

Committee: General Assembly Second Committee, Economic and Financial

Issue: Promoting South-South cooperation for development

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INTRODUCTION

South-South Cooperation (SSC) is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the Global South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains in order to strengthen the self-reliance and capacity of these countries and increase the communication between countries of the Global South. The idea of SSC started in 1949 and has since grown to a successful framework that has helped and still helps many countries grow and improve.

SSC is of great importance to the countries of the Global South, as it gives them an opportunity to learn and grow in line with their identity and characteristics, whilst being complementary to the North-South cooperation. Moreover, it is mostly said that SSC has more value than the traditional North-South cooperation. These two kinds of cooperation differ in many ways. Within SSC there is equality between the countries, there is no interference in internal matters and there is more respect for their independence. SSC promotes self-sufficiency and within it there is a diversification of ideas. Moreover, SSC is mostly less expensive whilst having a greater impact. It is driven by mutual economic and commercial linkages instead of by charity. Besides, SSC has a greater emphasis on technical cooperation and knowledge sharing, taking on the form of horizontal cooperation between equally strong partners with similar identities and a vested interest in growth.

The UN has been included in SSC since the beginning. It started with the UN technical aid programme and has developed from that to where it is now. Still, the UN plays a big role in bringing countries together and helping SSC flourish. In 1974 the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) was established, aiming to promote and encourage SSC.

The biggest challenge of SSC is to include more countries and enhance the development. SSC has proved to be very successful for the development of LEDCs, therefore it is important to ensure that as many countries as possible can benefit from it. It is also important to improve the current SSC frameworks and ensure that as many countries as possible are working together, as this will enable them to learn more from each other.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

South-South Cooperation (SSC)

South-South Cooperation is a way of development which aims to accelerate the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical development of the Global South. This is done through the exchange of knowledge, experience, technology, investment, information and capacity. The parties involved in the exchange are the governments of Southern countries, civil society organisations, academic institutions, national institutions and networks.

Triangular cooperation

Triangular cooperation is a Southern-driven partnership. This partnership is mostly between two or more developing countries, but includes one developed country or multilateral organisation also contributing knowledge and resources.

Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

‘A country having a standard of living or level of industrial production well below that possible with financial or technical aid; a country that is not yet highly industrialised.’¹

The Global South

The Global South refers to the countries that SSC is focused on. These countries include the LEDCs in the Southern hemisphere, so the countries in Latin America, Africa and most of Asia.

Northern Countries

The Northern Countries include the developed countries which are mostly located in the North. These countries are the countries in North America, Europe, and, although it is located in the South, Oceania.

Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

The Millennium Development Goals have been created in 2000 by member countries of the United Nations in order to amongst others halving poverty by 2015 and halting the

¹ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/developing-country>

spread of HIV/AIDS. In order to achieve this, eight Millennium Development Goals have been established, every goal is provided with targets to achieve it.

Sustainable development

‘Any construction that can be maintained over time without damaging the environment; development balancing near-term interests with the protection of the interests of future generations.’²

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

South-South cooperation has been created with the aim to increase the development in the Global South. Important to note is that South-South cooperation has been created to complement North-South cooperation, not to replace it. South-South is mostly initiated by the countries themselves, therefore the governments play a lead role within this cooperation. However, some non-governmental organisation (NGOs) also play a role in establishing South-South cooperation.

There are many objectives of South-South cooperation. Obviously, some of the objectives are strengthening their self-reliance, strengthening and creating technological capacity and increasing the participation of the Global South in international economic activities. Moreover, South-South cooperation also has the objective of increasing and improving the communication between the Global South and as a way for the international community to recognise and respond to the problems and requests of the Global South.

SSC also has a strong political component, besides improving the economy of Southern countries, as it also aims to reform the economic system, as currently the Northern countries are the biggest players in the economic system. SSC provides to support the South in becoming part of the global economy. SSC is focused on cooperation to strengthen relations between Southern countries and helping them to develop and increase their bargaining power.

SSC is not exactly the same as Triangular Cooperation. SSC strongly involves members of the Global South. On the other hand, triangular cooperation is technical cooperation between two or more Southern countries, which also comes to involve a country of the North. Triangular Cooperation consists of technical skills, knowledge and resources of two Southern

² <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/sustainable-development>

countries and a Northern country, which enables the technical skill to be implemented in a partner country.

