

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday 11 June 2019
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 3:
A new draft strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.**

This document serves as a background document for agenda item 3 entitled a new draft strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

A. Introduction

The following is a summary of activities conducted by the South-South Cooperation Unit over the last three months.

- Hosting a discussion panel during the Science Policy and Business Forum;
- Participating in the second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40);
- Preparatory work towards a new UNEP Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation;
- Participation in the second Belt and Road Forum.

B. Science-Policy-Business Forum - Thematic Discussion Session

During the Science-Policy-Business Forum on 9th March, the South-South Cooperation Unit in collaboration with the Africa Office and the Energy Branch hosted a thematic session titled *“The Role of South-South Cooperation in attaining affordable and clean energy in Africa”*. With a focus on experiences from Africa, the panel explored the regulatory and policy frameworks that undergird the renewable energy sector and the role of innovative partnerships and South-South Cooperation in achieving the goal of affordable and clean energy for all. The panel discussion came up with recommendations on how South-South Cooperation can be used to further support Africa’s efforts in the renewable energy sector.

Key recommendations which arose from the panel were that:

- A policy platform to harmonise renewable energy product standards at a regional level should be established. The platform would benefit from knowledge and best practices in other regions/countries.
- A capacity building initiative through which private sector actors can learn about models used for marketing and servicing renewable energy products in other regions/countries should be developed.
- An initiative on renewable energy that supports local/ off-grid projects through exchanges across regions should be established.

C. Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation

South-South Cooperation is proving to be a catalyst for delivering environmental capacity building and technology transfer to countries and regions in the South. Such cooperation is critical for replicating and scaling up successful initiatives and innovative solutions increasingly developed and available in the Global South.

UN Environment Programme held a side event during the second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in Buenos Aires on 20-22 March, highlighting the role of South-South Cooperation (SSC) in environmental management and governance and the opportunities for further strengthening it for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals and Targets. The objective of the panel discussion was to highlight using lessons learnt and evidence-based best practices from member states, international organizations and civil society, how South-South and Triangular Cooperation can:

- contribute to the design and implementation of initiatives that promote sound environmental governance and management.
- facilitate capacity-building, technical assistance and knowledge/experience exchange thereby empowering countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The event created a platform for discussions on issues related to South-South Cooperation such as: definition and parameters, measurement indicators, use of technology for scale-up and engaging the private sector – particularly the small and medium size enterprises for wider impact.

D. Interagency Collaboration

The South-South Cooperation Unit has continued to participate in and contribute to interagency collaborative work on South-South Cooperation including providing inputs to the development of a new UN System-wide strategy for South-South Cooperation.

E. Preparation of a draft Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The South-South Cooperation Unit will be developing a new UNEP strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation. In *Annex I*, A draft outline of the document is provided for your consideration and review.

F. Participation in the second Belt and Road Forum.

Along with the UN Secretary-General, the Acting Executive Director Ms. Joyce Msuya attended the opening plenary session of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. While representing UN Environment as a partner of the Belt and Road Initiative International Green Development Coalition (BRIIGC), Joyce also delivered a speech at the Green Silk Road Thematic Forum which was one of twelve (12) thematic sub-forums held. There, she highlighted the importance of understanding the environmental needs of beneficiary countries along the Belt and Road and the need to help them spur green growth and achieve their development and country specific goals.

The Forum was also attended by a total of five thousand (5,000) participants from one hundred and fifty (150) countries and one hundred (100) organizations including eleven (11) UN Agency representatives.

Annex II: Remarks made by Acting Executive Director of UN Environment at the Green Silk Road Thematic Forum

Annex III: Remarks made by the UN Secretary-General at the opening of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

Annex I: Outline of the UNEP South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy

Executive Summary

SECTION I: Background

- Definition of South-South and Triangular Cooperation
- Principles of South-South and Triangular Cooperation
- Overview of state of South-South and Triangular Cooperation globally and in the UN system (global and regional trends)
- UNEP mandate for South-South and Triangular Cooperation
- Objective of the strategy
- Who the strategy is meant for

SECTION II: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in UNEP

- Related and complimentary policies and frameworks – gender, sustainable development goals, etc.
- Current status, challenges and gaps

