Thematic Paper
Supporting South-South and Triangular Cooperation on Peace and Development

I. Introduction

This thematic paper has been prepared by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) as an informal contribution to the preparation of the 2020 Report of the Secretary-General on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, which will also be the principal input into the 2020 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture. The paper highlights the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation in sustaining peace and development, introduces the progress made by the UNOSSC in facilitating better understanding and leveraging of the SSC modality for peace and development based on demands from member states, as well as aims to put forward recommendations for UN system to consider how to better support SSC for peace and development.

II. The Vision

South-South cooperation has been recognized as an important implementation modality to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) outcome document has emphasized the contribution of the South-South Cooperation towards the achievement of sustainable development, especially in addressing challenges as poverty eradication, women empowerment and gender equality. During the inauguration of the 10th South-South development expo in November 2018 at the UN headquarter in New York, the UN Secretary General also stated that “Innovative forms of knowledge exchange, technology transfer, emergency response and recovery of livelihoods led by the South are transforming lives.”

Global South built on solidarities, the principles of mutual gain, and non-interference, and with the spirit of sharing knowledge in different spheres, is taking collective actions to tackle the root causes of conflict and address the peace and development nexus. The increasing demands from various countries in the South for more proactive engagement in the promotion of South-South cooperation for peace and development reflects the significance and the impact that collaboration and solidarity between countries in the south can achieve.

In the Secretary General’s 2018 report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace, he states, “While financial support for peacebuilding activities is indispensable, the contribution of in-kind
resources can also be significant... I encourage United Nations senior leadership to support South-South and triangular cooperation in peacebuilding.¹

Also in 2018, the G77 Ministerial Declaration agreed by all ministers of foreign affairs of 137 global south development nations reaffirmed “the importance of building a culture of peace and strengthening multilateralism and development friendly relations among nations based on international law and dialogue respect for the principles of equality rights and self-determination and strengthening universal peace.”²

The UNOSSC, in responding to demands from member states and the call by the Secretary General, has strengthened its efforts in supporting SSC on peace and development since 2018, the starting of its new Strategic Framework (2018-2021). It has gathered more than 100 successful experiences that have contributed to the development of countries around the world. The evidences show that there are ample opportunities in working together and building initiatives and innovative solutions to collectively build peace and to address roots causes of conflict, through robust South-South cooperation and knowledge sharing. Many cases highlight impacts, lessons learned and implementing partner’s narratives and approaches on how concrete and solid initiatives have increased durable peace and development.

III. Overview of South-South Cooperation Contribution to Peace and Development

South-South cooperation has provided several examples of engagement among countries of the Global South, many of them showcase evident peacebuilding results. Below is a brief account on few initiatives in which South-South cooperation supported sustaining peace and efforts to achieve the SDGs.

Many developing countries, especially the emerging economies, have established funding mechanisms to support poverty alleviation in other developing countries, addressing root causes of conflict and crisis. The IBSA Fund presents such an example. Funded by India, Brazil and South Africa, the Fund has received $35 million in contributions becoming a prominent example of solidarity among countries in the South for the eradication of poverty and aiming at advancing toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals while enhancing peace and development.

Moreover, South-South and triangular cooperation and the modality of Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation (F2F) in support of countries experiencing conflict or emerging from crisis, provides support through peer learning, capacity building, and mobilization of third-party support, financial assistance or knowledge generation. F2F has powerful impact through its demonstration effect. F2F mobilized $2 million in financial assistance donated to Guinea.

¹ UN Secretary General’s report on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace A/72/707–S/2018/43
² G77 declaration: https://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2018.htm
Liberia and Sierra Leone to help address the Ebola crisis. The impact of the cooperation was multiplied several times through the global awareness effect that arose from the G7+ countries and was deliberately channeled through the recipient countries’ systems.

Other experience shared through South-South cooperation is the **UN Social Protection Floors** initiative, in which 15 countries of the Global South support policies and activities that extend countries’ social protection systems and basic social services in line with the needs of their population. Many developing countries have introduced elements of national social protection floors learnt from other countries through South-South cooperation.

