

Concept Note

High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation (DG Forum) 2018 to be held during the Global South-South Development Expo

General information:

- Date: 30 November 2018
- Time: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Venue: United Nations Conference Building in New York (Conference Room 1)
- Co-organizers: The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- Overall theme: Towards the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40): The Role of Practitioners in Scaling up the Impact of South-South and Triangular Cooperation for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Background

The prominent contribution of South-South cooperation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals has brought significant changes to the international cooperation landscape. The increasing role of South-South cooperation has been recognized by all major global agreements adopted by the international community on sustainable development and related issues, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Addis-Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, among others.

The second United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 20 to 22 March 2019 (BAPA+40), marking the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, will be a good occasion to reflect on innovative strategies that will consolidate even further and leverage the role and contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation in achieving national, regional and global sustainable development objectives.

South-South cooperation has increased in scale and scope along the diversification of its activities and the multiplication of its actors. It becomes critical, in this context, to strengthen its institutional set up at all levels, nationally, regionally and globally, to better support, coordinate and bring more coherence to South-South partnerships and activities. Many countries of the South have established dedicated institutions or mechanisms dealing specifically with South-South cooperation and have accumulated significant experience that could be shared with other countries.

The annual DG Forum seeks to bring together Directors General from cooperation agencies of national governments of the South and other partners, to provide an opportunity for them to exchange views on South-South and triangular cooperation approaches and methodologies, as well as to serve as match-making platform for further strengthening partnership. The Forum is a multi-stakeholder platform for South-South cooperation that offers an opportunity to make proposals for further mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation and is open to all interested actors involved in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation.

The 2018 edition of the DG Forum, celebrating ten-year anniversary since the first one held in 2008 in New York, taking place within the process leading up to the BAPA+40, will give the participants, representing Member states and other actors, an opportunity to exchange views and ideas about issues in relation with the themes of the Conference.

The overall theme of 2018 DG Forum is “Towards the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40): The Role of Practitioners in Scaling up the Impact of South-South and Triangular Cooperation for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. This year, the reinforcement of the global institutional arrangement for South-South and triangular cooperation is a topic that requires adequate attention from policy makers and practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation, given the increasing demand for coordination and partnership at the global level.

An important aspect closely linked to the increased institutionalization of South-South cooperation is related to the growing relevance of reporting on its impact with the ultimate objective to promote the sharing of experiences and best practices and the fostering of partnerships. Many developing countries are already reporting on their South-South cooperation activities, while adopting diverse approaches and methodologies. It is also important to have a global platform where countries through the exercise of reporting voluntarily can share their experiences, including highlighting successes, challenges and lessons learned, with the aim to scale up the role of South-South cooperation for sustainable development and to catalyze South-South and triangular partnerships.

South-South cooperation provides significant impetus to sub-regional, intraregional and interregional cooperation. The pooling of efforts, the coordination of policies and strategies at the regional and interregional levels among countries of the South contribute to their endeavors toward attaining the SDGs and the regionally agreed development goals. In this regard, the institutionalization and reporting on the regional South-South cooperation activities will contribute to the peer-learning process among the regions of the South.

Furthermore, it should be highlighted that the United Nations is playing an important role in supporting the efforts of Members States and other actors in catalyzing the contribution of South-South cooperation to sustainable development. A growing number of UN entities are mainstreaming South-South cooperation in their corporate strategies and programmes, and also allocating dedicated funds and human resources to boost their role in South-South and triangular cooperation.

The session theme of the 2018 edition of the DG Forum:

Opening session

Session 1: Institutionalization of South-South cooperation

Institutionalization of South-South cooperation is critical to better coordinate and harmonize South-South cooperation activities, nationally, regionally and globally in order to achieve better results for sustainable development.

The panelists will present their national policy instruments as well as their institutional, operational and legal frameworks that guide and govern their South-South and triangular cooperation. The session will include discussion of capacity development in institutional arrangement. In addition, the panelists will share their views on the ways to strengthen the UN arrangement for South-South and triangular cooperation, especially the UNOSSC given its role in facilitating, coordinating and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation globally and with the UN system.

Session 2: Reporting on the impact of South-South and triangular cooperating: the sharing of experiences and the promotion of partnership

The session will focus on the merit of reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation as a means to facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices among the actors of South-South and triangular cooperation as well as a way to foster partnerships.

The panelists will share their national experiences on reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation. They will also exchange views on the importance of having a global mechanism of voluntary national reporting to promote peer learning and partnerships among the actors of South-South and triangular cooperation.

Session 3: The role of the United Nations in scaling up South-South and triangular cooperation

The UN system is strengthening its institutional and operational support to South-South and triangular cooperation as important modalities of cooperation for the achievement of the SDGs and other international development goals.

The session will highlight how the UN system is providing its support to scale up the role and contribution of Southern and triangular partnerships. It will also be an occasion to exchange views, between representatives of Member states and UN system, on the ways how to enhance the coordination among UN entities when intervening in South-South and triangular cooperation activities.

Session 4: South-South cooperation: regional perspectives

Regional and interregional partnerships and initiatives among the countries have contributed significantly to global efforts for the achievement of the SDGs. Different regions of the South have

established diverse mechanisms and institutions to facilitate development cooperation among their members.

Participants in this session will highlight and feature the experiences of different regions of the South in promoting cooperation for sustainable development, including in reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation activities, and how they can learn from each other's experiences.

Session 5: Road to the BAPA+40

This session will highlight the takeaways and ideas generated during the discussions of this edition of the DGF that can serve as inputs for the preparation of the BAPA+40, more specifically for the consultations on its outcome.

Closing session

Participation registration:

- Online registration for the DG Forum is required.
Link: <http://www.expo.unsouthsouth.org/2018-new-york/programme/dg-forum/dg-forum-registration/>

Focal point contact details

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| Overall Coordinator | Tarik Iziraren, Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnership, UNOSSC |
| Communications Focal Points | Tarik Iziraren, Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnership, UNOSSC Yoko Shimura, Programme Analyst, UNOSSC |
| Email addresses | unosscc.dgspace@unosscc.org , tarik.iziraren@unosscc.org , yoko.shimura@unosscc.org |
| Phone numbers | 1 212 906 5609, 1 212 906 3642 |