

**South-South Cooperation in Human Settlements Special Session
Fifth Session of the World Urban Forum
Theme-The Right to the City-Bridging the Urban Divide
Rio de Janeiro 24 March 2010**

Introduction to Theme

The theme for the forum is *The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide*. Half of the world's population lives in towns and cities with the urban poor constituting a majority of urban dwellers. The theme for the fifth session of the forum recognizes the rights of the urban poor and promotes their inclusion and equal access to the city. The poor should live in "dignity and in safety" and should also benefit from the city. The forum will stress the role of the government in ensuring the rights of the poor are guaranteed.

In line with the UN-HABITAT's *2010-2011 State of the World's Cities Report: Bridging the Urban Divide*, the main topics of the fifth World Urban Forum are: *The Right to the City, Bridging the Urban Divide, Equal Access to Shelter, Cultural Diversity and Identity in Cities, Governance and Participation* and *Inclusive Sustainable Urbanisation*. In addition to these topics, discussions will also look at urban income gaps, inequality, participatory governance, democracy and women-friendly cities. Under the Millennium Development Goals for poverty reduction by the year 2015, governments agreed that these combined with good urban planning, and good governance are the best way forward for a better urban future.

South-South Cooperation & Triangular Cooperation in Support of Sustainable Urbanisation

Urbanisation rates are highest in pace and scale in the developing world where a projected 2 billion urban dwellers will be added over the next 20 years. UN-HABITAT estimates that of the one billion urban dwellers living in slums, 94 per cent are from the South. In the Least Developed Countries, UN-HABITAT estimates that 78 per cent of urban population lives in slums and 42 per cent of all developing country residents are slum dwellers.

In light of these trends, UN-HABITAT is committed to promoting South-South and triangular cooperation to achieve key Millennium Development Goals in "sustainable urbanization" and "shelter for all". UN agencies agree on a "strong commitment to South-South cooperation and see it as a critical tool for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs". As adopted in the Habitat Agenda by member states, cooperation between countries in the South is encouraged through technology, information, expertise and lesson sharing.

From promoting technical cooperation among developing countries, a few decades ago, the idea of South-South Cooperation has come a long way. In a general context, it remains a growing and dynamic phenomenon for confronting the challenges faced by developing countries. Most importantly, it is a manifestation of solidarity and collective self-reliance for developing countries.

However, it must be emphasized that South-South Cooperation is not a substitute for North-South cooperation. The North has an obligation both in their own national interests but also in the interest of global harmony, equity and development, to fulfill their commitment through North-South cooperation.

On the local government level, South-South Cooperation and North-South have taken momentum in the recent years. For both Metropolis and United Cities and local Governments (UCLG), Triangular Cooperation is at the heart of intensive efforts at the local level towards a tangible "city diplomacy" in the context of decentralized cooperation that enables local authorities and their associations to claim their rightful place as "actors of change" within the national, regional and international arenas. This - obviously, stresses the urgent need for stronger local democracy and economy, as well as improved local finances and taxes regulations to empower local authorities and their associations in their day-to-day management of the world's cities. This includes sharing of experience, capacity building and strengthening of the regional cooperation in this context the International Guidelines on Decentralisation and access to back services for All will be an excellent vehicle to implement the triangular and South-South Cooperation.

UN-HABITAT and partner commitment to South-South and Triangular Cooperation

UN-HABITAT has held a number of activities promoting South-South Cooperation. Among these are the meetings of housing and urban development ministers in the three regions where UN-HABITAT is active: Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. The African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD), and the Assembly of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development of LAC (MINURVI) serve as a platform for policy dialogue, lesson sharing in slum improvement and slum prevention and act as a mechanism for strengthening UN-HABITAT South-South and triangular cooperation.

Furthermore, UN-HABITAT has deployed thirty-nine Habitat Programme Managers throughout Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia to not only elaborate UN-HABITAT activities at country level but to also integrate South-South Cooperation in UN-HABITAT, UNDP and partner organizations within and outside the UN system. By using its expertise, experience, human resources and centres existing in the South such as the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation and the regional ministerial bodies, HPMs are instrumental in representing UN-HABITAT's commitment to South-South Cooperation.

UN-HABITAT has actively been contributing to further cooperation through its Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme. The programme has resulted in the creation of a Best Practices Database which documents experiences and best practices from more than one-hundred countries in both the North and South.

