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**Research Report**

## Key issues for BAPA+40: South-South cooperation and the BAPA+40 subthemes

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91

## **KEY ISSUES FOR BAPA+40: SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND THE BAPA+40 SUBTHEMES**

Vicente Paolo B. Yu III





# **RESEARCH PAPERS**

**91**

## **KEY ISSUES FOR BAPA+40: SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND THE BAPA+40 SUBTHEMES**

**Vicente Paolo B. Yu III\***

**SOUTH CENTRE**

**FEBRUARY 2019**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Developing countries today face multiple interlinked macroeconomic, financial, climate, and development challenges. South-South cooperation is an important element for developing countries to meet these challenges individually and collectively, and in multilateral North-South dialogue and global governance. The overall theme of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (40 years after the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promotion and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries/BAPA+40) is the “Role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities”, with sub-themes. This research paper will present some concepts relating to South-South cooperation that have been developed by the South and the United Nations system, and looks at some issues that would be relevant to discussions that may be undertaken with respect to Subthemes (i) “Comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation”; (ii) “Challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation”; and (iv) “Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation”. It concludes by providing recommendations for the consideration of developing countries in response to the various subthemes, as inputs to support the active engagement by developing countries in the negotiations for the BAPA+40 outcome document.





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## I. INTRODUCTION

Developing countries today face multiple interlinked macroeconomic, financial, climate, and development challenges. For developing countries to meet these challenges individually and collectively, South-South cooperation has become more essential in all fields of international and domestic endeavour.

The need for strategic and united collective action on the part of developing countries in the international arena has long been recognised, including in the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation, in the Group of 77 (G77) and China's Yamoussoukro Consensus on the Principles of South-South Cooperation, and the reaffirmation of these principles of South-South cooperation by the G77 in September 2009. Such recognition is also seen in the establishment of South-South political and economic cooperation mechanisms such as the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the various Southern regional cooperation and economic integration organisations, as well as the South Centre as the multilateral intergovernmental think tank of developing countries. As a result, South-South cooperation is an important element in the South's development process and in multilateral North-South dialogue and global governance.

South-South cooperation is hence playing an increasingly important role in supporting the development strategies of developing countries, as shown by the continued strong political commitment of developing countries as articulated in collective statements from the G77 and the NAM; the increased volume of South-South cooperation activities; the increased scope and area coverage of South-South cooperation activities, especially in development policies; the broader geographical reach; the increase in the number of participating actors; and the establishment of more agencies for South-South cooperation within the national institutional architecture of many developing countries. The complementary nature of South-South cooperation in relation to North-South development cooperation is well-recognized and frequently articulated by developing countries in multilateral fora.

The overall theme of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (40 years after the Buenos Aires Plan of Action/BAPA+40) is the "Role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: challenges and opportunities", with the sub-themes as follows:

- “(i) Comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation;
- “(ii) Challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation;
- “(iii) Sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories;
- “(iv) Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation.”<sup>1</sup>

This research paper looks at some issues that would be relevant to discussions that may be undertaken with respect to Subthemes (i), (ii) and (iv) that will be the focus of intergovernmental negotiations for the outcome document of BAPA+40.

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<sup>1</sup> The theme and subthemes for the 2019 BAPA+40 Conference were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in April 2018. See [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/72/L.47&referer=/english/&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/72/L.47&referer=/english/&Lang=E).

For the G77, the BAPA+40 conference “will present an opportunity to enhance the current institutional arrangements to effectively support South-South cooperation and promote South-South agenda”, including, *inter alia*, “the consolidation of existing mechanisms of South-South cooperation.”<sup>2</sup> For the Group, BAPA+40 “represents a key milestone in the evolution of South-South Cooperation” and “will provide a unique opportunity to review lessons learned over the past four decades, reach a deeper understanding of Buenos Aires Plan of Action's message in a different international context, create new commitments, and work together in an integrated manner to create a suitable and inclusive environment, promoting multilateralism, regional integration and collective pursuit of sustainable development.”<sup>3</sup>

Following this introduction, this paper will present in Section II some concepts relating to South-South cooperation that have been developed by the South over the past decades and how the United Nations (UN) system has conceptualized it. Section III will focus on identifying the comparative advantages of South-South cooperation and the opportunities that can be seized for enhancing South-South cooperation in multilateral affairs and in South-South institution building, so as to respond to Subtheme (i) of the BAPA+40 Conference. Section IV will look at the various factors that pose challenges to the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation, in response to Subtheme (ii) of the BAPA+40 Conference. Section V will look at the issue of scaling up the means of implementation of Agenda 2030 in support of South-South cooperation, in response to Subtheme (iii) of the BAPA+40 Conference. Section VI concentrates on providing recommendations for the consideration of developing countries in response to the various subthemes for the BAPA+40 Conference discussed in this paper, as inputs to support the active engagement by developing countries in the negotiations for the BAPA+40 outcome document.

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<sup>2</sup> G77, 41<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Declaration (2017), para. 70. Available from <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2017.htm>. See also G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 22, at <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> G77, Statement at the Opening Ceremony of the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 (27 November 2017). Available from <http://www.G77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=171127>.

## **II. CONCEPTS OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

The emergence of South-South cooperation can be traced to the 1955 Bandung Asian-African Conference where 24 newly independent African and Asian nations met to foster their political and economic co-operation.<sup>4</sup> This evolved into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, enabling developing countries to maintain a neutral stance during the Cold War.

However, over the past 60 years, and especially since the 1978 Buenos Aires Conference, the context in which South-South cooperation takes place has changed. Developing countries now account for 59.25% of global gross domestic product (GDP)<sup>5</sup> (in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms) and around 40% of global merchandise trade<sup>6</sup>; and three of the ten biggest economies<sup>7</sup> in the world in aggregate terms are developing countries (though in per capita terms, these developing countries would be classified as low- or middle-income developing countries). Many developing countries have also moved up the development ladder in terms of the size, diversification, and scope of their economies, giving them greater capacity to engage in South-South cooperation. At the same time, however, virtually the entire world's poor live in developing countries.<sup>8</sup> Development and poverty eradication therefore continue, by and large, to be the primary policy objectives of developing countries today as it was 60 years ago.

The nature of the development challenges that developing countries face have also changed compared to 60 years ago. Climate change is now clearly recognized as a global challenge that needs to be addressed, while keeping in mind that development still needs to be pursued. The global financial architecture that has been developed over the past 60 years, into which many developing countries have become deeply integrated, gives rise to exogenous economic shocks that in many cases derail and hamper the development of many developing countries. There are other global trends and challenges, such as the increasing use of automation and digital technologies for the production and consumption of goods and services and challenges to multilateralism, which may impact on the development prospects of developing countries.

At the same time, there has been a recent burst of multilateral activity that resulted in the adoption of a set of multilateral policy instruments that seek to provide a framework for how development is to be undertaken and financed. These include the 2015 Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2015 Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Framework, and

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<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Final Communiqué of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, April 1955, archived with the University of Chicago at [http://franke.uchicago.edu/Final\\_Communique\\_Bandung\\_1955.pdf](http://franke.uchicago.edu/Final_Communique_Bandung_1955.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook (April 2018). Available from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPSH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD>.

<sup>6</sup> Developing countries accounted for 42% of global exports and 40% of global imports in 2016. See World Trade Organization, World Trade Statistics 2017, p. 60, at [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/wts2017\\_e/WTO\\_Chapter\\_06\\_e.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/wts2017_e/WTO_Chapter_06_e.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> These are China (no. 2), India (no. 7), and Brazil (no. 9). See World Economic Forum, The World's Biggest Economies in 2018, at <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/the-worlds-biggest-economies-in-2018/>.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank data shows that around 99% of the world's 736 million people in 2015 who live at or below the international poverty line of USD1.90/day live in developing country regions, with around 630 million in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. See World Bank, Decline of global extreme poverty continues but has slowed (World Bank Press Release, 19 September 2018), at <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/09/19/decline-of-global-extreme-poverty-continues-but-has-slowed-world-bank>.

the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 that incorporates 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, with 169 indicators). The SDGs can provide a framework for conducting South-South cooperation, in the sense that South-South cooperation can, and often does, encompass economic, social, and environmental aspects. It has been pointed out, for example, that South-South cooperation complements North-South cooperation, “particularly when addressing emerging development challenges, like climate change, food security, social protection and public security.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, as the UN Secretary-General pointed out in 2017, “South-South cooperation, as a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation, offers enormous opportunities and potential to support accelerating progress towards achieving the [Sustainable Development] Goals.”<sup>10</sup>

The evolution of South-South cooperation provides important lessons about the role that it can play in enhancing national ownership through voluntary partnerships and in strengthening the national capacities of the partners to undertake cooperative activities. Such lessons include moving progressively, in a relatively short period of time, from South-South cooperation focused on activities to project-oriented approaches and eventually to medium and long-term development programmes with their partners.<sup>11</sup>

The scope of South-South cooperation has expanded and now includes technical cooperation and knowledge exchanges, trade, investment, infrastructure and connectivity as well as the coordination of policies and development strategies among developing countries. South-South cooperation has also become more visible in regional and global development discourse and initiatives.<sup>12</sup>

As Southern providers of cooperation became more able, since the early 2000s, to influence the international development agenda through their increased economic and political weight in the global arena while still facing their own development challenges, they became more engaged internationally and have invested in building more political, economic and social ties with other developing countries. As one researcher has pointed out: “While evidence remains weak, available data suggest a rise in overall volume of South–South cooperation resources and a larger geographical reach. Developing countries have welcomed these providers due to the similarities in their national challenges, more equal relationships with them and more advantageous conditions offered for development cooperation agreements than those offered by other sources of funding.”<sup>13</sup> In particular, Southern partners tend to offer and obtain additional development solutions that are based on their national policies and may therefore be more appropriate given that Southern partners may have more

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<sup>9</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Task Team on South-South Cooperation, “Unlocking the Potential of South-South Cooperation – Policy Recommendations from the Task Team on South-South Cooperation” (July 2011), p. 00. Available from <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/TT-SSC%20Policy%20Recommendations.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations, State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), para. 1. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. OECD Task Team on South-South Cooperation, Unlocking the Potential of South-South Cooperation – Policy Recommendations from the Task Team on South-South Cooperation (July 2011), p. 00, at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/TT-SSC%20Policy%20Recommendations.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), para. 2. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>.

<sup>13</sup> Mariella Di Ciommo, “Approaches to measuring and monitoring South-South cooperation,” Development Initiatives Discussion Paper (February 2017), p. 5. Available from <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Approaches-to-measuring-and-monitoring-South%E2%80%93South-cooperation.pdf>.

affordable technologies and there may be similarities in institutional arrangements, geography, culture, or level of income.<sup>14</sup>

### **A. Conceptualization of South-South Cooperation by the South**

South-South cooperation in the overall context of multilateralism is a continuing process vital to confront the challenges faced by the South. It is a valuable contribution to development, and as such needs to be strengthened, including through enhancing the capacities of the institutions and the arrangements that promote such cooperation. South-South cooperation can be an important strategy to sustain the development efforts of developing countries and a means of enhancing their participation in the global economy. It is a very important aspect of international cooperation for the achievement of development among developing countries, and it is quite distinct and separate from existing modes and frameworks relating to long-standing official development assistance (ODA) from developed countries to developing countries.

In this regard, the principles for South-South cooperation, including at the policy level, have already been articulated by the South. They serve as important benchmarks for shaping South-South relations at the global, regional, and national levels, and could impact on the further development of North-South relations. These will also shape the ways in which the countries of the South achieve their respective development goals and objectives. For example, the Havana Programme of Action<sup>15</sup>, the Marrakech Framework of Implementation of South-South Cooperation<sup>16</sup> and the Doha Plan of Action<sup>17</sup> taken together represent a comprehensive framework for intensified cooperation among developing countries.

