



South-South cooperation for development

Distr.: General
9 April 2025

Original: English

High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation

Twenty-second session

New York, 27–30 May 2025

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on
progress made in the implementation of decision 21/1 of the
High-level Committee**

Measures taken by United Nations organizations to implement decision 21/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation through support for South-South and triangular cooperation to accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to decision 21/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. It contains an overview of the ways in which United Nations organizations have further mainstreamed South-South and triangular cooperation into their own policies and strategies while strengthening the capacities of Member States to engage in effective and impactful South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives in 2023 and 2024. The growing proportion of strategic and programmatic frameworks at the country level that incorporate and mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation is an indicator of the sustained interest of Member States in United Nations system support for South-South and triangular cooperation. The report concludes with several recommendations to enhance South-South and triangular cooperation through sustained efforts in capacity-building, mainstreaming, knowledge-sharing, financing and multi-stakeholder engagement while leveraging United Nations system support and innovative measurement frameworks to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

* [SSC/22/L.2](#).

** The present report was submitted for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in response to decision 21/1, adopted by the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its twenty-first session, in which the Committee requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on progress made in implementing that decision, including the recommendations and proposals made in his report (SSC/21/2). At the twenty-first session, on the theme “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through South-South and triangular cooperation”, discussions were held on the role to be played by South-South and triangular cooperation in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The global health emergency aggravated existing development challenges in the global South, intensifying vulnerabilities to external shocks. That situation was further compounded by rising debt distress, a surge in conflicts, rising poverty levels and the reversal of progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. Against that backdrop, the present report highlights the ways in which the global South expanded South-South and triangular cooperation in 2023 and 2024, despite structural and contextual constraints, through strengthened partnerships and the mobilization of diverse development resources. It further examines the measures taken by United Nations entities to integrate support for South-South and triangular cooperation into their policies, strategies and programmatic work. The report provides an overview of United Nations system efforts to support Member States in fostering capacity development, facilitating technology transfer, mobilizing resources and advancing cooperation among institutions and networks.

3. The role of South-South and triangular cooperation in achieving development goals was widely recognized in the reporting period, as reflected in a total of 66 resolutions, declarations and outcome documents adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and in the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation perspectives into United Nations regional and subregional intergovernmental processes. In many documents, it was also highlighted how entities of the United Nations system could be leveraged to strengthen and scale up South-South and triangular cooperation efforts, reinforcing their role as facilitators of knowledge exchange, capacity-building and resource mobilization. South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation were mainstreamed as modalities of work in a number of key United Nations intergovernmental processes and outcome documents. Similarly, outcomes of the Group of 77 processes, such as the outcome document of the Third South Summit and the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the forty-eighth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China, included provisions to mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation and acknowledged their contribution to sustainable development.

4. The present report outlines key actions and initiatives undertaken by the United Nations development system to strengthen solidarity through South-South and triangular cooperation in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Section II responds to the request of the High-level Committee for all United Nations entities to further integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into their strategic frameworks at the global, regional and national levels. Section III reviews efforts undertaken by the United Nations development system to enhance support for South-South and triangular cooperation at the request and under the leadership of developing countries while leveraging the respective mandates and comparative advantages of United Nations entities. Section IV examines collaboration among institutions in the global South, through the creation of networks that are sharing expertise to address pressing development challenges, including those emerging from the COVID-19

pandemic. Section V highlights United Nations system efforts to provide policy, financial, scientific and technological support to bridge digital divides, accelerate digital transformation and harness science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. Section VI outlines measures taken to scale up financing mechanisms that enable the United Nations development system to advance South-South and triangular cooperation. Lastly, section VII presents conclusions on the progress made in implementing decision 21/1 of the High-level Committee and sets forth recommendations to address existing gaps.

5. The information included in the present report covers the period from January 2023 to December 2024 and was collected primarily through the annual survey conducted by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation. That information was supplemented by institutional reports from United Nations entities and surveys conducted for the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The report provides an illustrative rather than exhaustive overview, drawing on inputs from 21 United Nations organizations that responded to the survey in December 2024.¹

II. Continued integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the policies, strategies and workplans of United Nations organizations

6. Throughout 2023 and 2024, United Nations organizations took measures to further institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation in their strategic frameworks and planning instruments and through the appointment of dedicated focal points and continued investment in staff learning and capacities. The responses to the survey conducted by the Office for South-South Cooperation on activities implemented during the reporting period included numerous examples from United Nations development entities that integrated South-South and triangular cooperation into their strategies at the global and national levels, bearing in mind their respective mandates and comparative advantages. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review published in 2024 ([A/79/72-E/2024/12](#)), since 2021, requests for support from the United Nations on South-South and triangular cooperation, in areas such as health, climate change and social protection, had risen from 53 to 61 per cent of host country Governments. The United Nations development system responded to those requests accordingly: 81 per cent of the survey respondents had included that mode of collaboration in strategic plans, and 86 per cent of them had integrated South-South cooperation results into corporate reporting in 2023, up from 73 per cent and 79 per cent, respectively, in 2022.

