

## **CSO Statement on the 2017 DCF High-Level Symposium on 'South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Achieving the 2030 Agenda'**

We, civil society organizations from different regions, strongly recognise the important contribution of South-South Cooperation in responding to the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda. Not only is it a valuable complement to North-South cooperation in terms of development financing, it is also a means to promote effective development through learning and sharing technical and economic knowledge, as well as skills to facilitate development among developing countries.

SSC, notwithstanding, is fraught with challenges that could potentially undermine the objectives of international development cooperation.

SSC providers such as China and India have taken the same approach as Northern aid providers by substantially tying their aid through hiring of their own local companies to implement projects in partner countries, thus raising unit costs, limiting local spillover effects, and reducing effectiveness.

Southern multilateral development banks (MDBs) still need to develop formal allocation mechanisms instead of spreading financing across particular areas of interest to the countries that dominate these institutions. Furthermore, these MDBs such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank need to institute space for substantial participation of CSOs in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of their strategies, policies, and projects. In this context, we are concerned about the adverse environmental and social implications of infrastructure projects in the partner countries, that have brought about displacement of communities, and land grabs. [1]

Financial debt structures must be transparent to all parties, including monitoring of resources gathered and environmental impacts. When currency is borrowed, the lender must accept currency as payment instead of using the debt to arrest resources, thereby allowing proper environmental safeguards and fair market value for lawfully-negotiated access to resources. Ecological debt must be minimised by involving all concerned in planning sustainable development projects in accordance with human rights instruments.

Information on SSC activities to date remains scattered and incomplete, impeding the evaluation of the impact and development of further SSC engagements based on good practices.

SSC is still a government-to-government undertaking, wherein there is a lack of multistakeholder processes, and has much room for improvement in terms of engaging with civil society and affected communities.

Almost four decades after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, it is worth examining the development of SSC, while paying close attention to both the positive lessons and challenges. The origins of SSC exemplifies a development cooperation based on solidarity and not on economic self interests. Cooperation among Southern countries provides an advantage in seeking appropriate solutions to their comparable problems.

[1] Refer to Country Case Studies on South-South Cooperation, [http://www.realityofaid.org/roa\\_report/country-case-studies-on-south-south-cooperation/](http://www.realityofaid.org/roa_report/country-case-studies-on-south-south-cooperation/)

As a form of cooperation guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, demand-driven support, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit, we put forward the following recommendations to strengthen SSC in light of urgent needs to fulfill the 2030 Agenda:

1. Improve data quality, aggregation and transparency of SSC flows to inform policy and enhance accountability of SSC partners/providers;
2. Develop guidelines for multi-stakeholder collaboration, and evaluation frameworks based on the principles of effective development cooperation;
3. SSC provider countries and Southern MDBs must untie their development cooperation and lift conditionalities that inequitably benefit their own interests at the expense of the partner countries' development. Partner countries therefore should determine the nature of cooperation based on their own development priorities, instead of according to providers' political and economic agenda.
4. SSC should incorporate rights-based approaches to ensure that the rights of those affected by the cooperation will be respected. To operationalise this, SSC partners/providers must institutionalise mechanisms for participation of affected communities and civil society organizations that are abreast with the conditions on the ground. The institutional development of SSC should include measures to create and support formal multi-stakeholder bodies and consultation processes that can feed into SSC strategies, plans, policies, and monitoring.

We call for the international community to promote and uphold South-South Cooperation that is based on genuine and broad-based partnership and solidarity, if it is to make an effective contribution in fulfilling the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. □

Members of the Reality of Aid network and CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness hope that these recommendations would be considered and incorporated in the outcome document of the Development Cooperation Forum High-Level Symposium in Buenos Aires on 6-8 September 2017.