UN-HABITAT also supports triangular cooperation through its technical cooperation activities designed to improve trans-boundary cooperation. An example is the Lake Victoria Basin Initiative which brings together countries in East Africa to discuss the ecosystem of the Lake Victoria basin which addresses the water and sanitation needs of the thirty million people living around the lake.

UN-HABITAT has co-hosted five conferences in Asia on sustainable urban development where government representatives, finance institutions, and UN agencies have been brought together to share experiences in the formulation and development of housing policies.

On a bi-lateral level, there have been a number of South-South and North-South agreements between countries particularly between South American and African countries. The second Africa South America Summit was just held in September 2009 where leaders from South American and

African countries gathered in Venezuela to pledge their commitment to promoting South-South Cooperation between the two regions. With support from the African Union and the Union of South American Nations, countries from both regions have agreed to exchange experiences and increase cooperation.

Another example for cooperation between Latin American and African Countries can be seen through the educational programs initiated by the Cuban Government. Since the 1960s Cuba has been providing scholarships to young African students to study different specialties at mid and higher levels in Cuba, mainly from the Republic of Guinea, Congo, and later Angola. By the academic year 2008-2009 the number of African students added up to more than 50 % of all foreign graduates in Cuba. Also, the Cuban Government has participated in establishing three medical faculties in Eritrea, Tanzania and Equatorial Guinea where Cuban professors are teaching. Up to today, around 500 young students are trained in these centers.

In addition to educational programs Cuba contributes to developmental work. In Cape Verde, Cuban agriculture and fishery experts are transferring knowledge and technology to producers on the island.

A step towards more intensive South America-Africa Cooperation is the ILO/Brazil Multi-annual Partnership Agreement 2009-2011 which was signed in March 2009 as a new Partnership Complementary Agreement on South-South Cooperation. It was inspired by President Lula da Silva's commitment to the support of Latin America and Caribbean, African and Asian developing countries. The objective of the agreement is promotion of peer horizontal cooperation and the establishment of a spirit of solidarity between nations. Brazilian-African Cooperation in Angola and Mozambique is an undertaking that aims to fight child labour. Funded by the Government of Brazil, the new pilot project tries to combat child labour and child trafficking in both countries.

On a multilateral level, several European governments including, but not limited to, Brazil, India, France, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Japan and international organizations such as the World Bank, the UNISDR and OFDA/ USAID have formed a partnership under the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) on South-South Cooperation. GFDRR is working with low and middle income countries to formulate strategies for risk reduction, disaster mitigation and climate change adaptation.

India, Brazil and South Africa have partnered to promote development cooperation through a multilateral system known as the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation. IBSA has established a Joint Development Project in Guinea Bissau that was supported by UN Agencies. This project envisaged support for the national authorities for the development of capabilities for the sustainable management and use of agricultural and livestock resources. In Haiti another workgroup has helped to build up a solid waste collection programme bringing ideas and expertise from successful experiences in Brazil to Haiti. It aims to reduce gang violence through labour-intensive waste-collection activities. Additionally in Cape Verde and Burundi the workgroup on health has helped to improve the local health system by strengthening Burundi's Infrastructure and capacity to combat HIV/Aids and refurbishing the Health Care Network in Cape Verde.

Lastly, the UNDP Special Unit on South-South Cooperation (SU/SSC), established more than thirty years ago promotes South-South and Triangular cooperation on a global level and throughout the UN. The SU/ SCC works promote cooperation in the following three areas: Policy

Dialogue & Development, Public Private Partnership and Southern Development Exchange. As the host of the SU/SSC, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) plays a major role in South-South Cooperation. Through its support to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and to various forums for the South-South dialogue, the Special Unit leads the preparation of analytical studies and United Nations system guidelines on South-South Cooperation. The SU/SSC is helping to mainstream South-South Cooperation in UNDP, the United Nations system and beyond through the activities of the Global South-South Development Academy, the Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expo and the South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange (SS-GATE) System. Priority has gone towards facing the challenges of food security, HIV/AIDS and climate change.

As an example, the Special Unit organized the first South-South High-Level Meeting on Oil and Gas Management, which was held in Doha, Qatar. The primary objective of the Doha Meeting was to help strengthen the capacity of new oil-producing States to manage hydrocarbon resources and avoid the “curse of oil” through effective macroeconomic policy and enhanced institutional oversight.

