand for learning from more experienced international actors.

Mr. Anders Pedersen reflected on the strategy and mentioned that it is fundamentally changing the principles upon which international cooperation and development cooperation are based on. Even from a purely operational point of view, the strategy is one of the best ways in achieving results. He expressed that the UNCTs should be guided by questions such as:

1. What is the issue that I want to promote?
2. What is the challenge?
3. What is the specificity that would benefit from different kinds of mechanisms I put in place?

He also mentioned that there is a significant number of initiatives the UNCT are doing in Jordan, which can be further promoted to highlight successful outcomes in Jordan. Particularly, there are two areas which will benefit much more from SSTC, which are the water sector and the digital economy. Operationalisation and contextualisation are seen among further steps towards advancing SSC. For the regional dimension of SSC, it should be made clear that this is very much about cooperation in between countries that have some similarities. Moreover, preferences of the countries on which country to learn from should also guide the UN support. He stated that “we just have to think much more out of the box in terms of us being able to actually promote what this is eventually going to be all about.”

Ms. Nathalie Fustier expressed that the country is well placed to engage in SSTC, both as a provider and participant. Especially, in diverse areas such as digitalisation, agriculture, renewable energies, and the green economy. Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of SSTC, and has been engaging with many partner countries from the global South to benefit from SSTC opportunities, particularly in Africa and Asia. Saudi Arabia is a G20 country, and as host of the G20 in 2020, it reaffirmed its longstanding commitment to SSTC, acknowledging that achieving the SDGs requires increased human and financial resources, innovation, and ideas. The country championed the inclusion of vulnerable and underserved populations, with a strong focus on youth unemployment and women’s empowerment, as well as digitalisation. The Digital Cooperation Organisation is a new international organisation founded in Riyadh, aiming to strengthen global collaboration and unifying efforts among its members. This is across all innovation-driven areas in advancing digital transformation and accelerating the growth of the digital economy.

The UN in Saudi Arabia has sought more structured, system-wide and innovative ways to enhance and strengthen their support to Saudi Arabia’s engagements in SSTC. More broadly in international development. These efforts are undertaken with the support and collaboration of the UNCT, and have become more achievable through the repositioning of the RC system through the UNDS reform.

Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh highlighted three priority areas, as identified in the CCA/UNSDCF:

1. Diversification of the economy, administrative reforms and strengthening human capital in terms of education, health and others;
2. Outcomes related to environment, health and wellbeing and sustainable cities and environment; and
3. Global positioning of Kuwait as an active international and regional player in terms of multilateralism and cooperation.

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Kuwait is actively providing humanitarian and development support, including through its Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. The support was extended to 107 countries amounting more than US\$20 billion, ranging from infrastructure support in strengthening schools, roads, traffic and hospitals, to many other programmes. During COVID-19, the country has been actively supporting the COVAX system, which is contributing to this global initiative led by the UN. Kuwait is also a partner of the UN in capacity development, and in strengthening SSTC capacities through the Kuwait Public Policy Centre. The Centre was established with support from UNDP and UN Kuwait, as a platform for peer learning in the process of formulating Kuwait's public policies. The health sector development policy benefitted from the exchange in different practices coming from different countries. This led to the creation of a new approach in the privatisation of public hospitals.

The country also collaborates with the UN and countries in the region for peacebuilding and humanitarian support, positioning itself in peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy. Thus, they have facilitated dialogue among different groups in Yemen. Kuwait supported the Iraq Investment Conference in 2018, which led to the pledging of more than US\$2 billion of support for Iraq. There are many areas that require more collaboration at the regional level and across borders, especially in areas such as migration and employment.

Ms. Alanna Armitage stressed that an IBC is, in itself, a system-wide strategy and work plan around specific issues of importance to the entire region. As the Co-Chair of IBC on Youth with UNICEF, and on Gender with UN Women, she noted that both IBCs have stepped up their engagement with the country teams in sharing knowledge, information and experience, as well as coordinating efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Inter-regional Dialogue has created a new momentum for ensuring the integration of SSC as a mode of work for the IBCs.

Focusing on youth, she underlined the importance for the IBCs to promote not only government-to-government SSTC, but equally important connections across the South in civil society, academia, private sector, and youth networks. This is what has been done in collaboration with various youth networks from the countries in the region, and it gave an opportunity for both young people to engage in South-South knowledge and experience sharing, as well as a space for Member States to be inspired by each other's examples. She also highlighted that UNFPA was also pleased to be one of the partners of the UNOSSC Youth4South Initiative. It was launched in 2017 during the Global South-South Development Expo in Antalya.

Ms. Alia El-Yassir emphasised that Europe and Central Asia was the first region to establish IBCs as mechanisms to pull together the UN system-wide expertise in response to the identified regional challenges and development issues. IBCs are platforms established to support joint analytical work, joint advocacy, and positioning, provide technical support to UNCTs and ensure knowledge sharing. Especially, bearing in mind, when being demand driven and aligned with priorities at the country level. During the COVID-19 outbreak, the IBC organised a special event connecting practices from Western, Eastern, Southeast and Central Asia. This was related to gender-based violence response during the pandemic, which engaged both governments and civil society leaders in sharing solutions on remaining challenges. The IBC created a repository of resources and good practices in integrating gender into COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

Strategic opportunities for SSTC are seen in providing platforms to engage civil society, women leaders and other partners, in order to tackle an increasing backlash against gender equality and women's rights. This is through further analysis and joint advocacy with key partners across the region, and also in facilitating common messaging across the regional UN system to aid in debunking misconceptions, as well as addressing women's leadership

and participation in green recovery. All essential in closing the gender digital divide, and engaging closely with the other regional IBCs and structures leading in these areas. It is important to note that the involvement of UNCTs, governments and civil society in promoting the exchange of experience and knowledge, is fundamental. South-South, East-East and triangular efforts are also needed to address lagging progress on gender data and related challenges in monitoring and measuring the implementation of SDG 5.

Mr. Vito Intini underlined that some issues require not only regional, but also SSC to provide successful solutions. The countries in the region, which are challenged by the limited fiscal space and sustainability, can benefit from learning from each other and create a kind of common voice on these issues. A number of countries have committed to reprioritise expenditures. They have already achieved results when it comes to energy subsidiary reform to create fiscal space, that could be better targeted to social policy and social expenditure.

The experience from other countries, not only within the region, but outside the region, is useful as countries have embarked in this kind of reform many years before. Another area to consider is the remittance flows. The SDG 10 is committed to the reduction of remittance corridor costs and transaction costs. This is an area that is very important within the region, where remittances are forecasted to go down and shrink further. The formalisation of informal economies is an attempt to come up with new incentive mechanisms in a highly informal economy, that could better protect workers in preparation for any future crisis. This is another area where SSC can bring positive results.

Ms. Roula Majdalani highlighted that the IBC supports and promotes collaborative multi-stakeholder efforts to attain thematic objectives related to food security, climate action and environment. ESCWA has been leading the coordination of the IBC since early 2020. They have been involved in the coordination and joint activities for two main pillars:

1. 'Climate Action and Energy Efficiency', which is co-led by ESCWA and UNEP; and
2. 'Water, Food Security and Nutrition', which is led by FAO with contribution from ESCWA.

It was emphasised that there must be more incentives to operationalise and upscale SSC by improving access to funding. She also distinguished the following areas for future collaboration with IBC through South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation on:

1. Food systems transformation to ensure the environmental and economic sustainability of food systems from farm to fork;
2. Treated wastewater for irrigation, food security and managed aquifer recharge within the water sector; and
3. Climate change by:
 - a. Strengthening national capacity in reviewing, updating, and tracking the NDCs;
 - b. Developing national monitoring systems on adaptation through the development of common indicators and metrics; and
 - c. Supporting Member States in developing project proposals to access climate finance and funds particularly.

Section II: Summary of Remarks

Dr. Sebastian Haug referred to the findings of his upcoming study on Mainstreaming South-South and Triangular Cooperation at the UN. The findings provide a scorecard of 15 UN entities that have mainstreamed support for SSTC at the institutional level. It also analyses factors of that mainstreaming, including recent geopolitical shifts.

Three key points of the commentary include focus on strategies and flexibility that the UN can follow in supporting programme countries in cross-border engagement. It explores engagement through different mechanisms in the spirit of UNDS reform, and in close cooperation with their national counterparts. It would also be ideal to expand concrete funding mechanisms as general conversations on SSC has contributed to creating more space for cooperation forms beyond the ODA. For RCs and UNCTs, bilateral regional or global trust funds can or should be essential mechanism for developing SSTC support programmes across agencies. It is also important that all stakeholders, particularly in the Southern Member States, are more explicit regarding what they mean, what they need, and what they can offer. This assists UN entities in making their support more beneficial.

Mr. Bobby M. Olarte noted that UNFPA considers SSTC as one of its mode of engagement for programmatic approaches to deliver on both country and regional programmes. The strategy informs the new UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025, that UNFPA is currently crafting. With the hope of strengthening SSTC at the country level, there is a need for collaboration within the context of UNSDCF and other UNCT partners, especially in starting to map the demand for SSC.

He also emphasised that the centres of excellence and national agencies that have proven successful in SSC across various areas, are potential partners that would aid in solving a problem with SSC. It is a challenge to find a potential partner whenever a country wants to do SSC partnerships. Thus, centres of excellence provide these solutions. They are visible, proven, and very interested to partner with other countries. UNFPA is mapping the centres for excellence as part of the process.

