

**Second High Level Conference on South South Cooperation
Informal Meeting to discuss the Outcome Document**

INDIA STATEMENT
by
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17 January, 2019

Thank You Co-Facilitators,

We would once again like to congratulate you both and compliment you for your efforts in bringing out the Zero Draft and assure you of our full support in working towards finalizing the outcome document for the upcoming conference on South-South Cooperation in about two months now.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by Palestine on behalf of G77 and would like make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

Co-Facilitators,

The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs seek a *transformation* across the entire development landscape. This transformation explicitly requires inclusive economic growth, infrastructure and jobs, access to modern energy and industrial development and innovation. These constitute the development priorities of the so-called South.

The 2030 Agenda sees the developing countries as active agents of change and not merely as passive recipients of assistance. We are happy to see these reflected in the zero draft and would like to see them further strengthened.

The scale of challenge ahead of us is clear. Nearly six decades after the completion of decolonization and the emergence of the so-called South, glaring global inequalities continue to confront us. Chronic poverty, proliferation of conflicts is a reflection that there has not been enough of cooperation among nations. The complementarity of the South-South cooperation should be leveraged to achieve more and accordingly the outcome document needs to be focused and action oriented.

South-South cooperation, by definition, is among partners sharing similar challenges and traversing broadly similar paths towards development. Its evolution has proven that the diversity of forms and flows is its greatest strength. It defies easy categorization and temptations to straitjacket it should be resisted. This is vastly different from the North-South aid that has a distinct context of historical obligations and where one set of partners is far better placed to assist.

It is, perhaps, ironical that while South-South Cooperation is being discussed in the UN, discussions on North-South aid are beyond its ambit. This also defies the spirit of universality of the new development Agenda.

Co-Facilitators,

From our perspective, Prime Minister Modi spoke to the core ideals of South-South Cooperation while inaugurating the Third India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in October 2015.

He said *“It is a partnership beyond strategic concerns and economic benefits. It is formed from the emotional bonds we share and the solidarity we feel for each other”*.

Two facets of South-South Cooperation are particularly salient.

First is that South-South Cooperation is not a new phenomenon. It already has a long and established tradition going back several decades. Indeed for countries like India, South-South Cooperation was a founding creed of the newly independent nation and our cooperation with fellow developing countries stretches back to times prior to decolonization.

At the same time, South-South Cooperation is less and less of a novelty at the fringes of development cooperation. It is indeed becoming more and more the norm and is increasingly at the centre of the development cooperation discourse.

That said, South-South Cooperation retains its distinct nature and values. The triangular cooperation which supports the southern driven partnerships should also be guided by the principles of South-South Cooperation.

If North-South Cooperation is about ‘giving’, South-South Cooperation is about ‘sharing’.

One needs to therefore avoid placing excessive emphasis on South-South Cooperation or to project it as the principal new component of a redefined Global Partnership.

It is and will remain a complement to traditional forms of North-South Cooperation. In fact it is latter which needs to be urgently scaled up and placed at the service of the new Agenda.

Second is that the evolution of South-South Cooperation over the years has proven that diversity - of forms and flows - is its greatest strength. The core idea underpinning South-South Cooperation is to share best practices and lessons with other countries traversing the same path towards development.

Co-Facilitators,

For this reason, it cannot be, and indeed should not be, put in a box. It defies easy categorization and temptations to straitjacket it should be resisted.

We also need to be cautious in overemphasizing the necessity of harmonizing standards between South-South and North-South cooperation. An approach of binding down uniform standards, if pursued obsessively, runs the risk of diluting the richness and diversity of South-South Cooperation.

The Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development has provided a comprehensive mandate on South-South Cooperation which needs to be fully respected. Institutional support of the

United Nations will also need to increase commensurate with the importance and scale of South-South Cooperation. We would welcome adequate reflection of these in the document.

We support the approach proposed by the co-facilitators on the way forward in terms of procedures and look forward to the revised draft of the outcome document next week.
