



STATEMENT BY H.E. MUNIR AKRAM, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN STRENGTHENING SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION DURING THE 15TH SESSION OF THE HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (New York, 30 May 2007)

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, at the thematic discussion on “The Role of the United Nations in strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation” during the 15th Session of the High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation.

2. Our discussion on the role of United Nations in strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation is topical and timely. Particularly, at a time when the UN Reform and UN’s role in promoting development is a buzzword at the UN.
3. From promoting technical cooperation among developing countries, a few decades ago, the idea of South-South Cooperation has come a long way. It is a growing and dynamic phenomenon; an important process that is vital to confront the challenges faced by the developing countries. Most importantly, it is a manifestation of solidarity, a manifestation of the collective self-reliance of the developing countries.
4. Unfortunately, however, most of the growth and expansion in the South is limited to a few countries. A great number of developing countries in particular the least developed, the landlocked and small island developing states are still confronted with poverty. Over 1.1 billion people are living in extreme poverty in many developing countries. Lack of basic infrastructures, and limited financial support as well as access to global knowledge and technology are major obstacles in the development process of these countries. Not surprisingly, many of these countries will fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
5. On the occasion of the G-77 South Summit held in Havana, Cuba in April 2000 and in Doha, Qatar in June 2005, the leaders of the South took significant steps reflecting a strong determination to increase the scope and dimension of South-South Cooperation. The Doha Plan of Action, among other things, requested the Secretary General to take concrete measures to further strengthen the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. Mainly more financial and human resources are needed, so as to enable it to carry out its full responsibilities, in particular through mobilization of resources for the advancement of South-South Cooperation including through triangular cooperation.
6. The Group of 77 has through these Summit level initiatives demonstrated its determination to strengthen the capabilities of developing countries by addressing with a renewed focus the challenges and opportunities of the South.

Mr. President,

7. We greatly appreciate the important work being done by the United Nations System in promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation. We have noted with interest, the activities undertaken by the UN system, Agencies, Funds and Programmes including the UNDP, particularly

the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

8. While the Secretary General's report on reviewing the progress in the implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action notes a number of positive developments, it also highlights many areas where improvements are required, specially the need for better mechanisms for the strengthening of South-South as well as Triangular Cooperation and enhanced funding for such cooperation.

9. The strategies and directions of mutual development cooperation must, of course, respond to addressing specially the problems and challenges facing the poorest among the developing countries. Their challenges cannot be confronted by the developing countries alone.

10. The UN system must enhance its own coordination and coherence to effectively support the South-South agenda. The 2005 Doha Summit called upon the Secretary General to strengthen UN support for South-South Cooperation. With the rise in number of actors involved in development activities, improved coordination and cooperation among all of them is vital to achieve optimal outcomes. In this context, the UN General Assembly's decision to convene a Development Cooperation Forum under the aegis of ECOSOC, to enhance policy oversight and effectiveness of development cooperation is timely.

11. The UNDP Administrator's Report indicates that the UNDP has identified South-South Cooperation as one of the drivers of development effectiveness, requiring its integration in the development cooperation activities of all the organizations in the UN system. Similarly, new trends are emerging in triangular cooperation, including the pairing of UN agencies with the private sector and with governments in the North and South, to foster South-South and triangular cooperation.

12. The Special Unit for South-South Cooperation has an important role to perform. This role includes supporting technical cooperation within countries of the South promoting South-South cooperation in the work of all UN funds and programmes and facilitating triangular cooperation between the North and the South. We would also encourage the Special Unit to intensify its efforts to respond to the various mandates assigned by the G-77 Summits and other High Level Conferences related to South-South Cooperation in various fields.

13. There is also a need to support multilateral arrangements and mechanisms for South-South cooperation. In this context, we call on our Development partners and the UN System to generously support the UN Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. We also call on our development partners to provide necessary support to the G-77 Consortium on Science and Technology and Innovation (COSTIS) established recently on the recommendations of the Second South Summit.

14. The Group of 77 and China strongly believes that, thirty years after the adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action, it is time to reflect on the new and emerging realities with a view to determine our future course. To this end, it would be timely for the General Assembly to consider convening in 2008 a High Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation.

Mr. President,

15. South-South Cooperation is not a substitute for North-South cooperation. The North has an obligation both in their own national interests but also in the interest of global harmony, equity and development, to fulfill their commitment through North-South cooperation. We need to underline

this premise vigorously and consistently at every occasion. Also, South-South cooperation, whether through the UN or bilaterally or regionally, cannot mirror the cooperation with the North. The premises are different, the conditions are different, and the expectations are different and must be accordingly reflected.

16. A strong partnership of South should also complement our relationship with the North and vice versa. Triangular cooperation is therefore a useful and cost effective tool for furthering our objectives. New partnerships among countries of the South, supported by our development partners, will help to unlock the economic potential of the developing countries to the benefit of the entire international community. The challenge, therefore, is for all partners in the South as well as from the North, to translate the new dynamism of the South into a force for the realization of an equitable and universal development paradigm. The UN system indeed has a key role to play in this regard.

I thank you