



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe**

**President of the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**to the**

**Closing Ceremony of the**

**Global South-South Development Expo**

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*Please check against delivery*

Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

I am truly pleased to be here with you for this closing ceremony. Until this past September, I had the honour of serving as the President of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, and so this Global South-South Development Expo has a certain resonance for me.

Let me begin by acknowledging the many participants to this Expo and the host of creative ideas. This Expo brought together over 1,200 people from more than 150 Member States, as well as partners from the 29 UN System entities, and more than 100 private sector, civil society and academic organizations. You have showcased a wide array of tested green economy initiatives over the course of this week. Your success stories and your innovations are paving the way to prosperity for all by tackling shared challenges and making sustainable development an accepted and realistic norm.

I would also like to thank the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner and his organization for graciously hosting this year's Expo here at the United Nations Office in Nairobi. And I remain forever grateful to Mr. Yiping Zhou and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), for their vision and dedication in driving the South-South agenda forward through this annual event.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Developing countries continue to grow in wealth and savings. They now hold more than \$5 trillion in reserves. Between 1980 and 2010, these countries increased their share of world trade from about 25% to 47%, with half of that trade taking place among countries of the South. It is therefore evident that South-South cooperation is having great impact and influence across a range of sectors including health, energy, economic and trade. It is also worthy to note that the South is attracting significant

capital inflows, and that some of the emerging economies of the South are beginning to exercise tremendous geopolitical influence. The fact that this Expo is being convened in the Global South for the first time is testimony to the growing importance of the South.

As never before, Southern countries are supporting one another through investment, technology transfer, and peer-to-peer learning. South-South and regional groups are meeting at the highest levels, consolidating their influence and impacting the global discourse. They are also strengthening and redesigning approaches to development. In part, these new configurations and partnerships are guiding the way to a new era in development and global economics.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With each passing year, it becomes more and more commonplace to say that eradicating extreme poverty is now an achievable reality – that in the not too distant future, we will no longer need to count the number of people living on less than \$1 or \$2 per day. Many are now convinced that this noble goal is within our grasp, and in large part, this is because of the growing might of the Southern countries and the efforts of their people. Yet the challenge remains to put in place the policies, programmes and measures to make poverty eradication a reality by creating more cross-sectoral synergies.

The theme of this year's Expo - *Building Inclusive Green Economies: South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development*, invites us to recognise and act on the fact that society, economy and environment are inextricably linked, and that each derives benefit from or causes harm to the other. It also highlights the concept that ecology and economy are not two competing and mutually exclusive paradigms, but that they can in fact be harmoniously managed in a mutually advantageous way for the benefit of companies, citizens, communities and countries. Trade, with appropriate mechanisms that ensure open markets and allow for fair competition, can bring much value added to societies. These are the underpinning tenets of the green economy – the protection of planet and people while ensuring prosperity that is sustainable.

On the basis of this definition, there are some critical steps to be taken in the creation of a global green economy. I start with the building of new and strong trading relationships in which new green goods and services will play a pivotal role. From earliest times, trade was central to social and economic growth and it will be equally important in the green economy as it has been in the brown economy.

Second, governments will need to embrace business as partners in the creation of decent jobs, wealth, and development. It is governments that must create the enabling environment through legal, fiscal, governance and regulatory frameworks so that the business sector can innovate and successfully transition to a green economy.

Third, the business sector must step up to the role of greening operations and practices, and act with a higher level of social and environmental entrepreneurship; just as they did with the knowledge economy and technology sectors, they must innovate new products that improve quality of life and transform markets in order to facilitate a viable and vibrant global green economy.

Fourth, the business sector must recognise that when the natural resource base is protected, it enables a lowering of the bottom line and an increase in profits, as well as positive brand recognition.

Fifth, societies in which there is greater wealth and disposable income are those in which citizens spend more, thereby increasing economic activity. Since people, planet and profit are interconnected, ideas such as social entrepreneurship, social corporate responsibility, introducing green matrices into business models and the valuation of human and social capital actually bring a high return on investment. Hence the role business plays in protecting people and planet is one of enlightened self-interest, which yields high returns.