16:20 - 16:25

Commentary

- **Dr. Sebastian Haug**, Researcher, German Development Institute (GDI-DIE), Bonn – Commentary based on the forthcoming publication “Mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation: work in progress at the United Nations”

16:25 - 16:55

Roll-out of the UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Moderator: Ms. Sumeeta Banerji, Policy Specialist, UNOSSC, New York

- **Mr. Bobby M. Olarte**, Senior Adviser, Inter-Country Cooperation, Policy and Strategy Division, UNFPA, New York
- **Ms. Martha Santos**, Programme Manager, South-South Cooperation, UNICEF, New York
- **Ms. Yuko Suzuki Naab**, Global Policy Advisor, Effective Development Cooperation, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP, New York
- **Mr. Karim Khalil**, Secretary of the Commission, Office of the Executive Secretary, ESCWA, Beirut
- **Mr. Luis Eduardo Flores Mimica**, Sustainable Development Officer and Focal Point for Stakeholder Engagement, Office of the Secretary of the Commission, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Santiago
- **Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe**, Regional Chief, Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, UNOSSC, Istanbul

It is also important that the regional offices have a special and very instrumental role in facilitating SSC, given the natural tendency of countries in the region.

Ms. Martha Santos emphasised the important role of governments in driving and leading SSC. She also pointed to the specificity of SSC, which allows countries to make a key contribution in delivering the 2030 Agenda. She also noted how SSC compliments with other cooperation and partnership modalities, which are described in SDG 17. She also mentioned the importance of a more coordinated UN support for SSC, which is now the UN System-wide Strategy and Action Plan. UNICEF not only contributed in the development of the strategy, but also supported in its implementation.

UNICEF supports and engages in SSC, like all other UN agencies. For example, working with national agencies, UNICEF supported the transfer of knowledge from Thailand to Ukraine and Uzbekistan. This highlights both regional and global matchmaking. She also emphasised that SSC is a very specific modality. It is a country requesting support from another country in developing a policy. For example, support in inclusive education, for e-learning or for the protection of children in the context of tourism. It is not only about the neighbouring countries, it is sometimes based on language, and challenges that countries are facing collectively.

Ms. Yuko Suzuki Naab noted that, given the decentralised nature of UNDP, SSTC is mainstreamed in the programmes and projects at all levels. SSTC is tracked through a SSC marker in the reporting of results. A wealth of solutions, innovations and approaches were identified and co-created through over 90 Accelerator Labs organised by UNDP. Knowledge and innovations generated across UNDP programmes and projects have the potential to be adopted and replicated through SSTC. The South-South Galaxy hosted by the UNOSSC is being expanded through inter-agency collaboration. It provides a significant platform to ensure access to the shared knowledge. However, the knowledge and innovations co-generated by UNDP is yet to be fully systematically interchanged with the South-South Galaxy at scale.

UNDP launched internal online discussions to hear from colleagues on ways to strengthen its support to SSTC. It was part of a system-approach to support programme countries overcome the multi-dimensional crisis, while continuing to focus on the SDGs. There are a few thoughts on what needs to be strengthened in regard to tools/guides needed to support country offices with the identification of partners, and results to be accelerated using SSTC. Moreover, it is important to strengthen results orientation of the SSC marker to demonstrate how SSTC contributes to accelerating results more concretely, and the impact of UNDP on supporting SSTC. In addition, the need to evaluate the internal sharing of knowledge and the community of practices to codify, systematise and contextualise practices, innovations and solutions. It is also critical to share lessons learned and good practices on how UN agencies are implementing the strategy.

Mr. Karim Khalil highlighted three key drivers for the UNDS in the Arab region and in particular for ESCWA, that set the backdrop for their work:

1. The implementation of the SDGs which have not been on track before the pandemic;
2. The implications of policy options currently being adopted by countries that will shape the post pandemic development path; and
3. The implementation of the final phase of the UN reform at the regional level. ESCWA, as a Regional Commission with its Member States, all from the South, finds that its work is primarily to leverage SSC.

Section II: Summary of Remarks

The new strategy, its objectives, and the action plan, all fit with the mandate of the vision and work plan of the Commission. The new strategy can indeed provide an important impetus for some of the 'policy creativity' emerging from the South, which is most recently evident in dealing with the pandemic. The two key vehicles for operational delivery of support that ESCWA has at its disposal are the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation, which provides direct demand-based support to Member States to advance knowledge transfer through building their capacity and providing advisory services, and the Development Account, which is a capacity development programme for developing countries.

ESCWA also supports research and academic institutions through the regional network of national green help desks and the network of national technology transfer offices. ESCWA continues to lead the development of the Regional Knowledge and Data Hub as a product for the RCP at the regional level. UNOSSC can help with the identification of the potential for greater inter-regional policy development and cooperation on present or upcoming issues that are common strategic interest for the UN system as a whole. UNOSSC can also assist in facilitating specific strategic inter-regional policy initiatives such as digital connectivity in the context of COVID-19, as well as in implementing the strategy and action plan that could be channeled for discussion and actioned by the RCP. Main issues chosen for analysis could also contribute to discussions at the UN Economic and Social Council as part of the initiatives.

Mr. Luis Eduardo Flores Mimica stressed that the implementation of the UN System-wide Strategy needs to fit within the complex landscape. One of the key elements to be assessed is SSTC as a transversal matter. This is due to the need to deal with issues at global, regional and national level, as well as in different environments. When it comes to the UN system, there are different processes and instruments in dealing with 2030 Agenda and the UN reform with the RCPs, IBCs, RCs, UNCTs, and all the mandates that the agencies have. This complexity needs to be acknowledged to fit BAPA+40, the strategy and the action plan. In particular, how it works with the instruments of the 2030 Agenda.

At this point, ECLAC is building a map. They are looking into how this map works in the framework of the SDGs and the Decade of Action. To adequately manage and implement the strategy, there needs to be flexibility, collective thinking, dialogue, and above all processes. The work that has been implemented thus far is commendable in terms of bringing the right partners together and generating the right conversations. The strategy and the action plan are still there for stakeholders to implement, but we need to address the complexity.

Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe assured the audience that support to the implementation of the System-wide Strategy, both at the regional and country levels, is already embedded in this year's work plan for the Division. The work plan also has some resources attached to it for some very strategic initiatives. The UNOSSC's Division has incorporated relevant regional and country level outputs of both the strategy and the drafted action plan into the work plan. It is also important that most of the planned interventions are based on a brief look into UNSDCFs, CPDs, SEIAs, regional programmes of agencies, work plans of RCPs and relevant IBCs.

The implementation of the strategy by the regional arm of UNOSSC will be based on leveraging existing regional and sub-regional forums that aim at enhancing policy coordination and the sharing of experiences and good practices at the regional level. This is through engaging in regional UN reform efforts, RCPs and IBCs, as well as providing policy, knowledge and thematic support based on the work plan for RCPs. At the national level, support will aim at strengthening institutional, human and technical capacities. This is done through national stock-taking and assessment exercises, providing technical assistance and capacity development for national ecosystem, as well as collaborating with emerging providers of triangular cooperation. UNOSSC also intends to engage with RCs in order to support a select number of UNCTs with the development of joint programmes, capacity development strategies, peer-learning, knowledge, experience and technologies.

Ms. Berna Bayazit elaborated on the ODA Capacity Development Initiative, representing a series of educational events since 2014, which benefits development practitioners of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Ministries of Finance, aid agencies of development assistance providers in Europe and the CIS region. She highlighted that the events are a part of a broader service line of the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub to support the ODA management systems, all contributing to South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation. The initiative is both learning and sharing of peer expertise by Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Bulgaria, and other countries. Since 2020, the capacity development series are delivered online at the request and priorities of the partners. They are often hosted by partners on ODA relevant technical and thematic areas, such as monitoring and evaluation, reporting, private sector engagement, green and alternative finance, skills development and more.

In regard to broader efforts, UNDP provided support for the establishment of institutional and legislative framework for Romania's RoAid, Kazakhstan's KazAid and Astana Civil Service Hub. They also supported in the consolidation of the strategic plan for the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. UNDP also has programmatic project level cooperation with Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development, the Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs, and Turkey Partnership for Development. UNDP also supports in expertise deployment schemes. The private sector and civil society organisation actors also contribute to development cooperation through the Innovation Challenge Funds. Continuous learning and shift towards digitalisation of ODA management, support programmes, as well as supports in building capacity for diversifying partnerships and modalities for development cooperation, are all crucial steps to move forward in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Ms. Ines Tofalo presented the UNOSSC administrated South-South Funds implemented through the UN system. It consists of:

- The UN Fund for South-South Cooperation;
- The Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF);
- The India Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA); and
- The India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

17:00 - 17:30

Catalytic Initiatives and Harnessing Knowledge

Moderator: Ms. Olena Ovchynnikova, Learning Portfolio Manager, UN System Staff College Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development, Bonn

- ODA Capacity Development Initiative - **Ms. Berna Bayazit**, Team Leader a.i. (Partnerships), UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub
- South-South Funds implemented through the UN System: Focus on UNOSSC Mechanisms - **Ms. Ines Tofalo**, Chief, Programme Support Unit, UNOSSC, New York
- Establishing a Statistical Population Register in the Republic of Moldova (India-UN Development Partnership Fund-supported Initiative) - **Mr. Eduard Mihalas**, Programme Analyst, Population and Development, UNFPA Moldova
- Select UNOSSC Global Projects and Initiatives - **Ms. Dingding Sun**, Programme Coordination Specialist, UNOSSC, New York

Section II: Summary of Remarks

The key characteristic of these funds is that they operate on South-South principles, including national ownership and leadership, non-conditionalities and solidarity. The demand always comes from requests from a government to one of the sponsoring countries, or to the trust fund or committees of the fund. The UN system comes in to support these funds. Currently, 20 UN entities are participating in the funds, and they basically cover all the 17 SDGs.