The principles for South-South cooperation were adopted by the foreign ministers of the G77 in September 2008 and supported by the Heads of State and Government of the XVth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in July 2009<sup>18</sup> (see Box 1). These principles provide a solid foundation for the conceptualization and implementation of South-South cooperation and there is no need to rewrite them.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> See G77 South Summit 2000, Havana Programme of Action, at [http://www.G77.org/summit/ProgrammeofAction\\_G77Summit.htm](http://www.G77.org/summit/ProgrammeofAction_G77Summit.htm).

<sup>16</sup> G77, Marrakech Framework of Implementation of South-South Cooperation. Available from <http://www.G77.org/marrakech/Marrakech-Framework.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> G77, Doha Plan of Action. Available from [http://www.cooperacionsursur.org/images/docs/Doha\\_Plan\\_of\\_Action\\_2005\\_English.pdf](http://www.cooperacionsursur.org/images/docs/Doha_Plan_of_Action_2005_English.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> See the Ministerial Declaration of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the G77, 25 September 2009 (see <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm>, para. 70), reaffirming the adoption at its 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting (26 September 2008) of the South-South cooperation principles recommended by the Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-XII), 10-13 June 2008. These South-South cooperation principles were supported by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at its XVth Summit in Egypt in July 2009 (NAM Doc. No. NAM/2009/FD/Doc.1, para. 358). See also G77, Ministerial Declaration 2018, para. 147, at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2018.htm>.



**Box 1**

**South-South Cooperation Principles  
Adopted by the G77**

- a. South-South cooperation is a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South and must be pursued as an expression of South-South solidarity and a strategy for economic independence and self-reliance of the South based on their common objectives and solidarity;
- b. South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South;
- c. South-South cooperation must not be seen as a replacement for North-South cooperation. Strengthening South-South cooperation must not be a measure of coping with the receding interest of the developed world in assisting developing countries;
- d. Cooperation between countries of the South must not be analyzed and evaluated using the same standards as those used for North-South relations;
- e. Financial contributions from other developing countries should not be seen as Official Development Assistance from these countries to other countries of the South. These are merely expressions of solidarity and cooperation borne out of shared experiences and sympathies;
- f. South-South cooperation is a development agenda based on premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations. South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion;
- g. South-South cooperation is based on a strong, genuine, broad-based partnership and solidarity;
- h. South-South cooperation is based on complete equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit;
- i. South-South cooperation respects national sovereignty in the context of shared responsibility;
- j. South-South cooperation strives for strengthened multilateralism in the promotion of an action-oriented approach to development challenges;
- k. South-South cooperation promotes the exchange of best practices and support among developing countries in the common pursuit of their broad development objectives (encompassing all aspects of international relations and not just in the traditional economic and technical areas);
- l. South-South cooperation is based on the collective self-reliance of developing countries;

- m. South-South cooperation seeks to enable developing countries to play a more active role in international policy and decision-making processes, in support of their efforts to achieve sustainable development;
- n. The modalities and mechanisms for promoting South-South cooperation are based on bilateral, sub-regional, regional and interregional cooperation and integration as well as multilateral cooperation.

There have been attempts from non-government developing country think tanks working on South-South cooperation to identify other principles for South-South cooperation.<sup>19</sup> From the literature available, the key values that underpin South-South cooperation include “respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit” that stem from the perspective that South-South cooperation “is a partnership among equals based on solidarity.”<sup>20</sup>

Some of the core principles for South-South cooperation have been well articulated by Southern researchers and South-South cooperation providers,<sup>21</sup> to distinguish South-South cooperation from North-South cooperation. For example, these would include the following:

- ***Ownership by the South*** – A foundational concept for South-South cooperation is that of ownership by the South. South-South cooperation is an instrument of, and belongs to, the South. For those developing countries that are active in this area, it is a manifestation of South-South political and economic solidarity in addressing common development challenges, and a way for developing countries to help each other move towards a situation where developing countries will exit from requiring aid to improve their own development prospects;
- ***Equality between partners*** – The South-South cooperation framework views the countries involved as partners trying to share the development burden by working with and learning from each other rather than as donor and recipient;
- ***Fostering national and collective self-reliance*** – South-South cooperation seeks to develop and maximize complementarities in production, consumption, trade,

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<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Neissan Besharati et al., A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for South-South Cooperation (NeST Working Paper, March 2017), pp. 8-9, at [http://www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/saia\\_NeST-Working-Paper\\_20170515.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/saia_NeST-Working-Paper_20170515.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> See Sachin Chaturvedi, Features of South-South Cooperation and Global Dynamics (FIDC Policy Brief No. 1, January 2014), p. 1, at [http://ris.org.in/images/RIS\\_images/pdf/FIDC%20policy%20brief\\_1.pdf](http://ris.org.in/images/RIS_images/pdf/FIDC%20policy%20brief_1.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Sachin Chaturvedi, *ibid.*, pp. 1-2. See also e.g. IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Declaration on South-South Cooperation (5 June 2018), at [https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/29955/IBSA\\_Declaration\\_on\\_SouthSouth\\_Cooperation](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/29955/IBSA_Declaration_on_SouthSouth_Cooperation) and <http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2018/ibsa0605.htm>; BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, VII BRICS Summit Ufa Declaration (9 July 2015), at [https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125\\_1409.html](https://www.brics2017.org/English/Documents/Summit/201701/t20170125_1409.html); Swaran Singh, The BRICS Model of South-South Cooperation (UJCI Africa-China Policy Brief No. 2, August 2017), at <http://confucius-institute.joburg/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/UJCI-africa-china-policy-brief-no-2-singh.pdf>; Enrique Dussel, BRICS expected to be new platform for South-South cooperation (27 August 2017), at <http://kabar.kg/eng/news/brics-expected-to-be-new-platform-for-south-south-cooperation/>; Wang Xiaojun (UNOSSC Deputy Director for Programmes and Operations), BRICS to boost South-South cooperation, world development (Xinhua, 2 September 2017), at [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/02/c\\_136577610.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-09/02/c_136577610.htm).

investment, technology, and development cooperation among the partners working together in pursuit of their collective and individual development objectives;

- ***Mutual benefit with no policy conditionality*** – South-South cooperation seeks to emphasize mutual assistance for mutual benefit in the spirit of partnership. This is important for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the cooperation, under which the partners are able to obtain and use appropriate, affordable, and effective solutions (including financing, technology, and capacity building) without any policy conditionalities attached<sup>22</sup>. Policy conditionality is therefore absent in South-South cooperation (SSC), since such cooperation among the partners is not conditioned to “the adoption of a particular plan or policy country, and they understand that SSC is respectful of the principle of non-intervention in States’ internal affairs. ... SSC has the characteristic of not imposing policy conditionality, unlike what happens in NSC [North-South Cooperation];”<sup>23</sup>
- ***Voluntary and demand-driven*** – South-South cooperation is voluntary, i.e. it is undertaken voluntarily out of a sense of solidarity and partnership rather than out of a legal or political commitment or obligations. It is also generally demand-driven, and seeks to be responsive to the development needs and priorities of the partner countries, and reflecting the mutual interests that the partners seek to advance and promote through their cooperation;
- ***Wide scope and diversity of approaches*** – Because the South is composed of widely diverse countries with a multiplicity of development conditions and political governance arrangements, the ways in which, and under which, South-South cooperation takes place are also necessarily diverse and multiple. There is no single common template across the South for how South-South cooperation may be undertaken; neither is there a unified approach with respect to its scope or the areas in which it can be undertaken nor in the modalities by which it should be undertaken. As has been pointed out, “there are several areas where distinct practices have emerged across the major Southern providers. Some of them relate to national legislations and some are associated with on-going conventions. In some countries of the South there is a clear articulation of development cooperation policies while in other cases some specific aspects of common

<sup>22</sup> A good discussion on the nature of not imposing any policy conditionalities under South-South cooperation is provided by Sachin Chaturvedi of Research and Information System of Developing Countries (RIS), in which he states that having no policy conditionality means that “the priorities and policies of the partner countries are not hindered in any manner and the non-interference in the internal affairs and the national sovereignty of the development partner is also taken care of, thus making the SSC more efficient and cost-effective. By not imposing any conditionalities, SSC gives the power of independent decision making to the partner countries, keeping in view their aspirations and special values. Thus, the SSC believes in respecting the independence and national sovereignty, cultural diversity and identity of local content.” See Sachin Chaturvedi, op. cit., pp. 1-2. Other researchers, however, have suggested that while SSC may generally be free of policy conditionalities, there may be “procedural conditionalities” that might be imposed in order to address “specific issues regarding the legal terms of an agreement, the financial conditions, the management of funds, the purchase of materials and the forms of implementation” as well as “political conditionalities” that are related to “the use of SSC as an instrument of foreign policy.” See e.g. Miguel Lengyel and Bernabe Malacalza, What do we talk when we talk about South-South Cooperation? The construction of a concept from empirical basis (Paper presented at IPSA-EPCR Joint Conference panel on South-South cooperation, 16-19 February 2011), pp. 15-16, at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265152002/download>.

<sup>23</sup> Miguel Lengyel and Bernabe Malacalza, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

principles are more vigorously followed than in others. Also, the concept of SSC goes beyond knowledge exchange, financing and capacity building, investment links and trade.”<sup>24</sup> The conceptualization of South-South cooperation therefore goes beyond ODA, as it includes “not only financial flows, such as concessional loans and grants, but also the government-sponsored investment for infrastructure development (GSI), agreements of energy supply on favorable terms to recipient countries (AES), in addition to TCDC [technical cooperation among developing countries] or technical cooperation coming from the transfer of knowledge, experience, technology and capabilities. That is, SSC has technical, financial and economic components that make it a concept with a broader scope.”<sup>25</sup>

An excellent comparison of the differences between North-South and South-South cooperation can be seen in the following table:

### Comparison of North-South and South-South Development Partnerships

Indicators	Aid programmes (North-South)	Development partnership (South-South)
Nature and purpose of support	ODA. Stated to be altruistic in nature	Mutual benefits and growth
Philosophical perspective	Framework approach	Ingredient approach
Participants	At least one participant has very high per capita income	Both partners may have very low per capita income
Level of development	Large differences in stages of economic development between donors and recipient	Both partners almost at same stage of economic development
Role of participants	Donors and recipient of ODA	Relationship of equality, both may contribute to the process
Conditionality	‘Top-down’ with policy conditionality and no predictability	Request-driven and generally free from conditionality of any kind, so largely within timelines
Flexibility	Multilayered time-consuming bureaucratic structures, hence added transaction cost	Highly decentralised and relatively fast with few implications for transaction cost
Priority sectors	Grant assistance and budget support for social sectors	Economic and technical cooperation largely confined to projects in infrastructure and productive sectors investment
Adherence to global governance framework like Paris Declaration	Donors use guidelines of Paris Declaration, which they evolve as an instrument for effectiveness	Providers are out of the purview of any global arrangement such as Paris Declaration, in which they were not involved. Hinges on mutual trust of partner countries
Data, monitoring and evaluation	Peer-reviewed by DAC-OECD. Data is compiled and periodically released by the national governments and DAC-OECD	No monitoring mechanisms beyond occasional reports of data and anecdotal details
Role of NGOs	Extensive	Limited
Role of Private Sector	Limited	Extensive

Source: Sachin Chaturvedi, Features of South-South Cooperation and Global Dynamics (FDIC Policy Brief No. 1, January 2014), p. 3, at [http://ris.org.in/images/RIS\\_images/pdf/FIDC%20policy%20brief\\_1.pdf](http://ris.org.in/images/RIS_images/pdf/FIDC%20policy%20brief_1.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Sachin Chaturvedi, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Miguel Lengyel and Bernabe Malacalza, op. cit., p. 8.

In this context, it is important to highlight that the conceptualization of South-South cooperation is also evolving in the light of the varied and diverse ways and conditions in which it is being undertaken by countries of the Global South.

