

**Global South-South Development Expo
DAILY SUMMARY
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UN News Centre article – Antalya: South-South cooperation offers major opportunities to support vulnerable countries, UN official

28 November 2017 – As the most vulnerable countries continue to face serious development challenges, South-South cooperation offers enormous opportunities and potential to effectively support them in accelerating progress on implementing globally agreed goals, a senior United Nations official has said.

This vital message was delivered to delegations gathered yesterday in Antalya, Turkey, for the opening of the Global South-South Development Expo 2017 by Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu, the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

“These are all countries faced with complex and unique development challenges which lend themselves to exploring how and where we can maximize South-South cooperation and leverage global partnerships to support countries' efforts toward sustainable and inclusive futures,” said Ms. Utoikamanu, who advocates on behalf of 10 billion people in the world's most vulnerable countries.

She is participating in the 2017 Global Expo along with other senior UN officials, government ministers, national development agency directors, and civil society representatives, who have gathered to share innovative local solutions and push for scaling up concrete initiatives from the global South to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The central promise of the 2030 Agenda is to 'leave no-one behind,' and thus is about addressing poverty, reducing inequality and building a sustainable future of shared prosperity,” explained Ms. Utoikamanu. “But it is already clear that these noble Goals will be elusive if the 91 countries my Office is a voice for remain at the bottom of the development ladder.”

As such, she said, South-South collaboration has led to increasing trade between and with emerging economies, investors, providers of development cooperation and sources of technological innovations and know-how. “This trend is confirmed by trade preferences for [least developed country products], enhanced trade finance opportunities, but also innovative infrastructure finance emerging,” noted Ms. Utoikamanu.

“The complex and pressing challenges the vulnerable countries experience demand that we further strengthen and leverage South-South cooperation,” added Ms. Utoikamanu. “South-South cooperation is not an 'either-or' it is a strategic and complementary means of action for the transfer and dissemination of technologies and innovations. It complements North-South cooperation,” she emphasized.

This week's gathering will focus on a number of issues, including how to transfer science, technology and innovation among developing countries.

With that in mind, Ms. Utoikamanu said that to a large extent, the future will be determined by the abilities to leverage science, technology and innovation for sustainable growth, structural transformation and inclusive human and social development.

“It is proven that innovative technologies developed in the South often respond in more sustainable ways to the contextual needs of developing countries. Last, but not least, this is a question of cost,” she said.

In all this, the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries has a major role to play in boosting science, technology and innovation capacity. “It must facilitate technology transfer and promote the integration of [least developed countries] into the global knowledge-based economy.”

While countries in the South continue to deepen cooperation to achieve the SDGs, the trend of declining official development assistance (ODA) is cause for great concern. ODA remains a crucial source of external financing for the vulnerable groups of countries UN-OHRLS represents,” she said.

“OHRLS is committed to working with countries both of the North and the South to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and above all its pledge of leaving no one behind,” concluded Ms. Utoikamanu.

LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE 2 (9-10.30 a.m.):

Youth empowerment and launch of the Youth Leadership Initiative

The world has never been so young. Half of the world’s population is under 30, and the majority of them live in the developing world. Participation and accountability are pressing issues. To reach the SDGs, the youth need to be at the table at all levels. In fact, they are the SDG generation. Strong public policies on youth are needed. New jobs and services must be created in order to ensure robust employment levels. Entrepreneurship can be a complement. Organizations leverage South-South cooperation in several ways in their work with young people. This includes exchange programmes, sharing knowledge about the realities of young people and promoting peer networks. The Youth4South Partnership Initiative was launched at the end of the Solution Forum.

The **UN Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake**, sent a video message to the participants. She noted that half of the world’s population is under 30, and the majority of them lives in the developing world. “We need to make sure our generation knows about the SDGs”, she said. The SDGs will be key in supporting the young generation. We must foster a generation of change-makers. “We are the SDG generation”, she stressed.