In terms of the COVID-19 response, PGTF has supported grants to provide five countries in the Middle East and North Africa, with the opportunity to advance joint research on COVID-19 related to areas in animal and human health. The UN Fund for South-South Cooperation is a funding mechanism through which South-South Galaxy has received funding to engage in knowledge sharing events. The India-UN Fund had been very active in response to COVID-19. US\$11 million have been provided to 14 countries in funding areas ranging from health infrastructure, equipment, personal protective equipment to socio-economic mitigation and recovery from the pandemic. She expressed hope that the UN system shares this information and enables the governments to have greater participation in these funds.

Mr. Eduard Mihalas elaborated on the initiative supported by the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, which is aimed at establishing a Statistical Population Register in the Republic of Moldova. With funding from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, an ambitious target of setting up a statistical population register has been outlined that will make use of available administrative data in the country. UNFPA facilitated an exchange of experience and knowledge between countries.

Through SSTC, it sought an opportunity to support Moldova in advancing its statistical system by peer learning from other countries. They brought together Statistical Offices from Estonia, Netherlands, Finland, Slovenia, and Spain that had knowledge-sharing sessions with the National Bureau of Statistics. They were able to showcase how administrative data is used, and the important process of establishing a statistical population register. Furthermore, they explored why this is so important in providing accurate and reliable data in monitoring the SDGs, and how governments can save money by establishing such a population register. The current project builds on new opportunities and creates bridges between Statistical Offices, so in the future, data stays at the core of the interventions.

Ms. Dingding Sun presented select UNOSSC global projects and initiatives. She specified on the approaches and objectives of UNOSSC in designing the projects:

1. To build and connect platforms regionally and globally, by leveraging thematic expertise of partners, and benefitting from a multi-stakeholder approach;
2. To connect demands and supplies by facilitating the development of a pilot project;
3. To establish joint programming with other UN specialised agencies, by leveraging their expertise in local implementation, pilot demonstration and thematic capacity development activities; and
4. To advance research by connecting countries, cities, think tanks, agencies, institutions and people from the South in exchanging knowledge, learning from and adapting experiences and solutions for sustainable development.

UNOSSC's global projects and initiatives create opportunities for different levels of stakeholders to join SSC in advancing the SDGs. They include:

- The Global South-South Development Expo, which is a UN system-wide platform;
- The South-South Cooperation Cities Project, which is a platform offered to non-state actors, including cities, local authorities, private sectors, to facilitate concrete project cooperation, and assist in guiding non-state actors with SSC in implementing cooperation projects that align with the SDGs;

- The Global Thinkers Initiative and the Global South-South Development Center Project are platforms that engage institutions, including think tanks globally, and has six global networks which reaches a network of 250 think tanks globally, to advance cross-cutting topics in SSC research and inform policy discourse;
- The Youth4South Initiative provides capacity development, training opportunities, civil funded scholarship and fellowship opportunities to support the youth, enabling the youth to further pursue advanced research, relevant to South-South and international cooperation; and
- The South-South Galaxy is an online global platform for SSC related knowledge sharing and partnership brokering, and is a network of networks connecting all the different development agencies and existing platforms.

Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang noted that South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation have proven its importance and necessity for these two regions and beyond. It goes far beyond providing and receiving assistance. It offers a comprehensive toolkit and various modalities to be utilised and combined to suit the local needs. Certain issues often benefit more from triangular partnership, offering partners a wider range of expertise, resources and diversified approaches. Priority areas for SSTC support include digital transformation, climate change, youth, water, economic diversification, migration, remittances, and strong social protection systems for resilient systems and recovery from this pandemic.

17:35 - 17:40

Closing Remarks

Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, Deputy Director, Programme and Operations, UNOSSC, New York

Beyond geographical closeness, contextual similarities matter. The linkage between global, regional and national levels needs to be strengthened to make sure policies, knowledge and practice form a healthy circle that feed into each other. This will be the guidance for all to move forward and scale up all actions in supporting policy, knowledge, institutional capacity, and financing mechanisms. Ultimately, to get things done, all stakeholders need to operationalise the support through various programmes, initiatives and trust funds to deliver on the common goal of the SDGs.

Annex

Profiles of Speakers (in speaking order)



Director a.i., UNOSSC,
New York

Mr. Adel M. Abdellatif of Egypt was appointed by the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner, in September 2020. Before joining UNOSSC, Mr. Abdellatif served as Deputy Director, a.i., and Senior Strategic Adviser in the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) of UNDP. In that capacity, he coordinated the work of the UNDP Country Offices in 16 countries in the Arab States region. He advised on UNDP policies in the region to identify the strategic regional and national priorities and led the strategy for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Arab countries. Mr. Abdellatif further provided analyses of emerging trends and formulated strategies and briefings for UNDP leadership. In addition, he headed the team that produced the UNDP flagship Arab Human Development Report.

In his work with UNDP, he also took the lead in launching key UNDP regional initiatives in the Arab States region, including those on good governance, climate resilience, water governance, regional trade facilitation, social cohesion and women's empowerment. He supervised the publication by UNDP of several reports and papers and initiated the launch of the Arab Knowledge Report in partnership with the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Abdellatif came to UNDP following a two-decade career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, serving in several embassies and earning the rank of Ambassador. He holds a doctoral degree in political economy from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, Switzerland.



Deputy Regional Director,
UNDP Regional Bureau
for Europe and the CIS,
Istanbul

Ms. Agi Veres assumed this role in 2019. Since 2002, when she joined UNDP, she has served in various capacities at headquarters, regional and country levels. Previous to her current post, she served in management positions as Resident Representative and Country Director of UNDP in China (2015-2019), Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in Lesotho (2011-2015), Deputy Chief and Senior Programme Coordinator in the (2006-2011).

Prior to her field experience, she started with UNDP at its Headquarters in New York, where she held positions as UNDP Corporate Reporting and Business Analysis Team Lead (2005-2006), and ICT Communications Officer (2002-2005). She joined UNDP from her private sector career as a management consultant for Accenture, focusing on organisational effectiveness and change management in Hungary and New York (1997-2002).



Regional Hub Manager,
UNDP Regional Hub for
Arab States, Amman

Prior to this role, **Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafi** served in different senior positions at UNDP Headquarters in New York, at the Regional Bureau for Arab States (Chief Country Operations Division 2014-2015, Chief of Staff 2012-2013 and Senior Program Advisor and Special Advisor 2009-2011). He headed the UNDP Gaza Office for many years (1995-2008), leading the UN development work in close partnership with the newly established Palestinian Authority and Civil Society. He also played a leading role in the UN's efforts for the reconstruction and recovery of the Gaza Strip, and served as a member of the Gaza City Council 1995-2002 on a voluntary basis, heading the Gaza Municipal Committee for the City Development.

He is an economist by training and served as a member of governing boards of some civil society organisations in the State of Palestine.



**Regional Director for
Eastern Europe and
Central Asia, UNFPA,**
Istanbul

Ms. Alanna Armitage has championed women's health and rights over the past three decades in Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America, including as UNFPA Representative. As Director of UNFPA's Geneva Office, she led the Fund's Geneva-based multilateral interactions on global health, human rights and humanitarian response. She connects social influencers as part of the 'Let's Talk!' movement, opening up space to speak about harmful taboos around women's health and bodies. She acts as a mentor of young women leaders.

She holds degrees in cultural anthropology and international development studies and a postgraduate degree in health systems management, and is completing a PhD at the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies on the impact of demographic anxiety on gender equality in Eastern Europe.



**Regional Director for
Europe and Central Asia
and Representative to
Turkey, UN Women,**
Istanbul

Ms. Alia El-Yassir has been working with UN Women since 2011. Prior to assuming her current role, she worked with UN Women as Deputy Regional Director and as Representative at country level. In these roles, she has supported normative processes and UN coordination efforts, as well as complex programmes and projects for tackling gender equality and women's empowerment.

Before taking on these roles within UN Women, she worked with UNIFEM and UNDP. She also has experience in the science education field. She is a strong believer in volunteerism and has supported a number of women and human rights NGOs in a volunteer capacity. She holds a BSc degree in biology from McGill University and an MSc degree in desert studies from Ben Gurion University of the Negev.



Deputy Director a.i., UN Development Coordination Office, New York

Ms. Rosemary Kalapurakal assumed this role in December 2020, after having served as Chief of DCO's Policy and Programme Branch over the last two years. She brings to this role more than 20 years of diverse experience at the UN, spanning policy and programme work as well as strategic management and operations.

Previously, she served as the 2030 Agenda Lead Advisor for UNDP in its Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), and as the Deputy Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme. She has worked for UNDP in numerous management and policy capacities at Headquarters and in the field, focused on sustainable development and inclusion. She holds a doctorate in business and a master's degree in economics.



