



Remarks

by

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Vice-President

on behalf of

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President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

High-Level Event of the General Assembly

“Contributions of North-South, South-South, Triangular Cooperation,
and ICT for Development to the Implementation of the
Post-2015 Development Agenda”

Closing Session

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we come to the end of our High-level event, it is appropriate that we look both back and forward; back at some of the key points raised over the last two days and forward at our next steps.

Foremost, I would like to thank our Chairs, speakers, panellists and discussants for their engaged participation. They clearly have laid out how harnessing all types of cooperation can enhance and improve the post 2015 development agenda, as well as where improvements are needed; and they put forth important suggestions on how to maximize the benefits of ICTs.

As we have just heard from our Chairs regarding the highlights from today's panel discussions, allow me to focus my remarks on some key points from yesterday's General Debate.

Our participants discussed development cooperation in its many forms. We heard about the traditional benefits of North-South cooperation, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), capacity building and technology transfer, and how it will still have a primary role in the new development agenda. While many participants reminded us that existing commitments must be honoured, we heard concerns for the needs of countries that have recently graduated from the least developed category but still need ODA. We were also reminded of the unique perspective of countries that are now both donors and recipients.

Participants heralded the many gains of South-South cooperation, with reference to its benefits to early economic and technological cooperation, democratic systems, environment, social systems and emergency response. We heard suggestions to strengthen the UN's ability to support South-South cooperation, including the UN Office on South-South Cooperation. The need to develop country-led systems to monitor and evaluate South-South Cooperation at the national level was stressed; however, we also heard that South-South cooperation should remain voluntary. The benefits of triangular cooperation were also emphasized as a way to solve development challenges, while helping developing countries accumulate their own experiences and build their capacities as development partners.

We heard about the widely varied and many possible uses for ICTs, including creating new and decent forms of employment; improving financial and social inclusion, infrastructure, new sources of data, transportation systems; facilitating banking, education, healthcare and disaster risk reduction; engaging in democratic processes, as well as enhancing gender equality. It was noted that ICTs can have a significant role as an enabler in all of the focal areas identified by the Open Working Group in the discussions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can help countries leap-frog and level-out the playing field in their development efforts.

On the one hand, we heard that ICTs can improve empowerment and inclusion of marginalized groups; yet on the other, it was mentioned that they are often controlled by corporate elites. We also heard that global intellectual property rights often favour the rich and prohibit the poor from accessing the end product. To this end, there was a suggestion for a coalition among governments and the private sector to ensure ICT connectivity is available internationally. The importance of a regulatory framework to protect data and privacy was stressed, as was the need to ensure that ICTs do not limit access to information and undermine democracy.

Engagement with the private sector was raised as an important consideration, where we heard both endorsements and concerns. Participants recognized that the private sector can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development efforts, but cannot replace governments in their role of service provision. We heard about the importance of enhancing the private sector's role in the implementation of the SDGs, when they are established.

In addition, there were calls for opening trade markets as a tool for development; reforming UN funds and agencies so they are better prepared to help deliver on the post-2015 development agenda; ensuring a strong accountability framework for the agenda; and possibly taking some initiatives, such as the technology transfer mechanism, out of the confines of a traditional UN structure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The inputs from this event will be put into summary form by my staff, with the support from the UN Secretariat, and will be distributed in the coming weeks. Our findings here will be part of a larger stocktaking event to be held in early September, which will serve as an input to the Secretary-General's synthesis report. Therefore, we can expect that our work here will be put to good use and positively influence ongoing discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

The President thanks you for sharing your thoughts, raising your concerns and being part of a process with potentially far-reaching and long-term impacts.

Thank you.