Inter-regional and cross-border movements among pastoral communities often lead to conflicts. The Marsabit County of Kenya bordered with Borana Zone in Ethiopia is an example of this risk. The **Ethiopia-Kenya Cross-Border Integrated Programme** was set to establish effective peace and conflict structures; re-engineering the national government coordination mechanism to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts efficiently and effectively. With collaboration of the EU IGAD/CEWARN and UNDP, the programme has developed a response plan to address inter-communal violent conflicts in the two countries, and ongoing violent conflict. South-South cooperation engagement has offered opportunities for the two countries to establish continuous consultations. Similar approaches have been initiated in the Karamoja cluster (Kenya-Uganda border region), Omo-Turkana Cluster (Ethiopia and Kenya border region) and the Mandera Triangle (Ethiopia-Kenya-Somali border region).

The case **Colombia is the one of the best examples on women’s engagement in peace processes**. The approach used to include women in the process, reflected on the robust engagement of women in the peace process prior the negotiation. Women in Colombia created a resistance structure and guiding principles and approaches to participate in peace processes. Women’s presence during the Colombian peace negotiation process held in Havana, Cuba accompanied by victims of war played a very important role. South-South cooperation has manifested itself as an effective tool in establishing an inclusive peace agreement, with Cuba and Norway as guarantors for the peace process. Women’s approach to the peace process included the establishment of a subcommittee, women’s presence during Havana meetings and their participation in peace summit in September 2016. All these mechanisms utilized by women, supported by the political will of the Government of Colombia and the FARC-EP contributed in shaping Colombia’s peace agreement as the most gender sensitive agreement reached with South-South collaboration and the effective engagement of women.

**IV. The Role of UNOSSC**

Since 2016-17, UNOSSC has received demands from various countries and regional groups to more proactively engage in the promotion of SSC for peace and development. Since then, UNOSSC has expanded the portfolio of nascent collaboration with United Nations agencies working on peace, conflict and humanitarian crisis, and that include: DPA, PBSO and OCHA.
UNOSSC role as facilitator, convener, and advisor and (potentially) fund manager, becoming a catalyst of transformative South-South Cooperation for sustainable peace and inclusive development across all continents, building on the following thematic priorities along the continuum of peace processes, from prevention, to management and to transformation.

The following table shows UNOSSC’s South-South Peace and Development outcomes and thematic pillars:

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<tr>
<th>EXPECTED OUTCOME</th>
<th>THEMATIC PILLARS</th>
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<td><strong>1</strong> Southern Knowledge Collective analysis on peace &amp; development produced &amp; shared by Global South thinkers and countries.</td>
<td><strong>Thematic Pillar 1 - Conflict prevention</strong>&lt;br&gt;Focus on root causes of violent conflict, Effective public policies, and alternatives for systemic change. etc.</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong> South-South Learning Exchanges Expansion of opportunities to share lessons learnt &amp; Global South alternatives and options for peace and development</td>
<td><strong>Thematic Pillar 2 - Peace negotiation, conflict/crisis management &amp; resolution:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Southern experiences in the mediation, management and resolution of conflicts and crisis. Focus on localized and people-lead approaches, participation of indigenous communities, women, youth, non-state actors, key stakeholders in the negotiation, management and resolution of conflict and crisis.</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong> Policy Influencing Increased Southern solidarity for peace ensures that policies are informed by Southern best practices and perspectives</td>
<td><strong>Thematic Pillar 3 - Conflict transformation - from conflict to sustainable peace and inclusive development:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contextually relevant factors enabling one country/region to move from violence and conflict to sustainable and inclusive development and peace. Include. Diverse models of transitional justice, elections as a factor promoting (or not) peace consolidation; participatory processes to support political agreements at all society-levels, DDR, etc.</td>
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Together with the relevant UN entities, UNOSSC has focused on the following means to deliver on the three above-mentioned outcomes:

1. **Building knowledge and evidence-based analysis to inform policies – South-South Global Thinkers**

In recognizing the importance of improving capacity and engagement of Southern think tanks on issues related to South-South Cooperation, UNOSSC and UNDP partnered to establish the South-South Global Thinkers: a Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation. The Global Coalition brings together more than 200 Global South think-tanks,
academic institutions and organizations that have strong research components. The South-South Global Thinkers initiative allows think-tank networks to better connect with each other in order to collectively address multi-disciplinary challenges, and to find channels to inform and influence the global development agenda on South-South and Triangular Cooperation through the development of frontier research and knowledge.

