

## Marking South-South cooperation, UN officials call for more equitable opportunities



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

12 September 2012 – The developing countries comprising the global South have made strides in development and cooperation over the past decade, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said today while also cautioning that despite strong advancements, some areas of the region still languish in poverty.

In a [message](#) marking the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, Mr. Ban celebrated South-South cooperation for having the potential to balance growth and equity on a global scale despite the economic strains of the global financial crisis.

“The countries of the South are building new models of development cooperation that emphasize mutual benefit and solidarity as well as cost-effectiveness,” Mr. Ban said, adding that the rapid spread of information technology throughout the South, and the resulting increase in connectivity and networking, had allowed for greater sharing of experience and knowledge and the boosting of development.

“This is helping to provide people with improved access to affordable medicines, technology and credit,” he added.

In the past, the bulk of South-South cooperation involved the sharing of technical developments, including the improvement of livestock breeds, health, food processing and efficient water use. Today’s cooperation has added government policy coordination to the list in what is seen as crucial progress towards the achievement of the anti-poverty goals known as the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)).

In one recent instance of successful South-South cooperation in Madagascar, Chinese experts helped establish a hybrid rice development and demonstration centre where 34 strains of Chinese hybrid rice were grown. The average yield per hectare was two to three times higher than the average output of local rice.

Nevertheless, the Secretary-General noted that although more children in countries of the South are in school, more mothers survive pregnancy and childbirth, and more infants and toddlers live to adulthood, swathes of poverty and underdevelopment were still prevalent.

“Despite the strong performance of many developing countries, there remain large pockets of poverty in the global South, even in fast-growing emerging economies,” he said. “This is a stark reminder that even as countries reap higher economic gains, we must work to ensure that the opportunities for prosperity are distributed more equitably.”

Pointing to the recent UN Conference on Sustainable Development ([Rio+20](#)), held in Brazil in June, at which the need for social, economic and environmental equity was underscored, Mr. Ban urged the international community to put the issue of fairness at the top of the global development agenda.

“As we mark the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, I pledge to further strengthen support for this fruitful collaboration, which can improve conditions in the global South that reverberate around the world.”

Addressing the General Assembly’s commemoration of the Day, the Assembly’s President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser similarly spotlighted the importance of international collaboration in the global South’s development.

“The challenges of a globalized world are proving too daunting for any nation to tackle them alone. And they affect countries of the South disproportionately,” Mr. Al-Nasser told the gathered delegates. “They require collective and concerted efforts at all levels by all development partners.”

Mr. Al-Nasser also announced the upgrade of the institutional structure within the UN that supports South-South cooperation. He noted that the new UN Office for South-South Cooperation would be the focal point of Organizational efforts to make South-South cooperation central to the international development agenda.

“Today we have the opportunity to advance a paradigm of development partnership that promotes mutual learning and mutual benefit, national ownership and leadership and the transfer of appropriate technologies, skills and local knowledge,” he said.

In December 2011, the General Assembly, decided that, beginning in 2012, the observance of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation would be changed from 19 December to 12 September, to mark the day in 1978 when the UN Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries adopted the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

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