Mr. Mohamed Djelid, UNESCO, provided an overview of UNESCO’s work with youth. The world has never been so young (1.8 billion people, age 8-24). These generations face tremendous challenges, such as climate change and extremism. UNESCO wants to make youth partners, not only beneficiaries. The UNESCO Youth Forum is the organization’s main consultation forum with young people in order to better understand what the young are expecting from the organization. These recommendations go into UNESCO’s strategic plan. The young want UNESCO to become a platform where they can exchange and bring in their proposals. The organization uses social media to work with youth. South-South cooperation is one of the solutions to respond to the youth’s requests and needs. There is an urgent need to develop youth policies at the country level. A key priority in this context is grasping the realities of the youth. Institutional arrangements at the regional level need to be flexible.

Ms. Alanna Armitage, Regional Director, UNFPA, noted that today, we are witnessing the largest population of young people ever. 85% of the 1.8 billion youth live in the developing world. They are the SDG generation. South-South cooperation has traditionally been government-government, but South-South cooperation is now also starting between academia, civil society and young people. UNFPA has supported several young people who are here at the forum. In 2000, UNFPA created the

[Y-PEER network](#). It was founded on the acknowledgement that young people learn most from other peers. The network was started in Europe and then spread to other areas. It touches the lives of 2 million young people every year. UNFPA will also support the new youth initiative by UNOSSC. “To reach the SDGs, we need to dramatically increase our joint efforts to include the youth. The youth need to be at the table, at all levels, global, regional and national”, Ms. Armitage called upon participants.

Mr. Pezzini, Director, OECD Development Centre: 90% of youth live in developing world today. If we want to keep the same level of employment as today, we need to create 600 million new jobs in the next 15 years. In Africa, 29 million young people will enter the job market every year. Jobs often do not match the skills of the young people. Entrepreneurship is an alternative, but it is often done out of necessity and entrepreneurs are often confined to subsistence. Africa’s opportunities to grasp the global value chain continue to be very low. In 1993, Africa was producing only 1.4 percent of intermediary goods; today, we are only at 2.2%. This means that we need to create new services, e.g. services related to the transmission of information such as the example from IFAD yesterday. Access to reproductive services are also critical. The OECD has created a toolkit for young entrepreneurs this year, [“Unlocking the Potential of Youth Entrepreneurship”](#). “We all need to join forces”, Mr. Pezzini concluded.

Mr. Edem Bakhshish Regional Coordinator for Arab States, Eastern Europe and CIS, UNOSSC, introduced the Youth4South Partnership Initiative. He emphasized that young people are not only recipients but a resource full of energy. Young people are the champions for development innovation. South-South cooperation, when done well, can lead to more relevant and less cost-intensive solutions. The Youth4South Partnership Initiative will go beyond the project level; it is a multi-partner, innovative partnership. Young leaders will receive hands-on training and guidance; graduates of Youth4South will become resource persons for their peers. The resulting global report will feed into the global dialogue on sustainable development and South-South cooperation.

Mr. Helge Espen, FK Norway, described the history of his organization, which is a government institution located in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its mandate corresponds directly to [SDG 4.7](#). FK Norway was started 17 years ago and is anchored in institutional cooperation. Professionals spend 6-12 months abroad in partner institutions. 150 new young people enter the programme every year. The benefits are multiple and visible at the individual, institutional and societal levels. The exchange year is usually a year of maturity for the young people. FK Norway’s experience indicates that leadership training is something that develops in the group and in the societal context. Many participants go on to engaging careers and contribute to local development. The new UNOSSC youth initiative has many similarities with FK Norway, so there will be a lot to exchange on.

Amb. Elshad Iskandarov, Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), noted that the majority of OIC member states are in the South. Youth makes up one third of migrants from Global South, including illegal emigration. Starting from 2014, the OIC Youth Forum includes forums on entrepreneurship. Start-ups are facing multiple challenges. This is why the dissemination of knowledge is critical. The [OIC Startup Platform \(OSP\)](#) addresses these needs. It is open for OIC youth who can register their start-up for an opportunity to work with mentors, get free trainings and potentially pitch their start-up to investors. In total, 3,000 start-ups are screened; 300 of them then receive practical on-line support. Finally, 50 projects are selected for meetings with investors. Another initiative of the OIC is the announcement of annual youth capitals.