¹ Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), United Nations Capital Development Fund, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Tourism Organization.

7. A cross-divisional coordination mechanism created by the World Food Programme (WFP), the global South-South and triangular cooperation task force, completed its work in 2023, which included a checklist for integrating gender equality into WFP-facilitated South-South and triangular cooperation and an overview of options to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into partnership tools and country strategic plans. As a result, for the first time, country offices could report using specific indicators, and approximately 78 per cent of country strategic plans approved by the WFP Executive Board in 2023 included South-South and triangular cooperation. Furthermore, the WFP Executive Board approved a groundbreaking update of the WFP policy on South-South and triangular cooperation in 2023, accompanied by a \$9 million implementation plan to ensure quality and results while responding to emerging demands.

8. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched its new “Operational guide on embedding South-South and triangular cooperation in country strategic opportunities programmes” in 2023, which resulted in the incorporation of South-South and triangular cooperation into all of the six country strategies prepared.

9. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has established a dedicated unit to enhance coordination with the United Nations, which has a dedicated budget to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives and to monitor related activities across the organization. Key priorities include capacity-building initiatives, improved data collection, and the review and evaluation of relevant strategies and initiatives.

10. The World Tourism Organization integrated South-South and triangular cooperation into its Toolkit of Indicators for Projects, which is used in training staff to align initiatives with the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure effective project design, implementation and evaluation. It also established robust mechanisms for data collection and monitoring, enabling comprehensive reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives: the Toolkit of Indicators for Projects provides a structured framework for evaluating the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation projects on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring accountability and data-driven improvements, especially for targets 17.6 and 17.9.

11. The new operational guidelines for South-South and triangular industrial cooperation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) were accompanied by the launch of an e-learning course that resulted in more than 100 technical cooperation projects applying the South-South and triangular cooperation modalities.

12. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) published the third edition of the “Guidelines for trilateral South-South cooperation initiatives” and the “Partnership guidance note on South-South and triangular cooperation”. In 2024, UNICEF launched an e-course on South-South and triangular cooperation to introduce staff to its conceptual framework and programming opportunities. Currently, 57 per cent of UNICEF country programme documents include South-South and triangular cooperation, and all of the annual reports on those country programmes contained information on South-South and triangular cooperation activities carried out in 2023.

13. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also invested in strengthening staff capacity for mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into agricultural policies, programmes and investment projects through regional workshops that also provided a platform for discussing new South-South and triangular cooperation resource mobilization opportunities with member States.

14. In 2023, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published a new guidance document entitled “Mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation: considerations for South-South and triangular cooperation design, implementation and documentation” aimed at facilitating the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation throughout all phases of the project cycle, ensuring a more unified and impactful approach to development initiatives. In 2024, 66 per cent of UNDP country programme documents contained either a mention of or detailed plans for South-South cooperation engagement, while 10 per cent of UNDP projects included support for South-South and triangular cooperation, most of them focused on strengthening national capacities.

15. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States commissioned a review of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.² According to the findings of the review, South-South and triangular cooperation played a significant role in the achievements recorded by the Programme, although the last half of the implementation period was affected by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which stalled or reversed the gains that had been achieved. As a result of the review, recommendations were put forward for scaling up South-South and triangular cooperation with a view to achieving the goals and targets of a new programme of action for landlocked developing countries.

16. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) performance monitoring and assessment exercise for the biennium 2023–2024 and the biennial workplans for 2024–2025 included information on including and reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. In 2023, 21 PAHO country offices (of 27) and three subregional entities reported supporting or participating in South-South and triangular cooperation activities. For example, a two-phase triangular cooperation project between PAHO, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Argentina was implemented to strengthen national and regional capacities for antimicrobial resistance detection and surveillance in CARICOM member States.

17. The strategic plan of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for the period 2024–2028 includes an institutional commitment to significantly increase the role of IOM as a facilitator of South-South and triangular cooperation, promoting South-South regional integration and interregional collaboration through the State-led inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration. A review of IOM regional strategies is under way to provide concrete evidence on the use of South-South cooperation in country-level strategic planning and inform capacity development in South-South and triangular cooperation for IOM staff across headquarters, regional offices and country offices.

18. During the reporting period, the Office for South-South Cooperation enhanced the integration and mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation into global and regional policymaking, leading to their inclusion in 66 resolutions, declarations and outcome documents adopted by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Office provided substantive and policy support, underpinned by evidence-based analysis, to strengthen the role of South-South and triangular cooperation to a range of major United Nations intergovernmental processes. Notable contributions included support for the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024–2034, The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small

² The publication is available at <https://unsouthsouth.org/2024/07/01/review-of-south-south-cooperation-in-the-implementation-of-the-vienna-programme-of-action-for-ldcs-in-the-decade-2014-2024/>.

Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity adopted at the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in 2024, and the Pact for the Future and the annexes thereto. Those efforts reflect the increasing recognition of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as critical mechanisms for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

19. In 2023, the Office for South-South Cooperation, the Development Coordination Office and the regional commissions launched the “Guidelines for the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the country- and regional-level work of the United Nations development system”. The Office for South-South Cooperation disseminated the guidelines through workshops, webinars and communication materials throughout 2024. In addition, an e-learning module was developed by the Office for South-South Cooperation, together with the Development Coordination Office, the United Nations System Staff College and a United Nations task team, to support United Nations agencies in mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into their work at the regional and country levels. The e-module³ was a joint endeavour co-financed by FAO, PAHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Office for South-South Cooperation and WFP. A United Nations task team contributed to and assisted in reviewing the content of the e-module. The task team comprised representatives of the Development Coordination Office, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), IOM, the Office for South-South Cooperation, PAHO, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP. The Office for South-South Cooperation and the Co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of the Voluntary National Reviews published the *Handbook on Integrating South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Voluntary National Reviews*, providing step-by-step guidance on and examples of integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into the preparation and presentation of voluntary national reviews. The *Handbook* also complements the *Handbook for the Preparation of Voluntary National Reviews* published by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other resource packages on voluntary national reviews. In the “2024 voluntary national reviews synthesis report”, South-South cooperation was acknowledged as a relevant means of implementing the 2030 Agenda and addressing persistent challenges relating to development financing and debt relief.

20. The Office for South-South Cooperation played a key role in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation by convening and supporting numerous high-level policy dialogues and forums. Those engagements facilitated knowledge exchange on critical global challenges, including debt distress, climate action, private sector engagement and sustainable development. Those dialogues and forums reinforced the need to broaden partnerships and leverage South-South and triangular cooperation in order to address structural challenges and accelerate progress towards the meeting of global commitments. By fostering those exchanges, the Office contributed to the identification and dissemination of good practices, enabling countries to implement more effective and collaborative solutions.

³ E-module: Leveraging South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Accelerate Transformation towards Sustainable Development. Available at <https://unsouthsouth.org/our-work/capacity-development/sstc-e-module/>.

III. Continued programmatic support by United Nations organizations for South-South and triangular cooperation activities of Member States

21. Measures taken by United Nations entities to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into strategic frameworks and planning instruments resulted in more effective ways of providing continuous support to Member States when implementing South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development, at the request and with the ownership and leadership of developing countries, through a system-wide approach. Several resident coordinators led the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. According to the Development Coordination Office, in 2024, 117 United Nations country teams integrated some form of South-South and/or triangular cooperation into their plans.

22. The South-South Investment Forum, convened in Cairo in 2023 during the third Intra-African Trade Fair, was a collaborative effort between UNIDO, the African Export-Import Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China. At the Forum, participants highlighted sectors with significant investment potential and stressed the need for comprehensive regulatory frameworks and strategies to enhance investment flows within countries of the global South.

23. In 2023, IOM worked closely with the East African Community to advance the African integration agenda by prioritizing initiatives such as the one-stop border post and the harmonization of capacity-building programmes for border officers. In January 2023, the East African Community Secretariat, in collaboration with its partner States and with the support of IOM, developed a comprehensive training module on migration management within one-stop border post settings. As a result, training of trainers was conducted in Uganda to equip personnel with the skills necessary to implement the curriculum effectively.

24. IOM played a pivotal role in capacity development and technical assistance on climate change and human mobility through South-South cooperation. In 2023, with IOM support, the African Capacity Building Centre for Migration Management facilitated 46 capacity development and knowledge-sharing events involving 654 participants, representing an increase of 41 per cent in the number of learning initiatives compared with the previous year.

25. The China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility significantly expanded its impact, including through a project launched in 2023 to empower rural youth in the Kenya tomato value chain involving Kenyan and Chinese universities as well as the local private sector. Throughout 2023 and 2024, over 4,000 farmers received training through the project on greenhouse tomato farming and the development of bacteria-resistant varieties, strengthening capacities for more resilient food systems in Kenya.

26. Under the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme, three new projects were inaugurated in Kenya, Malawi and Namibia during the reporting period, as a result of an additional contribution of \$5 million. The projects in Malawi and Namibia are building on the results achieved in their first phases, supporting national capacities in such areas as agricultural mechanization, integrated pest control and poultry production. The project in Kenya is part of a triangular cooperation initiative to promote low-carbon tea production and value-chain development by adapting Chinese and German expertise and technologies.

27. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) facilitated South-South cooperation between Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam

focused on, among other topics, training in the detection of transboundary animal diseases and non-destructive testing techniques for the safety of buildings and infrastructure.

28. South-South cooperation through volunteering has been increasingly supported by United Nations Volunteers: more than 85 per cent of global citizens mobilized in the reporting period came from the global South, with women comprising the majority at 55 per cent, and a total of 3,350 served as international United Nations Volunteers in other countries of the global South. The second phase of the Africa Women Health Champions initiative was launched in 2024, in partnership with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, to recruit young women professionals between 22 and 35 years of age as United Nations Volunteer health champions in African countries. The first phase exceeded the target of 100 women health champions, mobilizing a total of 145 women from 38 nationalities, who contributed to 47 country offices in Africa, strengthening national health systems or communities while gaining hands-on experience and networking with leaders and peers.