At the core of South-South cooperation is the belief that achieving development is the South's own responsibility<sup>26</sup>, and that such development can only be achieved under conditions of fundamental equity, social progress, respect for sovereignty, and equal economic and political relationships with developed countries. As some researchers have suggested, South-South cooperation "was originally created as a comprehensive mechanism of solidarity between developing countries and has, therefore, a cooperative philosophy based on the creation, adaptation and transfer of knowledge and experience for human development."<sup>27</sup>

In this context, the G77 Ministers stressed that "South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South. South-South cooperation, which is critical for developing countries, therefore requires long-term vision and a global institutional arrangement, as envisioned at the Second South Summit."<sup>28</sup> The G77 also highlighted "the critical importance for developing countries of ensuring that the conceptual framework underlying South-South cooperation responds to the new and numerous challenges faced by developing countries through the exploration of new ways of thinking and new modalities, in line with evolving realities, thereby making it an important pillar to further strengthen South - South cooperation."<sup>29</sup>

Much greater depth in terms of how the G77 views South-South cooperation conceptually was expressed by the Group in May 2016 during a session of the UN High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation when it said that "South-South Cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals."<sup>30</sup> The Group stressed that "South-South Cooperation and its agenda have to be set by countries of the South, and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. At the same time, we reiterate that South-South Cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South Cooperation."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> This was clearly articulated by the South Commission in its 1990 Report entitled *The Challenge to the South*, when it said that "the responsibility for the South's development lies in the South." See South Commission, *The Challenge to the South* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 14, at [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Challenge-to-the-South\\_HRes\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Challenge-to-the-South_HRes_EN.pdf). This idea of national responsibility for development was also clearly articulated in Agenda 2030, para. 41, in which the global community recognized that "each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development", at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

<sup>27</sup> Miguel Lengyel and Bernabe Malacalza, op cit., p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> G77, Ministerial Declaration of the 41<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the G77, para. 65. Available from <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2017.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> G77, Ministerial Declaration of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the G77, para. 23. Available from <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> G77, Statement at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (16 May 2016), para. 5. Available from <http://www.G77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=160516c>.

<sup>31</sup> G77, Statement at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (16 May 2016), para. 6. Available from <http://www.G77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=160516c>. See also G77, Ministerial Declaration 2018, para. 144, at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2018.htm>.

South-South cooperation is therefore seen by developing countries as being conceptually different from traditional North-South ODA. Developing countries have continually stressed that South-South cooperation is a complement to, and not a substitute for, North-South development cooperation. It differs from ODA in that it is characterized as a “partnership among equals, based on solidarity” and is guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free of any conditionality.<sup>32</sup>

The G77, through their ministers, stressed that “South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation and reaffirmed that South-South cooperation is a collective endeavour of developing countries and that, consequently, South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion, as reaffirmed in the Nairobi outcome document.”<sup>33</sup>

The idea of South-South cooperation as being separate from, but complementary to, long-standing North-South cooperation remains valid and relevant today. This idea of complementarity highlights that both South-South and North-South cooperation are to work usefully together in order to promote the development of developing countries, with neither being superior to nor subordinate to the other. This idea recognizes that developed countries’ long-standing commitments and obligations to provide ODA and other development financing – such as the commitment to provide 0.7% of their Gross National Income as ODA – to developing countries continue and are not replaced by South-South cooperation.

South-South cooperation activities, in general, are seen as an investment by both developing country partners in each other’s development so as to enhance bilateral exchanges and improve economic relationships with each other, with the recipient partner’s needs and priorities being reflected and addressed in the kinds of activities that are undertaken. Despite the varied economic differences and circumstances that exist among developing countries, South-South cooperation partners share the common goal of achieving development and poverty eradication. And more recently, that goal is increasingly contextualized as the achievement of sustainable development while recognizing that different national circumstances and external constraints, including economic, policy, environmental, and social, will require that different pathways be pursued by developing countries to achieve such common goal. Furthermore, all developing countries can be both providers and recipients of South-South cooperation, including least developed countries (LDCs), because their different national development experiences mean that developing countries will be able to give and receive development lessons and assistance to and from each other through South-South cooperation.

In a 2008 South Centre paper on the Development Cooperation Forum<sup>34</sup>, Brazilian respondents, for example, stressed that “South-South cooperation is distinct, requiring specific standards of measurement, supervision, accounting evaluation. ... it is important that the DCF

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<sup>32</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Integrating South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programmes of Work Policy Guidance (12 February 2011). p.7. Available from <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26642/Annex%20%20to%20the%20briefing%20on%20South-South%20Cooperation.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>.

<sup>33</sup> G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 21. Available from <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> See South Centre, Developing Country Perspectives on the Role of the Development Cooperation Forum : Building Strategic Approaches to Enhancing Multilateral Development Cooperation, South Centre Analytical Note No. SC/GGDP/AN/GEG/10, October 2008, at [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AN\\_GEG10\\_Enhancing-Multilateral-Development-Cooperation\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/AN_GEG10_Enhancing-Multilateral-Development-Cooperation_EN.pdf).

[Development Cooperation Forum] promotes studies about the South-South cooperation and triangulated cooperation. ... South-South cooperation programs and triangled ones [should] be examined according to their specificities with respect to their elaboration, supervision and evaluation of results. This is important to develop a theoretical and realistic framework, based on successful empirical evidences.” The respondents noted that “Brazil puts South-South cooperation as a priority” and looks for “synergies that will lead to the development of cooperating partners in a solid and equal basis.” They also pointed out that “Brazil expects to keep answering, within its technical and financial possibilities, the demands from developing countries. In support of this South-South bilateral agenda, Brazil has been establishing triangular partnerships with foreign governments and international organizations. Brazil does not seek to have a different status in the realm of developing countries, for if this happened, it would reproduce the North-South model within South-South cooperation.”<sup>35</sup>

Chinese respondents for the 2008 South Centre paper viewed South-South development cooperation generally as developing countries helping each other and uniting with each other, to wit: “in terms of ... South-South cooperation, developing countries should, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, actively develop external economic and trade, scientific and technological and cultural cooperation to accelerate their own development. Only through uniting themselves, can the developing countries elevate their position in the South-North dialogue and preserve their own interests to the fullest possible extent in the process of globalization.... South-South cooperation has to find new approaches or new directions to proceed. ...”<sup>36</sup>

The Indian country paper stressed that “South-South cooperation should be viewed from the perspective of political solidarity of the South, utilisation of complementarities between developing countries and direct cooperation between larger developing countries and other countries in the South.”<sup>37</sup>

The South African respondents stressed that South-South development cooperation need not only be bilateral but can also be trilateral and would go beyond finance transfer – i.e. “where two emerging ‘donors’ jointly provide assistance to another developing country. It is likely that this would build on existing cooperation that has been occurring for decades. Further cooperation might comprise technical assistance, technology transfers, and support for innovation.” They also stressed that “South-South co-operation is conceptually and ideologically different to North-South co-operation or North-South aid. South-South co-operation is driven by other principles, such as equality, solidarity, mutual development and complementarity. The principles underpinning South-South interaction are different, so the rules are different. However, they argue that attempts by the established donors to co-opt these Southern development partners ignore this reality. The respondents noted that the developed countries have increasingly paid attention to South-South interaction due to the rise of China, India and Brazil, and thus their desire to co-opt the developing countries into the DAC [Development Assistance Committee] or a related aid management structure has apparently grown. The problem is that the Northern countries refuse to accept that the co-operation processes of North and South can be complementary and they are focused on co-option alone. The solution is for the North to acknowledge the fundamental differences that underpin the two systems and assess how the two processes can complement each other.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., para. 72.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., para. 73.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., para. 74.

Given that South-South cooperation is governed by principles that have been developed and shaped in light of this diversity and multiplicity, South-South cooperation is understood as a phenomenon in itself that is being shaped by the Global South for the Global South rather than as being another component or element of international development assistance and cooperation that should be subject to multilateral discussions and disciplines. This means that the development of the principles and operational modalities for South-South cooperation should be a Southern endeavour to be undertaken by the South for the South through Southern multilateral fora or arrangements, rather than be done through a North-South multilateral forum such as the United Nations or through ad-hoc multilateral arrangements or mechanisms spearheaded by the North. The United Nations as a multilateral forum can and should continue to play a supportive role to South-South cooperation, and even enhance such role, by serving as the venue through which the principles and operational modalities for UN activities in support of South-South cooperation can be negotiated and agreed upon by both North and South.

## ***B. United Nations System Conceptualization of South-South Cooperation***

The 1978 UN Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promotion and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA)<sup>39</sup> has served as the long-standing framework under which the UN system provides support to developing countries in pursuing South-South cooperation. The BAPA has been supplemented by other UN policy documents and guidance that have further shaped UN activities in South-South cooperation.<sup>40</sup> The UN is now in the middle of preparations for the Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation that will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in March 2019.<sup>41</sup>

This endeavour of the South with respect to clarifying what South-South cooperation is, however, should be distinguished from what is done, for example, within the United Nations system with respect to South-South cooperation – i.e. the 1978 BAPA, the work of the UN High-Level Committee on South-South cooperation, the work of various UN agencies with respect to South-South cooperation, the 2009 Nairobi Conference on South-South Cooperation, the upcoming 2019 BAPA+40 Conference, and the work of the Development Cooperation Forum under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). These UN activities relating to South-South cooperation complement developing countries' direct South-

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<sup>39</sup> See UN, 1978 UN Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promotion and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpSMm1OVEZYU2hNTWc/view>.

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. UN, Outcome document of the High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, UN Doc. No. A/RES/64/222, 23 February 2010, at [http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673728/files/A\\_RES\\_64\\_222-EN.pdf](http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673728/files/A_RES_64_222-EN.pdf); UN Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation, UN Doc. No. SSC/19/3, 14 March 2016, at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpSUC1PZ25xekFQaVk/view>. For a good compilation of UN policy documents relating to South-South cooperation, please see UN Office for South-South Cooperation, at <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/library/policy-documents/>.

<sup>41</sup> See UN General Assembly, South-South cooperation, Resolution 71/244 (21 December 2016), UN Doc. No. A/RES/71/244, 2 February 2017, at <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/244>; Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, Resolution 71/318 (28 August 2017), UN Doc. No. A/RES/71/318, 30 August 2017, at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/318](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/318); South-South cooperation, resolution 72/237 (20 December 2017), UN Doc. No. A/RES/72/237, 23 January 2018, at [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/237](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/237); UN Secretary-General Note on the Preparatory process of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, UN Doc. No. A/72/711, 29 January 2018, at [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1467295/files/A\\_72\\_711-EN.pdf](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1467295/files/A_72_711-EN.pdf).



South cooperation activities among themselves and through their Southern multilateral and regional institutions.

UN system efforts in relation to South-South cooperation should focus on supporting the development by the South for the South of their own approaches and modalities and concepts for South-South cooperation. Doing otherwise would “multilateralize” the framing, conceptualization, definition, scope, and implementation of South-South cooperation, resulting in the involvement of the developed countries in such work and giving them a voice in terms of shaping South-South cooperation; a situation that does not apply when it comes to North-South ODA cooperation given that such North-South ODA is governed by a primarily North-owned or -managed framework (e.g. the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action, the Busan Partnership for Aid Effectiveness, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation) under the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)’s Development Assistance Committee with minimal or no North-South multilateral accountability or oversight.

Neither should South-South cooperation be seen from the perspective of how it compares to North-South ODA cooperation in terms of scope, definition, methodologies, and modalities. To begin with, transposing North-South ODA-oriented paradigms or frameworks onto South-South cooperation would not necessarily be appropriate, as North-South ODA evolved under circumstances different from those applicable to South-South cooperation, thereby resulting in different approaches and concepts. In order to be able to effectively and appropriately compare South-South cooperation with North-South cooperation, new concepts and analytical tools and methodologies would first have to be developed.