Regional Chief, Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS, UNOSSC, Istanbul

Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe assumed this role in October 2020. Prior to joining UNOSSC, he was the Team Leader of the Intergovernmental Engagement Team in the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) of UNDP, New York, from 2015-2020. During this period, and from 2019-2020, he also served concurrently as the Team Leader ad interim of the UN System Affairs Group. In both capacities, he led on strategic positioning, representation, advocacy and partnerships; intergovernmental negotiation processes; served in the drafting committee of the UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation; and was the Bureau's lead in UNDP's engagement in the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board and the Joint Meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP.

From 2013-2014, he worked as the Senior Policy Specialist in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General in New York and provided policy support to Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, including on Post-2015 development agenda, G20, UN reform, South-South cooperation, and UN Development Group matters. From 2000-2013, he worked in UNDP (Geneva), Office of the UN Resident Coordinator (Tashkent), UNDP (Tashkent), UNICEF (Colombo), UNHCR (Colombo) and UNHCR (London).

He is a lawyer by training with a Master of Law (LL.M.) from the University of Essex, UK, where he was a Chevening Scholar of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a Master of Public Policy (MPP) from the University of Massachusetts, USA.



**Advisor to the Deputy
Director-General, FAO,
Rome**

Ms. Aruna Gujral is an Italo-Indian Strategic Leader with almost 20 years of experience with the UN system. She is currently the Advisor to the Deputy Director-General of FAO after having worked in different duty stations in sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and in the Near East, where she has covered different managerial positions providing effective leadership in Strategic Planning, Programming, Resources Mobilisation, South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Partnerships. She is a purely results-driven executive with a proven track-record in providing the highest calibre of strategic development and oversight to large programmes and operations, including in hazardous and complex socio-political settings.

She is an exceptional relationship builder, negotiator and a solution-focused leader. She incorporates strategic foresight thinking, positive attitude and high sense of dedication as a way of life in her professional life, and is a strong believer that working together we can bring transformative changes and achieve Zero-Hunger within our lifetime.



President, Emirates Policy
Center, Abu Dhabi

Dr. Ebtessam al-Ketbi is also the Founder of the Emirates Policy Center, which is one of the most important think tanks in the Arab World. She is a Professor of Political Science at the United Arab Emirates University.

In recognition of her role and the great respect she enjoys in the UAE and the Gulf region, she was appointed in 2015 as member of the Consultative Commission of the Cooperation Council of the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) in 2015. She was also chosen in 2018 in the list of 50 Most Influential Women in the Arab World. In 2019, she received the Women Super Achiever Award during the World Women Leadership Congress.



Director, Institute of Economic and Public Policy, Corvinus University of Budapest;
President of the Steering Committee, Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee);
Research Professor, ELKH Centre for Social Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre of Excellence, Budapest

Prof. Gyorgy Hajnal was also a senior researcher, and subsequently headed the successor organisation of the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration until 2010. In addition to his academic positions, he served as consultant to various domestic and international governmental and business entities.

His current research interests extend to comparative analysis of public management reforms and reform doctrines at central and local levels, administrative culture, and the structural dynamics of central government organisation, with a prime focus on the Central and Eastern European region and the patterns of illiberal transformation therein.

He has leading positions in the discipline's international academic organisations, being currently the President of NISPAcee and the Vice-President for Eastern Europe of IRSPM (International Research Society for Public Management).



Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), UNDP, New York

Ms. Ulrika Modéer was appointed to this role in June 2018 by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres. She previously served as State Secretary for International Development Cooperation and Climate and had been instrumental in reshaping Sweden's international development cooperation to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

During her tenure as State Secretary, she contributed to global policy on issues of relevance to UNDP, including on gender equality, UN reform, financing of the multilateral system, climate and environment, conflict prevention and the humanitarian-development nexus.

She combines a strong policy background with experience from parliamentary work as well as from civil society, and has had several assignments in Latin America (Bolivia, Guatemala) and Africa (Mozambique, Southern Africa). Born in 1969, she holds a Bachelor of Arts in international relations from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.



Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Geneva

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin of Russian Federation was appointed on 1 March 2021. Prior to joining UNECE, he was Resident Representative (RR) of the UNDP in Armenia (as deputy RR in 2017-2018 and RR since December 2018) leading a team of 120 people.

From 2011-2016, he was the Regional Partnership Advisor and Team Leader in the UNDP's Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, covering the Europe and the CIS region, based in Istanbul. In this function, he led a team of 20 that supported UNDP's partnerships with new development donors and partners in the region, including strategic partnerships with Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Romania, Russia and Slovak Republic.

Earlier, he had worked in the UNDP Regional Support Center in Bratislava, Slovakia (2011-2014), the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS at UNDP Headquarters in New York (2008-2011); and in the UNDP Country Office in Moscow, Russia (2002-2008).

He holds a PhD in Economics from the Moscow State University, a Master of Public Administration from New York University (Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service), as well as a degree in public administration from the Moscow State University and in international economics from the Russian Foreign Trade Academy.



Cluster Leader, 2030 Agenda, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Beirut

Ms. Karima El Korri of Morocco has worked for more than 20 years in development. She previously managed the population and development portfolio and pioneered the organisation's work on international migration, population ageing and youth empowerment. Prior to joining ESCWA in 2012, she served as a regional advisor and project coordinator in the UNDP, focusing on parliamentary strengthening and advancing participatory governance in the Arab States.

Previous to joining the UN system in 2004, she was a lecturer at the Al-Akhawayn University, then worked at a think-tank in Morocco engaging with government, civil society, the private sector, academia, youth and international organisations to develop the country's vision for development 2020.

She obtained her master's degree in applied linguistics from Teachers College, Columbia University and a bachelor's degree in English from Mohammed V University in Rabat.



Director, OECD Development Centre, Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary General on Development, Paris

In his current position, **Dr. Mario Pezzini** also served for a year as Acting Director of the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate. The OECD Development Centre is an institution where governments, enterprises and civil society organisations informally discuss questions of common interest.

Its Governing Board includes most of the OECD countries but also developing and emerging economies as full members. The Centre helps policy makers in OECD and partner countries find innovative solutions to the global challenges of development.

Before joining the Development Centre in 2010, he held several senior management positions in the OECD, where he has been working since 1995. Prior to joining the OECD, he was Professor in Industrial Economics at the MINES ParisTech as well as in US and Italian Universities. Also, he served as advisor in the field of economic development, industrial organisation and regional economics in international organisations and think tanks (e.g. ILO, UNIDO, European Commission and Nomisma in Italy).



Director, Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development, Global Finance Sector Hub, UNDP, Istanbul

Mr. Sahba Sobhani brings 19 years of experience in the private sector in Silicon Valley, Singapore and at UNDP as Programme Advisor, Team Leader and Programme Manager including as the technical lead for the recently endorsed UNDP private sector strategy.

He has significant partnership development and advocacy experience with the private sector working with over 100 companies and business organisations and a track record of operational leadership, innovation and management of six global UNDP-led strategic multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives in the area of business and development including the Business Call to Action Initiative, the Connecting Business Initiative and the G20 Global Platform on Inclusive Business. He has been the principal author and content manager of all five major UNDP-led reports in the area of private sector in development.

Previously, he managed two key UNDP private sector initiatives in the Executive Office of the former Administrator of UNDP, Mark Malloch Brown, including the Commission on the Private

Sector and Development, and the African Financial Markets Initiative. He co-authored *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor*, the seminal report of the Private Sector Commission produced at the request of former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He was also the managing editor of the *African Stock Markets Handbook*. He is a graduate of Yale University and the Fletcher School of Diplomacy, USA.



Director-General, Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation

Mr. Elborni Salhi assumed this role in 2012. He is a general engineer in rural economy and a senior expert of South-South and triangular cooperation. He also has expertise of more than 17 years in the field of the promotion of foreign direct investment and the support of foreign companies running business in Tunisia.

As a founding member of the economic and business Forum, he is in charge of improving the business environment in Tunisia.



Head, Department of Cooperation with Arab and OIC Institutions, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan

Mr. Malek Al-Breazat assumed this role in June 2008 serving as the focal/main contact person for the Arab and Islamic countries and funds at the Ministry. In addition, he is the focal point between the Arab and Islamic countries and all of Government of Jordan's institutions that have activities with the Arab and Islamic funds.

His duties and responsibilities include: contact with donor agencies; evaluate and review the proposed projects; participate as Deputy Governor for Jordan at the Board Council meeting of the Islamic Bank, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and IFAD; member of the Technical Committee for Managing the General Debt; national representative for Jordan at the UN ESCWA, etc.



Chairman of the Steering Committee, Astana Civil Service Hub

Dr. Alikhan Baimenov has held leading public posts in the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan. In his political career, he has served as the Head of the Executive Office of the President, Head of the Office of the Prime Minister, Chairman of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs, Minister of Labour and Social Protection, and twice as a Deputy of the Parliament of Kazakhstan. He also headed two stages of civil service reforms. In the result, the first "Law on Civil Service" and the competition-based recruitment of civil servants were implemented. In addition to other initiatives, it included introduction of Senior Executive Service – Corps "A" and professionalisation of HR departments. Under his leadership, for the first time among the CIS countries, the concept of three-level model of social protection and model of implementation of social insurance were developed in Kazakhstan. He is also an author of the series of publications on issues on social protection, public management and civil service, as well as political and party building.



