

Intervention by Mr. Ravi Bangar, Joint Secretary(MER), Government of India
on behalf of H.E. Mr. S.M. Krishna, Minister of External Affairs of India at the Meeting of
the Group of Fifteen (G-15) Ministers of Foreign Affairs
on 24 September 2011)

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to participate in the Ministerial meeting of the Group of 15. This Group was set up to enhance cooperation among the countries of the South, and engage in meaningful dialogue with the North. More than two decades later, the rationale for founding the Group not only continues to be valid, but has become even more relevant. The global situation today makes South-South cooperation not only useful, but imperative.

02. In today's world, we are viewed as emerging leaders with the potential to resuscitate a sluggish global economy and contribute to global stability and well-being. Our individual strengths, competencies and global influence would be multiplied manifold if we pool our resources together and develop 'win-win' synergies and complementarities. In the UN and other fora, intra-South cooperation has considerably strengthened our bargaining power and achieved favourable results on issues of common concern, in areas such as public health, intellectual property, biodiversity, etc. As the first and only such cross-regional grouping of influential developing countries, the Group of Fifteen has the potential to become a nodal hub for South-South cooperation.

03. For our Group to realize this potential, however, we will have to persist with the process of honest introspection that we embarked upon in the Tehran Summit. We have already demonstrated this resolve by acting upon the recommendations of the High-Level Task Force. The Group has established two Working Groups to consider concrete ways of revitalizing the Group's Sectoral cooperation Projects and its institutional mechanisms. We are encouraged that the Working Group on Sectoral cooperation is identifying best practices for technical cooperation among G-15 countries with a view to replicating them in other member countries. We hope that the revised guidelines for effective implementation and monitoring of G-15 projects recommended by the HLTF, are also operationalized and would contribute further to improving G-15 projects. On the institutional front, we look forward to meaningful recommendations by the Working Group on Institutional Mechanisms aimed at streamlining the Technical Support Facility in order to enable it to contribute more directly and meaningfully to the Group's activities and its revitalized role.

04. We are happy to note that action has already been initiated on several other key recommendations of the High-Level Task Force, such as articulation of common G-15

positions on key development issues on the international agenda; convening regular meetings of the G-15 Permanent Representatives in Geneva to supervise the Group's activities; and strengthening of the G-15/G-8 dialogue. In this context, I wish to sincerely commend the outstanding leadership and commitment displayed by Sri Lanka, as the Chair of G-15, for carrying the Group together and leading these bold initiatives. We hope that the steps initiated in the Working Groups and elsewhere, will be further consolidated and institutionalized, leading to a refurbished and energized G-15.

Mr. Chairman,

05. We must ensure that this process of reform that the Group has embarked upon, is not a static one, artificially confined to implementing the HLTF's recommendations. An organisation remains relevant and useful only as long as it adapts itself continually to changing realities and is responsive to shifting needs. We strongly believe that the G-15 must be 'alive' and constantly growing in response to the dynamic and fast-changing world we live in. The responsibility for ensuring this devolves upon all of us, both individually and collectively.

06. This includes responding to the fast-paced technological changes in the world, harnessing the tremendous reach and potential of information technologies, using the power of the media in its diverse platforms, identifying important global issues on the horizon and acting proactively on them, and involving our private sector partners more closely in the Group's activities. It is critical that the Chambers of Commerce of G-15 member countries have an integral role in promoting intra G-15 business, trade and investment. Such forward-looking measures will enable the Group to play a more significant role in the international arena, commensurate with the potential and capabilities of its member countries.

Mr. Chairman,

07. On its part, India continues to remain fully committed to G-15. India has, in the past, actively participated in G-15 projects and has coordinated a number of them. We stand ready to share our development experiences and promote intra G-15 cooperation by collaborating in capacity-building, technical assistance and sectoral cooperation projects. We have a range of ongoing collaborative projects in developing countries in a variety of sectors and technical cooperation programs, that are demand-driven and result-oriented. We would be happy to replicate these templates and projects within the framework of G-15 cooperation. We also look forward to actively engaging with the Group on international development issues where we have shared concerns in areas such as reform of the international financial architecture, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in addressing the collective challenges we face.

08. Before concluding, I would like to reiterate our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Sri Lanka, the current Chair of G-15, for their excellent stewardship of the Group at a critical time, and for taking the Group forward in the right direction.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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