There have been initiatives in the United Nations system in support of the strengthening of South-South cooperation, leading to operational definitions about South-South cooperation that are used within the UN system. UN agencies have been taking a series of measures “to further mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into their policy frameworks and corporate strategies towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. South-South cooperation now frequently appears in United Nations repositories of good practices and lessons learned and policy and programmatic instruments. Some agencies have also allocated dedicated funds and/or recruited specialists to boost their South-South cooperation initiatives not only at headquarters but, increasingly, at the country and regional levels.”<sup>42</sup>

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) has described South-South cooperation as a “broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, sub-regional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. Recent developments in South-South cooperation have taken the form of increased volume of South-South trade,

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<sup>42</sup> United Nations, State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), para. 12. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>; see also the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)’s 2018 progress report in relation to its 2011 review of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the UN system, in which the JIU stated its finding that “the majority of United Nations entities covered by this review have established dedicated and identifiable South-South and triangular cooperation units or focal points at their headquarters”, at JIU, Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3) (Geneva, 2018), at [https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\\_rep\\_2018\\_2\\_english\\_0.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_2_english_0.pdf).

South-South flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.”<sup>43</sup>

Other UN agencies describe South-South cooperation broadly as the exchange of knowledge, best practices, technical support, human resources, trade and policy advice among developing countries. For the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), for example, it is: “a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual or collective development through cooperative exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how. ... initiated, organized and managed by developing countries themselves with governments playing a lead role while involving public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals” and is “multidimensional in scope and can therefore include all sectors and all kinds of technical cooperation activities among developing countries, whether bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional, regional or interregional in character.”<sup>44</sup>

The 2012 “Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation” defines South-South cooperation as “a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South, born out of shared experiences and sympathies, based on their common objectives and solidarity, and guided by, inter alia, the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free from any conditionalities. South-South cooperation should not be seen as official development assistance. It is a partnership among equals based on solidarity.... South-South cooperation embraces a multi-stakeholder approach, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and other actors that contribute to meeting development challenges and objectives in line with national development strategies and plans.”<sup>45</sup> It also identified the following policy and operational principles of South-South and triangular cooperation:

(a) *Normative principles*

- Respect for national sovereignty and ownership
- Partnership among equals
- Non-conditionality
- Non-interference in domestic affairs
- Mutual benefit

(b) *Operational principles*

- Mutual accountability and transparency
- Development effectiveness
- Coordination of evidence and results based initiatives

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<sup>43</sup> UNOSSC, “What is South-South Cooperation?” Available from [http://unosscl.undp.org/sscexpo/content/ssc/about/what\\_is\\_ssc.htm](http://unosscl.undp.org/sscexpo/content/ssc/about/what_is_ssc.htm).

<sup>44</sup> United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Integrating South-South Cooperation in the UNEP Programmes of Work Policy Guidance (12 February 2011), p.7. Available from <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26642/Annex%20to%20the%20briefing%20on%20South-South%20Cooperation.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=1>.

<sup>45</sup> UN, Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation (UN Doc. No. SSC/19/3, 14 March 2016). Available from <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpSUC1PZ25xekFQaVk/view>.

- Multi-stakeholder approach<sup>46</sup>

While South-South cooperation is the focus at BAPA+40 in March 2019, it should not result in a multilateral framework that could constrain its further evolution and development of South-South cooperation by the South for the South. Rather, the BAPA+40 outcome should focus on strengthening the role of the UN system, further institutionalizing it, as a supportive and facilitative mechanism for South-South cooperation under which the UN system would encourage and facilitate the ability of developing countries to work with each other directly.

Additionally, in relation to the BAPA+40 outcome document, it is important for developing countries to also be able to respond clearly to the various subthemes that have been adopted by the UN General Assembly as the focal topics for the Conference. The following sections of this paper – Sections III, IV, and V – will look at Subthemes (i), (ii), and (iv), respectively, in this regard.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

### **III. RESPONDING TO BAPA+40 CONFERENCE SUBTHEME (I) ON “COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION”**

South-South cooperation will likely increasingly become an important element of how developing countries cooperate to support each other's development.<sup>47</sup> Its principles and concepts serve as important benchmarks for shaping South-South cooperation at the global, regional, and national levels. These will also shape the ways in which the countries of the South achieve their respective development goals and objectives.

Using and reflecting the South-South cooperation principles as articulated by the South (such as those contained in the 2008 Yamoussoukro Consensus<sup>48</sup>) are particularly important in view of the increasing importance of developing countries that are not part of the OECD-DAC framework as providers of cooperation financing for other developing countries.

#### ***A. Identifying Comparative Advantages of South-South Cooperation***

South-South cooperation has comparative advantages that should be maximized as part of the BAPA+40 outcome. These include the following:

- Greater choice - The entry of developing countries as development partners for other developing countries represents a greater choice in terms of possible development partners under conditions that may be both more appropriate and favourable for the partners as compared to traditional North-South cooperation.
- Appropriateness - The financing, technologies and skills that may be developed and shared through South-South cooperation activities may be more appropriate in light of the development contexts and circumstances of the partners. This is particularly important given that in terms of activities, South-South cooperation tends to be focused on capacity building, provision of financial assistance, technology exchange, infrastructure development, and support to institution building.
- Evolutionary - South-South cooperation in the overall context of multilateralism is a continuing process that helps developing countries meet their respective development challenges. As such, its evolutionary nature means that it can be

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<sup>47</sup> For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) pointed out that the regional economic communities of the South “have become a conduit for South-South cooperation in science, technology and innovation.” See UNESCO, Regional economic communities a conduit for South-South cooperation in science (2017), at [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/regional\\_economic\\_communities\\_a\\_conduit\\_for\\_southsouth\\_co/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/regional_economic_communities_a_conduit_for_southsouth_co/). See also UNESCO, Science Report: Towards 2030 (2015), at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002354/235406e.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> See the Ministerial Declaration of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the G77, 25 September 2009 (see <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm>, para. 70), reaffirming the adoption at its 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting (26 September 2008) of the South-South cooperation principles recommended by the Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-XII), 10-13 June 2008. These South-South cooperation principles were supported by the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at its XVth Summit in Egypt in July 2009 (NAM Doc. No. NAM/2009/FD/Doc.1, para. 358).

more flexible and can be made more appropriate, useful and effective for the partners. It is a valuable contribution to development, and as such needs to be strengthened. It is essential as a strategy to sustain the development efforts of developing countries, particularly in the context of the development challenges that they face due to climate change and the current global economic uncertainties and fragility.

- Strategic leverage for development - The development progress that many developing countries experienced in the past two decades, and the lessons that can be learned therefrom, can be leveraged to make South-South cooperation more substantial in terms of directly supporting, e.g. the industrial policies and other development efforts of the partners. Many of them have greatly diversified their economies, and increasing levels of industrialization have been achieved among a growing number of developing countries, giving rise to new complementarities among developing countries, both within regions and inter-regionally. At the same time, it is also clear that global economic uncertainties and climate change, among other things, also pose significant threats and barriers to increased capacities for South-South cooperation. A strategic South-South cooperation approach towards these challenges, threats, and barriers to development in the South could be developed, taking into account lessons learned from the recent development history of various developing countries. This strategic approach could entail broadening the potential scope for more developing countries to undertake more forms of South-South cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, infrastructure development, environmentally-sound science and technology sharing and development, human and institutional capacity building, sustainable agriculture, health, and other development-related fields.

These comparative advantages can be recognized in the new initiatives that a number of developing countries have launched in recent years, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative and the establishment of new South-South funding institutions at the national and multilateral levels (such as China's and India's respective South-South cooperation funds, the establishment of the BRICS' New Development Bank and of the South Bank).

As the UN Secretary-General pointed out in his latest report on South-South cooperation, "new South-South cooperation initiatives in infrastructure are increasingly facilitating regional, subregional and interregional integration, providing innovative approaches for collective actions. In parts of Africa, including West and sub-Saharan Africa, infrastructure projects involving groups of States are being implemented. India has substantially increased its support to capacity development in Africa; new initiatives, such as Made in India, Digital India and smart cities, offer opportunities to broaden its cooperation with partner countries. India has also announced a \$10 billion concessional line of credit to Africa over the next five years, as well as grant assistance of \$600 million that would include an India-Africa Development Fund of \$100 million, an India-Africa Health Fund of \$10 million, and 50,000 scholarships for African students over the same period. The Belt and Road Initiative championed by China, with over 100 countries expressing interest in partnership, will provide new opportunities and impetus for international collaboration, including South-South cooperation. The initiative focuses on promoting policy coordination,

connectivity of infrastructure and facilities, unimpeded trade, financial integration and closer people-to-people ties.”<sup>49</sup>

***B. Seizing Opportunities to Enhance South-South Cooperation in Multilateral Policy Development and Norm-making***

However, South-South cooperation should not simply be about working together in terms of development projects to be implemented on the ground. South-South cooperation should also be a political cooperation project among the Global South, in order to promote the Global South’s collective interests and defend its collective right to development. This will require the Global South, through South-South cooperation, to seize any opportunities that may exist in order to enhance South-South cooperation in multilateral policy development and norm-making.

Common South-South approaches and positions that are premised on common development-oriented perspectives and concerns, while at the same time respecting the varied and heterogeneous development experiences of developing countries, are essential in shaping the conditions under which development support from developed countries and international agencies can become more effective.

A key element of South-South cooperation at the multilateral level is that of South-South policy coordination in the context of multilateral policy discussions and negotiations. Such South-South multilateral policy coordination is needed in ensuring that global economic and political relations are based on a relationship of equality and cooperation among the countries of the South and of the North. As a South Centre research paper has pointed out in relation to the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations:

The only effective means of countering the negotiating strength of the developed countries in the WTO is through the elaboration and articulation of common positions by the countries of the South. This can be done in several ways. At the minimum, there should be much more exchange of information and appreciation of each other’s positions among as many countries of the South as possible. Simultaneously, the existing regional and other sub-groupings of developing countries should develop mechanisms for negotiating with a single voice in the WTO. Finally procedures and processes should be envisaged for collaboration among various sub-groupings of the South on issues of common interest in the WTO.<sup>50</sup>

This same logic in relation to coordinated collective South-South action in the WTO would apply across the board into other multilateral policy forums, such as on climate finance, finance, investment, tax cooperation, health, labor, migration, environment, and other areas. However, it should also be recognized that the very diversity of the South when it comes to development conditions and challenges, and hence the corresponding development priorities that each country might have, also pose both a challenge and an opportunity for

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<sup>49</sup> United Nations, State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), paras. 3-5. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>.

<sup>50</sup> Luisa E. Bernal, Rashid S. Kaukab, Sisule F. Musungu, and Vicente Paolo B. Yu III, “South-South Cooperation in the Multilateral Trading System: Cancun and Beyond,” South Centre TRADE Working Paper No. 21 (May 2004), pp. 28-29.

South-South cooperation in the multilateral arena. It is a challenge when such diversity of priorities and hence of perspectives create obstacles to the establishment of united positions, but an opportunity when such diversity results in creativity in the South in defining possible diverse development solutions that can be achieved only through a united Southern approach to obtaining and promoting greater policy space for the South.

When effective South-South cooperation and coordination is employed in the context of multilateral North-South engagement, the outcome of such engagement could then lead to stronger and more effective multilateral cooperation.<sup>51</sup> This could then allow the global community to be able to effectively address the multiple challenges and crises that define our times, such as the systemic flaws in the global governance structure, climate change, the global financial crisis, trade relations, and the growing development gap, among other things, in ways that will be economically, politically, socially and ecologically equitable, fair, and sustainable.

### ***C. Seizing Opportunities for South-South Institution Building***

However, in order for South-South cooperation to be made effective at the national, regional, and multilateral levels in terms of development projects, policy coordination, and collective action, it needs to be strengthened and supported through a strengthening of the South's own cooperation institutions, including the G77, the NAM, the South Centre, and the various regional and inter-regional institutions. Within the United Nations, various UN agencies and units play important roles in supporting South-South cooperation and making it effective on the basis of the principles of South-South cooperation and hence should also be supported and strengthened.