**Managing Director, UN
Technology Bank, Gebze**

Mr. Joshua Phoho Setipa assumed this role in November 2018. He oversees the vision, strategy, and activities of this new UN institution. He is a passionate advocate for improving access to science, technology, and innovation in the world's least developed countries. With over 20 years of experience in senior roles on international trade, economic policy, investment strategy, and economic development at the national, regional, and multilateral levels, he has a wealth of experience and knowledge on issues affecting the least developed countries.

He comes to the Technology Bank from the World Bank, where he was a senior consultant on trade facilitation. He has extensive experience formulating and implementing national and regional development projects in sub-Saharan Africa. From 2015-2017, he was the Minister of Trade and Industry for the Government of Lesotho. Before this, he served as Chief Executive Officer for the Lesotho National Development Corporation, leading investment mobilisation for Lesotho. He also served as a Senior Advisor to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization for over six years, from 2005-2012.

He holds a Master of Business Administration and International Finance from the University of Bradford, UK, a Graduate Diploma in International Relations and Trade from the Australian National University, Canberra, and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration and Political Science from the National University of Lesotho.



**Executive Director,
South Centre, Geneva**

Dr. Carlos María Correa of Argentina assumed this role in July 2018. Formerly, he was the Special Advisor on Trade and Intellectual Property of the South Centre. He is a renowned international authority on intellectual property and technology issues.

He has worked with the Argentine government and has been the Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies on Industrial Property and Economics at the Law Faculty of the University of Buenos Aires; been a visiting professor in post-graduate courses of several universities and a consultant to various regional and international organisations; advised several governments on intellectual property, innovation policy and public health.

Dr. Correa was also a member of the UK Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health established by the World Health Assembly and of the FAO Panel of Eminent Experts on Ethics in Food and Agriculture. He is the author of many books and numerous articles. He is also both a lawyer and an economist from the University of Buenos Aires and holds a PhD in Law from the same University.



Deputy Director, Policy and Partnerships,
UNOSSC, New York

Mr. Tarik Iziraren has more than 20 years of experience with the Moroccan diplomatic service, including eight years at the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the UN in New York. He served as Head of the Economic and Sustainable Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Morocco in New York.

He also served as Vice-President of the Executive Board of the UNDP/UNFPA and UNOPS (2012), and Vice-Chair of the Second Committee of the 69th session of the UN General Assembly. He participated in the negotiations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. He was a member of the African Group Team of negotiators for 2030 Agenda and was member of the Moroccan delegation to the Security Council (2012, 2013).

He led the substantive secretariat of the 2nd High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) held in Buenos Aires from 20-22 March 2019 as well as the development of the UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.



Director General,
Moroccan Agency for
International Cooperation

Ambassador Mohamed Methqal was appointed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI in June 2016. He has been coordinating Morocco national efforts in international humanitarian assistance through the implementation of many Royal initiatives in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also worked on implementing Morocco cooperation projects in health, agriculture, fishery and education in partner countries mainly in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

In October 2020, he became member of the Advisory Group of the Central Emergency Fund (CERF) of the UN. Since October 2019, he has been elected President of the Network of South-South Cooperation Actors (RAFSUD) at International Organisation of Francophonie (OIF). Previously, Ambassador Methqal was the Special Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, where he was in charge of new economic diplomacy, cooperation and international development; Chief of Staff of the President of COP22; Senior Advisor to the Minister

of Economy and Finance in Morocco, and had provided consulting and advisory services to Governments, corporations and business leaders since 2004 as he worked in strategy and management consulting during six years at international consulting firms based in Paris for which he also contributed to develop their Morocco branch and their activities in West Africa.

During his career, he had advised multiple companies and investors on strategic projects in Europe, Morocco and sub-Saharan African countries. He began his career in 2000 as a research assistant for three years at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. He co-founded two innovative start-ups and is a winner of the 2003 NETS Prize, awarded to the 15 most promising young entrepreneurs in Switzerland.

He graduated with an engineer diploma from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL) and holds an MBA from College des Ingénieurs in Paris and a Certificate in Entrepreneurship from Babson College, USA.



Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Abro occupies the post of Deputy Director in charge of the UN agencies assistances and cooperation in Djibouti and serves as the focal point of South-South and triangular cooperation. From 2007-2017, he held the post of first Counsellor to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Djibouti in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Deputy Director,
Social and Cultural
Department,** Ministry
of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation,
Djibouti



Ms. Aliya Aghazada assumed this role in 2018. She was born in 1977 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and graduated from Baku State University with MA on international relations and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1997. During these years of diplomatic service, she worked in various departments of MFA such as Media and Information Department, Strategic Research Department and Human Recourses Department.

From 2013-2017, she worked at the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Kingdom of the Netherlands as Counselor and Chargée d'affaires.

**Deputy Director,
Azerbaijan International
Development Agency
(AIDA)**



Prior to his current role, **Mr. Jan Sliva**, born in 1973, worked with the European Investment Bank's Management Committee in Luxembourg as Head of Cabinet and Senior Advisor to four Vice Presidents for a decade. Previously he was a diplomat at the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels and an editor and foreign correspondent for the Associated Press, the world's leading news agency, with long-term postings in New York, London, Strasbourg and Brussels.

He holds an Executive Master in Finance from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management and a Master in English and American Studies and Literature from Charles University in Prague.

**Director,
Development Agency
(CzechAid)** Czech
Agency



Mr. Ahmed Faruk Diken is involved in the formulation and implementation of technical cooperation and Reverse Linkage interventions, as well as managing partnerships in the MENA and Europe region for South-South and triangular cooperation. In addition to implementing projects, he also supports institutional aspects of capacity development and South-South and triangular cooperation by contributing to the development of relevant policies and strategies of the IsDB. He works closely with partners in the member countries as well as with international development partners in formulating initiatives that promote South-South cooperation.

**Senior Technical
Cooperation Coordinator,
MENA and Europe,
Regional Cooperation and
Integration Department,
Islamic Development Bank
(IsDB), Jeddah**

Prior to his current position, he worked as Senior Specialist in Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, a poverty alleviation focused trust fund of the IsDB Group. He joined the IsDB as a Young Professional in 2011. During his training as a young professional, he has worked on private sector operations, public-private partnerships and project evaluations.



Ms. Maria Misovicova has rich working experience in the development field, including in Central Asia. With a background in economics and international law, her career expands over several areas including trade negotiations, trade and development, trade facilitation, programme management, resource mobilisation, and partnerships building.

Before joining the UN, she served as a diplomat in Slovakia's Foreign Service. She worked as a trade negotiator at the World Trade Organization in Geneva and led trade negotiating teams during Slovakia's accessions to OECD and EU.

**Chief, Capacity
Development and
Partnerships Section,
Strategy and Programme
Management Division,
UN Economic and Social
Commission for Asia
and the Pacific (ESCAP),
Bangkok**



In his current role, **Dr. Sebastian Haug** focuses on South-North relations, international cooperation and multilateral politics. He used to work for the UN in China and Mexico and holds a Master of Science from the University of Oxford as well as a PhD from the University of Cambridge.

Researcher, German
Development Institute
(GDI- DIE), Bonn



Prior to his current post, **H.E. Ambassador Imad Zuhairi** served as Deputy Head and Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the UN in Geneva and other International Organisations in Switzerland. He has been a career diplomat since 1995 and assumed several functions from Director of European Department to Head of the Communication Section at the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Desk Officer for Western European countries within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He holds an MBA and has good knowledge in English and French.

Director **General,**
Palestinian International
Cooperation Agency
(PICA)



Ms. Najat Rochdi assumed this role in August 2020. She brings over 20 years of experience in development and humanitarian assistance and international coordination in conflict and post-conflict areas, including through her latest assignment as Senior Adviser to the Special Envoy for Syria and Director of Peer to Peer with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Geneva.

Prior to this, she served as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator with the UN peacekeeping mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Earlier, she served as Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Cameroon and Deputy Director of the Representative Office of the UNDP in Geneva.

**UN Deputy Special
Coordinator for
Lebanon, UN Resident
and Humanitarian
Coordinator, Lebanon**



Mr. Mohammed Elrazzaz joined the UfM in 2013. Part of the Economic Development and Employment Division at the Secretariat, he is in charge of Creative Economy, Digital Economy and Social Economy, as well as liaising on Regional Integration.

In parallel, he has been a Professor of Mediterranean Heritage at the International University of Catalonia in Barcelona (UIC) since 2015. His second book, titled “The Mediterranean: A Shared Heritage”, was published by the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI, Slovenia) in 2018.

Regional Integration Expert, Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Barcelona



Ms. Georgette Gagnon brings to the position over 25 years of experience leading and implementing strategic initiatives on human rights, humanitarian action and development and coordinating multi-disciplinary teams in conflict and post-conflict countries.

Most recently, she served as Director of Field Operations and Technical Cooperation in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), where she led the substantive and operational work of the Office’s 94 field presences around the world. From 2010 to 2015, she was the Director of Human Rights for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) based in Kabul. She has also served as a director and senior adviser on protection of civilians, human rights and the rule of law to the UN, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, national governments and non-governmental organisations.

Assistant Secretary-General, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, Libya

She holds an LLB from York University in Toronto, Canada, and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex in the United Kingdom.



Mr. Arkan El-Seblani, being native of Lebanon and a lawyer by training, is an international development professional specialised in supporting democratic governance reforms, with a focus on anti-corruption and the rule of law.

