

GSSD Expo 2022 – Report for the side event on Measuring South-South cooperation to mobilize financing for SDGs

13 September 2022, 14:20 – 15h35 Bangkok time

I. General Context

The primary objective of the side event on “Measuring South-South Cooperation to mobilize financing for the SDGs” was to showcase the new conceptual framework to measure South-South Cooperation (SSC). This framework has been recently developed by the United Nations Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), which specifically established a subgroup on SSC in this regard, including Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, India (chair), Mexico, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Russian Federation and OECD were observers, and UNCTAD provided the Secretariat.

The development of the framework follows up on the long-standing mandate of the UN on measuring SSC, as evidenced in the Buenos Aires Action Plan (1978), the two United Nations High-Level Conferences on South-South Cooperation (Nairobi 2009 and Buenos Aires 2019), and the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Not only will the framework enable the reporting of many sub-items of the new SDG indicator 17.3.1 but it is also meant to provide data at the international level on all aspects of SSC, as mutually agreed by countries of the South, including non-financial and/or non-monetized modalities of SSC. These data are expected to quantify and further highlight the key role of SSC in fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the South as well as assist countries from the Global South and their partners in implementing evidence-based policies aiming at upscaling resource mobilization for the SDGs.

The side event presented the framework on SSC and the new SDG indicator 17.3.1 and the institutional and scientific processes underpinning them. It was also an opportunity for UNCTAD, co-custodian of SDG indicator 17.3.1 with OECD, to share insights on prospects, especially on the technical refinement and implementation of the framework. UNCTAD was indeed organizing this session as part of its role to coordinate future testing and refinement of the framework, and global reporting and capacity building based on it. In several instances during the side-event, UNCTAD, UNSD, and pioneering countries of the South pledged other countries of the South to join the ongoing pilots aimed at testing and refining the framework as requested by the IAEG SDGs, either as pioneering countries willing to share their experience or beneficiary countries meant to receive technical assistance to build or strengthen their own capacity in measuring SSC.

The second main objective was to spearhead dialogue to empower Southern countries to report their own data for global debates related to development support and consider how the indicator will help manage and mobilize resources for the recovery from the pandemic and progress towards the 2030 Agenda. Countries, including both providers and recipients of SSC, as well as supporting multilateral institutions, were invited to share their experiences and expectations in these areas.

II. Solutions/cases presented

The moderator of the session **Rachid Bouhia, Economic Affairs Officer in UNCTAD Statistics**, presented the main objectives of the meeting as described above, insisting on the call to countries from the South for joining the efforts led by UNCTAD to test and refine the conceptual framework on SSC.

Ms. Anu Peltola, Acting Director of UNCTAD Statistics, delivered the opening remarks on behalf of UNCTAD Secretary General. She emphasized that partly due to the lack of data, the tremendous potential is of SSC too often underestimated or overlooked in the development narrative at the international level, adding the framework would pave the way for redefining the standards on international development aid towards what they should be, taking into better consideration the experience and the needs of both Southern providers and recipients. She reiterated that UNCTAD was firmly committed to strengthening national capacities to measure South-South cooperation in a country-led process and to ensure that the SDG indicator is informed also with data measured by the global South.

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of United Nations Statistics Division, mentioned that the development of this initial conceptual framework for South-South cooperation already gained wide recognition and praise within the United Nations. He noted that South-South cooperation continued to expand in scope, volume, and geographical reach and that Southern providers should continue further work on its measurement. He strongly urged countries to support and participate in efforts to set up mechanisms in their countries to compile and report the required information and to participate in the global reporting on this new indicator through UNCTAD according to the agreed conceptual framework on South-South cooperation.

Mr. Sukbhir Singh, chair of the IAEG-SDGs subgroup on SSC, presented the framework on SSC in further detail. Considering different views among developing countries on the methods that could be applied to quantify SSC and to allow flexibility to develop country-led systems (as in para 25 of A/RES/73/291), the framework presents three sets of quantifiable items, that can be independently measured and reported:

- Group A: Financial modalities of South-South cooperation (reported directly through monetization)
- Group B: Non-financial modalities of South-South cooperation (including items that may be monetized)
- Group C: Non-financial modalities of South-South cooperation (The same items as in Group B, subject to quantification by non-monetized methods)

Mr. Muntasir Majdoub Hamid Ahmed, Technical Cooperation Officer at the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), shared the lessons learned from the experience of the IsDB in fostering national ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation. IsDB identified 7 main pillars in this regard. These ecosystems provide a structuring basis for the measurement of South-South Cooperation which can help countries engaging in such a venture for the first time.