Mr. Michael Sheldrick, Global Citizens, urged participants to provide platforms right into local contexts. Accountability will be key to achieve the SDGs. He recalled former U.S. President Clinton’s remark that “this (mobile) phone makes a young person more powerful than the President of the

U.S.”. 2019 will be a critical year as we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Call for Action. Finally, Mr. Sheldrick reminded the audience that 2018 will mark the 100th birthday of Nelson Mandela. Mandela said that “poverty is not natural, it is man-made and therefore can be eradicated” and called on young people to “(L)et you generation’s greatness blossom!”. “We can be this great SDG generation”, Mr. Sheldrick concluded.

At the end of the Solutions Forum, all partners jointly launched the Youth4South Development Initiative.

THEMATIC SOLUTION FORUM 4 (10.45a.m.-12.15 p.m.):**Skills development and youth employment within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation**

Participants described several initiatives that have been established to address the needs of young people related to skills development and employment. In 2016, for example, ILO launched the “Global Initiative for Decent Work for Youth”. The engagement of the private sector is critical to make sure that “our initiatives go far”. Relevant apps and digital platforms are being established. The litmus test for any platform is whether it leads to action; at the moment, not all platforms pass this test. “We need to learn from the young people how they use social media and how they communicate”, stressed one panelist.

Ms. Anita Amorim, ILO, stressed the devotion of her organization to South-South cooperation. ILO has allocated regular budget for South-South cooperation. The organization has also participated in all Global South-South Development expos to date.

Mr. Musa Kulalikaya, SESRIC, noted that the OIC is the second-largest intergovernmental organization in the world after the UN. Therefore, South-South cooperation is at the heart of what the OIC does and, consequently, also what SESRIC does. SESRIC works on three mandates: statistics, research, and technical cooperation. Mr. Kulalikaya provided several concrete examples from SESRIC’s work in relation to youth. He described SESRIC’s support to young people in Palestine through a joint project with IsDB and TIKA on economic empowerment. SESRIC also takes steps to increase participation of private sector in youth employment. To this end, SESRIC has joined forces with the IsDB and the UNDP Istanbul Center for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD) to develop skills, employment and entrepreneurship development. SESRIC has also launched a programme to link students from other OIC member countries who are studying in Turkey to the Turkish private sector.

Mr. Numan Özcan, Director ILO Office, Ankara, shared ILO’s experience with refugees in Turkey. Currently, Turkey hosts more than 3.3. million Syrian refugees. Turkey has granted labor market access to Syrian refugees; 1 million of them have entered the labor market. ILO has learnt three lessons related to skills development from this. First, the host country needs to learn more about the refugees and gain a comprehensive understanding of their skills. and certify their skills. It is vital to give them additional skills, in particular young refugees (e.g. language skills, labor market skills). The second lesson is to work with existing structures instead of creating parallel structures. Third, it is critical to understand what happens on the job market (e.g. quality of jobs, working conditions). Refugees should also be included in the national labor strategy. ILO’s work will be a contribution to the [Global Compact for Refugees](#). ILO is considering exporting this framework to the Horn of Africa (Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon).

Ms. Perihan Tawfik, National Officer, ILO Cairo, described ILO’s efforts to encourages cross-country learning with regards to systems of apprenticeships. A concrete example is knowledge exchange between Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. Employers are even more challenged by differences in the national apprenticeships than the apprentices. This is why ILO also provides tailored raining to employers. In 2016, the [Global Initiative for Decent Work for Youth](#) was launched. ILO has several good practices to share, e.g. exchange between Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco (e.g. job search blog). The ILO Office in Egypt has also designed programmes on entrepreneurship and small businesses to encourage young people to stay in the country.

Mr. Joao Bosco Monte, Brazil Africa Institute (IBRAF), informed participants that youth is high on the agenda of the institute. The Youth Technical Training Programme (YTTP) brings young Africans to

Brazil to provide them with training and knowledge. There are three criteria to take part in this programme: age (between 18-35), gender (50% women), and geographical diversity. The focus is on agriculture, infrastructure, ICT and health. IBRAF will focus more on agriculture as the youth is interested in this topic. IBRAF also hopes to include participants from other regions. The Brazilian Government is assisting IBRAF in developing this initiative through its embassy network. Next year, the Brazil-African Forum will convene on the topic of "Power of the youth". As a general remark, he cautioned that "without the participation of the private sector, our programmes will not go far".