Consequently, in March 2018, UNOSSC established a dedicated expert team with the task to devise a South-South Peace and Development research agenda. One key programmatic milestone was the creation of a specialized Peace and Development Group within the Global Coalition of Southern Think-Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation.

The South-South Peace & Development Global South Thinkers group was formed in September 2018 composed by 10 Global Thinkers and think tanks based in various countries in Latin America, Middle East, and Africa covered a relevant range of peace and development research areas. With the aim to amplify the visibility, voice and influence of Southern proposals and alternatives for sustainable peace, the group produced and shared research and evidence-based policy analysis and recommendations regarding the “peace, development and security nexus” across regions and by engaging with state and non-state actors -including member countries, regional blocs, multilateral organizations, UN agencies and other key stakeholders- working to prevent and transform conflict. The group also took part in policy influencing initiatives and facilitated capacity building activities. The range of experiences indicated by members of think tanks such as Oxfam and the Center for the Study of African Economies created a great opportunity for newer think-tanks to also collaborate with new and dynamic research and initiatives.

The graph below presents a summary of the research areas as proposed by the Southern think tanks themselves:

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<th>Sustainable &amp; inclusive development</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<td>Gender &amp; youth inclusion in peace</td>
<td>Women, peace &amp; security</td>
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<td>Regional and international policymaking for peace</td>
<td>Diversity &amp; indigenous peacebuilding</td>
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<td>Good governance, transparency &amp; anticorruption</td>
<td>Land reform &amp; mining conflicts</td>
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<td>Security, counterinsurgency</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conflict prevention, management &amp; transformation, mediation, peacebuilding</td>
<td>Cities</td>
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Some of the examples include:

- **SAIIA**\(^3\) undertakes research in relation to peace and development across African countries and explores the role and impact of Chinese, Turkish in peace and conflict within the region.

- **ILAIPP**\(^4\) and the Global South Unit for Mediation (housed within BRICS Policy Center) conduct research regarding various national and sub-regional peace and development challenges, policies and processes across Latin America and Africa. Members committed to tangible policy outcomes; ensuring that their work improves the lives of people within their respective regions.

- Espacio Publico, a think-tank based in Chile, consciously aims to make their research accessible beyond ‘elite ‘policy circles in Latin America.

- Think-tanks such as ASIES, Grupo FARO and REPOA\(^5\) recognize the importance of unity and knowledge exchange for peace promotion within the Global South.

The global thinker’s research work highlighted a significant pattern that encompasses:

- ✓ Gender and youth inclusion and sustainable & inclusive development.
- ✓ Indigenous peacebuilding, cities and diversity.
- ✓ Overlap in many topics, which provide a good opportunity for cross-regional knowledge exchange.

The UNOSSC has actively facilitated the global thinkers to participate in policy dialogues, including along side the Second High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, the General Assembly, the High-level Political Forum. Most recently, UNOSSC has also shared the findings of the research by the think tank community with the Peace Building Commission, in partnership with the Peace-building Support Office.

### 2. Promoting knowledge sharing and partnership brokering – South-South Galaxy

The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation along with development partners has developed a global knowledge sharing and partnership-brokering platform – South-South Galaxy. The platform is powered by artificial intelligence and aims to respond systematically and effectively developing countries’ demands to connect, learn and collaborate with potential partners.

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\(^3\) The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)

\(^4\) Iniciativa Latinoamericana de Investigacion para las politicas publicas ILAIPP

\(^5\) Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES) Policy Research for Development (REPOA). Grupo Foundation for the Advance of Reforms and Opportunities. FARO
It serves as a consolidated South-South solutions platform for southern partners in the UN system and acts as a one-stop-shop for all partners to use. The platform complements, rather than substitute or duplicate existing national or regional institutional arrangements.

