

## **High-level Opening Ceremony of “Global South-South Development Expo 2018 (28-30 November 2018)”**

2018/11/28

*- As delivered -*

### **Statement by H.E. Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly**

**28 November 2018**

Secretary General,

Ministers,

Excellencies,

It is an honor to participate in the inauguration of this Global Expo, to celebrate the results of solidarity and fraternity between countries who share similar realities and challenges.

This occasion is even more significant due to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Expo and since we are also in proximity of the Second High Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which will take place next March in Argentina.

We are in a crucial moment to reflect on the progress we have made during these 40 years of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the challenges that we are yet to overcome.

*Excellencies, friends,*

Firstly, I would like to emphasize the favorable moment of the south-south relations that has been characterized by the notable economic performance of the southern countries in the last few years.

For instance, south-south exports grew in an annual average rate of 13 percent between 1995 and 2016, far outpacing total world exports, at 8 percent.

Furthermore, the value of south-south trade increased almost sevenfold, from just 0.6 trillion USD in 1995 to 4 trillion USD in 2016.

The good relationships in the south could also be seen on cooperation. Between 2015 and 2017, the proportion of countries from the Global South providing development cooperation increased from 63 to 74 percent.

This awakening of the countries of the Global South, to which emerging economies have significantly contributed, is modifying economic and commercial patterns at a global scale.

These achievements would not have been possible without the obvious progress made at the internal level in those countries, which are the result of the implementation of innovative policies in critical areas for development such as in the fight against poverty, health and quality education.

And although there are still great challenges, this Global Expo allows us to emphasize the creativity of the peoples of the South to set those policies in motion.

Secondly, we must broaden and deepen south-south cooperation in the context of new development paradigms.

Since the approval of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the world has experienced deep transformations at an accelerated rate.

Today, we are part of a multi-polar and interdependent world. International cooperation must also reflect that reality and respond to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as was rightly point out by the Secretary General.

Thus, the next Conference in Buenos Aires will be crucial to renew the foundations of international cooperation and reaffirm that south-south cooperation complements traditional cooperation, without substituting it.

By this premise, Southern countries, other partners and the United Nations system must work together to enrich the modalities to exchange experiences and good practices; broaden the areas for cooperation; and search for creative solutions for persistent barriers and challenges.

Hence, we can broaden the doors for a more integral and inclusive cooperation that can significantly contribute to a social and sustainable development.



Regional integration and multilateralism are the only way to overcome regional and global challenges such as the eradication of poverty and hunger; decent work; empowering women and girls; protecting the environment; promoting health and education; and many others.

And, considering that south-south cooperation is a model of a Global Partnership to support the fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals, multilateralism is doubly reinforced.

**María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**  
President of the UN General Assembly

Thirdly, south-south cooperation contributes to strengthen multilateralism and regional integration by facilitating a space for exchange and solidarity that helps bringing southern countries closer and strengthening their relationships.

The horizontal nature of the south-south cooperation nurtures the will to cooperate with each other, trusting in our capabilities, with the conviction that joint efforts will facilitate more effective and sustainable solutions.

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*Excellencies,*

To conclude, I wish to tell you that, as a citizen of the global south, I feel very proud of what south-south cooperation represents.

An alternative view of how to move towards development; collaborating with others with the sole interest of mutual benefit and complementarity; acknowledging that we all have something to give and that, resources aside, political decisions are essential to make a difference.

Therefore, I am absolutely certain about the immense potential of South-South cooperation, the key is to make the most of it.

I trust that this event will serve to renew the interest in this modality of cooperation; as well as to broaden and deepen exchanges between the countries of the South; and to encourage developed countries and other actors to contribute to the successful experiences of the Global South.

Dear friends, I wish you the best of omens for these next days, you have my full support.

Thank you.

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