

Regional Consultation on South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific

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United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

Special address by H.E. Mrs. María Alicia Cuzzoni de Sonchein, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Argentina to Thailand, on behalf of the BAPA+40 Conference host country

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

First of all I would like to express our appreciation for the invitation extended to Argentina to participate in these regional consultations on South-South cooperation. Throughout these past 3 days very stimulating discussions took place on the current situation of South-South and triangular cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and on key issues that will be addressed in the coming BAPA+40 Conference.

BAPA+40 will take place in a particular moment. For the past few decades, we have witnessed the expansion of South-South cooperation, evolving at different levels and engaging a multiplicity of actors that occupy today an important place in the global development agenda. It has reached greater level of specificity and adopted a variety of modalities and areas of work, having as backdrop very different historic contexts, capacities, political systems and institutional configurations.

Great progress has been made regarding the institutional frameworks at a global, regional and national level. Many countries have established and improved government structures and mechanisms of planning and management of South-South cooperation. The reconfiguration of the global scene has given impulse to this process. We live in a more diverse and multipolar world, where southern countries have demonstrated great dynamism and whose voices heard in decision making processes at the global and regional level.

On the other hand, the 2030 Agenda reaffirms the global commitment with development and calls for complementing national efforts to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with global policies and programs, in particular in support of developing countries.

Argentina is convinced of the significant contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation to development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and it is today an integral component of our foreign policy that is being increasingly consolidated as State policy. The Argentine Fund for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (FO.AR) has been building partnerships for development for over 26 years. South-South and Triangular Cooperation has allowed Argentina to build capacities through the exchange of knowledge, technologies and best practices in 70 countries, creating tools for more dynamic and inclusive development processes by means of technical assistance provided in the context of international cooperation projects.

Until 2018, more than 9.500 projects were carried out with the participation of 6.500 experts, mainly in Latin America and the Caribbean but also in Africa and Asia. In this continent an increasing number of projects are being implemented. Currently, we are developing 10 bilateral programs in several countries of the region and another 15 are on a formulation phase.

Argentina is committed to continue strengthening our cooperation with strategic partners in Asia. Our Strategic Cooperation Plan with Asia will promote an increasing political, economic and commercial link with Asian countries in order to build, under a paradigm of equity, partnerships for development. In this context, we seek to promote the implementation of bilateral projects, in particular those with a regional impact, contributing to boost skills in those thematic areas in which our country has developed high skills and in which is globally recognized such as Agribusiness, Science, Technology and Innovation and Strengthening of Public Management.

The "Smart Nations Regional Seminar" -focused on the use of technologies in the areas of government, infrastructure and public services- imparted by Argentine and Singapore experts for ASEAN countries and East Timor in February 2018 is one example. The "Workshop on technical cooperation in the field of agro-industry" that will take place in Hanoi July 30th and 31st, for officials and representatives of Vietnamese institutions and guests from the ASEAN member countries plus Mongolia will also be a great scenario for the formulation of new projects with partners of the region.

Hosting BAPA+40 is another example of Argentina's commitment with South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development. This conference together with the WTO Ministerial Conference that took place last December and the 2018 G20 Presidency reaffirm our country's bet on multilateralism.

BAPA+40 is loaded with symbolic value. 40 years after the adoption of the Buenos Aires Action Plan our country will host a new global debate on South-South cooperation that should not be limited to a defense of the status quo. The growing and diversification of experiences and capacities of developing countries in South-South and triangular cooperation call for setting more ambitious goals that could be reflected in an action oriented outcome that is centered in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. With that in mind is that we think BAPA+40 will be an opportunity to advance and build consensus on some of the following issues:

1. Institutional strengthening of South-South cooperation

Regarding the establishment and development of institutions in charge of managing South-South cooperation and the integration of South-South cooperation in national development policies and programs, it is timely to acknowledge the role regional platforms can play in the development of institutions and methodologies. The Iberoamerican Program for the Strengthening of South-South cooperation can be a good example in this regard as in its context Member States developed an Integrated Data System for South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Also, we need to assess the best way for the United Nations Development System to support our efforts, contributing to the establishment of cooperation coordination entities, identifying opportunities for program formulation and facilitating partnerships.

2. Promotion of triangular and decentralized cooperation schemes

We need to understand triangular cooperation as an egalitarian construction, based on political dialogue and institutional coordination. BAPA+40 could be the starting point of a new triangular cooperation with its own features and its own entity, overcoming the traditional notion of triangular cooperation as an accessory element of bilateral cooperation among States. It is on those foundations that triangular cooperation can become an adequate platform for enabling cooperation agreements in key areas.

On the other hand, decentralized cooperation can contribute to an effective localization of the SDG's, enabling the creation of city-city networks and platforms to promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge transfer, increasingly involving civil society institutions, to achieve a better identification of demands and a better appropriation by our citizens.

3. Promotion of a better inter-regional articulation and synergy

We believe that these association schemes have great potential for building networks, the establishment of peer review mechanisms and the coordination of positions in global forums and there is a need for fostering inter-regional dialogue.

4. Evaluation

BAPA+40 offers the opportunity to have an honest discussion on the importance of advancing in the follow up and evaluation of the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation with a view to showcase its contribution to sustainable development. Improving institutions in the management of international cooperation and moving forward towards the establishment of analysis and information gathering mechanisms is an imperative for achieving the SDG's and strengthening the management, planning and resource allocation processes at the same time. Such follow up mechanisms need to be developed respecting the principles and nature of each cooperation modality

5. Integrated approach to development in South-South cooperation

BAPA+40 should contribute to a transition from the traditional sectorial perspective of our cooperation to a new one capable of achieving a balance between the social, economic and environmental dimensions through better institutional coordination throughout the whole cycle of the projects, from formulation to implementation and evaluation.

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Of course, in order to achieve progress in these and other topics in the next few months it will be essential to build solid political agreements. In order to do so, we as Member States

must commit to a adopting a proactive and propositive role during negotiations and establishing better interregional communication channels. We should be capable of identifying those areas where building consensus is possible and transform them in larger agreements and make full use of the inputs produced by regional consultations, academia and *think thanks*.

Since Nairobi, there has been a growing demand for an inclusive and representative South-South cooperation governing platform. BAPA+40 is an opportunity to reach a multilateral consensus that will allow to boost the volume, reach and quality of our South-South and Triangular cooperation initiatives.

It is with that goal in mind that we invite international cooperation authorities, funds, programs and agencies of the United Nations Development Agencies, civil society, development banks and academia to actively participate in this process. Argentina will work closely with the President of the General Assembly, co-facilitators and all other participants to build bridges, identifying lines of work and facilitating a constructive dialogue to ensure a successful conference.

In a challenging moment for multilateralism, BAPA+40 represents an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the past four decades and reaffirm the Buenos Aires Plan of Action call to work in solidarity to face the development challenges.

Thank you very much.