Mr. Berken Safak Sener, Board Member, Youth Deal Cooperation stressed the role of cooperative enterprises in building a better world. Cooperatives increase resilience to social and economic crises. In Italy, for example, where cooperatives are very strong, employment increased by 8% from 2007 to 2011 while in the general economy it dropped by 12%. The goal of the Youth Deal Cooperation is to ensure peer-to-peer learning on legislative, institutional and economic issues through digital means. All our partners are able to access the decisions of our board instantaneously. In Turkey, the Youth Deal Cooperation has established 20 cooperatives and is also looking for partners in the region. Portals need to enable to work together, because "portals are only useful when they lead to action".

Mr. Fernando Baptista, international consultant on South-South and triangular cooperation, UNOSSC and ILO, reminded participants that today's youth was shaped by the Internet and social media. UNOSSC's strategy is inspired what youth does on social media today. More than 2,000 people are part of the South-South Meeting Point, which was created six years ago as the main entrance to the network. Networks are more about people than about institutions; they are about peer-to-peer conversations across organizations. The main idea behind South-South Meeting Point is to use social media to make people speak to each other and create synergies. Since the beginning of 2017, UNOSSC has worked on a similar portal for UN agencies. Mr. Baptista stressed that "we can and need to learn from the young people how they use social media and how they communicate".

THEMATIC SOLUTION FORUM 5 (1.30-3 p.m.)**Women as benefactors of development through social entrepreneurship**

Panelists shared examples of how South-South cooperation can be a catalyst for women entrepreneurship. An illustrative example is the spread of community-based savings and credit schemes in Asia through women community leaders from Bangladesh. Technology is increasingly used to reach out to women. A noteworthy example is [“SheTrades”](#) by the International Trade Center, which provides support to women entrepreneurs with a unique platform that connects them to markets and which is complemented by an app. Panelists called for a mindshift in the ecosystem; at the same time the increasing opening for women, even in conservative societies, was noted. Money acts as an equalizer -- or in other words, “the one thing that will make a difference is economic empowerment, because money talks”.

Ms. Neslihan Cevik, Researcher, SESRIC, emphasized that women are benefactors of development through social entrepreneurship – and not beneficiaries. She also noted that women tend to collaborate more with others than men.

Mr. Srinivas Tata, Chief of Capacity Development and Partnerships Section in the Strategy and Programme Section, UN Commission on Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), described how women at the bottom of the pyramid benefit from community-based savings and credit schemes. Almost half of Asia’s population – or 49% - live in cities and towns. Approx. 440 million people live in slums in Asia and the Pacific. Women and girls are often the poorest among the urban poor. It has proven to be very effective to organize the poor around money; individually they are weak but collectively they become strong. Community-based savings and credit schemes emerged in Bangladesh and then spread to other countries in the region. These schemes work as follows: A group of 10 to 30 invariably women comes together and starts collecting savings from each member every day. Together they decide who to lend the money to (e.g. to other women, other groups). It was South-South cooperation at the level of women community leaders that helped spread this concept to other countries. ESCAP documented this knowledge in its [Quick Guides on Housing the Poor in Asian Cities](#).

Dr. A.H. Monjurul Kabir, Senior Adviser and Global Lead, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, UN Women, noted that UN Women works to ensure that the voice of women and youth are included in discussions on South-South cooperation. Little attention has been paid to SMEs and women’s access to finance. Women-owned enterprises have an annual credit deficit of USD 300 billion. In many parts of the world, UN Women is noticing a decline of women in the workforce. UN Women, therefore, calls for changing prevailing business cultures and strengthening the voice of women. South-South cooperation will benefit from robust participation from civil society. If women are more present in the labor force and business, economic growth will be boosted in their countries. Mr. Kabir stressed that “the one thing that will make a difference is economic empowerment, because money talks”.

Ms. Attiya Nawazish Ali, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, said that entrepreneurship can enable women to empower women to act as mentors and to uplift their families. The role of impact investing for women is promising. Islamic finance can be a complement to impact investing, since they are both value-based. Investors should set up angel funds to support women-led businesses. With regards to South-South Cooperation, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce has partnered, among others, with the UNOSSC and the Perez-Guerrero Fund. It also provides a platform for women where they can discuss how to strengthen their business with other women from OIC countries. Concrete examples of the chamber’s work include Sudan where its activities ultimately led to the establishment of a family bank. In Pakistan, the chamber set up a platform for women in cotton

production to market their products. Finally, Ms. Nawazish Ali noted that women are no longer marginalized and that there is an opening, even in conservative societies.