While at least since the 1970s with the Buenos Aires Plan of Action on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries there has been long-standing multilateral

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<sup>51</sup> Recent examples witnessed by the South Centre of the successes of developing countries in working together politically to coordinate positions and ensure the reflection of their perspectives in multilateral policy outcomes include the negotiation of the Sustainable Development Goals under the UN General Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group on the SDGs from 2013-2015 that ensured that the SDGs would cover not only the economic, social, and environmental pillars of sustainable development but also include the means of implementation through a global partnership (SDG17), the negotiation of the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement from 2012-2015 under the UNFCCC's Ad-Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform that resulted in a continued reflection of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, the negotiation of the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) in 2009 that saw the inclusion of the provision of the means of implementation for developing countries, the negotiation of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Action Plan on Anti-Microbial Resistance from 2013-2015 that highlighted the need for developing countries to be assisted in the implementation of the global action plan, and the negotiation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) XI Sao Paulo Consensus in 2004 that recognized for the first time in a multilateral document the concept of policy space for developing countries. Historically, the adoption of the 1974 UN Declaration on the New International Economic Order (NIEO, UN Doc. No. A/RES/S-6/3201, 1 May 1974) and the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (UN Doc. No. A/RES/29/3281, 12 December 1974) could be traced to the collective push from the Non-Aligned Movement (with respect to the NIEO) and the G77 (with respect to the Charter negotiated through UNCTAD), although subsequently, the NIEO and the Charter were not implemented as developed countries pushed for the strengthening of the Bretton Woods system and the eventual creation of the World Trade Organization. See e.g. United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, Procedural History of the Declaration on the New International Economic Order, at [http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga\\_3201/ga\\_3201.html](http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/ga_3201/ga_3201.html); and United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, Procedural History of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, at <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cerds/cerds.html>.

recognition of the importance of South-South cooperation for development and the role it could play in supporting developing countries in their development efforts, the development and strengthening of Southern and multilateral institutions that could foster and enhance South-South cooperation in various areas should continue to be a major policy goal for the South. Indeed, there has been a growing reassertion of interest in and support for interregional, regional, and sub-regional economic and political cooperation among developing countries, as can be seen in greater levels of activity within developing country regions and continuing institutionalization of South-South cooperation through the creation or strengthening of national, regional and multilateral South-South cooperation organizations and finance institutions over the past decade.<sup>52</sup>

The modalities and institutions for South-South cooperation at all levels, including the South's various regional institutions and the South's own multilateral institutions, such as the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement and the South Centre, should be strengthened by the South and extended appropriate support by the North and multilateral institutions.

The countries of the South need to talk to each other and actively explore and develop operational and effective ways of cooperating with each other in promoting their common and collective interests as developing countries together. In this context, Southern institutions such as the G77, the South Centre, the Commission for Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), and the South's various regional institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the African Union, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), and others, all play important roles in contributing to positive changes in multilateral policies and in the institutions that define these policies. To this end, such Southern institutions need to be invested in and further strengthened by the South so as to improve the South's ability to work together, cooperate, and engage in collective policy coordination in relation to global issues.

In this context, under Subtheme (i) for BAPA+40, it would be important for the G77 to stress that the BAPA+40 should help strengthen the ability of developing countries to work together to address the global issues that pose challenges to their development prospects. The BAPA+40 outcome could, for example:

- Call on UN agencies to strengthen their work and activities on multilateral economic policy issues, including on international trade and finance, through more research, financing, technical assistance, and capacity building to be provided to developing countries and their South-South cooperation institutions to facilitate their coordination and collective engagement in multilateral policy discussions and negotiations;
- Request UN agencies to scale up their work in supporting (through technical assistance, capacity building, financing, technology sharing and transfer) developing countries and their South-South cooperation institutions to work with each other on various SDG-related activities;

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<sup>52</sup> See e.g. United Nations, State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), paras. 2-11. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>.



- Encourage the expansion of South-South trade, investment, financing, and technology transfer, including the provision by UN agencies of appropriate mechanisms or avenues to facilitate such activities and provide matching services<sup>53</sup> for South-South cooperation partners with each other.

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<sup>53</sup> This was first tried by the now-defunct South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange (SS-GATE) ran by the UNOSSC. See UNOSSC, at <http://unosscl.undp.org/sscexpo/content/ssc/services.htm>.

#### **IV. RESPONDING TO BAPA+40 CONFERENCE SUBTHEME (II) ON “CHALLENGES AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION”**

The lack of adequate implementation, systematic follow-up and institutional support has been one of the characteristic traits of South-South cooperation which made many ambitious plans of action and valuable and promising schemes and ideas remain largely on paper. One of the principal and continuing challenges for the developing countries remains how to make such implementation effective.<sup>54</sup>

##### **A. *Institutional Considerations to Strengthen South-South Cooperation***

South-South cooperation can take many forms.<sup>55</sup> This is reflective of the diversity of the national development circumstances under which South-South cooperation takes place, and the diversity and wide range of actors from developing countries that participate in South-South cooperation activities.

In this regard, many institutions have been set up to promote South-South cooperation at various levels, both within multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and by developing countries themselves through their regional organizations and their multilateral institutions such as the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement, the South Centre, and COMSATS.

The G77 is clear about viewing the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the United Nations as the “central multilateral policymaking body in the United Nations system to review and assess global and system-wide progress on and support for South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, and to assist in providing future guidance and direction on these issues for the benefit of developing countries.”<sup>56</sup>

Within the UN system, the G77 has stressed that the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) “is the articulator of South-South cooperation in the United Nations system and that the United Nations Development Programme as well as entities of the United Nations development system should not duplicate, overlap with or undertake the system-wide functions and responsibilities of the Office. They [the G77] reaffirmed the importance of further enhancing the role and impact of the Office and up-scaling it in terms of financial,

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<sup>54</sup> South Centre, “South-South Cooperation: The Challenge of Implementation” (South Centre Background policy paper for the XIth Meeting of the G77 Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (Havana, March 2005)), p. 1. Available from <http://www.G77.org/ifcc11/docs/doc-03-ifcc11.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> The UN Secretary-General’s 2009 report on South-South cooperation provides an excellent overview of the range and breadth of South-South cooperation activities. See UN, Promotion of South-South cooperation for development: a thirty-year perspective – Report of the Secretary-General, UN Doc. No. A/64/504, 27 October 2009.

<sup>56</sup> G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 25. Available from <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>. See also, G77, 34<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2010), para. 78, at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2010.htm>, stressing “that the General Assembly High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation is the central multilateral policy-making body in the UN system to review and assess global and system-wide progress on and support for South-South development cooperation, including triangular cooperation, and to provide overall guidance on future directions.”

human and budgetary resources in order to galvanise more coherent and coordinated United Nations system support to South-South and Triangular Cooperation towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”<sup>57</sup> The G77 has recently noted that the UNOSSC “should maintain its focus on developmental issues”; that “the particular interest of the developing countries is gaining the support to enable them to gain more access and knowledge of other countries of the South and identify potential Southern Partners, in areas such as industry, trade and investment, knowledge and technology transfer, economic growth and employment, environment and natural resources management”; and that “eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions should be the overarching goal of the UNOSSC strategic framework, as it is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.”<sup>58</sup>

The G77’s position is that “all partners interested in supporting South-South cooperation [are] to be guided by the principles and objectives of such cooperation established in such internationally agreed documents as the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/134 of 19 December 1978, and the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/222 of 21 December 2009, as well as other relevant General Assembly resolutions” and “reiterated the Group’s position that any policy debate outside the United Nations system should be guided by the agreed frameworks above and the Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation.”<sup>59</sup>

However, among the chief shortcomings of South-South cooperation have been weak organization and lack of institutionalized technical support, both at the international level and

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<sup>57</sup> G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 26. Available from <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>. The G77 also stated that “the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation be enabled to participate in the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in keeping with its status as a separate entity within the United Nations for the global coordination and promotion of South-South cooperation for development on a United Nations system-wide basis, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions. They reaffirmed the importance of strengthening the Office with human and financial capacity and recognized the need to mobilize adequate resources for enhancing South-South cooperation and, in this context, invited Member States to make generous contributions in support of such cooperation through, inter alia, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation” (G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement, para. 27). For more on the performance of the UNOSSC in the UN system’s South-South cooperation activities, see JIU, Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3) (Geneva, 2018), at [https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\\_rep\\_2018\\_2\\_english\\_0.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_2_english_0.pdf). Beginning in 2015 to as recently as 2017, the G77 in its annual ministerial declaration “strongly recommended the consolidation of existing mechanisms of South-South cooperation and reiterated their call for the establishment of a United Nations specialized agency for South-South cooperation to be located in a developing country”, although this was not repeated in the 2018 G77 ministerial declaration. See e.g. G77, 39<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2015), para. 72, at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2015.htm>; G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 22, at <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>; G77, 41<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Statement (2017), para. 70, at <http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2017.htm>.

<sup>58</sup> G77, Statement at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Executive Board Briefing on the UN Office for South-South Cooperation Strategic Framework 2018-2021. Available from <http://www.G77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=180322>.

<sup>59</sup> G77, 40<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Statement (2016), para. 25. Available from <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2016.htm>. For the latest UN report on the state of South-South cooperation, see UN, State of South-South cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. Ref. No. A/73/321, 13 August 2018), at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E).

within most countries. The intergovernmental institutions set up by the South (such as the G77, the South Centre, the Non-Aligned Movement) to advance cooperation have, in many cases, lacked adequate financial and institutional resources sufficient to generate long-term institutionalized cooperation and coordination arrangements or mechanisms that are capable of providing continuing technical and intellectual support – such as what the secretariat of the OECD has provided for developed countries – or even mechanisms for regular consultation, coordination of action, and settlement of differences. This has hampered the South's collective action and ability to negotiate in a coordinated manner at the global level. Equally disadvantageous has been the South's inability to ensure that the objectives of South-South cooperation are reflected in national plans and policies and that South-South cooperation mandates are incorporated in the work of their public agencies and institutions. These shortcomings can be traced, in many cases, to inadequate and ineffective institutions; lack of resources; and insufficient political commitment on the part of governments who were occupied with other developmental matters. The impact of these factors became exacerbated when economic crises hit developing countries, forcing these countries to focus on domestic economic management, short-term crisis response policymaking, and maintaining relations with developed countries.

Additionally, South-South cooperation initiatives also have to contend with the habit in many developing country governments and developing country political and economic elites of looking towards the North (especially those developed countries with whom they had historical colonial relationships) economically, politically, and culturally, for development assistance, cooperation, and inspiration.

Hence, the political factor in terms of promoting South-South cooperation, while not sufficient by itself, is critical to ensuring that South-South cooperation becomes well-established as part of the policy priorities of developing countries. The South Commission's conclusion made in its 1990 Report that "it is the vision, will, and commitment of those directly involved, and especially of the top political leaders of the South, that have proved to be crucial factors in the success or failure of initiatives in [South-South] co-operation" continues to be as valid now as it was almost thirty years ago.<sup>60</sup>

The crucial challenge that developing countries continue to face collectively is how to strengthen and diversify South-South cooperation. This has been a goal of developing countries' foreign policy for many decades, and has evolved in response to changes within the South as well as in the global economy and with the South's relations with the North. A great deal of intellectual, political, and organizational energy has been invested in South-South cooperation over the past six decades. The increasing momentum of South-South cooperation<sup>61</sup> therefore needs to be supported by strengthened institutionalization of coordination and collaboration among the countries of the South.

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<sup>60</sup> South Commission, *The Challenge to the South* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 150. Available from [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Challenge-to-the-South\\_HRes\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/The-Challenge-to-the-South_HRes_EN.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> The increasing momentum of South-South cooperation has been remarked on by many observers. See e.g. Grace Wang (UNDP Lead Adviser on South-South and Triangular Cooperation), UNDP Our Perspectives Blog (11 June 2015), at <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2015/6/11/South-South-cooperation-how-can-we-maximize-its-impact-on-sustainable-development-.html>; Kevin Gray and Barry K. Gills, South-South cooperation and the rise of the Global South, *Third World Quarterly* (Vol. 37, No. 4, 2016), pp. 557-574, at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01436597.2015.1128817?needAccess=true>; Amina Mohammed (UN Deputy Secretary-General), South-South Cooperation Offers Path to Balancing Growth, Deputy Secretary-General Says on United Nations Days, Urging Greater Partnership in Tackling Inequity (UN Doc. Ref. No. DSG/SM/1083-DEV/3280, 12 September 2017), at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/dsgsm1083.doc.htm>;

More pragmatic approaches are now being followed to overcome difficulties in strengthening South-South cooperation. The emergence of important South-South cooperation initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the establishment of new multilateral South-South development cooperation institutions such as the New Development Bank, a renewed and increased interest in the strengthening of regional South-South cooperation and integration mechanisms (such as in the African Union, ASEAN, etc.), are now providing developing countries with a wider range of options in terms of possible development partners and cooperation arrangements. The success of such initiatives, however, depends in many cases on the political will of the developing countries involved to effectively pursue such initiatives.