The sixth step really comes back to governments and connects with our role at the UN. Ultimately, it falls to governments, acting nationally, regionally and internationally, to evolve and implement policies that ensure citizens benefit from national wealth, that social services are strong and function well and that the revenues derived from strong and successful businesses and taxation are ploughed back into the

development field in the form of social service, health care for all, proper education for girls and women, as well as boys and men, good housing and lives of dignity. That is what development is all about. That is what I think you have eluded to in the title of this Expo and for that I commend you. If the South can develop a model of the green economy that has a uniquely southern DNA, which grows economies while protecting the planet and ensuring the wellbeing of its people, then it would be well on the way to unprecedented growth and sustainable development and to becoming world leaders with new models of development

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Rio+20 Conference, Heads of States and Governments stressed the interconnectedness between the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

During the High-level week of the General Assembly this year, Member States committed to an outcome document that marks the next step in our development efforts as a global community. This document makes a strong call for a final push to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Despite our aspirations, we have hard work ahead of us.

Here, Southern countries, with a common understanding of shared development challenges, can be their own best allies.

The outcome document adopted in September also set us firmly on course to adopt a new development agenda - one with a broadened view that will apply to all countries, albeit with different responsibilities. In this regard, the theme of this year's Expo - *Building Inclusive Green Economies: South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development* – is fitting in that Southern countries have both the opportunity and obligation to pursue a “smarter” development course than their predecessors. It is an “opportunity” because smarter development can yield better and more lasting results, and it is an “obligation” because this planet and its people sorely need this change in direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the Opening Session of this Expo on Monday, Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson called on all of us to “work together to capitalize on Southern successes,” and urged us to: “build bridges, establish partnerships, encourage innovation, and establish sustainable strategies for scaling up impact together.”

The concrete solutions we have seen over the last few days illustrate how we are adding tangible effort to what we are saying on the issues. From the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency to the limitation of pollutant emissions, from sustainable farming and forestry practices to water conservation, these initiatives demonstrate that the protection of the environment is not only a moral imperative, it is also an economic imperative.

With that in mind, let me please take a moment to congratulate some of your successes this week:

- You exhibited more than 70 best practices.
- You showcased dozens of tested solutions.
- SS-GATE enabled Southern CEOs to launch a multi-million dollar South-South partnership agreement to produce hydropower in Tanzania and it facilitated the matching of over 100 solution-seekers with Southern providers.
- The South-South Energy Initiative, led by Ghana, was launched to leverage Southern know-how as a means to help new oil and gas producing countries avoid the pitfalls of the past.
- We saw the inauguration of the South-South Technology Transfer Facility for the Landlocked Developing Countries, which is designed to strengthen their productive capacity and production to benefit of those most in need.
- We heard the announcement of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation-UN joint initiative to raise 20 million dollars to train Somali women, nurses and entrepreneurs; and
- The 2013 GSSD Expo Carbon Offsetting Initiative was put forth to ensure that the carbon footprint of this Expo is offset.

Distinguished Delegates,

In Rio, in the General Assembly and in other international forums, member States have increasingly recognised the strategic significance of South-South cooperation in the United Nations system. To continue on this path and to deepen our discussions on how to continue improving South-South cooperation, I will convene a High-level Event on South-South, Triangular Cooperation and ICT for Development in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. I am confident that the solutions you showcased here, the innovative partnerships you formed, and the multi-partnered, multi-agency initiatives you launched at this Expo will undoubtedly contribute to this process.

Let me conclude by echoing the Secretary-General's call for the entire United Nations system to "Think as one, act as one, and deliver as one" for development. What you have exhibited here at this Expo is what the SG called for and member States wanted. For that, I commend the work of the UNOSSC!

I look forward to seeing many of you in New York as we chart our way to a promising new era in global development. And I thank each and every one of you, but especially you, Mr. Zhou, for opening our eyes to fresh and exciting ideas, as you do every year.

Thank you.