



South-South Cooperation for Economic Integration: UNCTAD's Platform

21st March 2018 (1-3pm), PB Torre-MARQ, Buenos Aires
Side Event of Unit of Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries
ECIDC-UNCTAD

Main Objective of the Event:

South-South economic integration can provide unique opportunities to the developing countries to structurally transform and deliver on their sustainable development goals, but these opportunities come with associated challenges. Developing countries can greatly benefit by sharing their policies and experiences in this area. UNCTAD under its project on “South-South Integration and the SDGs: Enhancing Structural Transformation in Key Partner Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative” is launching a Platform to share policies and experiences of BRI partner countries in the key areas of investment, trade, finance, debt, and technology. The Platform will also share learning from China’s own development experiences in regional value chains, financial development and progressing as a digital economy.

Background:

Even after achieving better growth performance since the turn of the millennium, developing countries still face multiple challenges in economic and social advancement, which requires appropriate policy responses at all levels. In this regard, experience and knowledge sharing has become increasingly important as it can improve policymaking capacity of developing countries. It can also help countries identify key drivers of structural transformation and external vulnerabilities in sustaining dynamic growth. In the 2030 Agenda, SDG 17.16 emphasizes “enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources”. UN Security Council Resolution (S/RES/2344 (2017)) also calls for “further efforts to strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation, including ... the Belt and Road Initiative”. In contrast to learning experiences from developed countries, learning among developing countries can play a distinctive role, given the similar challenges and opportunities faced by the South in today’s globalized world. In recent years, trade, FDI, debt and aid flows show that South-South Economic Cooperation has expanded rapidly, but the potential of South-South learning in terms of policy making knowledge and experience is yet to be fully realized. Against this backdrop, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) initiated by China provides a unique opportunity to facilitate knowledge and experience sharing among southern countries in building a community of common destiny.

UNCTAD has conducted development-oriented research and analysis on the key policy issues for over half a century, including macroeconomic framework, development and trade strategy, debt management and development finance. In 2009, UNCTAD set up a Unit on Economic Cooperation

and Integration among Developing countries (ECIDC) to reinforce UNCTAD's work on South-South cooperation. Since then the Unit has helped many developing countries and regional blocs to progress on major international development through SSC. Against the backdrop of 2030 Agenda and the potential opportunity offered by BRI in exchanging policy experiences among developing countries, UNCTAD has initiated a 'BRI Platform' to facilitate such exchange. This Platform will facilitate experience sharing among BRI partner countries in a number of ways including a 'virtual e-platform', facilitating one to one dialogue, BRI Partner countries meetings and a Forum to discuss evidence-based research and case studies in the identified areas for capacity building. China's own experience with policy making to foster growth and economic development will also be shared with the participating countries.

Questions to be addressed:

- How does the international community foster an enabling environment to encourage knowledge and experiences sharing among developing countries?
- What kind of opportunities does BRI provide to partner countries in terms of sharing of knowledge and policy experiences?
- What role can UN system and other international organizations play in facilitating such peer-learning process and strengthening its effectiveness?
- What major components should be included in the UNCTAD's Platform? And what should be the priorities in terms of experience sharing?
- Concerning the virtual platform, what should be its the structure and function?

Proposed Panelists for the Roundtable:

- Representative from UNCTAD
- Representative from China
- Representative from BRI Partner country
- Representative from BRI Partner country
- Representative from BRI Partner country
- Representative from BRI Partner country
- Representative from BRI Partner country
- Open house discussions

Concrete Outcome of the Event

The event will build awareness policies and experiences of China and its BRI partner countries in the areas of trade, finance, FDI and digital economy. Through discussions among the panelist and interactions, the event will provide inputs to building a successful and sustainable platform for sharing of policies and experiences among BRI partner countries to enhance South-South economic integration.

Registration

The panelists and other participants of this event require approved registration to Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40). The registration information can be found at the webpage <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/bapa40/> .