

**Leadership Roundtable, Day 1 of the Global South-South Development Expo 2022**

**“Our Common Agenda-A Ministerial Dialogue”**

**Date and Time:** 12 September 2022, 12:15-13:15 (Bangkok Time)

**Venue:** United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC), ESCAP Hall, Bangkok, Thailand

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Format: Hybrid

**Background**

In the document, “Our Common Future”, the Secretary-General of the United Nations indicated the challenges facing the world today. “The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is upending our world, threatening our health, destroying economies and livelihoods and deepening poverty and inequalities. Conflicts continue to rage and worsen. The disastrous effects of a changing climate – famine, floods, fires and extreme heat – threaten our very existence”, he said. To be able to face these challenges he suggested that the world has to find solidarity. “First, now is the time to re-embrace global solidarity and find new ways to work together for the common good. This must include a global vaccination plan to deliver vaccines against COVID-19 into the arms of the millions of people who are still denied this basic lifesaving measure. Moreover, it must include urgent and bold steps to address the triple crisis of climate disruption, biodiversity loss and pollution destroying our planet”. Furthermore, in the same document, he stated that instead of using solidarity to mitigate the problems, the contrary is happening. “Increasingly, people are turning their backs on the values of trust and solidarity in one another – the very values we need to rebuild our world and secure a better, more sustainable future for our people and our planet”.<sup>1</sup>

South-South cooperation is built on the foundation of Solidarity. The Outcome Document of the Second United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, article 8 states that, “We recognize the importance and different history and particularities of South-South cooperation, and we reaffirm our view of South-South cooperation as a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, according to the national priorities and plans”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common\\_Agenda\\_Summary\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Summary_English.pdf). Retrieved July 4, 2022

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/pga/73/wp-content/uploads/sites/53/2019/03/6March-Outcome-document-SSCooperation-6-March-2019.pdf>. Retrieved July 4, 2022

In paragraph 15 of Decision 20/1 adopted by the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation that took place in New York in June 2021, it was stated that the HLC, “welcomes the networks and exchanges between Southern institutions in developing countries, and requests the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, in close collaboration with Member States, to further foster dialogue and collaboration with and among such institutions, building upon the work undertaken at the regional, interregional and global levels with a view to advancing South-South and triangular cooperation to address pressing development challenges, including those emerging due to the COVID-19 pandemic....”.

The confluence of the UN Secretary-General’s Agenda and the fundamental approach to South-South Cooperation in working in solidarity will be the subject of a Ministerial Dialogue at the Leadership Round Table convened by the United Nations Office for South-South cooperation, the Government of Bangladesh and other partners during the upcoming Global South-South Expo.

As the dates for the convening of the Global South-South EXPO in Bangkok, Thailand, on 12-14 September approach, such development challenges, particularly the daunting task of recovery from COVID-19, still loom large for developing countries. While many member states have collaborated to come up with plans for recovery, financing of such plans remains an important barrier. There is therefore an urgent imperative to seek out solutions for such financing.

It is expected that the Ministers will discuss the solidarity needed for a strong recovery from COVID-19 in the South, the prerequisites for that in terms of policy and partnership required. Furthermore, the Ministers will discuss institutional arrangements for enhancing solidarity.

In May 2015, the Government of Bangladesh convened the “High Level Meeting on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the post Development Agenda: Financing for Development in the South and Technology Transfer” that it hosted in Dhaka”. In his address to the BAPA+40, the Hon. Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP, noted that in the meeting of 2015, Bangladesh had explored means to “to promote SSC including proposal to establish a forum of Development, Finance, Economic and Foreign Ministers of the South to discuss, dialogue, and explore the potentials as well as the critical issues of the South in the context of achieving the SDGs.”<sup>3</sup>

In (paragraph 40 (g) of the Report of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation Twentieth Session A/76/39 (1–4 June 2021)<sup>4</sup>, the call for a ministerial forum was repeated as follows:

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<sup>3</sup> [https://mofa.gov.bd/site/press\\_release/caa410a7-a313-4fc8-a052-08c113ceac15](https://mofa.gov.bd/site/press_release/caa410a7-a313-4fc8-a052-08c113ceac15)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/20th-session-of-HLC-EN.pdf>



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“Most importantly, establish a forum for finance and development and for foreign ministers of developing countries to discuss, decide and explore critical issues and strengthen weaknesses that meets at least once annually, preferably during the high-level event of the General Assembly ...”

The proposed Ministerial Dialogue during the Global South-South Expo will have following objectives.

**Objective**

The Ministerial Dialogue may focus on the following questions:

1. Was solidarity, the foundation of South-South cooperation, fully leveraged to help the Global South face up to the challenges of COVID-19?
2. What can the Global South do to be better prepared for the next pandemic or next global disaster?
3. The UN Secretary-General’s “Common Agenda” mentions challenging issues such as COVID-19, climate change, outbreaks of conflict and their very adverse consequences on human welfare. Is there evidence that South-South Cooperation can be effective in addressing them?
4. What are the partnerships and strategies required to enhance global solidarity?
5. In terms of institutionalization of the solidarity approach, a proposal for a Ministerial dialogue forum has been on the table for a while, spearheaded by Bangladesh and like-minded countries. What needs to be done to make this a reality, and

**Format of Event**

The Dialogue design will be an interactive discourse held Davos-style. An experienced moderator will facilitate an informal dialogue, with time available for questions from the audience. The Leadership Roundtable will be one hour.

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

Moderator of event: **Ms. Patchari Raksawong**

- **12:15 pm** – Introduction of session by **Mr. Denis Nkala**, Chief of Intergovernmental and UN Systems Affairs at the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)



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- **12:18 pm** – Moderator opens session
- **12:20 pm** – Welcoming/Opening remarks
  - 1- **H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen**, M.P. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and co-convenor of the Leadership Round Table (joining virtually) (3 min)
- **12:25 pm** – Statements by High-level Representatives
  - 2- **H.E. Mr. Santiago Andrés Cafiero**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina and President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (video message).
  - 3- **H.E. Ms. Nancy Tembo**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malawi and Chair of Group of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (video message)
  - 4- **Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana**, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
  - 5- **Ms. Rabab Fatima**, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS) (video message)
- **12:50 pm** – Q&A
- **01:15pm** – Closing Remarks by **Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang**, Head of Delegation, UNOSSC