As the UN has observed in 2017, “three aspects of the institutionalization of South-South cooperation are particularly salient.”<sup>62</sup> These aspects include “the development of formal rules, informal norms and dedicated organizations [that] have moved South-South cooperation increasingly into the mainstream of policymaking at the national level”; “there is an ongoing expansion of the number of actors, including subnational entities such as municipal and provincial governments and non-State actors such as civil society, private sector firms, volunteer groups, and academic and research institutions, engaging in South-South cooperation as part of their core activities. Decentralized South-South cooperation has become more formalized”<sup>63</sup>; and “there is a new wave of multilateral institutions devoted to South-South cooperation, especially the financing of these activities” such as “the establishment of new multilateral financial institutions” like the New Development Bank.<sup>64</sup> This increasing institutionalization of South-South cooperation is driven, according to the UN, by increased and deepened “organizational learning by existing South-South cooperation institutions”, increased definition and specialization in various aspects of South-South cooperation by various countries, and the development of “a growing global community of specialized development professionals working on South-South cooperation, especially from the global South.”<sup>65</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that the great priority in order to strengthen and institutionalize South-South cooperation is the building of the following capacities through the provision of financing, technology, infrastructure and institution-building support, and human resource capacity building:

- Institutional capacity for the delivery and absorption of South-South cooperation-sourced finance, technology and expertise, and to support collective collaboration, coordination, and action at the national, regional, and multilateral level by developing countries,
- Policy integration capacity to enable developing countries to appropriately integrate South-South cooperation support into long-term foreign policies and development planning and implementation,

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Baher Kamal, *South-South Cooperation Key to a New Multilateralism* (IPS, 4 December 2017), at <http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/12/south-south-cooperation-key-new-multilateralism/>.

<sup>62</sup> United Nations, *State of South-South Cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General* (UN Doc. No. A/72/297, 7 August 2017), para. 6. Available from <https://undocs.org/A/72/297>.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 7.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 8.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 9-11.

- Resource capacity needs to be generated, both internally within developing countries and externally to enable greater levels of South-South cooperation support to take place among developing countries.

### ***B. External Factors that Impact on South-South Cooperation***

Uncertain global, regional, and domestic economic conditions, combined with the adverse effects of climate change and global environmental degradation, present significant risks and opportunities to enhanced South-South cooperation.

There are global developments that point to the need for more vigorous cooperation within the South, including global economic uncertainty, climate change, natural disasters, migration, technological development, financial flows, and other issues. The South must close ranks in order to meet the challenges posed by continued attempts by the North to maintain economic dominance or their influence in the South. To be able to play an influential role and to negotiate from a position of strength in global affairs and the shaping of global norms, policies, and institutional arrangements, developing countries must cooperate and act together.

The risks are that given weaker sustained economic growth, a net outflow of financial resources, a greater level of global income inequality, and greater development challenges arising from the adverse effects of climate change, developing countries could limit or reduce the governmental budgetary resources that may be made available for South-South cooperation generally. Such risk, in particular, may be greater in cases where South-South cooperation activities are undertaken as part of a country's foreign or economic diplomacy activities.

On the other hand, opportunities for enhanced South-South cooperation may arise in the event that developing countries, in the face of weakening levels of multilateral cooperation, shift the focus of their international cooperation efforts from a North-South orientation to a South-South one.

The economic crisis of the 1980s, the late 1990s, and the late 2000s highlight the need for developing countries to seek to be less dependent economically on the North and, therefore, the importance of South-South cooperation for development and the role that it could play in supporting developing countries. It is clear that had South-South cooperation links among developing countries in the political, economic, and other areas been well-established and diversified, such links could have eased or even helped avoid the difficulties that developing countries face when hit by externally-driven economic crisis arising from global economic imbalances that favour the North by decreasing their economic exposure or vulnerability to the North's economies and providing developing countries with viable alternatives for their exports and development financing needs.

Changes in the South, in the North, and globally are increasing the need and enlarging the opportunities for South-South cooperation. Many countries of the South have diversified their economies, with a number industrializing rapidly and giving rise to new complementarities among developing countries, both within regions and inter-regionally. These broaden the potential scope for trade, technology, and capital flows among developing countries. The South today is better equipped than before to advance effective South-South

cooperation; at the same time, it is also in greater need of using South-South cooperation in many areas.

Furthermore, the rationale for South-South cooperation is reinforced by changes taking place in the global North and by trends in the global economy and global trade. Economic growth in the North, while still playing an important role in shaping the development prospects of many developing countries, no longer is a reliable nor sufficient foundation for sustained development in the South. The uncertainty and precariousness of global trade flows, particularly in a period when unilateral trade protectionism especially against the South is being practiced, could also make global trade an uncertain engine for economic growth in the South; while in the area of finance, while efforts should be promoted to drive capital flows from developed to developing countries, the volume is neither predictable nor sufficient to the financing needs of developing countries.<sup>66</sup>

Rapid advances in science and technology that lead to changes in the modes of industrial production and the provision of services in developed countries can also provide developed countries with new productive capacities that can make their production costs more competitive vis-à-vis developing countries (eroding the latter's previous advantage in having cheap labour costs) while at the same time decrease developed countries' dependency on raw materials from the South. The words of the South Commission almost thirty years ago still hold true today – “neither can the South rely on the North to provide it with technology on terms and conditions that suit the South or to help it generate its own technology.”<sup>67</sup>

These changes and trends in developed countries' economic fortunes, which in turn affect the South, make it essential for the South to look to its own collective resources.<sup>68</sup> The developing countries will have to increasingly make themselves, to the greatest extent possible, be each other's markets, sources of development financing, and sources of science and technology. South-South cooperation will have to increasingly be an additional engine for powering the South's sustained and sustainable development and growth and their achievement of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, the South needs to continue to stress that multilateral cooperation and engagement with the North to keep the global economy stable (with respect to trade, finance, investment, debt) and to address global political, sustainable development, and environmental problems (such as climate change) must remain at the forefront, and should be undertaken through multilateral fora such as the United Nations.

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<sup>66</sup> See e.g. UNCTAD, Trade and Development Report 2018: Power, Platforms and the Free Trade Delusion (Geneva, 2018), at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2018\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2018_en.pdf).

<sup>67</sup> South Commission, op. cit., p. 153.

<sup>68</sup> For recent literature on the changing economic environment in the North which affect the South, see e.g. UNCTAD, Trade and Development Report 2016: Structural Transformation for Inclusive and Sustained Growth (Geneva, 2016), at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2016\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2016_en.pdf); UNCTAD, Trade and Development Report 2017: Beyond Austerity: Towards a Global New Deal (Geneva, 2017), at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2017\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2017_en.pdf); UNCTAD, Trade and Development Report 2018: Power, Platforms and the Free Trade Delusion (Geneva, 2018), at [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2018\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/tdr2018_en.pdf).

### ***C. Monitoring, Measurement, Quantification, and Evaluation of South-South Cooperation***

The diversity and multiplicity of ways in which South-South cooperation is undertaken pose significant challenges to obtaining clear and comparable information about the scope, extent, and level of implementation of South-South cooperation initiatives. While the entry of developing countries as prominent development partners may provide additional sources of development financing for other developing countries<sup>69</sup>, South-South cooperation partners generally do not think that their South-South cooperation activities should be required to be subjected to monitoring, reporting, or evaluation modalities that are applicable to North-South ODA. Some South-South cooperation partners may decide, however, to voluntarily use such modalities or methodologies.

In 2008, the G77's Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC), in its Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation, invited the G77 Chair to "establish a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of South-South cooperation projects presented in Annex I of the Doha Plan of Action as well as other projects and initiatives on South-South cooperation undertaken by Member States, including the creation of a database system."<sup>70</sup> However, to date, neither a monitoring mechanism nor a database system for South-South cooperation has been set up by the G77, largely because there continues to be a diversity of views within the G77 with respect to the scope, objectives, institutional arrangements, governance mechanism, and outputs of such monitoring mechanism or database system.

Within the UN system, as reported by the UN Secretary-General in his 2018 report on the state of South-South cooperation, "many United Nations entities encounter difficulties in monitoring and evaluation their support for South-South initiatives, but some have designed methodologies to assess performance and measure the impact of their various interventions."<sup>71</sup> The UN Secretary-General pointed to several initiatives that have been undertaken by various UN entities to elaborate and define indicators and monitoring, evaluation, and reporting tools and mechanisms that can be used in relation to these UN entities and UN member States' South-South cooperation-related endeavours.<sup>72</sup>

The issue of the monitoring, measurement, quantification, and evaluation of South-South cooperation might become an important issue at BAPA+40. However, what is important to highlight is that because South-South cooperation belongs to the South, it is the South and its institutions that should determine and implement the ways and means by which

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<sup>69</sup> See e.g. Maya Schmaljohann and Annalisa Prizzon, *Age of choice: How developing countries are managing the new aid landscape – a summary* (Overseas Development Institute (ODI) Report, February 2015), at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9522.pdf>; OECD, *The New Development Finance Landscape: Developing Countries' Perspective* (Working Draft presented at the OECD workshop on development finance on 25 June 2014), at [https://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/The%20New%20Development%20Finance%20Landscape\\_19%20June%202014.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dac/aid-architecture/The%20New%20Development%20Finance%20Landscape_19%20June%202014.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> See G77, *Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation* (XIIth Session of the IFCC-ECDC), para. 4, at [http://www.G77.org/ifcc12/Yamoussoukro\\_Consensus.pdf](http://www.G77.org/ifcc12/Yamoussoukro_Consensus.pdf). The Yamoussoukro Consensus was subsequently endorsed by the G77's ministerial conference in 2009. See G77, *Ministerial Declaration* (2009), para. 70, at <http://www.G77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm>. The Doha Plan of Action referred to by the Yamoussoukro Consensus is the Doha Plan of Action adopted by the Second South Summit in 2005. See *Second South Summit*, at [http://www.G77.org/southsummit2/doc/Doha%20Plan%20of%20Action%20\(English\).pdf](http://www.G77.org/southsummit2/doc/Doha%20Plan%20of%20Action%20(English).pdf).

<sup>71</sup> UN, *State of South-South cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General* (UN Doc. Ref. No. A/73/321, 13 August 2018), para. 61. Available from [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E).

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 61-64.



South-South cooperation should be monitored, measured, and evaluated, using methodologies and criteria that should be determined by the South (preferably through the G77 as a political exercise in the first place) and which should reflect the key principles and characteristics of South-South cooperation (including the multiplicity and diversity of the ways in which South-South cooperation is undertaken).

