Concept Note

Webinar: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Context of COVID-19 — Lessons, Experiences and Insights for the Future of Development Cooperation

General Information:
- Date: September 15th
- Time: 9:00 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. New York time
- Venue: Online (Over Zoom)
- Co-organizers: The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the South Centre
- Overall theme: The event will provide an opportunity to discuss early lessons learned and share experiences from the development cooperation scene in the context of the ongoing pandemic, while looking into specific insights about how South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTrC) has been used so far, and how it can further be strengthened to benefit development cooperation in times of severe and sudden external shocks in the future.

Background
1) The entire world is continuing to deal with the global COVID-19 pandemic and the number of people affected by the coronavirus is continuing to rise on a daily basis. The high rate of contagion is putting immense stress on healthcare systems across the world.

2) Many governments have instituted measures to slow the rate of contagion, ranging from localized lockdowns, wearing of masks and observing social distancing to restricting access to collective spaces such as offices, shopping malls and entertainment spaces. Despite these measures, many countries have struggled to contain the pandemic, with the number of cases rising again in countries which had previously reported declining new cases.

3) It is important to note that, in addition to the impact on the healthcare system, the pandemic is also causing unprecedented damage to the global economy, raising concerns on longer-term effects on the progress many countries had made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is now apparent that a lot of this progress in terms of reducing poverty, alleviating hunger and strengthening health systems has been reversed\(^1\), which will lead to a readjustment of priorities in the “Decade of Action”.

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4) Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic at the national level, majority of the countries of both the global South and the North, also pulled together to address the fallout from this crisis, though it fell short of expectations. International cooperation agencies, under the direction of their governments, airlifted planes full of supplies to many countries while also making available their emergency response teams, as well as their private sector players, to address immediate needs of countries in critical need.

5) Needless to say, since the start of the pandemic, many challenges emerged, responses were crafted, and lessons have been learnt with respect to various aspects of SSTrC in particular and development cooperation in general.

6) These early lessons, experiences and insights, if studied and analyzed well, can provide a vital source of knowledge to enhance SSTrC approaches and mechanisms, particularly in the context of responding to emergencies, such as the ongoing pandemic, as well as in building resilience in the medium to long-term, and to reduce the negative impacts of emergency situations.

7) With this overall purpose in mind, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the South Centre will be co-organizing a webinar entitled “South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Context of COVID-19 — Lessons, Experiences and Insights for the Future of Development Cooperation”.

8) In addition to speakers from the three co-organizers, speakers from other multilateral development partners, as well as bilateral and technical cooperation agencies from the different regions of the world will be invited to this webinar. The draft program of the event is as follows.

Proposed Programme of Webinar

9.00 – 9.30 Welcoming Remarks and Setting the Context

➢ Content: During this session, speakers from the co-organizers will share welcoming remarks and provide introductory statements to set the context for this event, its purpose and intended outcomes.

➢ Speakers:

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Mr. Jorge Chediek, UNOSSC Director and the Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation
Mr. Amadou Thierno Diallo, Director General, Global Practices, IsDB
Dr. Carlos Correa, Executive Director, South Centre

9.30 – 10.15 **Session 1: Challenges, Experiences and Lessons Learned from National and Regional Cooperation Agencies/Institutions in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic**

➢ **Content**: The first session will provide an opportunity for various cooperation agencies representing different regions to share their experiences during the COVID-19 crisis. They will also share their perspectives on the ongoing challenges as well as opportunities on the ground in addition to insights about how lessons learned from these experiences can help further strengthen South-South Cooperation in particular, and development cooperation in general.

10.15 – 11.00 **Session 2: How Should SSTrC and Development Cooperation Evolve and Enhance in Light of the Current Pandemic and the Decade of Action?**

➢ **Content**: The second session will be an opportunity to hear from regional development institutions about their insights and perspectives on how development cooperation can be further enhanced in light of the current pandemic as well as in the context of the “Decade of Action” for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

11.00 – 11.30 **Discussion with Participants**

11.30 – 11.40 **Closing Remarks**

Logistical Matters of the Webinar

9) This event will be organized over Zoom. Each session will be lead by a moderator. All participants will be required to have their microphones turned off while the panelists provide their remarks and presentations. Participants will be asked to type their questions in the chat room in Zoom and the moderators will pose the questions to the panelists during the first two sessions.

10) During the discussion session, anyone willing to pose a question or share a statement will type “Intervention” in the chat box and the moderator will call on them to unmute their microphones and share their statements or questions.

11) The webinar will be conducted in English.
Participation Registration
12) Online registration is required.
   - Webinar Registration Link: https://undp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CRLmS3FEQJ6f6NurB1XXhA

Focal points from Co-Organizers

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