Ms. Oulimata Fall, International Trade Center, Advisor, Mo Ibrahim Leadership Fellow, Office of the Executive Director, remarked that “South-South cooperation can be a catalyst for women entrepreneurship”. The challenge for developing countries is to harness these opportunities to help women connect to South-South cooperation value chains. Moreover, it is critical to harness the opportunities provided by OIC countries (e.g. the halal market, which increases at an annual rate of 20%). Governments need to adapt specific policies on challenges faced by women (e.g. legal barriers, childcare activities, the fact that women face more trade obstacles than men, access to finance, digital gap). The International Trade Center has a flagship programme called [“SheTrades”](#) which provides support to women entrepreneurs with a unique platform and platform to connect to markets.

Ms. Bedrize Hülya, Founder, B-FIT, Fit Sport and Health Living Centers for Women, has established women-only fitness centers all over Turkey. The fitness centers also include a coffee shop and a multi-task room. Only women can become franchisees. This business model changed the whole fitness culture in Turkey. So, far more than 700,000 middle- and lower class women have become gym members. Headquarters helps franchisees to stay in business. The advisory board is made up of franchisees. Ms. Hülya has established an incubator programme, which was funded by the JP Morgan Foundation. She called for a shift in mindset. “Women do not need to be supported by men, we need to support ourselves. It is in our nature to be social entrepreneurs”, she said. The current ecosystem is not yet comfortable with women entrepreneurs; “women have to use more words than men to convince others”.

Mr. Hans Friederich, Director-General, INBAR, provided three concrete examples how women have benefited from bamboo production. A Ghanaian woman produces bikes out of bamboo. She wanted her business to have a social side and employs only girls. She sells her bicycles at home and abroad but also donates some of them. A woman in China owns a small bamboo plantation. Since bamboo leaves are very nutritious, she also keeps chicken in her plantation which provides her with extra income. In addition, she grows bamboo mushrooms – an additional source of income. In India, INBAR worked with a group of women to train them to make incense sticks out of bamboo. This creates both incomes and savings for them. Finally, Mr. Friederich highlighted that “what some countries do with bamboo is very different from what other countries do”. This is where South-South cooperation comes in.

THEMATIC SOLUTION FORUM 6 (3.15-4.45 p.m.)**Good practices in South-South cooperation for implementation of the SDGs: Development through transformation**

As countries are undergoing fundamental transformation processes, innovative approaches are required to ensure the achievement of the SDGs. The panelists presented best practices from the fields of public sector, infrastructure and tourism that vividly illustrate linkages across the whole SDG spectrum. Panelists stressed the importance to involve citizens in innovations before they are planned, designed and implemented. An example from Turkey on the renovation of border gates underlined the nexus between development, trade and governance.

Ömer Kocaman, Deputy Secretary General of the Turkic Council, noted that “South-South cooperation has a unique place in achieving the SDGs”. The Turkic Council wholeheartedly embraces South-South cooperation as a relevant mechanism to achieve its goals of regional cooperation. He added that “we (the Turkic Council) will build our future projects on the outcomes of this conference.”

Mr. Rastislav Vrbensky, Deputy Director, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, said that it was a great honor to co-host this event with the Turkic Council. In 2015, UNDP organized an international conference on ICT for development together with the Turkic Council. In 2016, UNDP and the Turkic Council co-signed a Memorandum of Understanding. The first ever [regional report on South-South cooperation in Europe and the CIS](#) (published by UNDP and UNOSSC in 2016) showed that knowledge-sharing can be organized in four ways: through peer-to-peer networks, centers of excellence, demand-based facilities and triangular cooperation. UNDP is committed to supporting countries in reaching the SDGs; South-South cooperation prevents a vital means to do so.