29. In collaboration with the University for Peace, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) finalized a study on good practices in operationalizing the right to development in South-South cooperation in May 2023, advancing a dialogue on South-South cooperation and human rights that highlighted the complementary and mutually reinforcing principles and practices of South-South and triangular cooperation and the right to development. The study built on experiences of projects funded by the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund in Antigua and Barbuda and on two projects funded by the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation in Angola and the Comoros, with technical support from Brazil and South Africa, respectively. In 2024, the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development conducted a thematic study entitled “Operationalizing the right to development in international development cooperation”, which addressed the subject of mainstreaming and operationalizing the right to development in different forms of development cooperation practices.

30. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) facilitated interregional exchanges at the city level to promote policies and practices in support of the achievement of inclusive cities. Those exchanges included exchanges between Colombia and Kenya on a community-based solution for affordable housing in informal settlements and a new initiative supporting exchanges between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa to promote sustainable human settlements in the mining sector in both countries.

31. During the reporting period, over 15 regional and subregional projects, involving 32 PAHO member States were supported on climate change, mental health, childhood cancer, migration, and the detection and surveillance of antimicrobial resistance. PAHO also supported resource mobilization efforts of countries and the implementation of three projects funded by the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, on: (a) increasing access to healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic through the adoption of robots and new technology in Trinidad and Tobago; (b) increasing maternal and child healthcare access and coverage in the Chaco area of Paraguay; and (c) strengthening the clinical management of COVID-19 patients and reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission among health workers in Belize. In 2023, the Health Intelligence Node of Uruguay, an inter-agency initiative of the Ministry of Public Health of Uruguay, the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation and PAHO, increased knowledge-sharing on the Uruguayan health system and promoted intraregional and interregional exchanges.

32. UNDP facilitated a total of 700 South-South cooperation projects in 2023 and 2024, addressing a broad spectrum of issues including poverty eradication,

biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, governance enhancement, gender equality, fiscal and financial management, and digital transformation.⁴ For instance, UNDP facilitated collaboration with China and Sri Lanka to help Ethiopia to improve access to renewable energy solutions, using biogas, biomass and solar technologies to benefit more than 10,000 households in rural areas. It also facilitated knowledge exchanges between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan on policies to enhance the efficiency of water conservation and management through transboundary cooperation. In a further example, UNDP brokered a partnership between Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands to strengthen anti-money-laundering capacity, reduce corruption and promote effective governance, with support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

33. The ILO Department for Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation and the ILO International Training Centre facilitated 14 South-South and triangular cooperation projects, engaging over 80 countries, in addition to its global-level activities.⁵ Key achievements include the facilitation of triangular cooperation among France, Kenya and Madagascar, supporting agricultural sectors in Kenya and Madagascar, while enhancing the capacity of cooperatives and small and medium-sized enterprises to access markets in France. Through peer exchanges regarding national experiences, such as the Kenyan model for meeting environmental, social and governance standards, Malagasy companies gained skills to navigate regulatory requirements for accessing European markets while promoting job-rich value chains and responsible business practices.

34. In November 2024, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) launched the *Manual for the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation: Technical and Procedural Aspects for Pilot Testing*. The *Manual* represented a major milestone to support voluntary testing of the agreed framework to measure South-South cooperation as part of a set of tools designed to strengthen the capacities of Member States to measure and report on the contribution of South-South cooperation to the 2030 Agenda. The framework will be piloted in Ecuador, Jordan, Malaysia, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru and Qatar, which will provide feedback on the feasibility and challenges of measuring South-South cooperation by applying the framework, ultimately strengthening national capacities to report on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 17.3.1.

35. In 2023 and 2024, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) facilitated numerous South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives to enhance peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange at the national, subregional and regional levels. In 2023, it fostered interregional collaboration by connecting Uruguay with Arab countries to share innovative approaches for extending social insurance coverage to informal workers, inspiring Egypt to develop a similar scheme. In addition, it facilitated technical exchanges between Djibouti and Egypt on digital population and housing censuses, securing a donation of 1,400 tablets from Egypt to support the census conducted in Djibouti in 2024. In 2024, ESCWA organized over 85 events focused on policy design and implementation, labour market adaptation and inequality reduction, including workshops on integrating social workers into social protection systems and bridging skills gaps in the member countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. At the third Arab Forum for Equality, held in Cairo, best practices were showcased from countries that had successfully mitigated inequalities during overlapping crises. These efforts reflect the ESCWA commitment to fostering knowledge-sharing and capacity-building across regions with a view to strengthening policy responses and development outcomes.

⁴ See the UNDP Transparency Portal. Available at <https://open.undp.org/>.

⁵ ILO, "South-South cooperation in ILO's regular budget (RBTC): the 2024 year in review". Available at www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/Results%202024%20RBTC-SSTC_FINAL.pdf.

