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United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

Statement of Mr. Samba Thiam
Senior Policy Development Advisor of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

**Introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the State of South-South cooperation (A/79/230),
to the Second Committee of the seventy-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly
Operational activities for development, South-South cooperation for development - Item 23 (b)**

9 October 2024
United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 2

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on the State of South-South cooperation (A/79/230).

The report responds to resolution 78/167 of the General Assembly, which requested the Secretary-General to prepare a comprehensive report on the state of South-South cooperation for submission to its seventy-ninth session.

The present report was prepared based on research as well as a survey coordinated by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), with information provided by United Nations organizations on their work in South-South and triangular cooperation. It also draws on findings from responses to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review surveys conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs among Member States, United Nations entities and resident coordinators in 2023.

The report outlines the current global development context and analyses new developments and opportunities in South-South and triangular cooperation.

- South-South cooperation galvanized the political will of the Global South to get back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and other internationally agreed development goals, through landmark declarations, resolutions and decisions adopted at various inter-governmental fora. These include the Twenty-first Session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation; the Summit on Science, Technology and Innovation of the Group of 77 and China held in 2023; the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the Third South Summit; and the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.



- Developing countries are assuming leadership roles in global economic governance and are now hosting and chairing annual meetings of the Group of 20 [e.g. India (2022), Indonesia (2023), Brazil (2024) and South Africa (2025)]. Such leadership provides developing countries with the opportunity to take a pivotal role in South-South cooperation, to better voice the interests of the Global South to address extreme poverty by 2030. It also enables developing countries to strengthen human solidarity to address poly-crises faced by vulnerable countries, including Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Middle-Income Countries, compounded by COVID-19 recovery, floods, violent conflicts and inflation.
- Developing countries, with the support of the United Nations System, Regional Commissions, private sector and other partners, are increasingly leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for the proactive provision of public goods to boost health-care resilience; for consensus on a new agreement on pandemics and sustainable financing for health, including measures on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response; for more decisive engagement in climate action and operationalization of the loss and damage fund; and for transition to a green economy as well as to digital transformation.

Mr. President,

In following up to the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), I am pleased to inform the Second Committee that the United Nations development system is making good progress in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development.

- The United Nations System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development has been a key driver for United Nations development system support to Member states on South-South cooperation. In 2023, 81% of UN entities included this mode of collaboration in their strategic plans, and 86% integrated South-South results in corporate reporting – up from 73% and 79%, respectively, in 2022.
- This has resulted in a continued integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the policies, strategic plans and the programmatic work of United Nations entities. Since 2021, requests for United Nations support on South-South or triangular cooperation have risen steadily from 53% to 61% of host country governments; focusing mainly on health, climate change, and social protection. The development system's response was evident, with an increased number of governments (71% in 2023, compared to 67% in 2022) receiving such support.
- 35% of governments indicated they had received support from the United Nations system in establishing or strengthening national institutions engaged in South-South and triangular cooperation.
- Specific initiatives included assigning South-South focal points (58%), establishing dedicated units for South-South cooperation (29%), and allocating budgets for South-South cooperation (20%).
- Since 2021, there has been a significant increase (from 27% to 47%) in Member States reporting that they received United Nations support for organizing global, regional, or national knowledge-sharing initiatives on solutions from the Global South.

Key challenges faced by United Nations entities include a lack of institutional arrangements, capacity, and funding for scaled-up South-South cooperation support.

Importantly, in line with recent General Assembly resolutions which have mandated the United Nations development system and UNOSSC to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and regional collaborative frameworks, the Office has developed jointly with the UN Development Coordination Office, guidelines and e-learning modules as valuable tools to support UN agencies in mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into their work at regional and country level. This effort is crucial in supporting national partners to catalyze progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Mr. President,

The report provides important recommendations for the consideration of Member States, and for the UN system to strengthen its support to South-South cooperation.

The Secretary-General has highlighted that the Summit of the Future provides a vantage point from which to further accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through support for South-South and triangular cooperation.

The Secretary-General urged Member States, with support of United Nations entities and partners to continue to strengthen South-South cooperation. Specifically, he:

- a) Encourages Member States to facilitate the development of, and access to, appropriate technology and support digital transitions, as well as exchanges of innovative practices to protect the interests of present and future generations, and to incorporate science, artificial intelligence and data analytics into national and international development choices;
- b) Urges Member States to prioritize and scale up South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives to enhance youth digital skills, employability and entrepreneurship, with the support of the United Nations development system and consider establishing a South-South youth innovation fund to support youth-led sustainable development initiatives, foster innovation and enhance the meaningful engagement of young people in policymaking processes;
- c) Encourages Member States to strengthen the use of South-South cooperation ideals of multilateralism, solidarity and mutual interest to avoid divisions and conflicts through exchanges of successful conflict-prevention and peacebuilding strategies and peer mediation to address emerging security challenges, including cyberthreats;
- d) Calls upon the United Nations development system to support Member States to enhance the establishment and development of platforms for innovation-sharing in education and pedagogical methods and leverage technological advancements through South-South and triangular cooperation.

The Secretary-General urges Member States to further enhance regional capacities for the development of vaccines, including with the support of the United Nations development system, and to scale up collaborative initiatives in the Global South, especially in Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

The Secretary-General encourages Multilateral Development Banks, including those based in the Global South, to spearhead reforms in the global financial architecture and take deliberate actions to address financial shocks and debt distress, in order to meet the priorities of the Global South and to ensure more inclusive and effective global economic governance.

He calls upon all stakeholders to strengthen partnerships for transformative development initiatives on a global and regional scale to maximize the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation. He further highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogues including the private sector, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks for the exchange of good practices and successful policies on innovative financing models as green bonds and blended financing solutions.

Importantly, the Secretary-General encourages the leadership of United Nations entities to leverage the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through:

- a) Accelerated implementation of the United Nations System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development;
- b) Full integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the work of the United Nations development system at the global, regional and country levels; and
- c) support for the roll-out of the *Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and Triangular Cooperation into the Country- and Regional-level Work of the United Nations Development System* at the national and regional levels.

Finally, The Secretary-General stressed that it is essential that United Nations resident coordinators continue to spearhead the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the work of United Nations country teams.

Mr. President,

UNOSSC is very grateful for the opportunity to present you with the key findings and recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. We welcome policy guidance by the Second Committee on advancing South-South and triangular cooperation for accelerated SDG achievement.

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