History

The idea of South-South cooperation started in 1949, when the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) established the first UN technical aid programme. This programme would give technical assistance to LEDCs. In 1955, Newly independent states from Africa and Asia decide to work together at the UN as the Afro-Asian Group, this was the first time of actual south-south cooperation. This idea of economic cooperation among LEDCs led to the development of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). At the first conference, states from Latin America, Africa, and Asia created the Group of 77.



figure 1 The Afro-Asian conference in Bandung 1955

In the 1970s there was great optimism that the South could direct the international structure of power and economic relations towards more equality between the North and the South. Therefore, some important developments in SSC happened. In 1972 the UNGA created a Working Group on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC). This led to the establishment of a Special Unit within the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in order to promote TCDC. From 1973 to 1977, the UNGA adopted a number of resolutions in which they called upon the international community to assist the developing countries. In 1978 a conference of the Global South on TCDC is held. This resulted in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) for Promoting and Implementing TCDC. It is also decided that special attention will be given to the least developed countries, such as landlocked countries and small islands.

During the 1980s many bodies were established. In 1980, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was founded, in 1981 the Gulf Cooperation

Council, and in 1985 the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In 1987 the South Commission, an intergovernmental body of LEDCs, was founded. Furthermore, in 1989 the Group for South-South Consultation and Coordination (G-15) was founded. The G-15 promoted South-South cooperation by influencing the policies of other international organisations, such as the World Trade Organisation. Because of these developments, the interest in SCC as a system of participation and exchange among developing countries began to increase.

In 2000 two important events happened. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are created by the UN General Assembly Millennium Summit in order to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable development in LEDCs. Also, the First South Summit was held in Havana. Here, The Havana plan of action was created, which aimed to improve SSC. This was the groundwork for the 2003 Marrakech Declaration, this declaration established the long term goals for SSC. Special attention was given to technology transfer, skill development, literacy, eliminating trade barriers and direct investment in infrastructure and technology transfer. It also prioritised programs to eradicate hunger and HIV/AIDS and to promote debt relief, environmental tourism, and sustainability.



Figure 2: Millennium Development Goals

Sustainable development

Currently, industrial economies play the lead role in the world’s sustainability challenges. They will continue to play the lead role. However, the role of emerging economies

is prominently increasing. SSC has appeared to be one of the most important ways for countries to overcome shared challenges in order to make their economies greener and more inclusive. Through exchange of knowledge and other things, countries can help each other through SSC to become more sustainable.

SSC aims to accelerate the development of the Global South within many spheres, therefore the exchange between the countries involved in SSC is of many different things. Thus, SSC is a very broad cooperation. Countries do not only cooperate through trade and investments, they also exchange the knowledge that they have so that it can be implemented in other countries. This leads to a more effective way of cooperation, as these countries have many things that need developing and through SSC, almost all these things can be developed.



Figure 3: Sustainable Development

Especially the exchange of knowledge has been highly successful, as countries do not have to discover everything for themselves, but can share in knowledge or others. A very successful example is the cooperation between Benin, Costa Rica and Bhutan Benin, which taught Costa Rica about the worth

of edible insects and Costa Rica taught Benin how to produce biological pineapples.

Bhutan taught both Costa Rica and Benin how to produce different types of mushroom. With this project almost 5000 new jobs have been created and more than 4000 families have gotten a higher salary. Besides this, there are also environmental benefits, such as more eco-friendly and biological techniques within agriculture, more recycling of waste, and reforestation.

Another example of a sustainable solution through SSC is the energy in Nigeria and Benin. The UNIDO introduced them to the potential of biomass as access to energy. Through biomass energy, these countries can use their waste as energy and more people can have access to energy, wherefore they will have energy for small industrial processes and can increase their capacity.