Another project that was initiated by the Division of Policy Dialogue and Advocacy of the Special Unit on South-South Cooperation is the Global Science Corps (GSC). The project places scientists and engineers from scientifically advanced countries at universities and research institutes in developing countries to share expertise and collaborate with local partners. The GSC therefore helps host institutions to develop its science and technology research capacity through interaction with and instruction from the visiting Fellows.

Objective

Based on Governing Council Resolutions 22/9, 60/1, 62/209 and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 63/239 on South-South Cooperation in human settlements, the purpose of the dialogue is to reinforce cooperation among countries in the South through the exchange of information and sharing of best practices. By enhancing the role of local authorities, the private and civil society South-South Cooperation can assist in attaining the human settlements related MDGs. The GC resolutions and the Doha Declaration aim to promote the Habitat Agenda and advocate on sustainable urbanization and are therefore aligned to all areas of the Medium-Term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP), particularly focus area 1 on Advocacy, Monitoring and Partnership.

Questions

1. Are there examples of South-South and triangular cooperation from your region that respond to urban challenges?
2. How can South-South Cooperation strategies contribute to achieving the MDGs, particularly sustainable urbanization and shelter for all?
3. Discuss how South-South initiatives have contributed to poverty reduction in your region?

Organization of the Special Session

1. Purpose

The purpose of the South-South Cooperation segment is to promote South-South and triangular cooperation among countries in the South to achieve sustainable urbanization and shelter for all. Through an exchange of ideas and experiences, the session strives to highlight the new trends in urban development and South-South Cooperation.

2. Structure and ways the Special Session will be conducted

- i. **Key Note address:** To be given by Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator (TBC)
- ii. **Discussant session:** Brazil, China, South Africa, India and Venezuela, Nigeria, Iran, Indonesia as well as LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs and LDCs including Burkina Faso, Mali, Tanzania, Angola, Zambia) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS Cape Verde, Mauritius, Cuba) active in South-South Cooperation and representative from Common Fund for Commodities. UCLG and Metropolis will speak about North-South and South-South City to City Cooperation.

3. Chair: Brazil Minister of Cities

Co-Chair: Hon Ministers from South Africa and India

Facilitator: Journalist (Anver Versi to be confirmed)

4. Participants and size of the event

Between 150-200 participants

Key Participants and Lead Discussants to be invited: Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, Hon. Minister of Human Settlements, South Africa Ministry of Human Settlements, Hon Minister of Housing from Nigeria, Chair of AMCHUD, Hon Minister from Iran , Chair APMCHUD, Hon Minister of Construction of China, Hon Minister from India, Hon Minister of Housing from Burkina Faso, Hon Minister from Kenya, Hon Minister from Indonesia, Chair of the last UN South –South Cooperation Conference in Nairobi , UNDP SU/SSC, GFDRR and Common Fund for Commodities.

5. Date: 24 March 2010

6. Duration: 2 hours, 16:30 -18:30

7. Expected contribution from Brazilian co-host

- a. To act as a co-host with UN-HABITAT on the preparation and organization of the session.
- b. To invite participants through its bilateral channels
- c. To designate a focal point/ contact for the event
- d. To provide financial support for sponsorship to LDC countries
- e. To provide full language translations in English, Portuguese, French and Spanish

8. Expected output and relevance to MTSIP Focus Areas

The expected output of the South-South Cooperation Special Session is the exchange of knowledge and experience to promote a sustainable urban future for cities in the South. Participants are expected to establish new partnerships through information sharing,

technology transfers, best practices and dialogues. The themes are related to the improvement of sustainable urbanization policies, urban management and government as well as expanded access to land and housing, urban infrastructure services and sustainable financing opportunities.

9. Relevance to WUF Dialogues

In line with the theme of the World Urban Forum: *The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide*, the debates during the South-South Cooperation Special Session shall be in accordance with the six main dialogues of the Conference. Targeting topics therefore are fundamental elements of the right to the city, approaches to bridge the urban divide and ensure equal access to shelter, impacts of cultural diversity in cities as well as environmental sustainability issues and components of democratic governance.

UN-HABITAT contact

Mr. Alioune Badiane, Regional Office for Africa and Arab States.

Tel: 254-20-7623075; Email: Alioune.Badiane@unhabitat.org

Brazil contact

Mr. Marcio Fortes de Almeida

Minister of Cities