What should also be noted is that the issue of monitoring, measuring, quantifying and evaluating South-South cooperation is not a purely technical discussion about how to generate statistical data to represent South-South cooperation in its full breadth and scope. Because many of the modalities by which South-South cooperation take place are not financial or monetary in nature<sup>73</sup>, it is difficult to quantify South-South cooperation fully in monetary terms. As one South-South cooperation practitioner has pointed out, “current initiatives aimed at establishing the monetization of all development cooperation modalities pose a challenge to South-South cooperation practitioners, as such a hypothetical global standard would not give full account of the innovative processes taking place through South-South cooperation. If measured only in monetary terms, most of South-South cooperation would become statistically irrelevant, with negative implications to the foreign policy of developing countries.”<sup>74</sup>

Any mechanism that may be eventually set up by the South to monitor, measure, quantify, and evaluate South-South cooperation will necessarily have to cover both financial and non-financial data, given that South-South cooperation includes modalities and activities that may have financial and non-financial/in-kind (i.e. cannot be quantified in monetary terms) aspects, in order to be able to properly and appropriately evaluate the developmental impact of South-South cooperation on the partners.<sup>75</sup>

There are, however, many challenges that need to be addressed in this regard, as some researchers have pointed out. These include significant capacity disparities among developing countries with respect to formulating methodologies for quantification, there is no consensus yet among major South-South cooperation actors to move in the direction of a common South-South quantification and evaluation model<sup>76</sup>, and developing countries do not have a common forum or organization with the mandate to facilitate this process in the way that the

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<sup>73</sup> See e.g. UNDP, *Scaling-Up South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development* (December 2016), at [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/development-impact/SS%20Research%20Publications/11960%20-%20Design%20for%20Scaling-up%20South-South%20Cooperation%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20-%202009-3\\_Web.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/development-impact/SS%20Research%20Publications/11960%20-%20Design%20for%20Scaling-up%20South-South%20Cooperation%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20-%202009-3_Web.pdf).

<sup>74</sup> Marcio Lopes Correa, “Quantification of South-South cooperation and its implications to the foreign policy of developing countries,” *South Centre Policy Brief No. 41* (July 2017), p. 1. Available from [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41\\_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries_EN.pdf). The same author suggests that “attempts to collect data on South-South cooperation by actors outside the developing world should not be viewed exclusively as academic exercises or efforts to increase the availability of information on development cooperation flows. Some actors could be interested in adopting monetary standards for measuring South-South cooperation because they see it as a potential, complementary source of funds (the idea of “new donors”), while others might be interested in financial data on South-South cooperation for market intelligence purposes or to monitor the dynamics of diplomatic alliances.”

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> See e.g. Mariella Di Ciommo, *Approaches to measuring and monitoring South-South cooperation* (Development Initiatives Discussion Paper, February 2017), p. 3, at <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Approaches-to-measuring-and-monitoring-South%E2%80%93South-cooperation.pdf>, stating that “at the moment, an international consensus on how and whether to measure and monitor South-South cooperation is far from sight.”

OECD Development Assistance Committee does for North-South cooperation.<sup>77</sup> Other technical and political challenges include “the lack of a common definition of South–South cooperation; different views on how to measure and account for different components; different ideas on accountability and the purpose of monitoring; and the uncertain governance of any future system. A review of national and regional initiatives shows the variety of approaches currently used and highlights the need for deepening technical and political discussions on how to further a coherent and shared approach to measuring and monitoring South–South cooperation. The existence of multiple, parallel initiatives reflect the variety of South–South cooperation, but these make transparency and accountability more difficult to realise, in particular from the perspective of data users.”<sup>78</sup>

Addressing these challenges will require a significant political investment by the South, and by South-South cooperation partners themselves, to establish and build up the institutional arrangements that will likely be needed in order to start generating discussion, share and exchange experiences, learn from lessons derived from experiences, develop trust in order to enable access to each other’s South-South cooperation data, promote efficient coordination and communication among South-South cooperation focal points, and engender a strategic political dialogue on the benefits and challenges of moving to a South-based multilateral framework for the monitoring, quantification and evaluation of South-South cooperation.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, it is also important to recognize that there could be benefits from eventually having a South-developed and –implemented mechanism to monitor, quantify, and evaluate South-South cooperation, although the identification of such benefits should be through a South-South dialogue process and any mechanism that may be developed should be able to reflect the diversity of South-South cooperation modalities and approaches.<sup>80</sup>

The sensitivities that continue to exist at the multilateral political level within the South and vis-à-vis the North in relation to the issue of monitoring, measuring, quantifying and evaluating South-South cooperation, even if it is to be done by a UN agency or under a UN framework, can also be seen as reflective of a valid and legitimate concern among many countries involved in South-South cooperation that doing so would mean providing space for developed countries to shape, monitor and evaluate South-South cooperation while the South itself does not have the same opportunities to do so with respect to North-South cooperation (e.g. ODA) since the North monitors and evaluates its North-South cooperation activities through its own institutions (such as the OECD-DAC) rather than through the UN system. Given these sensitivities, BAPA+40 should not be used as a way to intensify discussions, or to generate a mandate, that would lead to the establishment of a South-South cooperation monitoring and evaluation system run by the UN and developed jointly by the North and South through North-South multilateral discussions.

At the same time, however, Southern research institutions and academics as well South-South cooperation agencies themselves are looking into this issue. Brazil’s Agency for Brazilian Cooperation (ABC), for example, has developed its own methodology for

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<sup>77</sup> Marcio Lopes Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Mariella Di Ciommo, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> See e.g., Marcio Lopes Correa, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> Some principles that had been suggested with respect to South-South cooperation data transparency standards include that such standards should be able to: “1) respond to different information needs; 2) be useful and relevant for different purposes; 3) allow for data interoperability; and 4) ensure high quality data.” See e.g. Mariella Di Ciommo, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

quantifying its South-South cooperation activities.<sup>81</sup> Reflecting the multiplicity and diversity of South-South cooperation, there is also a multiplicity of approaches, proposals, and experiences that exist at national, regional and international level with respect to monitoring, measuring and evaluating South-South cooperation.<sup>82</sup>

More recently, some Southern academic and development cooperation experts from the Global South under the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) discussed and developed an analytical framework for South-South cooperation.<sup>83</sup> Following a series of technical discussions and consultations between 2015 and 2016 within the NeST community and other parties (including Southern governments), the NeST researchers were able to develop a suggested monitoring and evaluation framework for South-South cooperation based on a set of "20 qualitative indicators, organised around the dimensions of: inclusive national ownership; horizontality and mutuality; self-reliance and sustainability; transparency and accountability; and development efficiency."<sup>84</sup> Given that the NeST South-South cooperation monitoring and evaluation framework was developed as a non-governmental initiative, the NeST participants have highlighted the voluntary nature of their framework, stating that "while it is not the only system to conduct M&E of SSC, the framework puts forward one of the first concrete tools to evaluate the quality of South–South processes, practices and relations by think tanks and development practitioners from the global South. Partners and development stakeholders can adapt the NeST framework to their specific context and purposes. Different actors (including Southern governments that provide assistance, recipients and institutions such as multilateral development banks) may use the framework to measure the degree of accountability, or they can integrate certain elements into national, regional and global accountability mechanisms."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> See e.g. Laura Trajber Waisbach et al., *Monitoring and Measuring of South-South Cooperation Flows in Brazil* (Articulacao Sul Briefing Paper, March 2017), at <http://articulacaosul.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Briefing-1.pdf>. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) has developed its own manual on South-South technical cooperation, including a methodology for quantifying such cooperation, published in 2017 entitled "Manual of South-South Technical Cooperation Management; see <http://www.abc.gov.br/api/publicacaoarquivo/38>. At a 2015 UNCTAD meeting, the ABC had also proposed a "reference platform for measurement of cooperation and development-related exchange flows between developing countries", a proposal which it stressed "is not meant to be a standard for the preparation of any kind of global South-South cooperation report. No organization has received the mandate or endorsement by governments of developing countries to prepare such reports. The preparation of national-level or regional-level reports on horizontal/South-South exchanges and cooperation flows is an autonomous and voluntary decision of the governments of developing countries"; see [http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Contribution/gds\\_stats\\_2015d06\\_Contribution\\_Brazil2\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/meetings/en/Contribution/gds_stats_2015d06_Contribution_Brazil2_en.pdf). With respect to India and China, see e.g. Jandhyala Tilak, *South-South cooperation: India's programme of development assistance – nature, size and functioning*, *Asian Education and Development Studies*, Vol. 3 Issue: 1, pp. 58-75, at <https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-03-2013-0022>; Kashyap Arora and Rani D Mullen, *South-South Development Cooperation: Analysis of India and China's Model of Development Cooperation Abroad* (Centre for Policy Research, December 2017), at [http://www.cprindia.org/system/tdf/policy-briefs/india-China%20policy\\_Final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=6588&force=1](http://www.cprindia.org/system/tdf/policy-briefs/india-China%20policy_Final.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=6588&force=1).

<sup>82</sup> See Mariella Di Ciommo, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-14.

<sup>83</sup> The NeST's basic conceptual framework for analyzing South-South cooperation focused on the following areas: the definition, quantification and accounting of SSC flows; the development of indicators to measure the quality and effectiveness of SSC; South–South trade, investment and public–private partnerships; the concessionality of South–South development finance and lending instruments; and common reporting systems/templates for SSC. See Neissan Besharati et al., *A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for South-South Cooperation* (NeST Working Paper, March 2017), p. 8, at [http://www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/saia\\_NeST-Working-Paper\\_20170515.pdf](http://www.saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/saia_NeST-Working-Paper_20170515.pdf).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. These indicators, it should be noted, have not been adopted by developing country governments.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

Case-by-case country, regional, or multilateral policy research and analytical studies could also be undertaken by different South institutions, such as Southern non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks or academic institutions, or Southern multilateral institutions such as the South Centre in collaboration with other Southern regional institutions, using data obtained from the South-South cooperation partners themselves and supported through in-country surveys or interviews, so as to be able to obtain more in-depth and comprehensive data and information sets that can be used to draw a more complete picture of South-South cooperation. These could include the continued mapping of South-South cooperation activities, programmes, or projects undertaken by developing countries, including those that would be linked to the development, enhancement and implementation of actions for the implementation of Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement, and other multilateral agreements.

## **V. RESPONDING TO BAPA+40 CONFERENCE SUBTHEME (IV) ON “SCALING UP THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SUPPORT OF SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION”**

To be a driver for “innovation, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and growth” in the South, the G77 highlighted that South-South cooperation requires the following actions:

- “7.1 a better enhancement and adequate partnerships in an open and transparent manner to address the priorities of the 2030 Agenda;
- “7.2 a definition of strategies of South-South Cooperation across agencies, sectors including the private sector, and countries;
- “7.3 deployment of South-South Cooperation knowledge sharing in science, technology and innovations;
- “7.4 focus on sharing development experiences, knowledge exchanges and capacity building;
- “7.5 mainstreaming South-South Cooperation in national development cooperation framework; and
- “7.6 more robust institutional coordination and systematic measurement and reporting mechanisms.”<sup>86</sup>

The G77 are of the view that “in collective efforts to implement and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other commitments, the growing importance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation must be recognised but at the same time must not be overemphasised considering its role as a complement and not a substitute of North-South Cooperation.”<sup>87</sup>

The G77 has recognized that “South-South cooperation has been taking place in a wide range of areas, in support of development processes in all their dimensions, including eradicating poverty and ending hunger, addressing effects of climate change, reinforcing infrastructure and humanitarian assistance. It is recognized the efforts made by the South through different and innovative ways and methods to the consecution of development projects, such as technical cooperation based on knowledge exchange with the ultimate goal of expanding capacities through mobilization of experts, field missions, technical outputs, and training, as well as financing and new resources granted among developing countries. Furthermore, we would like to highlight the role of new regional banks of developing countries which are designed to operate within and across regions under the belief that a revitalized partnership among Southern countries is possible.”<sup>88</sup>

As noted above, South-South cooperation has generally been easier in the political sphere, where important joint initiatives continued to be mounted and sustained. But on economic issues there had been a wide gap between rhetoric and action – although this situation has also been rapidly changing in the last few years. South-South cooperation in

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<sup>86</sup> G77, Statement at the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (16 May 2016), para. 7. Available from <http://www.G77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=160516c>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., para. 15.

<sup>88</sup> G77, Statement at the Opening Ceremony of the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 (27 November 2017). Available from at <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=171127>.

relation to sustainable development and in the context of climate change has risen in prominence particularly since the adoption in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the UNFCCC's Paris Agreement.