Challenges

There are still many things that need to be done to make SSC as successful as possible. SSC has been proven very successful when there is political commitment from the authorities, the partners have strong leadership and the partners want to engage in partnerships with other Southern countries. It is also important that the SSC is built upon long-term relations. Moreover, countries should make use of complementary strengths. To ensure this, countries should have stable governments and to enhance the success many countries should take part. However, one of the most important critiques on SSC is that it is mostly among the more developed Southern countries, such as South Africa, Brazil, and Venezuela. Therefore, SSC should especially be promoted among lesser developed Southern countries.

Furthermore, to ensure that more countries will take part, it is important that the human rights and democratic framework of SSC should be strengthened in order to ensure that countries respect the sovereignty and policy of non-interference of other countries. This is important, as it will make sure that countries do not have to fear that other countries will ignore their human rights, destruct their environment or blatantly abuse their power.

Civil society organisations have a crucial role in ensuring everyone in the countries that take part in SSC benefit from it. However, in most of the countries that are involved in SSC, the relationship between civil society organisations and the government is not very constructive. In order to ensure that everyone can benefit, these relationships should be improved.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Brazil

Brazil started SSC in 1970 and has been a growing presence in the field of international cooperation. Brazil is mostly a donor within SSC, they contribute over 300,000 USD annually. They mostly cooperate with countries within Latin America and Africa. Brazil participates in SSC for political and economical reasons. Their political reasons are that this promotes global governance and stabilises the region, which they are also part of. Their economic reasons are market access, investment and access to natural resources.

Venezuela

In the last few years, Venezuela has become an important actor in SSC, especially under President Hugo Chavez. As Brazil, Venezuela is mostly a donor within SSC. They

cooperate mainly with countries within Latin America and the Caribbean, such as Cuba, Haiti, Argentina and Nicaragua. They also entered into investment deals with China and Iran in order to promote development.

Angola

Angola is a poor country that has benefitted from SSC. In 2014, Angola made an agreement with Brazil and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations. They agreed to improve food security in Angola by boosting its agricultural and veterinary research.

Bhutan

Bhutan works together with Costa Rica to create sustainable tourism, efficiently use energy, preserve biodiversity, and increase gender equality. Through SSC, Bhutan was able to create now sustainable services and community participation. They also developed guidelines for sustainable management.

United States of America (USA)

Being a member of the OECD, they help the OECD with the task team on SSC, which aims to deepen understanding for SSC. The USA has also, together with other countries, aided Brazil in SSC projects, which covered areas, such as vaccinations, school feeding, reforestation, malaria eradication and waste collection. However, although the USA has done some things for SSC, they have never been very active with SSC.

Finland

Finland is one of the main donor countries of SSC and is also among the traditional donors. They financially aided Chile to technically assist Latin American and Caribbean countries. Chile, for example, developed small and medium sized furniture production in Nicaragua with the financial aid from Finland.

United Nations Office for South-South cooperation (UNOSSC)

The UNOSSC was established to promote and coordinate South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation. The UNOSSC advocates for support for South-South initiatives, promotes SSC within the United Nations and throughout the international development community, engages a wide range of partners for SSC, enables Southern countries to work together and manages the South-South Cooperation Fund.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The OECD was founded in 1960 to increase economic progress and world trade. It enables governments to work together in order to share experience and overcome problems together. The OECD is also involved in the quality of life of people and compares facts, such as how much tax people pay and how much leisure time they have, in order to recommend policies which will improve the quality of people's lives.

South Centre

The South Centre is an intergovernmental organisation that came as a result of the South South cooperation. As a policy think tank, it helps the countries of the South to combine their efforts and expertise and researches international policy areas that are relevant to the development interests of the Global South. It has an Observer Status within the United Nations and several other organisations. The South Centre stands for promoting common interests among the countries of the South, while taking notice of their diversity and helping the South progress through cooperation

Group of 77

The Group of 77 is a group of developing countries which promotes their economic interests and South-South Cooperation for development. Its first meeting was held in 1967. The group of 77 makes statements in various UN bodies, such as GA committees or ECOSOC.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1949	ECOSOC established the first UN technical aid programme
1955	Start of the Afro-Asian group
1972	UNGA created the TCDC
1978	Conference of the Global South on TCDC
1987	The South Commission was established
2000	First South Summit in Havana
2003	South Summit in Marrakech which created the Marrakech declaration