36. ECLAC held the first session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2023. This new intergovernmental body is aimed at supporting Member States with innovative mechanisms for South-South and triangular cooperation, using indicators that go beyond graduation criteria based on per capita gross domestic product, such as multidimensional vulnerability, to leave no one behind. In 2024, at their first meeting, the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean decided to endorse the global and voluntary framework for measuring South-South cooperation led by UNCTAD and to strengthen the capacities of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean by holding training workshops. In addition, the Conference will prepare an action plan for mainstreaming a gender perspective into international development cooperation programmes and projects, which will be presented at the second meeting of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in June 2025.

37. In 2023, the Resident Coordinator in Thailand, on behalf of the United Nations country team and in collaboration with the European Union and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency, launched three South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives under the Thailand Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022–2026. These flagship initiatives are aimed at advancing organic agriculture and enhancing reproductive health services, including capacity-building for midwives.

IV. Support for Southern networks and institutions

38. Among the most impactful recommendations in the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation is the recommendation to establish or strengthen national and regional institutions for the management of South-South and triangular cooperation. Without such institutions to further strengthen development cooperation, many promising action plans would not come to fruition. During the reporting period, United Nations entities spurred efforts to design and implement innovative South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives through online networks, knowledge platforms, distance learning and virtual training.

39. In 2024, the Office for South-South Cooperation, with UNDP, undertook an extensive revamp of South-South Galaxy, the United Nations system-wide platform for knowledge-sharing and partnership-brokering in relation to South-South and triangular cooperation. The revamp was focused on improving the overall user experience, upgrading core functionalities and technology and enhancing access to available knowledge products, data and research. Currently, the platform serves as a global open repository of good practices, solutions, knowledge products and other resources, which are accessible to all. With respect to its knowledge-sharing function, the platform contains information on more than 960 practical solutions spanning all the Sustainable Development Goals; and with regard to partnership-brokering, over 600 organizations have registered on the platform. The good practices set out on the platform illustrate how South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation can be leveraged to tackle local development challenges through peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges across different sustainable development issues and geographical areas.

40. Under its South-South cooperation strategy, IAEA has supported the Asia-Pacific Radiation Oncology Network to strengthen capacities for clinical decision-making and the continuing professional education of radiation oncologists, medical physicists and radiation therapists in low- and middle-income countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2024, more than 30 cancer experts gathered in Bali, Indonesia, to

conduct a comprehensive review of the three-year implementation of the virtual tumour boards. Created in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the boards have served as a means of pooling oncological expertise and resources from around the region to improve clinical decision-making and better address cancer-care challenges.

41. To foster private sector engagement in South-South cooperation, work has been done within the framework of the Africa Strategy of the United Nations Global Compact, in collaboration with the Africa Business Leaders Coalition and the Global Africa Business Initiative, to bring together business leaders from across the continent to address key issues relating to sustainable development, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships that unlock the economic potential of Africa within the framework of South-South cooperation. In 2023, the Africa Business Leaders Coalition shared technical know-how on how to drive action with a view to achieving meaningful outcomes on commitments relating to renewable energy targets and resilience plans. Similarly, the Global Africa Business Initiative achieved a nearly 25 per cent reduction in carbon footprints among participating businesses in line with the African Business Leaders' Climate Statement issued during the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

42. In 2023, IOM and the National School of Public Health of Morocco, in coordination with the Directorate of Epidemiology and Disease Control, organized a second "Winter School" workshop on sexual and reproductive health, mental health and psychosocial support, social protection, health coverage and the principle of living together with migrants. Participants were from Egypt, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen and, together, formed a network of different actors involved in migrant health in the Middle East and North Africa region. The workshop provided an opportunity for them to formulate recommendations on including migrants in universal health coverage and to capitalize on partner countries' experiences of integrating migrant populations into the health system.

43. On the occasion of the fifth session of the Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in 2023, ESCAP launched the South-South Cooperation Connector,⁶ an interactive virtual platform developed by ESCAP for the benefit of its member States in the region and key players in South-South and triangular cooperation. The platform is designed to help to match actors offering to provide technical assistance with potential recipients. The South-South Cooperation Connector also facilitates networking and active collaboration among key players and centres of excellence in the region, including through active working groups and communities of practice. In addition, member States can continue to engage with one another between annual sessions of the Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum through the ESCAP Community platform.

44. In 2023, PAHO launched the Network on Intersectoral Work and Social Participation for Health Equity in the Americas during a conference on intersectorality for health equity in the Americas, which was attended by more than 140 participants from over 20 countries. The Network was created with the aim of exchanging experiences and lessons learned as well as strengthening capacities and competencies on intersectionality in order to reduce health inequities by addressing their social determinants.

45. The Office for South-South Cooperation launched the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Solutions Lab, a global open platform for testing and incubating innovative South-South and triangular cooperation solutions. The Lab currently partners with ECE, IAEA, WFP, Masdar City, the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, and the Gulf Organisation for Research and

⁶ Available at <https://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org/south-south-cooperation-connector>.