South-South cooperation will likely play an important complementary role in the achievement of global and national development goals, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda. South-South cooperation, for example, is referred to in Sustainable Development Goal 17 as among the ways in which the means of implementation to achieve the SDGs can be provided. Many situations call strongly for cooperation among the developing countries, e.g. in the management of shared natural resources, in dealing with common problems such as climate change, and in harnessing science and technology to the specific needs and conditions in the South. Because of development advances, albeit not yet sufficient, that have taken place in the past few decades, the South is today better equipped than before to advance South-South cooperation.

Hence, South-South cooperation should be scaled up particularly in areas that are relevant to Agenda 2030 – including in the implementation of developing countries' nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. South-South cooperation in areas like climate change, disaster risk reduction and management, sustainable agriculture, sustainable and environmentally-sound infrastructure and technology, sustainable building design, etc. can help broaden the range and scope of the partnerships which developing countries can engage in with other countries in order to pursue their national sustainable development priorities and objectives.

The recent evolution of South-South cooperation, and the rising prominence of such cooperation in the area of climate change<sup>89</sup>, provides important lessons about its role in enhancing ownership and strengthening the capacity of developing countries in their national development efforts as well as in working with each other in mutually supportive and beneficial ways; even as one continues to recognize that South-South cooperation mechanisms and institutional arrangements need to be further enhanced and improved.

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<sup>89</sup> See e.g. Achim Steiner (UNDP Administrator), South-South Cooperation on Climate Change (Remarks at High-Level Forum on South-South Cooperation in Climate Change, 15 November 2017), at <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2017/south-south-cooperation-on-climate-change.html>; UNFCCC, South-South Climate Cooperation Strengthened at COP23 (27 November 2017), at <https://unfccc.int/news/south-south-climate-cooperation-strengthened-at-cop23>; UNFCCC, South-South Cooperation Driving Climate Action among Developing Countries (15 November 2016), at <https://unfccc.int/news/south-south-cooperation-driving-climate-action-among-developing-countries>.

## **VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BAPA+40**

South-South cooperation will only grow in importance as developing countries seek to learn from each other's development experiences, and seek to take advantage of changing global economic and political relationships. In this regard, there must be a sharing of experiences, a common dialogue, an active engagement, by the countries of the South with each other.

South-South cooperation needs to be supported through a strengthening of the South's own cooperation institutions, including the G77, the NAM, the South Centre, and the various regional and inter-regional institutions. Within the United Nations, specific agencies or units on South cooperation, such as the Office for South-South Cooperation, play vital roles in supporting South-South cooperation and making it effective on the basis of the principles of South-South cooperation and hence should also be supported and strengthened.

It is only when developing countries are able to fully and effectively participate, on the basis of their joint South-South cooperation activities, that fair, efficient and effective North-South multilateral engagement can be undertaken in order for the global community to be able to effectively address the multiple challenges and crises that define current times, such as the systemic flaws in the global governance structure, climate change, the global financial crisis, trade relations, and the growing development gap, among other things, in ways that will be economically, politically, socially and ecologically equitable, fair, and sustainable.

In light of the current state of South-South cooperation, the G77 could consider the following recommendations for the purpose of ensuring that the Outcome Document for BAPA+40 enhances the practice of South-South cooperation:

### **BAPA+40 Subtheme (i) - Comparative advantages and opportunities of South-South cooperation**

- BAPA+40 should welcome and encourage the participation of developing countries as development partners for other developing countries; peer developing countries represent and may provide a greater choice in terms of possible development partners under conditions that may be both more appropriate and favourable for developing countries as compared to traditional North-South cooperation,
- BAPA+40 should encourage and, if possible, promote South-South cooperation operational arrangements undertaken through bilateral, regional, or multilateral arrangements (including through the use of Southern regional and multilateral institutions) so that the financing, technologies and skills that may be developed and shared through South-South cooperation activities can be facilitated as these may be more appropriate in light of the development contexts and circumstances of the partners. This is particularly important given that in terms of activities, South-South cooperation tends to be focused on capacity building, provision of financial assistance, technology exchange, infrastructure development, and support to institution building,
- BAPA+40 should encourage the continued evolution of South-South cooperation in the overall context of multilateralism as a process that helps developing

countries meet their respective development challenges. Its evolutionary nature means that it can be more flexible and can be made more appropriate, useful and effective for the partners,

- BAPA+40 should recognize the lessons that can be learned from the development progress that many developing countries have experienced in the past two decades, and encourage developing countries to leverage such lessons in order to make South-South cooperation more substantial in terms of: (i) directly supporting the industrial and other development policies and efforts of the partners, and (ii) helping each other address global development challenges together through strategic approaches that would encourage more developing countries to undertake more forms of South-South cooperation (particularly in the areas of trade, investment, infrastructure development, environmentally-sound science and technology sharing and development, human and institutional capacity building, sustainable agriculture, health, economic diversification, environmentally-sound agriculture and industrialization, and other development-related fields),
- BAPA+40 should encourage the expansion of South-South trade and investment, and financing technology transfer should be encouraged and facilitated, including through the provision by UN agencies of appropriate mechanisms or avenues to facilitate such activities and provide matching services for South-South cooperation partners with each other,
- BAPA+40 should call on UN agencies to strengthen their work and activities on multilateral economic policy issues, including on international trade and finance, through more research, financing, technical assistance, and capacity building to be provided to developing countries and their South-South cooperation institutions to facilitate their coordination and collective engagement in multilateral policy discussions and negotiations.

**BAPA+40 Subtheme (ii) - Challenges and the strengthening of the institutional framework of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

- BAPA+40 should ensure that any policy framework for UN support to South-South cooperation that may be developed at BAPA+40 would be based on and be guided by the principles and objectives for such cooperation as established in international agreed documents such as the 1978 BAPA, the 2009 Nairobi Outcome Document of the UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, and the G77's Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation,
- BAPA+40 should call on and encourage each developing country to reflect in its development plans and national policies an explicit commitment to South-South cooperation broadly, and to working with other developing countries in terms of their actions to achieve the SDGs,
- BAPA+40 should call on UN agencies to support, and developing countries themselves should be encouraged to undertake, the strengthening and institutionalization of South-South cooperation through the building of the



following capacities by the provision of financing, technology, infrastructure and institution-building support, and human resource capacity building:

- Institutional capacity for the delivery and absorption of South-South cooperation-sourced finance, technology and expertise, and to support collective collaboration, coordination, and action at the national, regional, and multilateral level by developing countries,
  - Policy integration capacity to enable developing countries to appropriately integrate South-South cooperation support into long-term foreign policies and development planning and implementation,
  - Resource (e.g. finance and technology) capacity, both internally within developing countries and externally within the UN system and other providers, through internal and external resource mobilization (e.g. including increased regular and extra-budgetary allocations) to enable greater levels of South-South cooperation support to take place among developing countries,
- BAPA+40 could provide developing countries with policy-relevant guidance on the appropriate national institutional infrastructure for pursuing and maximizing the development gains from South-South cooperation. National institutional arrangements for South-South cooperation should, in a nationally-appropriate manner, ensure that there are clear lines of responsibility within the government with respect to action relating to South-South cooperation, including regional and subregional cooperation, as is already the case in some developing countries. Whenever possible, it would be important that South-South cooperation is seen as a national policy priority and, therefore, appropriately represented officially at senior levels of government policymaking, on par with other ministerial-level posts responsible for other areas of national development policy,
  - BAPA+40 could encourage developing countries to voluntarily establish regular procedures at the national level, including the use of statistical and other indicators, for reviewing performance in meeting any agreed goals of South-South cooperation with other developing countries, perhaps in coordination with Southern intergovernmental, regional or multilateral institutions working on South-South cooperation issues as well as UN agencies such as the UNOSSC, to monitor the implementation of South-South cooperation initiatives, building on the national, regional and multilateral approaches and methodologies that various South-South cooperation actors have already established or which may have been developed by institutions in and of the Global South<sup>90</sup>,

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<sup>90</sup> The UN High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation currently has the role of reviewing and assessing the global and UN system-wide progress on and support for South-South cooperation which the G77 has long recognized, with the support of the UNOSSC. In the 2008 G77 Yamoussoukro Consensus, the G77 had proposed that the G77 Chair should establish a mechanism under the G77 to monitor the implementation of South-South cooperation initiatives. However, such mechanism has not been established nor referred to thereafter in subsequent G77 statements.

- In order to reflect the South-owned and South-driven nature of South-South cooperation, BAPA+40 should avoid mandating the establishment of a South-South cooperation monitoring and evaluation system<sup>91</sup>,
- BAPA+40 could encourage Southern intergovernmental and academic research institutions to undertake, either individually but more preferably jointly with each other, policy research and analytical studies, using data obtained from the South-South cooperation partners themselves and supported through in-country surveys or interviews, so as to be able to obtain more in-depth and comprehensive data and information sets that can be used to draw a more complete picture of South-South cooperation. These could include the continued mapping of South-South cooperation activities, programmes, or projects undertaken by developing countries, including those that relate to national implementation of Agenda 2030,
- At the United Nations System-level, as part of the outcome for BAPA+40 and given the importance of the Paris Agreement under the UNFCCC, Agenda 2030, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda as key policy documents that will shape UN agency activities, programmes and projects going towards 2030, it is important that support for South-South cooperation, consistent with various General Assembly resolutions and the decisions of the UN High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, be more fully and explicitly incorporated into the operational programmes of UN bodies and agencies and that a stronger coordinating and consultative mechanism to support South-South cooperation be established at the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) level to complement the work of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation.<sup>92</sup> This is particularly important with respect to UN agencies undertaking activities and programmes that support South-South cooperation, in order to ensure that such activities and programmes support and are consistent with the priorities of the South-South cooperation partners. Additionally, the mainstreaming support for South-South cooperation in the UN system should include enhanced modalities for reporting and capturing both qualitative and quantitative indicators of the support provided by the UN system to developing countries' South-South cooperation initiatives,
- BAPA+40 could encourage other international community stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), the UN, and the public sector, to facilitate and support concrete South-South cooperation activities in relation to the SDGs by:

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<sup>91</sup> As indicated earlier, the UN Secretary-General has pointed in his 2018 report on the state of South-South cooperation to several initiatives that have been undertaken by various UN entities to elaborate and define indicators and monitoring, evaluation, and reporting tools and mechanisms that can be used in relation to these UN entities and UN member States' South-South cooperation-related endeavours. See UN, State of South-South cooperation: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Doc. Ref. No. A/73/321, 13 August 2018), paras. 61-64, at [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/73/321&Lang=E).

<sup>92</sup> Additionally, the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its 2018 progress report could also be looked into for implementation. See JIU, Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3) (Geneva, 2018), at [https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu\\_rep\\_2018\\_2\\_english\\_0.pdf](https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2018_2_english_0.pdf).

- Prioritizing and focusing on expanding the developing country community of practitioners and experts on South-South cooperation in relation to the SDGs,
- Working with developing countries and their institutions to develop institutional capacity – e.g. through ministries - for South-South cooperation activities that would assist developing countries in integrating SDG-related actions and policies into their national development planning and programmes,
- Assisting in and facilitating cross-country flows of South-South cooperation-related resources, including finance and technology, by working with developing country governments and their regional and multilateral institutions so as to ensure that such flows are mutually supportive of the national development policy priorities of the participating countries.

**BAPA+40 Subtheme iv) - Scaling up the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in support of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation**

- BAPA+40 should request UN agencies to scale up their work in supporting (through technical assistance, capacity building, financing, technology sharing and transfer) developing countries and their South-South cooperation institutions to work with each other on various SDG-related activities,
- BAPA+40 should stress that UN agencies should provide support to the conduct of South-South cooperation activities related to sustainable development so that South-South cooperation contributes to the achievement of Agenda 2030. To this end, UN agencies could be requested to identify a set of activities to be undertaken by them in each SDG-related thematic area – e.g. energy, transportation, adaptation, infrastructure, capacity building, financing, technology transfer, etc. – in the short and medium term that should address critical issues and needs, hold promise of success, and have a potential for further widening and deepening South-South cooperation,
- BAPA+40 should also reiterate and reaffirm the long-standing ODA commitment of developed countries and encourage them to contribute additional resources to the UN system to support its work in relation to the SDGs.

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