

**Remarks by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative of India
at
UN Day for South-South Cooperation
"Follow up to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action +40:
From Commitment to Action"**

12 September 2019

Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Fellow Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sometimes when you speak last, all that needs to be said has been said. I will not get into the normative aspects, because I agree with many of the assertions made in the G-77 statement and others. What I would like to focus on is that the challenge for all of us in the South and those of us who negotiated the documents of BAPA +40 is how do we translate these principles into action.

2. Otherwise, jocularly, some people call us the new NATO and by that I don't mean the alliance NATO but what they derisively say we are all about is "no action talk only". I am certain we would like to dispel those notions that we do not act. We act with clarity and act visibly.

3. I would like to submit three elements of what India is doing after the BAPA+40 to try and show how action imbues our thinking in terms of implementation of South-South Cooperation.

4. Number one, as many of you know, India has a reasonably developed South-South cooperation effort, which we implement bilaterally. We have been doing it for many years and our effort is to expand that. Today, we have something like 15,000 scholarships and training slots for fellow friends from the developing world and South to avail in terms of enhancing capacities, in terms of human resources development. That is something we feel needs to be increased, because knowledge is the basis of all development. We look to expand that element.

5. As India's economy expands, we are also trying to increase our development cooperation. This comes in various forms in terms of

development projects, in terms of assistance, in terms of lines of credits, etc. In this decade, as our economy has increased, our lines of credit have also increased. In a decade, we had something like US\$ 26 billion as Lines of Credit provided to the Global South. But that is done bilaterally.

6. Also, we have increased our efforts to work plurilaterally with our friends across the South. We work with African countries through the India-Africa Forum Summit; we work with Pacific small island developing states through the India-Pacific Small Island Development Summits and, for the first time, hopefully during the GA, we will also work with the leaders of the CARICOM in the India-CARICOM format. So that's our commitment to work with the Global South in ways that they find satisfactory for development purposes.

7. Number two, today it is not only about South-South Cooperation but Triangular cooperation and also building coalitions across the board. Just now the UNDP Administrator mentioned about that. We are looking at how we can build broad-based coalitions. One example was mentioned in terms of the International Solar Alliance. This is a coalition which now features 79 countries, largely from the developing world and South, but also several significant actors from beyond the South. As Mr. Chediek mentioned during the Climate Action Summit, solar energy will actually flow into the UN's meeting rooms. The Solar Park, which is being built by India on top of the UN building, will also generate electricity for all of us. So, energy action also, not only talk.

8. Apart from the International Solar Alliance, at the Climate Action Summit, we are working with another 30 countries to launch what will be called the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure. Many in the developing world suffer because the infrastructure is, at times, quickly destroyed when they are faced with nature's vagaries. So, a coalition which will work for resilient infrastructure, will be focused on building better. This will be the goal of that grouping. While it is largely from the developing world, but it will also have beyond the developing world, because we need partners. We need partners from every part.

9. And the final submission that I have is that we work here with the UN Office of South-South Cooperation on what I would call a small 'start-up' venture. It is a very small effort. If I have to describe what it encompasses, maybe in one line, I would say, it is "one for one with one".

10. What does this "one for one with one" mean? It means, one project for one country at a time, at a cost of no more than US\$ 1 million. We started this as an initial and incipient effort. Today, in less than two years, there are 37 projects, which the UN Office for South-South Cooperation is working with. In fact, as was said, there are countries also not from the global South, who are venturing to seek the support of that effort.

11. It is quintessentially southern because it adheres to all principles of South-South Cooperation. Perhaps, the most unique feature of that is its 'light touch'. It is not 'administratively heavy'. It does not request the countries asking for a project to give long project documents. It tries to leverage the UN system's abilities at project formulation and project implementation. We feel that with the reinvigorated and reformed RC system, this is the way that we can work with multilateral agencies in a cooperative manner. Doing it bilaterally is good, doing it plurilaterally is also good. But doing it multilaterally is the best.

12. So, it is with this thought that we worked with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. The effort is, we want to have more than a hundred projects in 10 years. It is now 36 projects in two years. We hope for 150 projects because US\$ 150 million is what we pledged to this fund in 10 years.

13. Each of the countries who would ask for it, at a given time, we will do one project at a time. If that project is completed by the UN agencies which are implementing that project, they will move to another project. We have nine implementing agencies from the UN working on this. We welcome others to join in this effort.

14. We also will not insist that this is only our effort. If this 'seed money' can be leveraged for other efforts that can come in, we would welcome that. Our objective is only to support and to show solidarity with our friends in the developing world.

15. These are three points that I would like to mention because in the end, as the Father of the Indian Nation, Mahatma Gandhi once said, "*It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may*

never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result."

16. South-South Cooperation is the right thing to do multilaterally; working for development is the right thing to do; and this is the small contribution that India, with its commitment to multilateralism and South-South Cooperation, is venturing to support at the UN.

Thank you very much!