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United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

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The Arab Forum for Sustainable Development (AFSD)

*On the Road to the Fourth Financing for Development Conference (FfD4):
Advancing a renewed global FfD framework and reforming the international financial architecture*

15 April 2026 | Beirut, Lebanon
1:30 – 3:00 PM Beirut | 6:30 – 8:00 AM NY

Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,

It is a distinct privilege to join this discussion on our shared priorities as we head to the Fourth Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4). Thank you for your insights and call to action.

Indeed, **FfD4 is an opportunity we cannot miss** --- not just for increasing the speed and volume of financing for SDG acceleration, but for transforming the very architecture of the system that shapes our development paths and prospects.

As you pointed out, the world has vastly changed since FfD3 in 2015. Twenty-first century development challenges have evolved with new risks, fast-moving crises, and constantly shifting geopolitical considerations.

However, we also now see opportunities, tools, resources and partnerships that were not available before or yet to be fully leveraged.

Allow me therefore to raise three key points for our collective reflection, shaped by what you just shared and which we view at UNOSSC as crucial as we head to FfD4.

First, the transformation of the global South itself.

Among the world's most dynamic economies today are once aid recipients, and they have become development support providers --- channeling crucial capacity enhancing tools, knowledge, technologies and resources suited to contexts they deeply understand.



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The growth and transformation of the Global South were fueled largely by trade, with developing countries increasingly becoming each other's trade partners. In 2023, the UN reported that [South-South trade more than doubled in the last two decades, reaching a record](#) \$5.3 trillion or 21% of global trade, and contributing up to 42% of global GDP.

Data are shifting, but this milestone fundamentally changed the development landscape of the global South itself, for good --- as this shift not only broadened developing countries' access to each other's markets and sources of materials, but also embedded or deepened development cooperation based on the principles of solidarity and mutual benefit.

This raises the need for systems and mechanisms that speak to new realities, such as those you raised today, Excellencies: *fit-for-purpose* global tax, debt, investment, banking, trade, and economic governance systems; as well as domestic public resources and private finance aligned with countries' new capacities and self-defined growth trajectories.

This requires transforming development cooperation itself, particularly at the regional level, which is my second point.

As his Excellency, the Chair of the G77 has noted and some of you touched on --- the transformation of the global South, the shifts in South-South collaborations, and the current financial and development landscape --- all call for transforming *the way we do development*.

Advanced, emerging and developing economies agree that the traditional development cooperation is shifting.

This is not to echo alarm on declining ODA, --- which we know had been on a "\$6.5 trillion shortfall in [unmet commitments](#) since 1970" here in the region --- but to remind that ours needs to be a collective effort to transform development cooperation itself --- which needs to be part of the transformation of our global financial architecture if our goal is sustained, inclusive, long-term progress.

South-South and triangular cooperation are cooperation modalities on ascendancy, as complement to and not substitute for traditional development support.

This means recognizing the unique assets along with the unique needs of developing countries, and supporting their exchanges and collaborations for their mutual benefit.

This is particularly crucial at the regional level and here in the Arab region, where weak regional integration is hindering SDG progress as the [Arab Sustainable Development Report \(ASDR\) 2024](#) pointed out.

The system reforms we envision **require reviewing and establishing regional ecosystems that benefit the entire region. Proximity of experience is particularly crucial in addressing challenges that transcend borders** (such as climate, digital connectivity, and trade flows). **It is also crucial in harnessing benefits that would otherwise bypass some countries.** Investments, as we know, also view countries as part of a regional ecosystem, as networks of human, infrastructure and institutional capacities that could define perceptions or projections of ROIs (return to investments).

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We also have **new partners and stakeholders in the region with financial and other capital who stand ready to engage**. The Global Facility for Sovereign Wealth Funds proposed in the Arab Position recognizes new and increasingly impactful development actors, and we need to broaden our understanding of where and how they could engage to support. The intellectual capital of the Arab diaspora, very significant, could also be more systematically harnessed for region-wide transformation.

The UN development system stands ready to support, which brings me to my third point: the mandate of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation.

UNOSSC is the special unit within the UN that was established to serve as the interlocutor, advocate and facilitator of South-South and triangular cooperation. We derive our mandate and policy directions from the Member States.

We support intergovernmental processes where global and regional decisions are made, helping to inform for instance as much as 39 resolutions, declarations and outcome documents in 2024 alone, including those related to financing for development ---- (a 44% increase from the 27 recorded in 2023) which demonstrates the increasing importance that Member States put on these cooperation modalities.

In these processes, we work in alignment with the global South groupings, which represent most of the developing world, particularly through the G77 as champions of these cooperation modalities.

We identify, channel and facilitate exchanges on context-specific, Southern-led solutions, launching the Solutions Lab and South-South Galaxy as resource platforms. We help build the capacities of UN entities to integrate SS & TrC in country frameworks, thereby broadening countries' access to solutions, partnerships and resources.

We also manage Trust Funds entrusted to us by Member States, which are designed to support catalytic efforts. And among the strong champions of UNOSSC in fact come from this region, which includes the Islamic Development Bank and sovereign development funds. The Triangular Funding Window we recently launched enables partners like Portugal and Spain to also channel support on emerging needs.

The mandate and services of UNOSSC, speak directly to the call made in the First Draft Outcome Document as well as the Arab Position relating to strengthening regional financial mechanisms, cross-border investments, resource mobilization and knowledge sharing on a modality anchored in solidarity and mutual benefit. In the context of tightening fiscal space, these cooperation modalities are becoming particularly impactful because they pose no additional burdens to countries involved.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

UNOSSC is in solidarity with the Arab region in helping ensure South-South and triangular cooperation that are sustainable, demand-driven and aligned with national and regional development priorities.

With the Regional Commission, we look forward to closer collaboration with all of you.

Thank you.