He holds a Bachelor of Laws from the Lebanese University and a Master of Laws from the George Washington University. He has more than 15 years of experience in the UN, in private practice in Lebanon and the United States of America, and in the Public Prosecution Office of the State of Qatar. He speaks Arabic, English and French, and has published numerous articles and papers on law and public policy. He is also a member of numerous professional associations worldwide and is a regular speaker and commentator at international and regional seminars and conferences.

Head, Regional Team on Anti-Corruption and Integrity, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, Amman



Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, UN Development Coordination Office, Istanbul

Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son began her career in Haiti, assisting HIV/AIDS patients with the non-governmental organisations. She then worked with the Country Women’s Association of Nigeria, focusing on microfinance schemes.

In 1994, she was posted to Somalia as a Programme Officer with the UNDP, marking the beginning of an 18-year period with UNDP. After two years in Somalia, she worked in various other locations including Lao PDR, Timor-Leste during the pre-independence period, Indonesia during the first democratic elections and Tsunami 2004 period. She was also posted in New York to serve as a Programme Adviser on Afghanistan and as OCHA’s Director of Corporate Programmes.

At OCHA, she was responsible for organising the World Humanitarian Summit and provided direct oversight over work on communications, information services, policy development and humanitarian financing including the CERF and the country based pooled funds. She took up her assignment as the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in August 2018 until August 2020. Subsequently, she assumed her current role.



UN Resident Coordinator, Georgia

Dr. Sabine Machl of Austria assumed this role in June 2019. Prior to this post, she has worked in international organisations for more than 22 years among those over seven years for the UN. Her latest assignment was UN Women Representative in Indonesia and Liaison to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and before that she headed UN Women in Palestine and Kyrgyzstan.

From 2007-2011, she was the Head of Section/Senior Adviser to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague covering the countries of the former Soviet Union. From 2005-2007, she was posted in Kyrgyzstan as Deputy Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek. She also worked for four years as the Head of the Central Asia desk in the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna. Throughout 2001, she was assigned Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Estonia and during Austria’s OSCE Chairmanship. In 2000, she was First Secretary in the Austrian

Permanent Mission. She worked as Desk Officer for Southeastern Europe in the Political Section of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at the European Parliament, in three different courts in Vienna and as a teacher in Croydon/London.

She holds two master’s degrees (in Law and Languages) and a PhD in Law from the University of Vienna. A major amount for her PhD research was carried out in Groningen, the Netherlands. She is fluent in German (mother tongue), English, Russian and French.



UN Resident Coordinator,
Kazakhstan

Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey brings over 20 years of experience working with peace, security and development to this position. Most recently, she has worked on strategic leadership of humanitarian operations and diplomacy for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement through the Swedish Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). She also served as Head of the Security Sector Reform Division of the Agency for Peace, Security and Development (FBA) of the Swedish Government and worked at the Security Policy Department of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Under the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), she also headed the Election Field Operations of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held the position of Director of European Union Integration Office, and served the UN Special Envoy for Kosovo.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Stockholm University and completed a post-graduate degree on master's level in humanitarian assistance at Uppsala University.



**UN Resident and
Humanitarian Coordinator,**
Jordan

Prior to this role, **Mr. Anders Pedersen** of Sweden was the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Botswana. Previously, he was Chief of Staff at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) between 2010 and 2012; Director of Department for Democracy, Human Rights and Gender Equality also at SIDA (2008-2010); Chief, Methods in Development Cooperation Unit at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2007-2008); and Secretary-General of the Four Nations Initiative on Governance and Management of the United Nations, Sweden (2006-2007).

He has served with the UN as Coordinator of the Europe, North America and Central Asia Unit in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, (2004-2006); Chief, United Nations Human Rights Office in Angola (2003-2004); Chief, Human Rights Division, Angola (2001-2003).

Prior to that he held various positions in the Swedish Foreign Service such as First Secretary, Democratic Governance Coordinator, Embassy of Sweden in Zambia (1998-2001); Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Sweden in Geneva, (1996-1998); First Secretary, Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden (1995-1996); and First Secretary, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Stockholm, Sweden (1992-1995). He was a Human Rights Legal Adviser to the United Nations Mission in El Salvador (1991-1992); Associate Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, El Salvador (1990-1991) and Associate Protection Officer, UNHCR, Honduras (1989-1990).

Early on in his career he was a Legal Adviser at the Secretariat of the Swedish Red Cross, Stockholm (1987-1989). He holds a Master of Law (LL.M.).



UN Resident Coordinator,
Saudi Arabia

In this role, **Ms. Nathalie Fustier** is responsible for overseeing and facilitating the work of all of the UN agencies across the country. She is a French national and holds a master's degree in political sciences and a master's degree in international negotiations.

Previously she worked at OCHA in various capacities, including as Head of Office in Lebanon (2017-2018), Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer for the Middle East (2015-2016) and OCHA Head of Office in Gaziantep, Turkey (2013-2014). Prior to joining OCHA, she has worked eight years in the private sector, advising international companies on various issues related to the Gulf and the Middle East. In parallel, she was volunteering as the President of the Women's Foundation for the Mediterranean, a French NGO.

She has been working on the Middle East for the last twenty years. She was cultural counsellor at the French Embassy in Doha (2004-2006); served as Political Affairs Officer in the Oil-for-Food programme of the UN (2000-2002) as well as in the Department of Political Affairs in New York (2002-2004). In 2003, she worked within the SRSG Office in Baghdad, Iraq. For eight years (1992-2000) she was in charge of the Middle East and North Africa office of the Delegation of Strategic Affairs in Paris.



UN Resident Coordinator,
Kuwait

Dr. Tarek El-Sheikh has more than 26 years of experience in policies and strategies of urban development formulation, training, advisory services and projects implementation. He gained his PhD in 2004 from Cairo University after studies in University of Karlsruhe, Germany and master's degree in development administration and planning from University of Bristol in 1996 and master's degree in architecture engineering from Cairo University in 1994.

Prior to his current role, he was Resident Representative of UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator to the State of Kuwait (2018); the former Director of Future Saudi Cities Programme (2015-2017); the Director of the Sub-Regional Office for Gulf States of UN Habitat in Kuwait (2010-2014); the Housing Sector Lead in the UN Country Team of Iraq (2007-2009). He joined the UN as Capacity Building Expert at UN Habitat Jordan (2004-2007).

Prior to joining the UN, he worked as Assistant Professor at the Urban Training and Studies Institute in Cairo and Deputy Director.

Dr. El-Sheikh was the leader of several knowledge development and information building programs in development policies and strategies. During his work with UNDP, the Anti-Corruption Strategy of Kuwait was finalised, women empowerment programme trained more than 100 Kuwaiti women in leadership, the National Human Development Report was finalised, the Culture Heritage Strategy Framework prepared for Kuwait, the Strategic Partnership Framework with the State of Kuwait finalised. He also led on the preparation of City prosperity profiles, planning reviews in Saudi cities and analysis of Saudi urban legislations and regional plans. He developed background report on Arab Cities 2012/13, Tunisia Housing Profile 2010, Arab Platform for Urban Observatories and Kuwait urban profile, Bahrain urban

profile, and State of Saudi Cities Report 2016. He also contributed to the preparation of the State of Iraq Cities Report, Iraq Housing Market Assessment, Iraq Housing Policy, Egypt Urban Development Strategy and also led on several urban development initiatives in Arab region, trained professionals from various Arab states on land development and informal settlement upgrading.

He is a member of several international, regional and national networks and groups including the British University Graduates Association, the European Network for Housing Research, the International Society for City and Regional Planners, the International Research Group for Law and Urban Space (IRGLUS), and the Eisenhower Fellowships Network.



Regional Lead Economist and Inclusive Growth Team Leader, UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States, Amman

Prior to this role, **Mr. Vito Intini** was the Senior Macroeconomic Adviser at DESA in New York, where he worked on the global macroeconomic forecasting model, socio-economic assessments of large infrastructure projects, quantitative methods to measure SDG interactions and prioritisation, SDG costing and budgeting, and co-led the preparation of the UN guidance on economic transformation, among other activities. Before DESA, he worked at UNCDF where he led the global program on municipal finance.

Earlier on, he was the Chief of the Economic Governance Section at ESCWA in Beirut where he led a number of publications and capacity building programs including on measurement of inequality, national sustainable development strategies, governance, fiscal policy, development in conflict, market competition, among others. He was a Private and Financial Sector Specialist at the World Bank focusing on the Balkan region. He also worked for OECD, OSCE, EU and the academia.

He specialised in international economics, holds master's degrees in environmental policies, development, and labour economics, and specialised in regional economics and economic geography during his PhD studies.



Leader, Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster, ESCWA, Beirut

In her current role, **Ms. Roula Majdalani** promotes cooperation among ESCWA countries on the sustainable management of natural resources with a focus on water, energy and food security under challenging conditions of climate change. She joined ESCWA in 1989 and served as a Human Settlements Officer, First Economic Affairs Officer on water resources management and Chief of the Technical Cooperation. She was assigned as Acting Deputy Executive Secretary for Programs Support in an interim period in 2018 and has led the establishment of the Arab Center for Climate Change Policies, mandated by ESCWA Ministerial Session Resolution in 2018. She was also delegated by the Executive Secretary to manage the ESCWA Technology Center based in Amman in an interim period (2016-2018) to optimise delivery on technology transfer for sustainable development.