Development. The Lab is aimed at addressing complex development challenges faced by developing countries by fostering innovative and scalable solutions that expedite the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. It is designed to leverage the knowledge, experience and innovation ecosystems of United Nations agencies and other partners, including the private sector, research institutions and academia.

V. Support provided to facilitate access by developing countries to digital and other enabling technologies

46. Uneven access to technology exacerbates inequalities and gravely affects countries in special situations, such as small island developing States and landlocked developing countries. In the Pact for the Future, including the Global Digital Compact annexed thereto, Member States committed to closing the technology gap within and between developed and developing countries. Similarly, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, in its decision 21/1, invited United Nations entities to support policies aimed at bridging the science, technology and innovation divide and fast-tracking digital transformation.

47. In the Havana Declaration on Current Development Challenges: the Role of Science, Technology and Innovation, adopted at their summit held in 2023, the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 and China emphasized the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation in science, technology and innovation and encouraged the establishment of new platforms for South-South cooperation and exchanges on science, technology and innovation.

48. Partners in Population and Development, a South-South intergovernmental alliance created in 1994 and supported by UNFPA, marked its thirtieth anniversary with an international interministerial conference in Bangladesh attended by representatives of 27 countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the resulting Dhaka Declaration, the member countries of the alliance committed to integrating South-South cooperation into national development policies, strategies and budgets and to leveraging digital transformation opportunities by emphasizing the importance of generating and utilizing data for evidence-based policy formulation.

49. The International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre for South-South Cooperation, inaugurated in 2008 under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and hosted by the Government of Malaysia, continued to facilitate knowledge-sharing in science, technology and innovation. In 2024, it offered an updated version of its training programme for high-level policymakers entitled “Empowering tomorrow: advancing science and technology policies with technology foresight”, which served to promote an exchange of experiences among policymakers from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

50. A youth-led initiative to help countries to address the science, technology and innovation divide benefited from the collaboration of UNESCO and the Office for South-South Cooperation. The project, entitled “Greening higher education: promoting the role of science, technology and innovation in Sustainable Development Goal impacts through meaningful youth engagement and leadership among the South-South University Cooperation Network”, was launched at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in December 2023. Offered in collaboration with the Government of China and managed by the Office for South-South Cooperation, it facilitated structured dialogue among member universities of the South-South University Cooperation Network, boosting the involvement and

leadership of young people in science, technology and innovation to expedite progress towards the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. Rural residents and marginalized groups have the most to gain from digitalization but are also the most at risk of falling further behind owing to digital divides. Advancing the digital transformation of rural areas was therefore a key area of work for FAO. With valuable support from China and in partnership with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), FAO strengthened the capacities of 12 Latin American countries to recover from the impact of COVID-19 on rural livelihoods and food systems, advancing the digital transformation of rural areas and improving the resilience of more than 4,000 farmers in CELAC member countries. The most significant achievements in that regard included the holding of over 70 digital literacy training sessions, the delivery of more than 400 technological devices, collaboration with more than 50 entities and the creation of the Facility Platform for Rural and Agricultural Digitalization.

52. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with economic, social and environmental uncertainties, increased digital divides and development inequalities in the Asia-Pacific region. Supported by ESCAP, the fifth Asia-Pacific Directors General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation was held on the theme “Digital innovation and South-South cooperation: driving sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”. The Forum offered participants an opportunity to discuss concrete examples of digital innovation solutions with the potential for adaptation in other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, paving the way for inclusive growth and sustainable development in the digital era through South-South cooperation.

53. In partnership with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom, ITU supported knowledge-sharing and capacity-strengthening among representatives of national institutions in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya to develop models for sustainable digital connectivity and access. With financial support from the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund of China, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of Uganda is revising the national electronic waste management policy in order to incorporate the principle of extended producer responsibility.

54. Support for the development of a regional e-commerce strategy for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was provided by UNCTAD in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and States members of the Community. The strategy is aligned with the ECOWAS Vision 2050 and will be instrumental in regional efforts to fully leverage technology to accelerate structural change and development and foster regional integration. The TrainForTrade programme includes a project designed to strengthen the capacities of regional entities to boost the digital economy in small island developing States. The project brings together government, e-commerce and trade professionals from such States, providing them with structured training and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

55. The United Nations Capital Development Fund strengthened government capacities to measure digital transformation at the country level with the inclusive digital economy scorecard, implemented by 25 countries in 2023. Data from the scorecard have already been used in the policy formulation process in several participating countries, and 10 countries have adopted the scorecard as their official national digital transformation measurement tool. With support from the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Union, the Fund launched the Caribbean FinTech Sprint for Financial Inclusion, partnering with governments in the region and leveraging local and global fintech companies to present market-ready solutions to strengthen cross-sector collaboration by bringing together the financial ecosystem across the Caribbean to support innovation and financial inclusion,

fostering national ownership and the exchange of expertise among countries of the South. Five awardees received \$500,000 in performance-based financing to expand e-commerce solutions to underserved persons in the Caribbean.

