

on South – South Co-operation

Meeting on South-South Cooperation,
15 December 2009 Nairobi, Kenya

**Your Excellency, Mr President of the South-South Co-operation Conference
Heads of Delegations and representatives of Member States,
Colleagues and Representatives of the Business Sector and of Parliaments
Dear Civil Society Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen**

We, the members of civil society organizations and networks from the Southern countries, would like to issue a statement in view of the current topical and timely discussions of the South ó South Co-operation.

We are grateful for this opportunity to present a brief statement of our issues to you today. We urge you to listen and take full account of the voices and key recommendations of civil society in your discussions, conclusions and follow-up actions.

Today the world is consumed by urgent crises of finance and climate that not only threaten the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people, in the South, but also the stability of the world's economies. The Northern governments and financial system are responsible for the current crises, but the costs and the impacts are paid for by the entire world, and by the poorest countries in particular.

Overcoming these crises requires decisive action and leadership from the global community. To date however, such leadership has been sorely lacking.

The swift and massive response of governments to bail out banks and private financial institutions with more than three trillion US dollars of public guarantees and funds, stands in stark contrast to their failure to respond decisively to the unabated crisis of poverty, and marginalization that has afflicted the majority of peoples in the world. South ó South cooperation therefore must prove its capability by raising the sum necessary to tackle poverty.

We note that SouthóSouth Cooperation has catalyzed the debate around aid effectiveness reform as well as reforms in the governance structure of the IMF, and the World Bank. In the last 30 years, these institutions have pushed for increased capital flows and market liberalization, resulting in the erosion of national policy space, and the violation of national sovereignty. They are among the major institutions responsible for the current situation, have no legitimacy and no credibility to play such a role in the reform of the international financial system, let alone to start a self-reform process. It is with this in mind that we call for deepening and strengthening South ó South cooperation.

Such cooperation however must meet basic requirements in promotion of human rights, solidarity and equity of the partners, environmental sustainability, and development ownership.

Co-operation promotes the development of global policies that put peoples' rights first, that respect and equality, as well as social and environmental justice.

We demand policies that ensure decent work based on employment opportunities, respect for labor rights, social protection, social dialogue, sustainable livelihoods, provision of essential services such as health, education, housing, water and clean energy, and that take account of the care economy, largely dependent on women. Southern people need to have greater control over resources and the decisions that affect their lives.

Mr President, distinguished delegates we are convinced that the South ó South Co-operation conference is key to reaching enduring solutions to the multiple human crises we have outlined. We call on governments to agree to a strong South ó South follow-up process that brings together all institutional stakeholders, not only the governmental and intergovernmental organisations, but also the International Labour Organization and civil society.

Mr President, distinguished delegates, the Civil Society would like to raise the following issues on South ó South Co-operation:

People based South – South Cooperation

The co-operation of the peoples of the South is key in supporting the activities and initiatives of the South - South cooperation. Unfortunately their participation is currently limited due to financial and other capacity problems. We call for an integrated approach to the South ó South Co-operation with governments of the South committing resources for facilitating CSO processes. We believe that civil society can play an important role in furthering the objectives of the South ó South co-operation. Governments should encourage and financially support Civil Society engagement, and recognize the key role they play in implementing and monitoring programs and policies. We urge for their structured inclusion in future deliberations and programs of the South ó South Cooperation.

On aid

On the question of Aid we contend that South ó South cooperation to further improve the quality of aid in its co-operation through strengthening of democratic ownership, with a greater focus on targeting gender justice, and ending tied policy conditions. Such conditions undermine ownership, increase poverty, and with the goals of poverty eradication and increased aid effectiveness.

On Investment

We are convinced of the need to institute a holistic approach to South - South investment that includes, among others, the social development aspects and sustainable technology transfer. South - South should follow environmentally and socially sustainable production systems, and align its operations with national and local economies.



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orks should be put in place to ensure corporate Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and social free trade agreements should be discussed with all relevant stakeholders, notably national parliaments, social partners and civil society ensuring democratic ownership.

On Debt

We call for the total and unconditional cancellation of odious debts as well as decisive actions to stop the re-accumulation of such debt.

South ó South co-operation governments should establish a new debt architecture that is inclusive, participatory and democratically accountable to the peoples it aims to serve. The United Nations should play a key role in its development, and the institutions and mechanisms should be subject to international human rights norms and treaties. Among other needs, the new binding institutional framework should revise the current debt sustainability framework so as to include domestic debt, human development and environmental and climate justice considerations. There is also an urgent need to establish fair and transparent debt work-out mechanisms that are independent from the International Financial Institutions.

In **Conclusion**, Mr President, distinguished delegates,

In the face of the multiple crises, we urge governments to take the side of women and men workers, farmers, youth and children of the South to promote environmental sustainability by taking an alternative economic path. We, civil society networks, representing millions of people from the South, therefore call for change in Nairobi that puts effective development, poverty eradication, human rights, gender equality, decent work, and environmental sustainability at the forefront of the discourse, the policies, and the search for enduring solutions.

We thank you.

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