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**Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs**

**Statement**

**At the High-level Forum of South-South Cooperation in Climate Change**

**November 14, 2016, Marrakesh, Morocco**

Excellencies,

Today’s event reaffirms the strong commitment by developing countries to take concrete actions to tackle climate change. This forum will surely strengthen partnerships for the Southern countries, and accelerate their implementation of both the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let me note, from the outset, that South-South cooperation is an important workstream of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, where we orient all of our work toward poverty eradication and sustainable development. UNDESA continues to support Southern countries to pursue evidence-based development efforts, including the parallel and integrated implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and **the Paris Agreement**. I am pleased to share some of our policy recommendations and analytical findings related to climate change and development cooperation.

Excellencies,

We know the immense challenge of tackling climate change and its effects, including the unprecedented levels of public and private support required. Implementing the climate objectives and 2030 Agenda demands – and enables – a comprehensive and synergistic approach. Progress towards the SDGs can help countries adapt to the impacts of climate change. Consolidating the progress made so far will create new momentum to propel us forward.

Enhanced and effective development cooperation is critical. Here, the distinct features and guiding principles of South-South cooperation are especially suited in implementing many aspects of the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda. While the road ahead remains challenging, it is within our reach to achieve a prosperous and sustainable future.

Excellencies,

While climate change affects all, it does not affect all equally.

The ***2016 World Economic and Social Survey report titled “Climate Change Resilience - An Opportunity for Reducing Inequalities***” indicates that weather-releated disasters have affected 4.2 billion people in the past 20 years, including a large loss of lives. Low-income countries have suffered the most, including economic losses estimated at about 5 per cent of GDP, with consequences for global inequality. This only heightens the challenge these countries face in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

For this and other reasons, special attention must be paid to these vulnerable countries. To this end, I would urge the forum to address five important issues.

**First,** the special needs of the most vulnerable countries have to assume a more prominent space in all climate change forums, including on climate finance. Studies have shown that national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are often used as proxies for mitigation potential, and thus guide funding decisions. In our view, this approach is inadequate; it has contributed to low levels of investment and insufficient support to countries often affected the most, yet with the least capacity to respond to its challenges, such as LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and African countries.

Last December, countries committed to mobilizing at least US$ 100 billion per year for climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in developing countries. The vast majority is for mitigation, with only one part in 17 for adaptation. Adaptation needs will range from $70 billion to $100 billion per year by 2050 in the developing countries alone. Redistributing resources currently available would not be enough: resources must be scaled up, with a clear path to close the “adaptation gap”.

**Second,** it is incumbent upon Southern countries to re-imagine and pursue new development paradigms and possibilities. The 2030 Agenda calls developing countries to lift their people out of poverty without relying on fossil fuels, a feat for which there is no precedent. The implementation of the Paris Agreement also requires us to re-orient and retool country-level institutions and systems. While there are well established institutions that handle and coordinate North-South development cooperation, many developing countries do not have national entities that facilitate South-South cooperation or climate finance. It is imperative that countries that have successful experiences in this realm share and help others.

**Third**, developing countries lack access and ability to analyse the key data that could enable them to assess the risks and implications of climate change. Capacity development efforts must be nurtured to strengthen the science policy interface, which in turn presents a unique opportunity for South-South cooperation. With the support of UNDESA to pursue evidence-based development efforts, Government experts from a number of Southern countries have developed expertise in the use of modelling tools to assess policy options to address sustainable development challenges, including ensuring sustainable energy for all and pricing carbon properly to mobilize resources that are invested in human development. These experts are becoming potential trainers for experts in other Southern countries.

**Fourth,** private investment alone cannot drive adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries. High up-front costs coupled with uncertain and limited returns constrain how much private finance developing countries can mobilize. This problem is further compounded by incomplete country-level strategies and policies, as well as lack of accurate, timely and accessible data and information on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation options. For many of these countries, however, public finance remains well positioned to support adaptation and mitigation.

In this context, development cooperation, with its unique pro-development orientation, has a catalytic role to play in leveraging more private finance towards adaptation efforts. It is important that this forum and other deliberations consider how to concretely support governments of vulnerable countries to mobilize the needed finances and ensure their contribution to sustainable development. We commend ongoing efforts to support developing countries to prepare their national development plans, and strengthen their national capacities to access, manage and coordinate financing for adaptation.

**Lastly,** the Paris Agreement requires developed country parties to provide, on a biennial basis, transparent and consistent information on their support, including efforts to mobilize public interventions. Important as it is, better information and data related to the North-South cooperation would be inadequate. Developing countries that have considerable expertise and experience in documenting their development cooperation can help others gain these capabilities as well. UNDESA is committed to supporting Southern countries in their efforts to improve the way they collect, document and share data and information, with a view to making it sufficiently detailed, disaggregated, accessible, and comparable to fully support knowledge sharing and mutual learning for sustainable development results.

In conclusion, Excellences, let me once again recognize that South-South cooperation, extended on the basis of solidarity and mutuality, holds clear strengths, when it comes to climate change, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The special needs of vulnerable countries need to be fully taken into account, including enhancing their capacities. We must consider means and ways of strengthening the role of governments in mobilizing public and private finance for mitigation and adaptation; refashion our institutions and systems to be compliant with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement; and boost the comparability, documentation, and sharing of data related to South-South cooperation. Effective development cooperation, putting the furthest behind first and ensuring that no one is left behind, remains crucial to the realization of these and other issues.

Please allow me to congratulate the organizers the Governments of China and Morocco, with the support of the new initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator (SCPI), and the International Ecosystem Management Partnership of UNEP. UNDESA is fully committed to working with our UN sister entities under the umbrella of the SCPI initiative to ensure that South-South and triangular cooperation, as a complement to North-South cooperation, are key modalities for climate action and sustainable development.

I wish everyone happy and fruitful deliberations.