She has served on several advisory boards for international and regional think tanks, strategically guiding development programs, resource mobilisation and partnership development, including the Center for Strategic and International Studies (based in Washington) and the International Center on Biosaline



Ms. Sumeeta Banerji is a social development professional and governance expert. In her current role, she provides substantive support and policy advice to inter-governmental negotiations and for UN system coordination on South-South and triangular cooperation.

She was previously the focal point for the India-UN Development Partnership Fund established in 2017 to support Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States to achieve SDGs. In 2018, she spent few months in Bangladesh, designing interventions as part of the UN's response to the Rohingya refugee crisis and developing UNDP's Democratic Governance Strategy for Bangladesh.

**Policy Specialist, UNOSSC,
New York**

Prior to this, she was leading the democratic governance portfolio for UNDP in India from 2007-2017, designing and managing complementary policy and technical initiatives for Government which reduce poverty and improve local service delivery across several states. From 2007-2013, she led UNDP India's partnership with Government of India to improve the delivery of the world's largest social protection programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Programme (MGNREGP) with an annual budget of US\$8 billion. From 2005-2007, she was leading a 'Community of Practice' (CoP) on Poverty Reduction for the UN in India, part of the UN's Knowledge Management Partnership Initiative 'Solution Exchange'.

Prior to joining the UN in India, she spent several years, 1994-2005, with the Canadian International Development Agency leading projects in the areas of democratic governance, human rights, child rights, inclusive education, livelihoods and, HIV/AIDS.

She is a Fellow of the Inaugural Class of Ananta Aspen's Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship, member of Aspen Global Leadership Network and BMW Foundation's Global Responsible Fellow. She did her undergraduate degree in history from the Lady Shri Ram College in New Delhi and her master's degree in international relations from the Diplomatic Academy in Vienna. She is also a linguist and has a master's degree in German from Jawaharlal Nehru University and diploma in French and Spanish.



Mr. Bobby M. Olarte has more than 17 years of experience at the UN system in the areas of South-South cooperation, knowledge management and learning. Prior to joining the UN, he worked with regional development institutions such as the Asian Development Bank and the Asian Institute of Management. For some time, he worked as a professor and department chair at De La Salle University in the Philippines.

He has an MBA from the University of Sydney in Australia, as well as a Fellowship in Demography.

**Senior Adviser, Inter-
Country Cooperation,
Policy and Strategy
Division, UNFPA, New York**



**Programme Manager,
South-South Cooperation,
UNICEF, New York**

In her current capacity, **Ms. Martha Santos** provides overall support, advice and guidance to UNICEF's engagement in South-South cooperation and country to country learning. She has over 20 years of continued work in UNICEF and UNAIDS, combining Headquarters and regional positions on partnerships and capacity building, as well as, field experience in developing and managing the implementation of a UNICEF education project in Zambia. As Partnerships Manager in UNICEF's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, she served as the focal point for UNICEF's regional cooperation with the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

She has a Master of Arts degree in curriculum design and teaching and Bachelor of Science degrees in psychology and mathematics. She is a national of the Philippines.



**Global Policy Advisor,
Effective Development
Cooperation, Bureau for
Policy and Programme
Support, UNDP, New York**

Ms. Yuko Suzuki Naab assumed this role in 2013. In this capacity, she leads a team in the Effectiveness Group that supports effective development cooperation as well as South-South and triangular cooperation. She has had many years of service at the UNDP since 2003, providing in-country advisory, technical and coordination support in the area of effective development cooperation and development partnerships, including development cooperation policy, institutional framework, development cooperation information management system and mutual accountability reviews.

Prior to joining UNDP Headquarters, she worked as Development Effectiveness Advisor to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in Rwanda/UNDP Rwanda as well as an Aid Coordination Specialist/Head of the Development Partners Group (DPG) Secretariat in Tanzania (UNDP/UN Resident Coordinator Office).



**Secretary of the
Commission, Office of
the Executive Secretary,
ESCWA, Beirut**

In this capacity, **Mr. Karim Khalil** oversees all intergovernmental relations with the 20 Member States of the Commission. He also heads its unit in charge of the management of the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation (RPTC), which seeks to provide direct support to member States in policy advice, capacity building and peer learning. He is the focal point for South-South activities at the Commission. He is also in charge of the Communications and Outreach team.



Mr. Luis Eduardo Flores Mimica is Chilean/Croatian. He has a law degree from Catholic University of Chile. He has worked as a public servant in the Chilean Ministry of Environment (1995-2002), as a consultant in the private sector in sustainable development matters (2003-2007) and as representative of the Latin American Office of Consumers International, a non-for-profit consumer association based in London UK (2008 -2015). Since 2016 he works for the Secretary of the Commission of UN ECLAC and since 2018, he is part of the team of the Secretary of the Commission that supports the Committee for South-South cooperation of ECLAC.

Sustainable Development Officer and Focal Point for Stakeholder Engagement, Office of the Secretary of the Commission, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Santiago



Ms. Olena Ovchynnikova has a track record of successful sustainable development programme management within non-profit and international development sectors. Her areas of expertise include solutions-oriented strategic programme design and implementation, stakeholder management and multi-actor process coordination.

Learning Portfolio Manager, UN System Staff College, Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development, Bonn

Previously she was with the Regional UNDG Secretariat, providing substantive support to the Regional UNDG Team of 22 agencies, funds and programmes and facilitating regional-level support to the UN Country Teams in 18 countries of Europe and Central Asia. Before that, she was Special Assistant to UNDP Regional Director for Europe and the CIS. She joined the UN in Kyiv, Ukraine in 2009, working on inter-agency coordination, country programming and results-based management and, later, on energy, environment and sustainable development programme.

Before joining the UN, she taught at the University of Uman, Ukraine, and was a senior programme manager at the FMLU and coordinator of Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Programme in Ottawa, Canada. She received her master's degree from the University of Oxford, UK, and her bachelor's degree from the University of Uman, Ukraine.



Ms. Berna Bayazit has been working for UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS since 2017, focusing on partnerships with new and emerging government actors and private sector, ODA capacity building and country office support for new partnerships.

Prior to that, she worked for UNDP's Turkey Country Office for more than ten years. She has longstanding experience in sustainable development programming, inclusive growth, employment and development cooperation.

Team Leader a.i.
(Partnerships), UNDP
Istanbul Regional Hub



Ms. Ines Tofalo coordinates the UNOSSC trust funds portfolio including the India-UN Fund, IBSA Fund, UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, and Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund, holistically advancing their partnerships, programmes and administration.

Her career has been mostly focused on South-South cooperation and financing mechanisms. Besides UNOSSC, she has worked for UNESCO as a Partnerships Office and FAO as a Policy Specialist.

Chief, Programme
Support Unit, UNOSSC,
New York



Mr. Eduard Mihalas is leading innovative demographic and data programmes in the Republic of Moldova as part of UNFPA. He led the process for shifting from "demographic security" to demographic resilience that supports Moldovan Government in addressing a growing ageing population, low fertility, migration of young people and low life expectancy, by promoting rights-driven and evidence-based policies.

He coordinated national efforts in aligning national population data to international recommendations and practices that result in the revision, for the first time in 30 years, of the population number at national level and estimation, for the first time, of international migration using cross-border data. At UNFPA, he is leading the population and development portfolio. As part of this, he builds programmes that seek to establish a robust statistical system in the Republic of Moldova, promotes demographic resilience policies and engages private sector in intergenerational solidarity programmes.

Programme
Population
and
Development
Analyst,
and
(India-UN
Development Partnership
Fund-supported initiative),
UNFPA Moldova



Programme Coordination Specialist, UNOSSC, New York

Ms. Dingding Sun coordinates the management of several projects and initiatives from UNOSSC Headquarters in New York including the Global South-South Development Center (GSSDC) Project, SSTC Cities Project, Youth4South Initiative and the Global South-South Development Expos. She also supports the development of new service lines and initiatives based on demands of Member States and partners, while aligning with strategic directions of the Office. Prior to this, she had worked for UNDESA, UNOPS and UNCDF in various functions.

She holds a Master of Philosophy from the University of Cambridge, UK, and a Bachelor of Law from Peking University, China. She speaks English and Chinese.



Deputy Programme and Operations Director, UNOSSC, New York

Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang assumed this role in 2017. She oversees knowledge and advisory services, regional offices, trust fund management and operations, and provides guidance to South-South cooperation programmes on poverty eradication, climate change, peace, gender equality and digital transformation. She brings to the position extensive senior leadership experience in leading research, policy dialogues, and facilitating partnerships, and strengthening the capacities of countries to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development.

She has most recently served as the Lead Advisor on South-South and Triangular Cooperation at the UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS). In that capacity, she initiated and spearheaded the establishment of the Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation - the South-South Global Thinkers Initiative - to advance thought leadership from developing countries on international cooperation.

Prior to that Ms. Wang worked as UNDP's Poverty Practice Manager for five years, leading integrated work plans, knowledge management, communications, global programmes and trust funds, championing a global initiative on scaling-up local development impact, as well as overseeing office administration and operations. From 2002-2009, she served in the UNDP Country Office in China where she was Team Leader for Democratic Governance and HIV and AIDS, and managed poverty alleviation and disaster risk reduction programmes. Before joining UNDP in 2002, she worked with governments, international non-governmental organisations, academic institutions and media outlets.

