



GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
GENEVA

**Opening Remarks delivered by
H.E. MS. CECILIA B. REBONG
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines and
Chairperson of the Group of 77 and China in Geneva
at the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) and the UNCTAD
1st Joint Technical Working Group
Palais des Nations, 9:00am, 17-18 December 2015**

**Defining, measuring and reporting South-South Cooperation:
Accounting grants, debt, technical assistance and in-kind support between
developing countries**

Ms. Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, South African Institute for International Affairs,
Mr. Steve MacFeely and Mr. Igor Paunovic, UNCTAD,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues from the Network of Southern Think Tanks,

As the year draws to a close, we are ending what was a truly watershed moment in the field of development. We started with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in July, followed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September, and we are closing the year with the closely related meetings, namely COP 21 and MC 10. We begin the new-year with the difficult, but not insurmountable task of implementing all the landmark agreements of this year. I believe that the two-day seminar we are having is a manifestation of our eagerness to get underway and begin the implementation process. The discussions you will have are closely related to the AAAA, which discussed the issue of South-South Cooperation, and of course the extremely ambitious and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, a crucial element in meeting these landmark agreements is the monitoring and analysis of the progress of countries as they strive to meet the development goals. Hence, the relevance and crucial nature of this 1st UNCTAD-NeST Joint Technical Working Group.

The Group of 77 and China gives importance to the issue of South-South cooperation and the need for proper data analysis of this form of cooperation that would enable the countries from the developing South to learn more about aid flows and see how it can be used so that we may achieve all our development goals including the ambitious and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

At the outset the Group of 77 and China wishes to point out that North-South cooperation is still at the core of the global partnership for development and remains critical in overcoming global development disparities. ODA represents one of the major sources of financing for the development of many developing countries. North-South cooperation should provide new and additional resources. Climate finance and debt relief should be counted separately from ODA commitments. FDI is an important element to achieve economic growth and development, and can pave the way for the transfer of skills and technology when oriented to building productive capacities.

Looking at South-South cooperation, I wish to emphasize that this form of cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among developing countries. Stronger ties among developing countries will continue to have a positive impact on trade and financial flows and the technological capabilities and economic growth in these countries. South-South cooperation can serve as one of the vehicles in support of the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This mode of cooperation, among others, can assist developing countries in establishing development paths that promote equity, openness, comprehensiveness, and innovation. The Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize, however, that South-South cooperation remains complementary to and not a substitute for North-South cooperation.

Given the importance of South-South cooperation, there must be a way of monitoring it and analyzing the data. This analysis is crucial if we are to achieve our development goals. Just to recall that in 2013, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons published their views on what was then referred to as the “Post-2015 Development Agenda.” In their report they identified a number of what they

described as Transformative Shifts, one of which was the need for improved data availability and to that end they called for a “Data Revolution.”

Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon supported this call, and established an Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. In November of 2014 the Independent Expert Advisory Group published their report “A World that Counts.” There are many recommendations in this report, but there are 2 key underlying messages: (1) the need for improved data availability and access, and (2) the need to align data and decision cycles.

In the coming year, countries will begin work on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As we speak, the global statistical community, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division is agreeing on a set of indicators designed to measure progress towards these ambitious goals and targets. Data availability will be a key issue underpinning the success of this agenda. This is immediately relevant to the work of our meeting, in particular to Goal 17, which UNCTAD has the responsibility for coordinating. Targets 17.6 and 17.9 deal specifically with South-South cooperation. Meanwhile, Target 17.4 deals with debt sustainability for developing countries. So the work plan that you will propose here will make a direct contribution to the realization of these targets.

The provision of South-South Cooperation has become important, and will become more important, as time goes on. UNCTAD estimates that the shortfall in ODA since the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, stands now at over 2 Trillion USD. Population projections anticipate that the global population will grow by more than 30% over the next 35 years, to reach almost 10 billion people. That growth will occur in the developing world, while populations in much of the developed world, but in particular in Europe, will begin to shrink. This may have stark implications for many developed economies and also the provision of traditional North-South aid.

In November of this year, I as Chair of the Group, wrote to the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, in anticipation of the forthcoming UNCTAD XIV conference and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, asking that UNCTAD develop further their statistical capacity in the very topics you will be discussing at this meeting. From a Group of 77 and China perspective, UNCTAD has long been advocating the importance of such issues. Therefore the Group fully supports this work and supports UNCTAD's involvement and hosting of such a database.

I wish you all a fruitful meeting. Thank you.