

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**MESSAGE BY MR. NIKHIL SETH
DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR ECOSOC SUPPORT AND COORDINATION, UNDESA**

**ESCAP REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM
21-22 OCTOBER 2008
BANGKOK**

Mr. Shigeru Mochida, Deputy Executive Secretary of UN ESCAP,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I am pleased to welcome all of you to this Regional Workshop on “Trends and progress in triangular and South-South cooperation”.

I would like to express my appreciation to each of you for having accepted our invitation. We are fortunate to be able to bring together such a distinguished group of policy makers and experts to discuss this important and timely issue.

Also, I would like to express my special appreciation to my colleagues in UNESCAP for co-organizing this important regional Forum and for their wonderful substantive and administrative support. My appreciation also goes to the South-South Unit of the UNDP regional office, for their substantive inputs.

DESA would also like to thank the Government of Japan for supporting this seminar.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This workshop is an important step in the preparations for the next Development Cooperation Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council to be held in 2010. The Development Cooperation Forum – which we call the DCF – is a new function of ECOSOC, mandated by the 2005 World Summit. The DCF fills a gap in the United Nations work on international development cooperation. It brings together the range of development actors – governments, NGOs, foundations, the private sector etc to discuss coherence in development cooperation. Its functions also include reviewing trends and progress in international development cooperation and making recommendations on practical measures to promote development cooperation for the realization of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs.

The first Development Cooperation Forum was held in July this year. It represented a first decisive step in positioning the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a key venue for global dialogue and policy review on key issues of development cooperation. It placed special emphasis on the role of the DCF in mutual accountability on aid. This role was further recognized at the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September. South-South and triangular cooperation were also a key theme of the DCF. A high-level symposium preparatory addressed this issue in Cairo in January, as did a dedicated round table during the DCF itself.

To ensure a comprehensive and substantive consultation process in preparation for the next DCF in 2010, DESA is supporting the organization of several High-level symposiums and meetings in different parts of the world. Today's workshop is kicking off this process.

This workshop has a role to play in the context of this year's key events on development cooperation. The 25 September High-level Event of the UN General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals generated a number of new initiatives and pledges. It thus gave hope that international solidarity may be sustained in the current global environment characterized by intertwined crises. Today's workshop can also build on the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in early September. Important lessons can also be drawn from Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) IV held in Yokohama in May this year, where the issue of triangular and South-South cooperation was among the key focus areas. Importantly, this forum, as did the DCF, can provide an input into the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development, to be held at the end of the next month. The conference will review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development and progress in the global partnership for development.

Within this broad global context, today's workshop will add a special value through its participative and interactive discussions among key decision makers on sectors important to triangular and South-South development cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. I am convinced that the sharing of experiences on triangular and South-South development cooperation in the Asia Pacific region will highlight the challenges as well as the new opportunities facing not only the region, but also the international development community in this area.

The first DCF – and the very informative background document prepared by Professor Kumar for today’s meeting- confirmed that there are a number of things we already know about triangular and South-South development cooperation. For instance we know that this type of cooperation represents a growing dimension of development cooperation. It should be seen as a complement and not as a substitute to North-South development cooperation. Programme countries see South-South cooperation as aligned with their priorities in a relatively balanced way. In the ESCAP region, Professor Kumar points among others to the strong focus of triangular and South-South cooperation on sharing of development experiences, technical cooperation projects, capacity building, technical assistance and also increasingly subsidized lines of credit and grants and preferential access to markets.

But the first DCF and the background paper also show that there are many things we do not know yet about triangular and South-South cooperation. Today’s workshop should help us advance our own thinking and debate on some of these issues. The annotated agenda suggests that we focus during these two days on the following four key issues of development cooperation. The first one is triangular cooperation. We hope that you can have a rich exchange of experiences on this modality of cooperation. This should help elucidate issues such as the effectiveness of triangular development cooperation and the possible replication of the Asia-Pacific experience in other parts of the world. The second issue is about the monitoring and evaluation of triangular and South-South development Cooperation. We hope to look at various questions such as potential advantages of putting in place effective and nationally-owned monitoring and evaluation systems. The third issue relates to data collection and analysis on triangular and South-South development cooperation. The focus will be on ways to improve

voluntary reporting on triangular and South-South development cooperation. The fourth and last but not least important issue is the role of the United Nations in supporting these processes and triangular and South-South development cooperation in general. One idea under this agenda item is whether there is need to create a specific platform for dialogue among southern donors under the DCF. Other questions relate to the UN's role in supporting the exchange and dissemination of best practices and experiences and its role in matching demands and opportunities in the area of South-South and triangular cooperation.

DESA encourages all of you to take full advantage of the workshop, to raise new questions, concerns, perspectives and ideas on triangular and South-South development cooperation.

Together, let us make this regional Forum a success.

I wish you very successful deliberations.

Thank you.

*Delivered by Ms. Marion Barthélemy
Chief, Development Cooperation Policy Branch
Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination
UNDESA*