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
“Leveraging South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Advance Sustainable Development in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS”
Thursday, 21 March 2019, 13:00-15:00
Sala de Audiencias, Facultad de Derecho
Buenos Aires
Colleagues and friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

first, I warmly welcome you to this side event.

My gratitude goes to the Government of Argentina and in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for all your support for the organization of this event. Gracias!

I also thank other co-organizers, China, Guinea and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, for your active engagement.

The peoples of the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) are among the most vulnerable of our global community.

These nations face persistent and complex development challenges.

We either can fulfill the promise to leave no one behind or we can leave these countries behind -

We pledged to leave no one behind and so I open my contribution calling for enhanced global partnerships to achieve the sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030 and the complementing Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

This must include leveraging much more and faster the potential of South-South cooperation. As I have said since I took up office, this is not an "either - or ". South-South cooperation is a critical complement to traditional development cooperation to address to address with every increasing urgency the needs of those left furthest behind.

This 2nd United Nations High-level Conference on South-South cooperation (BAPA+40 Conference) takes place at a time of moving into a new global development cooperation landscape.

South-South cooperation has increased both in scale and scope.

The emerging economies of the South are now important development partners in areas of trade, investment, capacity - building, financial support and technological cooperation for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

In 2017, South-South trade accounted for 28 per cent of the global trade flows.

LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS do indeed derive benefit from Southern partners’ innovative and scalable solutions in areas such as eradicating poverty, building required productive capacity for structural transformation and adopting new technologies to enhance both economic and natural disaster resilience.

But, a lot of road remains to be travelled together.

LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS face formidable challenges in meeting resource gaps ranging from technology gaps to those of human capacity and development finance.
Consider this: the targets in both the Istanbul Programme of Action and the SDGs demand a 7 per cent annual growth rate for LDCs and that implies an annual 10 per cent investment growth rate in LDCs.

Are we there yet? I guess you all know the answer - we are NOT.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not this audience I need to tell about the potential of South-South cooperation. We would not be here together if we were not convinced but we now must find ways to accelerate unleashing of this potential.

The outcome document of this Conference rightly focuses on the need to build human and institutional capacity in least developed countries through South-South and triangular cooperation. A cooperation that must include sharing of good practices and experiences, and transfer of technologies. In that context, it is good to see support to the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.

Today, our objective is to take a hard and informed look at where we stand in South-South cooperation in support of SDG achievement in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Today is about finding new areas of collaboration where South-South and triangular cooperation can be leveraged to contribute more and faster to the implementation of the SDGs in these countries.

We will particularly focus on the catalytic role of South-South cooperation in building science, technology and innovation capacity of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

The outcome document of the Conference alludes to the new opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technological advances. This is an area we must look into.

The global South has accumulated significant STI knowledge, resources and capacity.

I strongly believe this knowledge, this experience can greatly help LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to leverage the benefits of frontier technologies to leapfrog as they say into sustainable, inclusive and prosperous development paths.

Another very strategic and critical area is infrastructure. Lack of adequate and resilient physical infrastructure including infrastructure for energy, transport and ICT are widely shared development impediments in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

South-South cooperation again has a lot to contribute. We must make much greater use of South-South cooperation to give a strong and sorely needed push to infrastructure development.
Last but certainly not least, we must look at accelerating building resilience to withstand external shocks including the negative impacts of climate change.

Given the high vulnerability of countries to climate change and notably the SIDs, this must be a pillar in our work. Resilience is at the very core of sustainable development of the vulnerable countries.

The huge potential of South-South cooperation in scaling up the adaptation technologies needs to be tapped much more.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Allow me now to turn a bit to what OHRLLS can and already is contributing.

OHRLLS really was created by member states to be a platform, an advocate and a voice for those most at risk of being left behind. OHRLLS with our partners and for our partners champions South-South and triangular cooperation for the benefit of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

South-South and triangular cooperation is integral and not just an annex to all streams of our work.

This includes for example initiatives such as The Technology Bank for LDCs, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, and the Small Island Developing Global Business Network.

All successfully employed South-South and triangular cooperation.

2019 is a crucial strategic year.

The high-level mid-term reviews of two important agreements - the SAMOA Pathway and the VPoA of LLDCs - will take place.

The preparatory process for the 5th UN Conference on LDCs in 2021 will also kick off.

In September, the United Nations will convene a series of high-level events with the Climate Summit, the High-level Political Forum-the SDG Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.

These processes ALL are our platform for reinvigorating global commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

They present the unique opportunity to highlight the role and contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation in delivering tangible benefits to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

We must not squander this opportunity!
So, I very much hope for rich and insightful deliberations today. I hope for strong ideas and input into the global discourse and action in South-South and triangular cooperation.

Thank you.