SECTION III: UNEP South-South and Triangular Cooperation Objectives

- Overview and purpose of each objective area
- Projected end and interim results/achievements of the objective areas

Area 1: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in UNEP's Programme of Work

Area 2: UNEP's South-South and Triangular Cooperation engagement with the UN system

Area 3: Fostering and enhancing innovative South-South and Triangular Cooperation partnerships and initiatives

Area 1: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in UNEP's Programme of Work

i) Awareness and capacity

Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support).

ii) Design, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation Criteria and standards for projects, indicators, methodologies for measuring results, risk management. Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support).

iii) Knowledge Management, Communication and Outreach Tools

Capturing lessons learned, experience sharing, showcasing best practice, Knowledge exchange platforms, community of practice, links to external portals.

Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support).

iv) Funding of SSTC projects and activities

Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support).

Area 2: UNEP's South-South and Triangular Cooperation engagement with the UN system

- Engagement with UN Country Teams, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF or 'Cooperation Framework'), Regional UN Sustainable Development Groups etc.
- Where we can lead and where we should focus on synergetic contribution.
- Collaboration with UN agencies, UN system wide strategy, BAPA +40 Outcome document.

In order to achieve this:

Priority action i)

Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support)

Priority action ii)

Priority action iii)

Area 3: Enhancing innovative South-South and Triangular Cooperation partnerships and initiatives

- Target groups for collaborative partnerships.
- Guiding principles for the development of strategic and innovative South-South and Triangular Cooperation partnerships and initiatives.
- Participation in Multi-lateral forums to promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the field of Environment

In order to achieve this:

Priority action i)

Related priority actions (including roles and responsibilities of UNEP staff/Offices, institutional architecture and support)

Priority action ii)

Priority action iii)

SECTION IV: Funding for South-South and Triangular Cooperation

SECTION V: Governance

Annexes

Action plan for the strategy.

Annex II: Remarks made by the Acting Executive Director of UN Environment at the thematic forum of the Green Silk Road, the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, 25 April 2019

Good Afternoon,

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Colleagues and Friends,

I am honored to be speaking to you today at the Green Silk Road Thematic Forum. There is a Chinese proverb: "a year's plan starts in spring". It is so appropriate as we gather here in the spring to take stock of our progress towards a Green Belt and Road.

I do not need to tell anyone in this room about the challenges facing our planet. These are historic times and these are critical times. We are past pledging and politicking. It is time to make the kind of fundamental transformations that are required to secure the future of people and this planet.

And the good news is that we have the technology and scientific knowledge to make this possible. At the first Belt and Road Forum, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres reminded us that both the Belt and Road Initiative and the 2030 Agenda have sustainable development at their very core and as the United Nations we must do everything we can to promote these links.

Because the potential is exciting to transform economies, boost connectivity, create jobs and spur green growth. We can safeguard and indeed set new standards to protect the environment. With 70% of the urban world still to be built, we have huge potential to demonstrate that nature and infrastructure can go hand in hand. This is also an unprecedented opportunity to close the infrastructure financing gap and support developing countries in achieving sustainable development targets.

In 2017, President Xi Jinping of China announced the establishment of the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road. I congratulate the government of the People's Republic of China and the members of the Belt and Road Initiative, for this important effort.

UN Environment stands ready to support beneficiary countries along the Belt and Road to promote sustainable development; provide the support to build capacities to safeguard nature; and ensure we have the very best of science and platforms to make informed decisions.

We look forward to working with you on this road towards a healthy planet where both people and nature thrive.

Annex III: Remarks made by the UN Secretary-General at the opening of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, 26 April 2019

Convened by President Xi Jinping, we come together at this forum on the Belt and Road in the face of uncertainty and unease around the globe. I want to recognize China for its central role as a pillar of international cooperation and multilateralism. This gathering today reflects that commitment in these turbulent times.

Inequality, the climate crisis, and the potential risks of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution are creating deep levels of public anxiety. These global challenges are compounded by darkening economic prospects, triggered by new obstacles in world trade, heightened financial volatility, rising levels of debt and political uncertainties. Even the very notion of international cooperation - an essential component in our inter-dependent world - is under fire.