56. ESCWA contributed to the development of more than 15 national policy documents on topics identified as key areas of concern in the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. Examples include the information and communications technology security strategies of Djibouti, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the State of Palestine; the artificial intelligence strategies of Iraq and Mauritania; the cloud computing policies of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic; and the blockchain and digital inclusion policies of Jordan. In addition to policy changes enabled through South-South and triangular cooperation, ESCWA facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences, including through two study tours focused on digital census tools and methodologies. In the first tour, staff of the National Bureau of Statistics of Somalia visited the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt; in the second, a team of statisticians, demographers and specialists in technology and programming from the governmental institutions of Egypt visited their technical counterparts in Saudi Arabia to discuss combined census methodologies.

57. With the support of the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund managed by the Office for South-South Cooperation, PAHO strengthened the capacities of the Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago to integrate advanced technology into the healthcare system of the country. Through the Fund, a total of \$1 million was committed to bolstering the national COVID-19 response and providing financial support for a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, the Resident Coordinator Office and PAHO. The project, entitled “Bringing high and low technology (HALT) to COVID-19”, included the integration of humanoid mobile healthcare robots for use in the local public health sector, empowering the Ministry of Health to integrate digital health devices into the national system of Trinidad and Tobago.

58. Building on the success of its electronic immunization and logistics monitoring system (SMILE), developed in 2018 with the support of UNDP, the Ministry of Health of Indonesia made SMILE available to other countries through the UNDP Digital Health for Development Hub. In 2024, delegates of the Ministry of Health of Malawi went on a study visit to learn from the Indonesian experience. Lessons learned from the exchange will be used in the development of strategies to streamline healthcare logistics and ensure equitable vaccine distribution in Malawi.

59. The Facility/Programme for Capacity Development for Poverty Reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Science and Technology, implemented by the Office for South-South Cooperation and the Republic of Korea, supported the development of detailed technical solutions and implementation plans to address challenges in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam, equipping community members, particularly women, with the skills needed for sustainable practices within the water-energy-food nexus.

VI. Resource mobilization to advance South-South and triangular cooperation

60. Strengthened global partnerships and enhanced cooperation are urgently needed to address widening financing gaps, reinforce post-pandemic recovery and promote sustainable development, particularly in the least developed countries and other vulnerable countries. The present section of the report contains a summary of the measures taken by Member States and United Nations entities to scale up

contributions to the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation and other relevant financing mechanisms, demonstrating the complementary nature of South-South and North-South cooperation.

61. In 2023, WFP mobilized technical and financial resources from 149 national institutions through South-South and triangular cooperation. The Programme's South-South and Triangular Cooperation Unit raised additional financing resources from countries of the global South for South-South and triangular cooperation projects, including through the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation and private foundations. The South-South and Triangular Cooperation Innovation Challenge, launched by WFP with the support of the Government of China, expanded and diversified the range of zero hunger solutions originating from the global South and empowered developing countries to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation as technical providers.

62. The third phase of the FAO-China-Uganda South-South Cooperation project was launched in 2023 in support of the development of the agriculture sector in Uganda. Almost \$10 million was committed by Uganda, which is one of the most significant financial contributions by a least developed country for a South-South cooperation project facilitated by FAO.

63. At the eighth World Investment Forum, held in 2023, UNCTAD and the Africa Sovereign Investors Forum committed to a partnership aimed at unlocking investments in areas such as the energy transition and infrastructure in Africa, by leveraging African and global institutional investors, including sovereign funds, to help to finance sustainable development, especially in sectors relevant to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The partnership is also intended to foster joint investment and collaboration, including South-South cooperation.

64. New programmes were added to the portfolio of the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation thanks to further contributions from the Russian Federation. Moreover, a triangular cooperation window was established with seed funding from Portugal in response to a recommendation in the 2022 report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the state of South-South cooperation ([A/77/297](#)). The Office for South-South Cooperation and China continued to collaborate on the creation of a China-United Nations global South-South development facility, reflecting an intense effort by the Office to pool financial resources in order to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation among Member States. Collaborative frameworks were established with the Islamic Development Bank and the Fund for International Development of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to deepen support for innovative solutions and capacity-building efforts, reinforcing the role of South-South and triangular cooperation in addressing global challenges.