She is a Chinese national and holds a PhD in Education and International Development from the University of London.

Other Useful Resources and Links

- The Concept Note: www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Concept-Note-Inter-regional-Dialogue.pdf
- The Agenda Flyer: www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Agenda-Flyer-Inter-regional-Dialogue.pdf
- List of Registrants: www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/list-of-registrants.pdf
- The 12th Edition of the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation www.unsouthsouth.org/2021/01/13/2021-high-level-forum-of-directors-general-for-development-cooperation/

UNOSSC's websites

- UNOSSC www.unsouthsouth.org
- UNOSSC Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org

UNOSSC's select platforms, projects and initiatives presented during the Inter-regional Dialogue:

- South-South Trust Fund Management www.unsouthsouth.org/our-work/south-south-trust-fund-management

The UNOSSC financially manages and supports implementation of trust funds that support collaboration and piloting of South-South initiatives across the globe, namely:

- » The India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund);
- » The United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSSC);
- » The Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF); and
- » The India-UN Development Partnership Fund, as a dedicated facility established within UNFSSC.

- South-South Galaxy www.southsouth-galaxy.org

The South-South Galaxy is a global digital platform for knowledge sharing and partnership brokering. It was developed in 2019 by the UNOSSC, along with its development partners, on request from the Member States and through an extensive consultative process with UN entities and development partners.

- Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD Expo) www.expo.unsouthsouth.org

Organized by the UNOSSC in collaboration with UN entities and other partners, the GSSD Expo strategically engages all development actors, including the private sector, civil society, academic and philanthropic organizations, to scale up concrete Southern-grown initiatives to help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) among Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities for Sustainable Development Project (Cities Project) www.southsouth-galaxy.org/maritime-continental-silk-road-cities-for-sustainable-development-project-cities-project

The Cities Project, initiated by the UNOSSC in 2017, aims to promote SSTC at the city level taking advantage of the strategic opportunities offered by the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) in advancing the SDGs. It is designed to provide streamlined services which include demand-driven needs assessment, capacity development, advisory and advocacy, knowledge and technology transfer, expertise exchange, and implementation and co-financing.

- South-South Global Thinkers www.ssc-globalthinkers.org

South-South Global Thinkers, jointly established by the UNOSSC and UNDP, is a global coalition of think tank networks that facilitates the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives from the Global South to inform policy dialogues. Its research agenda focuses on the opportunities and challenges of scaling up SSTC for the achievement of the SDGs.

- Global South-South Development Center (GSSDC) Project www.southsouth-galaxy.org/capacity-development-initiatives/gssdc

The GSSDC project was jointly initiated by the UNOSSC and the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE). The GSSDC project builds on the achievements of the ten-year China SSC project and reprofile itself as a global network of centres of excellence for SSC in advancing SDGs and aims to engage Southern centers of excellences outside China, and build sub-centers of excellence in line with regional priorities in order to become a globally-focused platform to facilitate and implement SSTC.

- Youth4South www.unsouthsouth.org/youth4south

Youth4South is an Advanced Youth Leadership Programme launched by the UNOSSC in partnership with the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, the China Institute for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture (CISSCA), the Finance Center for South-South Cooperation (FC-SSC), IFAD, NOREC-Norway, UNFPA and the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment. Youth4South is designed as an umbrella facility dedicated to supporting South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, projects and activities in promoting youth leadership and capacity development for achieving the SDGs.

Other select platforms, projects and initiatives referred to during the Inter-regional Dialogue:

- Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD) afsd-2021.unescwa.org

Organized annually by ESCWA, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and other United Nations entities operating in Arab countries, the AFSD brings together Arab Governments and a broad range of stakeholders to address sustainable development priorities from a regional perspective, discuss progress, review national experiences, and enhance the region's voice at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. It advocates an inclusive and participatory approach to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, providing a platform for dialogue among government representatives, parliamentarians, academia, the private sector, regional

intergovernmental bodies, civil society organizations, and young people, among others.

- UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD) regionalforum.unece.org

Convened by UNECE, in close cooperation with the regional UN system, The Regional Forum is a valuable multi-stakeholder platform for SDG solutions, organised by UNECE in close cooperation with the regional UN system. The RFSD follows up on and reviews the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs in the UNECE region. Focusing on practical value-added and peer learning, it creates a regional space to share policy solutions, best practices and challenges in SDG implementation and helps identify major regional and sub-regional trends.

- Virtual Alliance of Practitioners for Exchange of Experience in the Context of the COVID-19 www.astanacivilservicehub.org/page/covid-19

The Astana Civil Service Hub has launched this virtual platform to exchange knowledge and best practices in applying innovations and best fit solutions to respond to COVID-19. This platform includes reports with practical cases, innovative solutions, technologies and recommendations shared by participating countries and partners of the ACSH. All accumulated knowledge and practical experience will serve to address pandemic related challenges and consequences enabling governments and partners to study best practices and develop their own unique solutions within the context of COVID-19.

- Czech-UNDP Partnership for the SDGs www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/partnerships/aid-effectiveness-partnerships/czech-undp-partnership.html

Since 2004, the Czech government and UNDP in Europe and Central Asia have cooperated to bring best practices and comparative knowledge to countries throughout the region. During these 16 years, the Czech-UNDP Trust Fund and later the Czech-UNDP Partnership for SDGs have supported 215 initiatives that followed an overarching objective – to contribute to the sustainable development in the region.

- COVAX Facility www.gavi.org/covax-facility

COVAX Facility is the global procurement mechanism of COVAX. The COVAX Facility will make investments across a broad portfolio of promising vaccine candidates (including those being supported by CEPI) to make sure at-risk investment in manufacturing happens now. This means the COVAX Facility, by pooling purchasing power from all countries that participate, will have rapid access to doses of safe and effective vaccines as soon as they receive regulatory approval. Guided by an allocation framework being developed by WHO, the COVAX Facility will then equitably distribute these doses to help protect the most at-risk groups in all participating countries.

- National Ecosystem for South-South and Triangular Cooperation www.isdb.org/news/isdb-develops-the-assessment-framework-for-national-ecosystems-for-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation

As a response to the recommendations discussed at the 2nd High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (also referred to as BAPA+40), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has approved a new capacity development programme to strengthen the national institutional arrangements, collectively referred to as the National Ecosystem for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the member countries.

- Asia-Pacific Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation www.unescap.org/south-south-cooperation/asia-pacific-directors-general-forum

The Asia-Pacific Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation held its third session on 25 November 2020. The session was held virtually for all participants from the Asian and Pacific region. Over 126 participants from 23 countries in Asia and the Pacific attended the Forum, including 15 Directors-General/heads of the agencies or units responsible for international development cooperation/South-South and triangular cooperation.

- Agadir SME Programme ufmsecretariat.org/project/agadir-sme-programme-fostering-sme-competitiveness-and-trade-in-the-agadir-agreement-member-countries

The objective of the Agadir SME Programme is to reinforce economic integration and contribute to economic development, and income generation through SME-led growth. Specifically, the project aims to enhance competitiveness of SMEs and improve their supply capacity and ability to ensure wider use of the cumulation of origin (the concept of cumulation of origin allows products of one country of a free trade zone to be further processed or added to products in another country of that zone as if they had originated in the latter country), in view of increasing intra-trade among the four Agadir Agreement member countries and their exports to the EU and creating synergies and a new economic dynamism among the Agadir agreement member states to strengthen sub-regional economic integration.

- YouMatch – Toolbox Project ufmsecretariat.org/project/youmatch-toolbox-project

The new Global Initiative on Innovative Labour Market Services for Youth – YouMatch aims at setting up a regional demand-driven toolbox for youth-orientated employment services to assess existing labour market tools, enable peer learning and knowledge exchange on a regional and international level, and encourage innovation and transfer of promising approaches within and among the participating countries.

- Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network (ACINET) www.arabacinet.org

Established in 2008, the ACINET includes 48 ministries and official agencies from 18 Arab countries, two observers members, and the Non-Governmental Group, which consists of 28 independent organizations from civil society, the private sector and academia. This makes ACINET the first Arab regional mechanism that brings together governmental and non-governmental entities to consult and cooperate against corruption.

The Regional Support Unit in Beirut provides secretariat services to ACINET. It is funded and hosted by UNDP's Regional Project on Anti-Corruption and Integrity in the Arab Countries (ACIAC) and cooperates with various partners including the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Bank Group and the OECD.

- Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) for Health Alliance www.who.int/activities/reducing-health-system-corruption

UNDP together with WHO, Global Fund and the World Bank have set up the Anti-Corruption, Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) for Health Alliance to support countries in mitigating corruption risks in the health sector, to reinforce our shared vision and integrated approach. It is working with governments and communities globally to institutionalize appropriate anti-corruption mechanisms in the COVID-19 health response.

- Spotlight Initiative www.spotlightinitiative.org

The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the UN to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation.

- UN INFO uninfo.org

UN INFO is a planning, monitoring and reporting system to track how the UN system at the country level supports governments to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.

- Debt Service Suspension Initiative www.worldbank.org/en/topic/debt/brief/covid-19-debt-service-suspension-initiative

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund urged G20 countries to establish the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which is helping countries concentrate their resources on fighting the pandemic and safeguarding the lives and livelihoods of millions of the most vulnerable people. Since it took effect on May 1, 2020, the initiative has delivered more than \$5 billion in relief to more than 40 eligible countries.