Through South-South Galaxy, southern partners are able to publish their Southern development solutions and needs, exchange knowledge, foster partnerships, access to cutting-edge research. South-South Galaxy will provide advisory services linking Southern partners with thematic experts from UN agencies.

All in all, SSC Galaxy serve as a hub for Knowledge Sharing, Advisory Services and Partnership Brokering, and foster Partnerships and Connections.

Member States UN agencies, academia and think tank will be able to find solutions and share innovative good practices, and build partnerships to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, and expand networks and increase visibility, share good practices, events, training courses.

Currently South-South Galaxy showcases examples of South-South cooperation in peace and development, linked to SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and strong Institutions; SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals and SDG 5 on Gender Equality. All these experiences and solutions can be used as a baseline for future work on South-South Cooperation in peace and development with a special focus on women and youth.

As a modality of South-South Cooperation, Monrovia programme is based in the recognition of the knowledge experience and challenges related to resilience. Two high-level round tables to exchange experiences were held in Monrovia in 2014, and in Lisbon in 2017. Ministries of justice from G7 and countries addressed the financial and IT capacities and other constrains. The impact sited echoed a process of mapping lessons learned in areas of justice that will begin in the coming years.

The challenges faced in Lake Chad region create devastating and escalating security crisis and humanitarian and ecological crisis and created influx of migration and vulnerable condition that boosted violent extremist groups. The project provided early warning systems for droughts and floods and strengthened the resilient capacities of local communicates to climate change, rehabilitated ecosystem and improved livelihoods of local communities.
3. Fund initiatives and projects

The UNOSSC apart from the initiatives and the efforts to strengthening and advocate for SSC, the office financially manages and supports implementation of trust funds that support collaboration and piloting of South-South initiatives across the globe, among these:

- The India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund). The IBSA Fund implements, through partnerships, replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to interested developing countries as examples of best practices in the fight against poverty and hunger.

- The United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSSC), which was established in 1996, to promote, support and implement South-South cooperation. It constitutes a core element of the United Nations system support to Member States in their strategy to engage partners and mobilize resource for the joint implementation of innovative and transformative South-South cooperation activities.

- The India-UN Development Partnership Fund is a dedicated facility established in 2017 within UNFSSC. It is supported and led by the Government of the Republic of India, managed by UNOSSC, and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system. The India-UN Development Partnership Fund supports Southern-owned and led, demand-driven, and transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and Small Island developing states.

While all the funds are contributing towards addressing root causes of conflict through reducing poverty, building resilient communities, and improving livelihoods, the funds also support initiatives directly contributing to sustaining peace, for example,

- In Haiti, the IBSA Fund supported a project called “Collection of Solid Waste as a Tool to Reduce Violence”. The project organized and mobilized communities with a history of violence and gang clashes around the labor-intensive process of waste collection and recycling. The project supported collective community works built local capacity in solid waste management and helped pacification efforts.

- In the State of Palestine, the IBSA Fund supported rehabilitation of the cultural and hospital center, which improved access of the population in Gaza to healthcare services including urgent care, surgery and psychosocial treatment.

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V. Potential and Opportunities moving forward

Building on the experiences of UNOSSC in supporting SSC for peace and development, there is an important opportunity for the UN system to join efforts to strengthen its support to SSC on peace and development based on demands from member states.

It is important that UN agencies internalize South-South Cooperation as an important modality in supporting their delivery of the SDGs, including their respective work in relation to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. This could be done through more knowledge sharing, advocacy, and partnership in implementation of peace and development programmes. It is a trend and recommendation for more institutionalized support on South-South Cooperation through UN agencies operational activities.

The review of peace architecture in UN may also present an opportunity for relevant UN entities to consider setting up or strengthen its SSC focal point arrangement, with necessary capacity and budgetary support for their work in advancing SSC for peace and development, as well as in the context of supporting the achievement of sustainable development.

The UNOSSC is tasked to coordinate, in consultation with the UN agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy to achieve more coherent and coordinated support by the United Nations system. Once developed, the strategy will also provide guidance for the system to better leverage South-South Cooperation for peace and development, among other priority areas.