H.E Mr. Bernardo Córdova Tello, Ambassador of Mexico to Thailand, opened the segment of the meeting specifically dedicated to countries' experiences. He mentioned that the measurement of south-south cooperation was not a new agenda in his country. One milestone in this agenda was the fact that in 2018, Mexico and Brazil began to discuss a methodology that would be able to measure the South-

South Cooperation of Latin America and the Caribbean in a politically consensual and internationally comparable way. In 2011, the Mexican Law of International Cooperation for Development (LCID) established the creation of a National Registry of International Cooperation for Development (RENCID) which is fed by information registered by Mexican institutions and functions as an information bank.

Ms. Viviana Manrique, General Director of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation in Colombia, took stock of Colombia's progress in measuring SSC, including a recent pilot study in collaboration with seven other countries of the global South, the establishment of an Observatory for International cooperation gathering experts from various countries and the release of a virtual course. Ms. Manrique added that these activities further revealed the need for strengthening the national statistical capacity in this area.

Ms. Andreia Rigueira, Coordinator for Planning and Communications at the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), noted that developing countries had taken the lead in the development of a method to quantify SSC considering its particularities, overcoming a void that has been filled by other international actors based on criteria conceived for other realities. She called on developing countries with further experience to support other countries with limited practice or means to engage in the measurement of South-South cooperation. She invited all developing countries to join the initiative led by UNCTAD.

Mr. William Maundu Munyoli, Senior Economist in Kenya's State Department for Planning, highlighted that his country accelerated its engagement in SSC after hosting the UN Conference on SSC in 2009. Over the years, Kenya has attempted to track SSC through institutional profiles that capture cooperation from both provider and recipient perspectives on a quarterly basis. The initiative has however faced challenges due to a lack of a solid institutional arrangement for managing SSC.

III. Moving Forward

In 2023, UNCTAD will launch a global capacity development programme with the UN Regional Commissions to test the initial framework with countries, provide training and study tours for peer learning, and share experience and tools for data collection. The selection of beneficiary countries is still under review. UNCTAD Secretary General has also requested the creation of an advisory board, led by and consisting of Southern countries, to steer capacity and methodology development ensuring country ownership. UNCTAD will develop and set up a global data reporting platform for the countries of the South to enable you to report your data to the SDG indicator.

The side event highlighted a very strong commitment by countries to supporting the efforts by the UN in refining and testing the framework for measuring SSC in order to enable fast and wide reporting for SDG indicator 17.3.1. Ambassador Córdova Tello expressed Mexico's gratitude and support to UNCTAD as the custodian agency for the global reporting of data on SSC. Ms. Viviana Manrique encouraged all her colleagues in the Global South to join UNCTAD's efforts in finalizing and implementing the new framework for SSC. Ms. Andreia Rigueira invited all developing countries to join the initiative led by UNCTAD. The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) has expressed its willingness to back the future implementation of UNCTAD's project aimed at providing support to developing countries

The IsdB will contribute to the UN development programme with presentations on their framework on national ecosystems for SSC as well as the good process of developing SSC intervention and with two

study visits by officials from IsDB member countries to other IsDB member countries to learn about measuring SSC and administrating SSC in general.

IV. Annexes

Speakers

- **Opening by UNCTAD Secretary-General (5 min)**
- *Ms Anu Peltola, Acting Director of UNCTAD Statistics on behalf of Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, UNCTAD Secretary General*
- **New SDG indicator – central for progress towards the SDGs (5 min)**
- *Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UN Statistics Division, UNDESA*
- **Conceptual framework on South-South Cooperation (5 min)**
- *Mr. Sukhbir Singh, Chair of the IAEG-SDGs subgroup on SSC, India*
- **National mechanisms for South-South cooperation (10 min)**
- *Mr. Muntasir Majdoub Hamid Ahmed, Technical Cooperation Officer, Islamic Development Bank*
- **Country experience in the measurement of South-South cooperation (5 min each)**
 - Mr. Bernardo Córdova Tello, Ambassador of Mexico to Thailand*
 - Ms. Viviana Manrique, Director General, Agencia Presidencial de Cooperación Internacional, Colombia*
 - Ms. Andreia Rigueira, Coordinator for Planning and Communications, Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)*
 - Mr. William Maundu Munyoli, Senior Economist, State Department for Planning, Kenya*

[Recording of the meeting](#)

[Finalized draft indicator proposal for SDG Target 17.3 and Reporting](#)

[Note on the outcome of the subgroup on SSC](#)