

**Extempore Remarks made by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Acting
Permanent Representative at the Annual Retreat of the United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) in Hyatt Hotel
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Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the floor.

Assistant Secretary General, Mr. Olav Kjørven, thank you very much for informing us that the UN system is having truly global conversations (on the post 2015 development agenda). We are in the 68th session of the UNGA and it's high time, we have such conversations on such extremely pertinent issues.



I see this wonderful report (UNDP HDR 2013) - 'The Rise of South'. I feel very good, I come from the South. But it feels like the South has arrived, everything is there and it is time now for the South to take care of South. That's not certainly the case and the facts do not absolve the North from its responsibilities. That is what we need to understand. South- South Cooperation is growing but it must be very clearly understood that this is neither a substitute nor it any way absolves the commitments of the North.

I want to make couple of other big points.

What did Rio say? Rio+20 recognized poverty as the greatest global challenge. It agreed to formulate sustainable development goals but it first recognized poverty as the greatest global challenge. In-fact, just a few months back, the United Nations adopted the QCPR resolution and again acknowledged that fact (poverty eradication as the overriding priority).

Why? You know, what are the MDGs? MDGs were least common agreement among the haves of the world, of what could be done for development at the turn of the Millennium. Today, just a few years before the target date for MDGs, one billion people are still living in abject poverty.

That is why the world is telling you, the MDG's agenda is absolutely important. What do they mean by that? They mean a very simple thing. They mean that the underlying factor continues to remain that each individual must have that minimum fundamental requirement of food, water, health, education. And, whether we like it or not, the best determinant of all these is money and it therefore imperative that salience of per capita income should continue to be the highest (in any measure of development).

In this age of globalization, cell phones are reaching more and more people. In fact, I am told the cell phone companies in Somalia are the best corporate entities there and so is the case in Afghanistan etc. Technology has made many things happen. In several parts of my country, Africa and so many other parts of the world, even the poorest of poor see opportunities. Thank God for that. They can't be cut off from having aspirations and seeing what the others are doing.

Which are the countries with high achievements on MDGs. These are countries that adopted (MDGs) because they fitted with their national priorities. East Asia, China being the leading example, my country and several parts of Africa have done well. Have you seen the latest figures on African growth, which are positive and bode well. There are opportunities for greater and better cooperation at different levels. This is excellent.

I was delighted to see that in the latest HDI ranking, the highest ranking developing country is Brunei at no. 30, and the next is Qatar. If we go down the list, most of the top developing countries are OPEC members. While oil wealth does not mean that their development challenges are overcome, but they now have the necessary means to overcome development challenges and that's critically important.

Equity is often spoken about at such debates. I come from world's largest democracy. Our governments must promote equity. Many of my colleagues sitting here from the developing countries well recognize India's efforts on inclusive growth. If today, every single country wants to invest in China, India, Brazil or all over Africa, it is because they see market opportunities there because of this effort on equity and the huge market that comes from the vast millions.

However, let us be very clear that equity also has some other dimensions to it.

There is equity among people, among people within the country, that's what really government should do and deliver on. The world can help, provide ideas, paradigms and ways do it and enabling environment certainly. But equity among governments is equally, if not more important.

The Secretary General met the G-77 few days back, on 12th of March. Addressing him, the Ambassador of Argentina pointed out that countries which are classified as Middle Income Countries still continue to need various means of aid assistance etc. And, she pointed to the growth in inequity between countries which has taken place as part of globalization and how important it is to address that.

Mr. Chairman,

If the South has risen, surely, isn't it time, that we should give the South greater say in global governance? Shouldn't the institutions be reformed? Did you know this entire report (The Rise of the South) has hardly to say anything about this? No, I am not criticizing the report, that is different matter altogether. I am very proud of this report because this helps me to stand everywhere and say that the UN has also recognized that we have also arrived. It is not only Goldman Sach who said so, some time back.

Issues today are not about responsible sovereignty. Does any developing country get up at the UN and say that I have come here to see that my domestic law shall be adopted in international arena and that should be the world's way of doing things. None of us from developing countries say that. We accept multilateralism for what exactly it is. It is developed world's way of doing things. But we are there to try and see how we can work with world at large but at least please understand our need for policy space.

So when you mentioned Mr. Assistant Secretary General that you have consulted 'global citizenry', I am glad you also noted the responsibility of governments. That is the key and the most important element. It is governments that have to deliver. And, multilateralism owes to governments to ensure that there is an enabling environment. This requires real voice and participation of developing countries.

Now let me turn to South-South Cooperation.

South-South Cooperation has grown tremendously over last many years and it has grown because the ability of countries of the South has grown. India earlier focused a lot on capacity building i.e. offered training, scholarships etc. Now we have certain capabilities and we are able to do projects, investments, undertake infrastructure developments and able to help in social areas development etc. We do this with the conscious effort that we are sharing what we have got, recognizing fully that we are no where meeting even our own demands. We do it because of our solidarity. We do it because we also perceive that if our neighbours, friends do well, at the end of day we all benefit as result of it. Therefore, it will continue to grow.

What is important to do internationally, is what our colleagues from Brazil said about an hour ago. There has to be good and clear recognition from where South-South Cooperation comes from, what are its paradigms. These need to be encouraged and sent forward. Straight jacketing it will only weaken it and not even add complementary action to North-South Cooperation.

If South-South Cooperation growing, it is not only because more countries in the South are in a position to provide certain amounts of assistance etc. It is also because the partners are willing to be work in the area of national priorities. Traditional donors first want detailed portfolios to be filed!.

This has also affected the World Bank. How many of you are aware, that the Bank has a shrinking loan portfolio? It is shrinking simply because the whole business, what began in 1950s as IBRD's priority of re-building Europe, moved to growth and infrastructure development in developing countries through means of concessional loans, but that does not find favour with the developed countries any more.

Let us remember that the Bank is all about loans. If it does not give loans, it wouldn't make a profit.

A grant giving agency is something else; it can't be the World Bank. The Bank is not a government department; it is not structured like that.

At United Nations excellent work done by us on South-South cooperation is captured in the 'Nairobi Declaration'. Let's give it strength and put it squarely in post 2015 development agenda. Let's leverage it for benefit of all.

I also want to say few words about Triangular Cooperation.

We have an IBSA Trust Fund run by UNDP. It is a modest thing, India, Brazil and South Africa, the partner countries contribute US \$ 1 million annually each. We have put in about US \$ 20 million over last many years. We have projects all over the world. We are extremely happy to see these kinds of things to grow. We will do what we can.

But we need to learn some lessons too.

Everybody talks about Triangular Cooperation. Yes, this is one kind of Triangular Cooperation i.e. cooperation between India, Brazil and South Africa with another country in the South. This is not like what triangular cooperation is made out to be, i.e. India Brazil and South Africa on one side, UNDP or a developed country as another partner.

But be that as it may, in the IBSA TF we have actually seen that a project is taking place at country 'X' (developing country) and it is financed by IBSA but tenders for project procurement are floated only in Western Europe! These are some startling facts and you may be wondering! It is not odd ball incident but is the result of UNDP norms. Why?

It is because the paradigm of thinking is basically along North- South corridor. That is fine, and may remain so but the same paradigm can't be shifted and applied on South-South Cooperation. It is different paradigm and we have to similarly nurture it in parallel with N-S cooperation. This is a must to grow S-S cooperation. I will stop here.

Thank you.

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