Mr. Alkhan Baimenov, Chairman of the Steering Committee, Regional Hub of Civil Service in Astana, set the context by noting that the public sector plays a key role in transformation during these times of increased levels of uncertainty and volatility. The Astana Hub has 38 member countries and works with 30 institutional partners. In 2016, the Hub joined the OECD’s Effective Institutions Platform. He stressed that “any transformation journey requires innovative approaches”. The Astana Hub is a flagship initiative of the Government of Kazakhstan and UNDP. This year, the Regional Hub has put particular emphasis on promoting green economy and encouraging exchange among its member countries in this area.

Kabira Mammadova, Deputy Director, Department International Relations, State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations (ASAN), presented the services of her institution to the audience. ASAN Service received the UN public service award in 2015. ASAN Service is a private-public partnership. Currently, more than 250 services can be delivered to citizens in a single location. The goal of ASAN Service is to foster a new generation of service providers. The customer satisfaction rate is very high with 98%. Currently, there are 11 ASAN service centers all over Azerbaijan. In addition, the Government offers mobile ASAN services partly delivered through interregional buses. So far, more than 1,210,000 citizens have benefited from Mobile ASAN Services. More than 12,000 volunteers support the work of ASAN services. Foreigners can now also apply for ASAN visas, which are ready in three hours. To share its knowledge, Azerbaijan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Afghanistan to support the country in establishing similar services there.

Sesili Verdadzze, Head of Innovation, Servicelab, Public service Development Agency, Ministry of Justice, Georgia, explained different ways how her government has made public service delivery more innovative in recent years. There are currently 19 public service halls over the country, providing over 300 services to citizens. Another example is the National Agency for Public Registry

using blockchain technology in its immovable property registration system. The most demanded services are provided in community centers in town with a population is over 5,000. The difference between public halls and community centers is that the latter also provide libraries and meeting areas for citizens. The government also offers express community centers (buses) and various on-line services. The ServiceLab works on developing new products and services using innovative methods such as foresight. “Innovation works well when it makes public service accessible to the citizens”, Ms. Verd zadze said. It is paramount to involve citizens in innovations before they are planned, designed and implemented.

Irakli Kotetishvili, Policy Specialist, Anti-corruption and public administration, UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub presented UNDP’s experience related to innovations in the public sector and governments can become more accountable and effective by benefitting from modern technologies. UNDP supports governments in implementing innovations through designing initiatives jointly with target groups, improving access to information, improving efficiency of public service delivery and implementing delivery units in central governments. UNDP also acts as brokers between the government and donors. Since 2016, UNDP has been supporting Ukraine in setting-up electronic asset declarations system. In Kosovo, UNDP helps the government to develop a tool to analyze public procurement data (www.e-prokurimi.org). UNDP has also supported “one-stop shops” for the delivery of public services in Azerbaijan, Albania, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

Ömür Gebes, General Manager, GTI, Republic of Turkey, presented a successful example of the Build-Operate-Transfer model in the field of border infrastructure. GTI is a private company, operating under The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB). GTI makes investments in border infrastructure where the private sector does not have enough incentives to do so. GTI creates revenues from the border gates it has invested in, such as duty-free shops, restaurants and tax-free gas station for exporters. Improved border gates promote trade, help reduce illegal actions and improve customer satisfaction. GTI has recently upgraded he Kapikule border gate between Turkey and Bulgaria, the busiest border gate in Europe. GTI will also work on a new border gate project on the only border gate between Turkey and Iraq. GTI has been included as a best practice example in the “[Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective](#)”. The company stands ready to share its knowledge with any region or country. It has signed an MoU with Iran and has on-going discussions with other countries.

Ms. Clare Stark, Strategic Planning Specialist, UNESCO, emphasized that UNESCO is committed to supporting countries in their South-South cooperation efforts. “We believe that South-South cooperation is a key implementation modality”, she noted. Ms. Stark presented the Silk Road World Heritage Corridor. Central Asia is one of the underrepresented regions on the World Heritage list. UNESCO aims at promoting culture-based development and foster regional cooperation and exchange on related matters, including the documentation of cultural sites along the Silk Road. This will contribute in particular to SDGs 8, 11, 12, and 16.

