Remarks

by

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High Representative

and

Under-Secretary-General

Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries

and Small Island Developing States

Opening of a Side Event

“A Glimpse of the Future South-South and Triangular Cooperation – Asia-Pacific’s Contribution in Science, Technology and Innovation”

Wednesday, 20 March 2019, 13:00-15:00

Aula Magna Room, Facultad de Derecho
Buenos Aires
Hon Prof Bambang Brodjonegoro, Minister of National Development, Planning & Head of BAPPENAS of the Republic of Indonesia,
Hon Dr Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh,
Hon. Bui Thanh Son, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Asia-Pacific region is home to some of our globe’s most populous, dynamic and fastest-growing economies in the world.

The region is also home to 36 countries confronting severe structural impediments in their strive for sustainable development.

A key feature is their vulnerability to external shocks and those associated with the impacts of climate change.

This is what the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) of the region tackle every day in their strive for inclusive and sustainable development for their people!

They lag behind in science, technology and innovation (STI) - they face an ever widening technology gap and digital divide. At the same time indigenous innovations remain underutilized.

These are not just issues in the "here and now" - these are issues compromising the future of young people!

There is an urgent need for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to build capacity not just in acquisition of technology but in how to fully utilize acquired technologies. How to ensure young, old, men and women all can benefit from technology, all have access.

The needs are many and include promoting indigenous capacity for research and development to diversify and enhance productive capacity.

At present, the issue is that these countries face considerable risk of being left behind. This is the result of a range of factors as I already mentioned like insufficient R&D capacity, financial constraints, absence of policy and legal frameworks and lack of implementation capacity to leverage the potential and also mitigate the disruptive impact of new technologies on the economy, society and environment.

What to do? What policy frameworks are needed to make technology work for all? What is the role of development partners, the UN system, the Global South in working with countries to cope with the ever more speedy transformation technologies and their use trigger?

These questions serious consideration but above all informed and immediate concerted efforts across the board.
This is where South-South cooperation offers a unique potential to us. It promotes best practices, knowledge sharing, technology transfer and capacity building through comparable, through context appropriate solutions for countries.

Member states of the Global South have built up significant and innovative STI knowledge, resources and capacity.

Through “southern solutions”, through " southern experience ", through " southern innovation ", I am convinced LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS can better access, leverage technologies to build capacity and manage in their strives for inclusive and sustainable development paths.

South-South cooperation plays indeed a pivotal role beyond this.

There is a strong role to be had in resilience building.

Practical solutions, indigenous low carbon technologies are to be exchanged. There is a role to play in increasing climate financing from the South to advance the LLDC, LDC and SIDS action plans for climate mitigation and adaptation.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We all know too well how science, technology and innovation are key drivers for structural transformation and human and social development. So, we must ensure we do not leave the LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS behind!

They have urgent needs. These are needs which if left unmet will jeopardize the path to inclusive and sustainable development.

It is encouraging to see that the outcome document of the 2nd UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation calls for enhanced support for building the human and institutional capacity of the least developed countries in science, technology, and innovation.

I am also encouraged to see the call for support to the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries.

The establishment of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries in Gebze, Turkey in 2018 is a milestone in South-South and triangular cooperation. By the way, it marked the first Sustainable Development Goal target to be achieved, SDG 17.8.

Expectations on the Bank and its work are very high. The prime goal is to facilitate the transfer of technologies and accelerate LDCs integration into the knowledge-based economy. It is a tall agenda but this is what is necessary in light of the issues and challenges countries grapple with.
I sincerely hope that the Technology Bank will become a conduit for LDCs to take advantage of global technology advancement and adopt adaptable, cost-effective technologies to achieve sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I see huge potential for the Asia-Pacific region to scale up South-South and triangular cooperation in STI.

Just think what such host front-runners as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, China and India have accomplished in just a few decades!!

As they say: where there is a will, there is a way! I would also add - where we have good partners and work hard each one of us but in a team spirit...

Today’s side event is very important in this regard. It provides an opportunity for policy-makers and practitioners to share, to have in-depth discussions on how to benefit from new and emerging technologies and mitigate their risks.

I hope that best practices and initiatives shared at this meeting will help countries in their strive to put together effective STI policies and strategies for inclusive sustainable development.

I wish you a very productive meeting and action driven deliberations.

Thank you.