

Welcoming Remarks
by H.E. Mr. Vijavat Isarabhakdi,
Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at the Regional Consultation on
South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific:
Towards the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 40th Anniversary
27 June 2018
Conference Room 4, UN Conference Center, Bangkok

Mr. Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP,

Mr. Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director of UNOSSC,

Your Excellency Ms. Faustina Rehuher-Marugg, Minister of State of the Republic of Palau,

Distinguished Representatives of Member States of ESCAP and the United Nations Agencies,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, as well as the Government and people of Thailand, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the *Regional Consultation on South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific: towards the Buenos Aires Plan of Action 40th Anniversary*. I am delighted to see many of our colleagues from the region joining us today, as part of the global preparatory processes, leading to the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, or in short, the BAPA+40 Conference, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, early next year.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

2. As the host country of the United Nations regional headquarters, and a long-standing and committed member of the United Nations, Thailand is honoured to co-host this important event, marking another important milestone for South-South cooperation and the global development cooperation architecture.

3. Since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in 1978, **South-South cooperation** has expanded in both scope and scale. It has now evolved to include cooperation in nearly all aspects and areas of development, far beyond its initial recognition as technical cooperation. In close conjunction with triangular cooperation, the role of South-South cooperation has become

increasingly important in pursuing **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

4. Hence, **South-South cooperation** is particularly relevant and significant for us, the countries of the Global South. It offers a **unique development approach**, which allows developing countries to exchange experiences from our respective stages of development, and socio-cultural and geographical backgrounds. It manifests solidarity amongst our peoples and countries; and principles of respect for national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality and mutual benefits.

5. For decades, this **one-of-a-kind cooperation** has proven to yield relatively more adaptive, locally relevant, and cost-effective solutions. It is a significant and widely-acknowledged complement to the traditional North-South cooperation.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

6. The unprecedented growth in South-South cooperation lies in the recent **rise of countries in the South**. This is particularly evident in Asia, which has become a generating hub of diversified resources, new ideas and practices for development.

7. For the **Asia-Pacific Region**, **South-South cooperation** has been one of the key instruments in fostering regional and sub-regional cooperation-- a mechanism that has increasingly turned into a powerful platform for leveraging benefits for developing countries. More importantly, it has resulted in the increased volume of South-South engagements in the areas of trade and financial flows, transfer of technology as well as human resources development and capacity building.

8. To support sustainability, South-South cooperation needs to be practical in both its practice and implementation. Following the example of many countries in the region, **Thailand** has progressed from being a recipient to becoming “an aid provider”, or rather “a partner”, in development cooperation. Through the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand has been working vigorously with more than 150 countries, of which countries of the South form a vast majority, and with development partners within South-South, North-South-South, and South-South for South modalities. At the heart of Thailand’s development cooperation initiatives lies the practical application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP), our home-grown approach to sustainable development, as articulated and bestowed by His Majesty the late king Bhumibol Adulyadej. It is one of the alternative approaches that we have been sharing with the region and the world,

including through all possible modalities of South-South and triangular cooperation with partners from different regions of the globe.

9. It is, therefore, our great pleasure to invite all of you on a field trip out of Bangkok, as we continue our Regional Consultation tomorrow, to experience first-hand the application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy at the community level, and in the form of an interactive museum. It will also be an excellent opportunity to exchange similar development experiences from different parts of the region and from different angles of sustainable development approaches that can be shared through South-South cooperation.

Distinguished Guests and Participants,

10. In the morning of 29 June 2018 which is Day 3 of the conference--for the very first time in the Asia-Pacific Region--a forum is being provided for heads of national agencies and government entities of the South who are responsible for development cooperation, to share good practices and experiences in South-South and triangular cooperation, and to coordinate technical cooperation between partner countries. We hope that this regional “DG Forum” will provide some space for dialogue towards better **coordination**, **coherence**, and **complementarity** among ourselves in revisiting demands and directions as well as delivering results-oriented development cooperation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. I would like to conclude by stressing that achieving sustainable development for all cannot be undertaken by only a handful of committed countries. It requires a **global partnership**, which must take place at all levels and across all sectors. Whether it is North and South, developed and developing countries, recipients and providers of aid, all of these combinations have a vital role to play together. Despite the enormous progress made, **South-South and triangular cooperation** is admittedly not without its flaws, like any other development frameworks and approaches. And that is precisely the objective of our gathering here – to identify the remaining challenges, to leverage new and existing partnerships, and to enhance the potential of such cooperation through a higher level of **coordination**, **coherence**, and **complementarity**.

12. I wish the Consultation fruitful discussions, an inspiring field visit, and an innovative way forward for South-South and triangular cooperation.

I thank you.