65. Lastly, more than 50 countries from the global South partnered with trust funds managed by the Office for South-South Cooperation to implement at least 57 development projects, with a total budget exceeding \$43.6 million. Those projects, ranging from small catalytic grants to initiatives costing in excess of \$1 million, contributed to diverse development outcomes. As a result, over 3 million people (52 per cent of whom were women) benefited from efforts to improve their knowledge, health and environmental and living conditions. In addition, more than 403 development solutions and opportunities for knowledge-sharing further strengthened South-South and triangular cooperation. Projects supported by trust funds influenced national policies and institutions; to cite one example, an initiative led by UNICEF in Nicaragua enhanced the capacity of the education system to integrate children with disabilities. Trust funds also facilitated progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, from poverty alleviation to clean

energy. In Uganda, for example, a project was undertaken with the support of the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation with a view to addressing chronic food insecurity by empowering women and young people through agro-industry initiatives. Similarly, a project launched in Benin in 2024 supported local salt production through the construction of a semi-modern processing plant, the installation of equipment and the provision of training to over 1,400 salt producers. The Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation continued to support research, knowledge exchange, environmental protection and improved resource management.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

66. The present report has provided information on the different ways in which United Nations entities have stepped up efforts to integrate South-South cooperation into their work by building staff capacity, developing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation within strategic and programmatic tools and methodologies. It has also highlighted meaningful measures taken by the United Nations system to support Member States in implementing South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, involving government and non-governmental networks and institutions dedicated to sharing resources, expertise and hands-on experience in tackling development challenges in the global South. The collaborative effort between the Office for South-South Cooperation and other United Nations entities in developing an e-module for United Nations country teams serves as a notable example of joint action that can be further scaled up to enhance system-wide capacity and coherence in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation. The successful implementation of the forthcoming United Nations system-wide strategy for South-South and triangular cooperation, to be formulated in 2025, will be a shared responsibility of the entire United Nations system, necessitating the engagement and support of all United Nations entities, including the mobilization of financial resources.

67. A growing number of guidance materials and training modules on South-South cooperation confirm the investment made in building staff and institutional capacity to respond to requests from Member States for support. The proportion of instruments and agreements that reflect a consideration of South-South cooperation is an indicator of the continuous effort being made to mainstream it across the United Nations development system and of the sustained interest from Member States in this cooperation modality.

68. The increasing number of South-South and triangular cooperation good practices that have been mapped, documented and disseminated, including through different online platforms, demonstrates the wealth of experiences available for advancing sustainable development and the trust in United Nations entities as partners of choice when it comes to facilitating knowledge exchanges in various development areas, especially with regard to piloting innovative approaches.

69. Even though the present report includes examples of financial resources mobilized in the reporting period, more work is needed to scale up initiatives through more robust, diverse and predictable financing for South-South and triangular cooperation. In that regard, the entities of the United Nations development system should continue to assist countries in identifying additional financial instruments that support South-South and triangular cooperation, including dedicated trust funds, regional financing platforms and innovative funding mechanisms. Engaging international and regional financial institutions and development banks in developing

dedicated financing windows for South-South cooperation will help to mobilize concessional finance and ensure that South-South cooperation projects receive adequate resources. In addition, exploring innovative financing models, such as impact investment, blended finance and debt swaps, will enable countries of the global South, especially the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, to channel financial resources towards priority development areas through South-South and triangular cooperation.

70. United Nations entities will further strengthen mechanisms to increase multi-stakeholder participation including private sector engagement, in particular in fostering business-to-business cooperation, technology exchange and investment in development initiatives driven by the global South. This also requires the engagement of civil society organizations in participatory evaluations and the implementation of South-South cooperation initiatives to ensure inclusivity and grass-roots impact. The United Nations development system will support regional and subregional networks in acting as South-South cooperation hubs, facilitating cross-sectoral partnerships and knowledge-sharing.

71. After many years of discussions on how to properly measure South-South cooperation through a voluntary approach developed by the global South, the launch of the *Manual for the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation: Technical and Procedural Aspects for Pilot Testing* represents a major milestone and the framework set out therein, which is currently being piloted, holds great promise and could ultimately encourage more countries of the global South to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation, boosting the renewed momentum to accelerate contributions to the 2030 Agenda. This requires United Nations entities, under the leadership of UNCTAD, to continue to support the refinement and expansion of the framework, encouraging more countries to adopt standardized methodologies to assess and report on their South-South cooperation contributions. Strengthening national statistical capacities to collect, analyse and report on data on South-South cooperation is critical in this regard.

72. Several United Nations country teams have undertaken joint South-South cooperation initiatives, demonstrating promising approaches to advancing sustainable development. These collaborative efforts have the potential to scale up impact, foster knowledge exchange and enhance technical cooperation among developing countries. By leveraging national and regional expertise, such initiatives can contribute to more comprehensive and integrated projects that accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, they can serve as a catalyst for attracting additional financial and technical resources, reinforcing partnerships and strengthening institutional capacities.

73. Given the pressing global challenges facing the global South, it is imperative to scale up South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in priority areas, including climate action; science, technology and innovation; digital transformation; and the transformative potential of artificial intelligence. Both modalities should be leveraged and should complement North-South cooperation. Expanding South-South digital cooperation will be essential to bridging digital divides, enhancing technology transfers and building digital infrastructure in developing countries. In addition, the promotion of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in science, technology and innovation should be intensified to accelerate the diffusion of innovations, foster technology partnerships and enhance the capacities of developing countries to address complex development challenges. The United Nations development system will continue to facilitate the exchange of good practices, strategies and policies and strengthen platforms that enable developing countries to collaborate on solutions that advance sustainable development in these critical areas.