

**BAPA+40  
Informal Meeting**

**INDIA STATEMENT  
By  
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**Madam Chair**

We would like to congratulate the two co-facilitators, the distinguished PRs of Lithuania and Uganda. We assure them of our full support in working towards finalizing an inter-governmentally agreed draft outcome document for the upcoming BAPA+40 conference in March next year in three months time.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of G77 and would like make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

**Madam Chair**

The world is a very different place from 1978 from the time of the first UN Conference in Buenos Aires.

South-south cooperation among fellow developing countries, which had originated in the context of the solidarity and the shared experience of the colonial context, was still in its nascent stage four decades ago.

Today, while the traditional north-south development aid has stagnated or even declined in some years, the south-south aspect of international cooperation has expanded considerably.

The purpose of our current exercise must be to have an overview of the scale of changes that have taken place in the south-south cooperation landscape. It should recognize the factors that have assisted the considerable expansion of south-south cooperation, which has now taken multiple forms. It must ultimately focus on ways to see how this can be incentivized and enhanced even further in view of the myriad development challenges that all of us face.

The reasons of the growing success of south-south cooperation are very clear. These are rooted in the principles that define and characterize south-south cooperation, which are very different from the tradition donor driven aid.

The inherent spirit of equality and solidarity; the similar experiences and concerns; the primacy of priorities of the partners; the flexibility of the modes of partnerships; the non-prescriptive nature of assistance all have contributed to the growing success of the south-south cooperation.

Our exercise should avoid venturing into any politically contentious arguments, especially since our common objective is to enhance south-south cooperation and there is little time before we need to finalise this shared document.

During these four decades since the adoption of Buenos Aires Plan of Action, we have witnessed the transformation of the international system, including the emergence of strong economies from the global South. We have also witnessed the important contribution made by developing countries in building of a more prosperous and peaceful world through their cooperation in the nature of solidarity. This cooperation can be traced back to the anti-colonial solidarity movement of the last century.

### **Madam Chair**

As a country, building partnerships with fellow-developing countries has been a longstanding feature of independent India's engagement over the past seven decades.

Such cooperation has taken myriad forms, ranging from collective negotiating blocs to training and capacity building and specific development projects.

This has proceeded in different formats ranging from purely bilateral arrangements to regional such as BIMSTEC in our neighbourhood or the wider India-Africa Forum Summit or the Forum for India-Pacific Islands cooperation (FIPIC). It also includes for instance the innovative format of the IBSA Fund that brings together India, Brazil and South Africa in association with the UN. Another successful innovation has been the triangular format in association with the United Nations in the form of an India-UN Development Partnership Fund launched last year together with the UN Office of South-South Cooperation.

### **Madam Chair**

The developments in South South Cooperation have in turn given rise to two parallel trends.

The first is the expectation that South-South Cooperation will increasingly fill the place vacated by North-South aid and may eventually overtake it. Implicit in this assumption appears to be the justification for the decline of north-south aid.

The second trend is the attempt in several quarters to try and harmonize the emerging patterns of South-South developmental cooperation with the traditional frameworks of North-South aid despite their vast differences, reasons for their success and ongoing trajectories.

As I have mentioned the core ideals behind South-South Cooperation are fundamentally different from those of North-South flows. While the latter is a historic responsibility, the former, i.e. South-South Cooperation is more in the nature of a voluntary partnership among equals.

It is also important to bear in mind the sheer diversity of South-South flows. South-South cooperation takes many forms, is driven by official as well as private initiatives, and involves a wide variety of partners, not to mention a very wide range of activities, from large infrastructure projects to small initiatives for capacity building and experience sharing.

Therefore both these trends, of trying to get South-South flows replace North-South aid and to attempt to harmonize their standards are misplaced.

### **Madam Chair**

As the salience of South-South Cooperation is increasing, the South needs greater understanding and support from the international community to continue to contribute and do more for the development agenda and achievement of the Sustainable development Goals.

We however would not like to see attempts to define, redefine or negotiate the established principles of the South South Cooperation. We do not need to fix what is working well.

We would like to reaffirm the principles as presented in the Nairobi Declaration, and would like to highlight some of those which are increasingly more relevant as the common understanding of the global South:

- i. South-South Cooperation is guided by equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit;
- ii. The centrality of SDGs and the Rio principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) and respective capabilities;
- iii. South-South Cooperation is not aid and developing countries engaged in South-South Cooperation are not donors and recipients but development partners;
- iv. Solidarity and the spirit of sharing are the primary motivation of South-South Cooperation;
- v. The aim of South-South Cooperation is to create higher levels of capabilities and economic opportunity for both the partners. Capacity building and

technology transfers continue to drive it in the spirit of solidarity among partner countries;

- vi. South-South Cooperation serves as a compliment to and not as a substitute for North-South Cooperation in supporting the acceleration of the development agenda, and ODA templates are not a good basis for South-South Cooperation.

### **Madam Chair**

It's only appropriate that developing countries proactively own and shape the discourse, and this is also reflected in the draft outcome document.

We hope that our deliberations in this process would lead to strengthening and expanding UN System's capabilities to facilitate the new initiatives in South South and Triangular cooperation.

In view of the UNDS Reforms and agreed modalities of funding of the reinvigorated RC System, we would like this opportunity to reiterate the exclusion of contributions under South South Cooperation from the arrangement of 1% levy.

We would also like to call upon the UN Secretariat, Funds & Programs and Specialized agencies to harmonise and limit to the minimum possible, the differentiated rate of indirect cost recovery across all the South-South Cooperation projects.

We also stress that the outcome document should meet the criteria of a good normative document which enriches the partnership framework and avoid being prescriptive and listing of specifics.

### **Madam Chair**

We look forward to receiving the 'zero draft' next week.