



United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation

10 September 2020

Statement by H.E. Kshenuka Senewiratne, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations

Your Excellency Tijjani Mohammed Bande, President of the 74th session of the General Assembly,

Excellencies, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The initiative of the UN Office of the South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) to organize this Meeting is much appreciated. Sri Lanka aligns with the Statement delivered by the Chair of the Group of 77 & China.

As we commemorate the 42nd Anniversary of the adoption of the BAPA this year, the world is regrettably facing unimaginable devastation and suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has mutated from health to economic, humanitarian, and social crises.

Excellencies,

Our hard-won development goals are well under threat of reversal due to the pandemic, thereby exacerbating the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the South. Global inequalities in the areas of the digital divide, trade and gaps in the access to education and health care facilities, and increasing vulnerability to external shocks have now been exposed with the onset of the pandemic. In this context, it is pivotal to explore partnerships to overcome these challenges through, technological transfer, technical assistance, negotiations on equal status, and sharing of lessons learnt, expertise and skills. While South-South Cooperation can make an important contribution initially to this end, it would need to be complemented by North-South Cooperation in order to derive the best.

As we have reached the Decade of Action, the world warrants urgent action by stakeholders at all levels to mitigate the health, economic and social consequences arising from the pandemic, and formulate strategies to move ahead. Time and again, South-South Cooperation has offered notable solutions to our shared development challenges. As such, it has a crucial role to play in the current context, driven by the spirit of solidarity of the South.

However, it is important to underline that, South-South Cooperation is not a substitute for Official Development Assistance, or replace the need for responsibilities of the global North, which are crucial for financing for development. Triangular cooperation also adds value to South-South cooperation by enabling developing countries to widen the source and access more resources, expertise and capacities.

Sri Lanka firmly believes in the potential of South-South Cooperation in driving our development and resilience to face the challenges ahead. My country has successfully curtailed the spread of the virus by means of contact tracing and cluster treatment, thereby limiting the number of deaths only to 12 and positive cases to 3140, in the entire island, resulting from Universal Health Care access to all citizens. Sri Lanka stands ready to share our best practices of mitigating efforts, if required, as a means of cooperation within the South.

Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the BAPA+40 outcome document, which also facilitates regional integration through Triangular Cooperation for collective actions, in overcoming our common challenges in strategizing for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Such inclusive partnerships in the global South are a significant instrument to help improve the mutually beneficial cooperation that has been an important aspect of Sri Lanka's development initiatives. In this context, permit me to recall, Sri Lanka's three-year project of triangular South Cooperation, initiated last year, to promote sustainable energy solutions focused on biogas and solar technologies.

Further, at the regional level, the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have sought to contain the pandemic, through a collective response, including the establishment of a Fund with voluntary contributions, to finance this initiative. Subsequently, health professionals and trade officials of the region have also been contributing to this momentum. Such regional and national level responses of the South should be reviewed and acknowledged during the 20th session of the High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation in December this year.

As we work collectively to recover better, it is imperative to do so, stronger, cleaner, greener and in a more resilient manner. In this context, UNOSSC needs to facilitate cooperation and partnerships with the countries, and incorporate environmental aspects in their responses. To this end, Sri Lanka is pleased to share its experience on mangrove conservation that promotes economic prosperity in coastal communities such as small fishing villages, fostering sustainable livelihoods that are environmentally resilient and sequestering carbon.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, while acknowledging the valuable work of the UNOSSC, led by the Secretary General's Envoy on South-South Cooperation, Sri Lanka calls upon the United Nations Development System to maximize its efforts in assisting South-South and Triangular cooperation for the developing countries at their request. This could be in a manner to build human and institutional capacities needed to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes, which would facilitate to build back better. We need to continue our collective voice and energies for the betterment of the South.

Happy UN Day for South South Cooperation

I thank you.