

Concept Note Session 4

Leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development: on the road to BAPA+40

ECOSOC Chamber, Tuesday, 22 May 2018, 10:15 AM – 11:45 AM

Format

90 minute interactive panel discussion, in plenary and guided by moderator.

Objective

The session will examine trends, challenges and opportunities in South-South and triangular cooperation, in the framework of sustainable development. It will aim to further identify and advance the distinctive contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals. It will promote focused, candid knowledge exchange and mutual learning, and generate concrete messages and policy recommendations towards the preparatory process of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40).

Focus questions

- *How to further orient South-South and triangular cooperation towards sustainable development, building on their comparative advantages and opportunities? What specific steps are required?*
- *How can the strengths of South-South cooperation, especially in non-financial development cooperation, be deployed for implementing the 2030 Agenda and Addis Agenda? What are the lessons that can be learnt by the international community?*
- *What specific steps are required to further the sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories of the collaborations between developing countries?*
- *How can the international community contribute to the scaling up of South-South cooperation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals?*

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major frameworks, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, give new impetus to South-South and triangular cooperation. South-South cooperation continues to show steady expansion, diversification and resilience. Recent years have seen the emergence of new actors, more inclusive partnership arrangements and innovative modalities of development cooperation. Those changes are strengthening development efforts at all levels to combat poverty and hunger, address climate change, support infrastructure development and advance humanitarian assistance. There is a steady rise in inclusive, action-oriented policy dialogues at various levels. A growing number of Southern partners are designing systems and processes to assess the outcomes of their projects and programmes. Together, developing countries are giving heightened attention to the quality, effectiveness and contribution of their development cooperation to sustainable development.

The importance of South-South cooperation in localizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related agreements should be more widely recognized, yet not overstated. South-South cooperation is not intended to substitute for North-South cooperation, which remains a vital form of support for developing

countries. Nor does the advance of South-South cooperation substitute for expedited progress in addressing systemic issues.

Generating estimates of South-South cooperation remains complex and challenging, given its emphasis on non-financial modalities and the lack of comparability in definitions and categories used for reporting. The proportion of developing countries providing development cooperation has increased from 63 to 74 per cent from 2015 to 2017, according to the 2017 survey of programme country governments conducted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Similarly, the survey showed a marked rise in the number of developing countries indicating that the United Nations had undertaken activities to support South-South or triangular cooperation in their country, from 54 per cent of countries in 2015 to 84 per cent in 2017.

South-South cooperation reflects a plurality of approaches and diverse regional dynamics and perspectives. The characteristics of South-South and triangular cooperation are influencing the larger development landscape, contributing to the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. They are helping to promote the shift from a narrow focus on financing to a broader partnership dimension and the effective engagement of all stakeholders and means of implementation, stemming partly from their emphasis on non-financial cooperation. Progress in developing legal and institutional frameworks to foster effective multi-stakeholder approaches in South-South and triangular cooperation should be built upon. Triangular cooperation initiatives integrate South-South principles into the project or programme design in tandem with emphasis on mutual learning, the provision of knowledge, the sharing of experiences and capacity-building.

Developing countries are increasingly formalizing their collaborative arrangements and enhancing their institutional capacities to engage in development cooperation, and varying trends have been observed within and across regions. Structured and vibrant forms of development cooperation are emerging through interregional development cooperation mechanisms and frameworks. The arrangements provide high-level platforms for knowledge-sharing and mutual learning among Southern partners, involving both State and non-State actors, including parliamentarians, representatives of civil society, local authorities, women and youth, as well as representatives of the private sector. The arrangements can facilitate the formulation of coherent development strategies and cost-effective interventions, often covering many countries, and the related summits are increasingly becoming major avenues for the pledging of resources, the coordination of policies and the launching of major joint initiatives. Multilateral development banks are also making a clear impact on development cooperation in the South-South and triangular space.

Session 6 of the DCF high-level meeting, in taking a cross-cutting perspective to issues around monitoring and review of international development cooperation, will also consider what lessons can be learned from South-led approaches to assessing the outcomes of development cooperation.

Further reference

- Report of the Secretary-General on Trends and progress in international development cooperation, E/2018/55 [\[Arabic\]](#) [\[Chinese\]](#) [\[English\]](#) [\[French\]](#) [\[Russian\]](#) [\[Spanish\]](#)
- DCF Argentina Symposium, South-South and triangular cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda: Building innovative and inclusive partnerships – [Summary](#)
- The evolution of South-South development cooperation: its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate change – DCF Policy Brief [No. 17](#)
- Fostering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: the role of multilateral development banks in South-South cooperation – DCF Policy Brief [No. 18](#)
- Promoting sustainable development through triangular cooperation – DCF Policy Brief [No. 19](#)

- How Governments of the South assess the results of South-South cooperation: case studies of South-led approaches – DCF Policy Brief [No. 20](#)
- What is development cooperation? - DCF Policy Brief [No. 1](#)

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