THEMATIC SOLUTION FORUM 7 (5-6.30 p.m.):**Accelerating country-led progress towards Zero Hunger (SDG 2) through joint and complementary efforts of the Rome-based United Nations agencies**

While urbanization is increasing, 50% of the world's population still live in rural areas. The three Rome-based UN agencies working on agriculture and food – FAO, IFAD, and WFP – shared their approaches to incorporate South-South cooperation into their corporate strategies and partnership documents. The agencies also described concrete mechanisms to include South-South cooperation in their work, e.g. centers of excellence, trust funds and co-financing. Finally, they presented their joint road map to promote South-South cooperation. Participants discussed whether South-South cooperation should remain government-driven or whether other stakeholders should come in more prominently. The panel made it very clear that we need to focus on the country-level, be flexible and adaptable.

Dr. Dongxin Feng, FAO, informed that South-South and triangular cooperation had been put at the top of the FAO to reach the organization's goals. FAO is a global platform for policy dialogue and information on agriculture. This year, the South-South Unit was transferred to the Department for Partnerships and Alliances. The organization has been a facilitator of South-South cooperation in the areas of food and agriculture for many years. Until today, 300 million dollars have been mobilized for South-South cooperation. FAO has developed partnerships with 30 providers and implemented South-South cooperation projects in 90 countries. At the moment, FAO has trust funds from China, Brazil, Venezuela and Morocco, among others. The China Trust Fund is the largest one and has funded around 20 country projects, mostly in Africa. FAO also supports triangular cooperation, e.g. between China, Ethiopia and the Netherlands.

Ashwani K. Muthoo, Director, Global Engagement, Knowledge and Strategy Division, IFAD, said that IFAD's South-South Cooperation Strategy is based on two pillars: transfer of knowledge as well as the promotion of investments and establishing business-to-business links between developing countries. At least 50% of IFAD's country strategies have a comprehensive South-South and triangular cooperation component. IFAD also prepares an annual report on South-South cooperation to its board. The new IFAD President plans to decentralize the organization and to establish three centers on South-South cooperation (Beijing, Addis, Brasilia). Mr. Muthoo stressed that "political will and leadership is at the core of success for South-South cooperation and rural transformation". The three agencies based in Rome truly want to cooperate on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. For the first time and in the broader framework of the Buenos Aires Plan for Action+40, the three agencies have identified a joint roadmap 2017-2019. In addition, the three agencies plan to publish a joint annual report on South-South cooperation.

Ms. Dina Saleh, IFAD, explained that IFAD has analyzed its current work on South-South cooperation. IFAD currently promotes knowledge sharing through nine "corridors" of technical exchange. 140 experts have exchanged their knowledge through these corridors. IFAD has also cooperated with UNOSSC and IsDB on this. Ms. Saleh noted that "we need evidence-based learning that can be shared with partner countries".

Kenn Crossley, Deputy Director, Policy and Programme Division, WFP, stressed that South-South cooperation is critical and fundamental to WFP's work. Each country office has to write up a strategic plan, but only after having consulted with the government and having listened to the needs articulated. While the organization cannot always support, other countries can: WFP can help governments find other countries to partner with. South-South cooperation needs to be demand-driven. "South-South cooperation is not the objective, it is one of the ways how we mobilize resources and capacities to achieve an objective", Mr. Crossley explained. IFAD tries to identify

potential partners based on the specific gap. IFAD always starts with the solution that it wants to achieve; there are no up-front criteria for partner engagement. The complementarities of the three agencies is still responsive to country leadership and how you want countries want us to work together.

Mr. Sixi Qu, Director, China Centre for Excellence, WFP, underlined that South-South cooperation has become one of the three main pillars of the China Centre for Excellence. The center works at three levels: policy, institutional, and implementation levels. “South-South cooperation must be demand-driven with a strong ownership by participating countries”, Mr. Qu noted. The center builds on its broad network of partnerships, including with private sector organizations such as Ali Baba. Private sector support should not be focused on financial support only; technical support from the private sector is also critical. WFP also works on the grassroots farmer level.

Mr. Jorge Chediek, Director of UNOSSC, commended the three Rome-based UN agencies on their innovative approaches and for “putting South-South cooperation into their DNA”. He cautioned that we need to revisit the area of agriculture in South-South cooperation. Cooperation in agriculture has gone down dramatically, also because of the successes achieved. Urbanization is increasing, but still, 50% of all people live in rural areas.