

23 May 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the Opening of the 17th Session of the High-level Committee on
South-South-Cooperation**

Your Excellency Ambassador John Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda and incoming President of the High-level Committee,
Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme,
Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join you today at the opening of the 17th session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.

As many of you know, I am personally attached to this subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, which I myself had the honour to preside over between 2007 and 2009.

I am proud to have concluded my term of office with the successful adoption of the Nairobi Outcome Document, in December of 2009.

I would like to offer to Ambassador Ashe my warmest congratulations upon his election.

From someone who knows very well the challenges and the rewards that lie ahead of you, I wish you all the best in your Presidency.

Rest assured you can count on my full support.

Mr. President, you have been elected to chair this body at a critical time.

South-South relations are gaining significant importance on the development landscape.

And many pressing global challenges must be urgently addressed.

In recent decades, both the potential and the prospects of the South have improved markedly.

This rise is reflected in increased resources, life expectancy, school attendance, and other indicators of human well-being.

The emergence of the South has led to a significant shift in the geopolitical balance.

However, the full realization of this potential requires good governance and more South-South cooperation.

There are now stronger South-South ties in the form of regional and sub-regional organizations, such as the African Union, the South American Community of Nations, the Gulf Cooperation Council and ASEAN, to name but a few.

These regional arrangements also provide useful fora for development activities and should be further enhanced.

Overall, the South is now better prepared to contribute to tackling global challenges in multilateral fora.

This is very timely:

In facing the pressing challenges of climate change, food insecurity and regional conflicts, it is clear that multilateral cooperation is urgently needed.

The recent negotiations for the Rio+20 conference, to be held in Brazil next month, have drawn our attention to the importance of mutual cooperation, including triangular cooperation, to benefit both developed and developing countries alike.

Such cooperation can be challenging, yet remains essential.

It is also now time to look to the post-2015 development agenda.

This gives us the opportunity to affect the future of development through the lens of South-South Cooperation.

The decisions made here at this High-level Committee will be key to that end.

Only together can we provide the necessary variety of policy and programming options that can give least developed countries a real chance in achieving sustainable development gains.

It is very encouraging to see that, as emerging economies ascend to higher levels of economic performance, they are also assuming a larger role in global development efforts.

One of the particular strengths of South-South cooperation is its framework for countries to pool their human, financial and other resources to meet shared development needs.

South-South Cooperation complements, but does not replace North-South development efforts that focus on meeting the basic needs of individuals and securing humanitarian assistance.

As such, South-South cooperation fills an important gap in development plans and actions.

Witness the numerous jobs created owing to growing flows of South-South trade, investment, remittances and development assistance.

In this context, it is very encouraging to note that many United Nations organizations and agencies are adding South-South cooperation to their policies and programmes, in addition to developing specific business models for knowledge and experience sharing in various sectors.

The Special Unit for South-South cooperation has indeed made significant strides in coordinating and bringing coherence to United Nations support for South-South cooperation through its services architecture.

I have had the privilege to personally witness the establishment of the SS-GATE and attended three of the Annual Global South-South Development Expos, which the Special Unit organized with the support and participation of more than 20 UN entities.

I am also pleased to know that the Special Unit has, on behalf of the Secretary-General, prepared the framework of operational guidelines for use by United Nations entities and agencies in implementing the Nairobi outcome document.

In my capacity as President of the General Assembly, I call for concrete measures to further strengthen the Special Unit.

This call is a reiteration of a standing request made by several General Assembly resolutions.

The time for such measures is now.

I am following up closely on this matter with the United Nations Secretary-General.

Ladies and gentlemen,

South-South cooperation is based on a philosophy of solidarity.

Solidarity that unites developing countries through partnerships and alliances, so that they may gain an effective voice in the international arena as they negotiate and advance their shared interests.

This solidarity of purpose must continue to be translated into action if South-South Cooperation is to become a stronger tool in the sharing of Southern development solutions.

For lasting achievements in development, multilateralism is critical and must be matched by a more robust commitment to the principle of co-responsibility, reinforced through South-South and triangular cooperation.

Effective global, multilateral partnerships provide the necessary building blocks for countries to achieve their development goals and to work effectively towards a more fair and equitable world.

Focusing our attention on these goals illuminates the pathway to a better, freer and more just world for this and future generations in the 21st century.

I wish you a fruitful session of deliberations.

Thank you.