

STATEMENT BY MS. PRIMROSE SHARMA, JOINT SECRETARY[TECHNICAL COOPERATION],
ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF
THE HIGH-LEVEL COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION 29 MAY - 1 JUNE 2007
ON MAY 29, 2007

Mr. President,

We congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election and thank the outgoing Bureau for the work done over the last two years. We broadly associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Chair of the Group of 77.

The countries of the South have seen dramatic progress over the last two decades despite the many continuing challenges, including those posed by a globalising world. Today, there are hardly any goods or services needed in the South that cannot be sourced from the South itself. As developing countries move towards market-based economies, in an era of globalization that has not brought the expected economic benefits to every country, cooperation amongst them remains relevant. This can help in mitigating the adverse effects of international economic policies and to achieve the positive potential that these forces of integration have in them for the developing world. It is, therefore, not surprising that the share of developing countries in total world trade has risen in the last two decades and that intra-South trade has been growing. Developing countries need to continue working together to overcome their shared vulnerabilities and disadvantages and to maximize the benefits that would accrue to them from the process of globalization.

Countries in the South also need skills and expertise in high technology areas and for expanding mechanisms for transferring experiences in the development of

human resources. In the past two decades scientific and technical competence has grown substantially in countries of the South to create significant complementarities between them. What is required is the will and the investments to put these complementarities to productive use.

Mr. President,

Our discussion in this High Level Committee is focused on “the Role of the United Nations in Strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation”. The UN, with its universal membership, is uniquely placed to play an important role on the debate on globalization and the development of an equitable and inclusive world economy. The report of the Administrator informs of the continuing support extended by UNCTAD for South-South trade by providing a forum for developing countries to address the consequences of globalization. UNCTAD makes a useful contribution by disseminating advisory services, policy research and analysis.

One of the practical areas where UN funds and programmes can make a tangible and immediate contribution is through UN operational activities for development. By using Southern expertise and procuring from the South, that which is needed for implementing their development programmes in developing countries, UN funds and programmes would help develop capacity within the South, in the implementation process itself. This would further stimulate South-South Cooperation. UN funds and programmes can also serve as reservoirs of experiences and best practices within the South and facilitate the exchange of these best practices. Given the common development experiences of developing countries, experiences from within the South are more likely to be relevant to each other. The decision of the UNDP Executive Board in 2004 to include South-South Cooperation among the drivers of development effectiveness in the Multi-Year Funding Framework was, therefore, timely.

The preparation of a roster of Southern experts needs to be speeded up. As only 22 UNDP country offices reported that there is increased national interest in South-South Cooperation, there is need to get the other country offices to participate in such exchanges. UNDP needs to work on the bottlenecks identified in the Report, through additional support to South-South cooperation and increased involvement of the Country Offices to address the gaps. Given the importance of mainstreaming South-South Cooperation in UN operational activities, the Special Unit should continue its activities in the existing arrangements and with the current structures and level. What is needed is greater commitment from UNDP and other funds and programmes to use the capacities, expertise and experiences of the South in addressing the challenges facing the South, rather than the creation of high level positions.

Mr. President,

India has believed in the imperatives of South-South Cooperation since its independence. This inspired us to establish cooperative technical and economic links

with a very large number of developing countries. A deliberate and systematic effort has been undertaken to spread the reach of our South-South cooperation activities to different regions of the globe. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation or ITEC, which was launched in 1964, has provided over US \$3 billion worth of technical assistance covering 156 developing countries. It is also this commitment that drives India's cooperation with NEPAD, and the TEAM-9 initiative focussed on West Africa. Work is underway on implementing India's initiative for a connectivity mission in Africa to support tele-education, tele-medicine, e-governance, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological services, across the continent.

There is also growing cooperation between India and the Pacific Island Forum and the CARICOM countries. India's "Regional Assistance Initiative" for Pacific Island Forum members, would, over the coming, years implement a wide-ranging package for Pacific Island countries, covering sustainable development, SME and capacity building through workshops and training courses, scholarships for higher studies etc. Cooperation with CARICOM countries ranges from provision of higher education in India, experts for flood forecasting/ disaster management, establishment of IT training Centres and infrastructure. The initiative undertaken by Brazil, India and South Africa, the IBSA initiative, is another manifestation of our commitment to South-South Cooperation. IBSA has undertaken a project each in Africa and Latin America and more are in the pipeline.

One of the challenges that developing countries face is that of inadequate capacity. India has therefore, engaged in sharing with other developing countries, expertise in areas of its excellence. India has been cooperating with its fellow developing countries for a long time. Since 2004 concessional lines of credit amounting to US \$1.4 billion have been approved for disbursal and a further US \$850 million are in the pipeline. The soft credit has been extended for infrastructure development, like water supply, power and transmission projects, irrigation, construction of roads and railway lines, supply of equipments such as tractors, pumps, etc. to farmers as well as pharmaceutical plans. The cooperation extended by India helps in capacity building in developing countries, thus, leading to South-South partnerships.

Over 6000 participants from developing countries receive training annually in India in over 250 institutions and universities, with many of them gravitating towards hi-tech areas such as IT. An increasing number of Indian experts are deputed to other developing countries in meeting developmental challenges. India has set up projects relating to vocational training in several partner countries in Asia and Africa for promoting IT and SME, the sectors in which India has significant strengths, as well as Entrepreneurship Development Centres in South-East Asian countries. We have now expanded our capacity building cooperation efforts to such contemporary issues as special courses for capacity building in the WTO for African diplomats and officials, on SMEs for equity fund and private managers, and for African cotton exporters, as also in environment related fields, among others. India is increasingly being requested to assist in the agricultural field. As the foremost milk producer in the world, the Indian

dairy industry has, of late, become a focus of interest under our South-South Cooperation programme. India is a strong advocate of collaboration in regional projects, particularly in areas such as infrastructure, poverty alleviation and dealing with cross border challenges such as natural disasters, pandemics like HIV AIDS, and Avian Flu, and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. India has offered US \$ 100 million for the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) to be utilized for projects in other SAARC countries on poverty alleviation once the SDF, with its three windows - Social, Economic, and Infrastructure - is operationalised.

Mr. President,

The biennial meetings of the High Level Committee provide a useful opportunity for highlighting the issues and concerns of developing countries in their quest for developing their economies and their search for an equitable and inclusive world economy. South-South Cooperation is a very useful vehicle for the development of capacities within the South. We hope to receive strong support from the UN system for South-South Cooperation and also in facilitating triangular cooperation by bringing in resources from the North for cooperative programmes amongst countries of the South. Much remains to be done and we would encourage UNDP and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation located within it, to make more concerted efforts in furtherance of South-South Cooperation.

Thank You, Mr. President.

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