Now allow me, in this context, to express two main concerns I have as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

First, the 2030 Agenda – our globally agreed plan for people, peace, planet and prosperity – on current trends will only be halfway towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by the target date of 2030. Financial resources available for the developing world for developing countries to reach those goals are far from being enough today.

Second, climate change is running faster than we are. I have repeatedly called it the defining issue of our time. Climate change poses an existential risk to all countries. We are seeing record highs in land and ocean temperatures, sea levels and greenhouse gas concentrations. Indeed, the last four years were the hottest on record. Natural disasters are wreaking havoc around the globe and the threats to public health are escalating and the poor and vulnerable are the first to suffer and the worst hit. But while we face extreme challenges, we are also seeing promising trends.

China's leadership on climate action is helping to show the way. New renewable energy jobs in China now outnumber those created in the oil and gas industries. In 2017, China invested over \$125 billion dollars in renewable energy, an increase of at least 25 per cent over the previous year. And China's new cutting-edge transmission line that sends electricity along a pathway 600 miles longer than anything built to date is a further potential boon for renewables.

China also played a pivotal role in building bridges and securing an agreement at last December's UN Climate Conference in Katowice – and will host next year's second Global Sustainable Transport Conference. Looking around the world, we also see more and more governments, cities and businesses understanding that climate solutions are wise investments in an equitable, prosperous and sustainable future.

And we now, looking ahead, are aware that at least 75 per cent of the infrastructure our world will need by the year 2050 has yet to be built. So we have a unique opportunity to build a new generation of climate resilient and people-centred cities and transit systems, and energy grids that prioritize low emissions and sustainability. But that will require an urgent transformation in how we build our societies, power our cities and invest in our economies. The choices we make now are essential to put us on a low-carbon growth path that is sustainable and inclusive and will build resilience.

In the context I have just described, we absolutely need to come together and achieve two central objectives: first, a quantum leap in the mobilization of resources available for the developing world to implement the Sustainable Development Goals; and second, the capacity to stop runaway climate change.

That is why I am convening a Climate Action Summit in New York on September 23, together with four other summit meetings during the High-Level week of the UN General Assembly in September, covering different developments-related strategies and that will set the course for full implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

We must reimagine and rebuild our world in a way that works for everyone, brings women into the leadership of the economy of the future and expands the opportunities for young people. I am telling leaders, do not come to the summits with speeches – come with credible and ambitious plans.

Now, it is in this context that the Belt and Road Initiative assumes remarkable and urgent importance. With the scale of its planned investments, it offers a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the creation of a more equitable, prosperous world for all, and to reversing the negative impact of climate change.

Excellencies,

In moving forward, I would point to three very important opportunities that can be seized.

First, the world will benefit from a Belt and Road Initiative that accelerates efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The five pillars of the Belt and Road – policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people exchanges – are intrinsically linked to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These are conceptual pillars that can be translated into real-life progress for all people.

United Nations country teams stand ready to support Member States in capacity and governance building, and in achieving a harmonious and sustainable integration of the Belt and Road projects in their own economies and societies in accordance with national development plans, anchored in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Second, the world needs to take profit of the Belt and Road Initiative to help close significant financing gaps for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the developing world, in particular, the need for about \$1 trillion needed for infrastructure investments in developing countries. This underlines the importance of economic growth that can generate inclusive, sustainable and durable social and environmental gains.

Third, I see the Belt and Road Initiative as an important space where green principles can be reflected in green action. Countries today not only require the physical roads and bridges to connect people and markets; they need roads and bridges from the unsustainable, fossil-fuelled grey economy to a clean, green, low-carbon energy future. Fully expanding our policy options for green and sustainable development and backed by green financing instruments must become the new norm.

Excellencies,

In these areas and more, the United Nations is poised to support the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative with the Sustainable Development Goals, to share knowledge, and to make the most of the opportunities of this large-scale initiative for maximum sustainable development dividends.

Let us work together to restore trust by making good on the shared promise of the 2030 Agenda and our common commitment to leave no one behind.

Thank you.