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Economic and Social Council's resolution 222 (IX)
- Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries **(A/RES/3461(XXX))**
- United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries **(A/RES/33/134)**
- Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries and a United Nations conference on South-South cooperation **(A/RES/50/119)**
- Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries **(A/RES/58/220)**
- South-South cooperation **(A/RES/60/212)**
- South-South cooperation **(A/RES/68/230)**
- South-South cooperation **(A/RES/71/244)**

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

South-South Cooperation has been mostly promoted through conferences. The most important UN meeting on SSC was held in 2009 in Nairobi. It reviewed the 30 years of progress since the conference held in 1978 in Buenos Aires. The conference wanted to promote the benefits of cooperation among developing and transitioning economies and maintain the support for Triangular Cooperation as a means of helping the developing world to progress. The meeting recognised the increasing power of SSC and the enormous growth of some of the developing countries.

Another attempt is the launching of several initiatives. One of the most important ones is the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator (SCPI) which will focus on the SSC with regards to the environment. It is designed to facilitate and support partnerships between developing countries.

SSC is also promoted by certain Northern countries. Within this, Northern countries provide and encourage Southern nations to work together and helps them to share their knowledge. An example of this is the Netherlands, they supported a partnership between Costa Rica, Benin and Bhutan and provided them with the financial support needed. The Netherlands helped these countries share their knowledge and values which led to an improvement of the quality of life.

The UNOSSC and other UN organisations have also done much in promoting South-South Cooperation. The UNOSSC works from the UNDP regional service centres in order to promote SSC in the different Southern regions. They support SSC by giving advice, and offering knowledge and programme services.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As the previous attempts have mostly been successful, a possible solution is to continue with organising conferences and meetings in order to evaluate the South-South Cooperation and find ways to improve it. This can be best done throughout the UN as it will be able to reach the most countries. Northern countries can also continue to promote SSC by helping financially; However, to make SSC more effective, it is imperative to monitor its dependency on developed countries. It is also important to encourage and promote SSC at various levels, so bilateral, sub-regional, regional and interregional in order to make sure that every region of the country benefits. This should also be promoted to countries who are already involved in SSC, as this might not already be the case and these countries will be more open to it, as they have positive experience with SSC and know how it works. Another way to make sure that every region benefits from SSC is through encouraging Civil Society Organisations to act with their government. These civil society organisation can keep track of what happens in the country as they actually live in this country. This also requires help from the government as they should have a good relationship with the civil society organisation and should be willing to help them achieve this goal. Therefore, the conferences should also be focused on encouraging governments to do this.

Besides the promotion by Northern countries, Southern countries which have had many benefits from SSC can also promote SSC by for example having meetings on SSC. This might be more successful than promotion by Northern countries, because Southern countries can explain to countries with the same values how beneficial SSC could be for their country. Moreover, Southern countries that have a good economy, such as Brazil, China, India and Venezuela, should be encouraged to become donor countries.

An important thing that should be promoted is the knowledge sharing through SSC, this is already done, but the more countries can share knowledge with each other the better. This can be done with the support of a Northern country or through organising meetings between Southern countries in order to discover complementary knowledge which can help all the partners. Special information sharing centres that are accessible for all countries of the

Global South could also be set up in order to create a platform where many Southern countries can share knowledge with each other, so that they can help each other to strengthen their capacity, increase their knowledge and become more sustainable.

In order to have effective SSC a country needs a stable government. To be able to also help these countries develop they should be helped to develop a powerful and stable government. This can be done best by nearby countries that are already involved in SSC, as they share the same values and can teach the country how successful SSC can be for their country. Moreover, these countries have already benefitted from SSC, therefore they have a stable government and a better economy, because of this and the shared values they are the most capable countries to help their neighbouring countries.

Lastly SSC best practices should be studied and promoted among developing countries, developed countries and multilateral institutions. This will enable the countries to determine the best practices. To be able to determine the best practices, Southern governments should be more transparent, they should do this through disclosing the levels and terms of development assistance to the public in a timely and accessible manner. The central repository of the information provided by these government could be the secretariat of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), as they are in an excellent position to gather this information and to conduct technical studies on SSC. By doing this, transparency, accountability, policy coherence and norms-setting in international development cooperation will be enhanced.

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