



UN-OHRLLS

Statement

by

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**High Representative
and
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**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States**

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Antalya Turkey

Thank you Master of Ceremony, Madam Baki for giving me the floor;
H.E. Mr. Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey;
Honorable Ministers, fellow panelists;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address the inauguration of the Global South-South Development Expo 2017.

I first wish to express our gratitude to the Government of Turkey for hosting this important event.

As the Secretary-General's High Representative, it is incumbent on me to be a voice and advocate for the three groups of vulnerable countries: the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and small Island Developing States. These are all countries faced with complex and unique development challenges which lend themselves to exploring how and where we can maximize South-South cooperation and leverage global partnerships to support countries' efforts toward sustainable and inclusive futures.

The central promise of the 2030 Agenda is to leave no-one behind and thus is about addressing poverty, reducing inequality and building a sustainable future of shared prosperity. But it already is clear that these noble goals will be elusive if the 91 countries my office is a voice for remain at the bottom of the development ladder.

Indeed, these vulnerable countries continue to face serious development challenges ranging from their low levels of economic diversification, limited productive capacities, limited scope for economies of scale and high risk exposure to external shocks including high vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

South-South cooperation offers enormous opportunities and potential to effectively support these vulnerable countries in accelerating progress towards the implementation of globally agreed goals including the Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Samoa Pathway for Small Island Developing States.

It is highly encouraging to see how in recent years collaboration among the Global south has grown both in scale and volume.

Here, I also wish to acknowledge the strong push and overall impetus the Secretary-General's Envoy on South-South Cooperation is giving to this critical area of work.

South-South cooperation is all about a spirit of solidarity, a spirit of solutions and finding relevant, contextually appropriate solutions.

South-South collaboration has led to increasing trade between and with emerging economies, investors, providers of development cooperation and sources of technological innovations and know how. This trend is confirmed by trade preferences for LDCs products, enhanced trade finance opportunities, but also innovative infrastructure finance emerging.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South-South cooperation has long been advocated for and recognized as an important avenue for developing countries to share relevant experience, knowledge, skills, and resources to meet their development goals.

The complex and pressing challenges the vulnerable countries experience demand that we further strengthen and leverage South-South cooperation. We see great potential for this. The role of OHRLLS also is to mobilise the entire UN system capacities to support the LDC, LLDC and SIDS countries.

Allow me to also highlight a few priority areas for action as well as successful examples where South-South cooperation demonstrates its value-added.

First, South-South cooperation is not an either - or. It is a strategic and complementary means of action for the transfer and dissemination of technologies and innovations. It complements North-South cooperation.

We all know that the future to a large extent will be determined by the abilities to leverage science, technology and innovation for sustainable growth, structural transformation and inclusive human and social development.

It is proven that innovative technologies developed in the South often respond in more sustainable ways to the contextual needs of developing countries. Last not least this is a question of cost.

Beyond a doubt, the Global South will have to be an important partner in all efforts to promote technology and innovation capacity in the developing world.

This is also why the 22 September signing this year between the Government of Turkey and the United Nations formally establishing the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Gebze is such important milestone. Once more, I would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Turkey for hosting the Technology Bank and for its generous financial support.

We now have begun to operationalize the Technology Bank, and incidentally, this also means realization of the first SDG target, SDG 17.8.

The Technology Bank has a major role to play in boosting science, technology and innovation capacity of the LDCs for sustainable development. It must facilitate technology transfer and promote the integration of LDCs into the global knowledge-based economy.

Another key feature and role we see is what South-South cooperation can do to complement infrastructure financing and will be fundamental to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Major investments in infrastructure can potentially be generated through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative of China.

Yet, infrastructure investment must be designed to benefit vulnerable countries in terms of climate resilient and disaster resilient facilities, use clean technologies, build transport links to enhance economic activity, attract foreign investment, and generally increase adaptation capacity to lead to inclusive sustainable development.

I would like in this regard to reiterate the Secretary-General's statement at the COP23 in Bonn and I quote

“infrastructure investment will be crucial - the world should adopt a simple rule: if big infrastructure projects are not green, they should not be given the green light “(end of quote)

Let me now turn to my final point - how South-South cooperation has a major role to play in implementing the Paris Climate Agreement.

Developing countries have accumulated unique knowledge and experiences by adopting sustainable, low greenhouse gas emission and climate resilient development pathways. Enhanced solutions oriented exchanges between countries of the global south will play a major role in addressing climate change and the strive toward realisation of the Paris Agreement goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South-South cooperation not only has gained great momentum over the past few decades but it finally has become a powerful tool to advance the 2030 Agenda on the way to the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in Argentina in 2019. This milestone meeting, we hope, will open a further, very strong chapter in South-South cooperation.

But let us also be clear, the complex if not by times dramatic challenges ahead of us require much strengthened partnerships at all levels.

While countries in the South continue to deepen cooperation to achieve the SDGs, the trend of declining Official Development Assistance is cause for great concern. ODA remains a crucial source of external financing for the vulnerable groups of countries UN-OHRLLS represents. And allow me to again quote the Secretary-General's words of wisdom to all of us at the COP 23: “we must engage all actors - national, regional and local governments, philanthropists, civil society and investors and consumers . - we require action coalitions across all key sectors and by all actors. “(end of quote)

Indeed, we owe action coalitions to the more than 1 billion people in the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. We are already two years into Agenda 2030 and there is urgency to redouble our actions.

OHRLLS is committed to working with countries both of the North and the South to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and above all its pledge of leaving no one behind.

I wish the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 great success. Thank you.