WORLD URBAN FORUM 6
SPECIAL SESSION 3 - SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

“Building a better urban future through south – south and triangular cooperation”

Naples, Tuesday, 04 September 2012, 14:00 -16:00

CONCEPT NOTE

1. INTRODUCTION

The overall theme of the Sixth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF 6) is: “The Urban Future”. More than just a slogan for advocacy purposes, the general focus of the upcoming WUF 6 is an appeal to countries and governments of the developing world to rethink the central role of the city in the developmental process and explore ways of harvesting its potential to boost national and local prosperity for sustainable urban development. With more than half of the world’s population living in towns and cities, and with a major portion of these urban dwellers classified as ‘poor’, there is need to take concerted measures and focus on urban poverty alleviation to ensure a successful transition to the urban future for developing countries.

The proposed session on the impacts of the south-south cooperation (SSC) on the urban future and the prosperity of cities provides an opportunity to debate the best possible interventions for improving the future for the world’s cities and the need for inclusion of the urban poor as strategic actors in sustainable urban development planning. In the ever-changing global development governance debates, SSC entails diverse forms of cooperation among developing countries, all of which impact the urban future through sustained economic growth such as the reduction of urban income gaps and related inequalities, the promotion of participatory governance and democracy, as well as support to youth, women and other vulnerable groups. These key interventions are opening the way towards a better urban future for all.

2. BACKGROUND AND GLOBAL CONTEXT

UN-Habitat has been committed to promoting SSC and triangular collaboration as a means of delivering on the commitments contained in the Habitat Agenda and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and targets. SSC and triangular cooperation allow for capacity-building, sharing of knowledge and technology transfer. Strengthening this cooperation could help
all involved partners contribute to addressing the national, regional and global developmental goals.

Emerging trends indicate that many urban areas in the developing South have experienced dramatic growth in recent decades as a result of rapid population growth, hampering the capacity of most cities to provide adequate housing, services and gainful employment for their citizens. Simultaneously, the development contexts have changed as the global economy has been transformed by a combination of rapid technological and political changes. An estimated three billion people—about half of the world’s total population—are classified as ‘urban’. Since urban areas command an increasingly dominant role in the global economy as centers of both production and consumption, SSC and triangular cooperation can be used as a modality for cities to share and exchange information on how to improve planning to increase economic growth and investment while reducing poverty as well.

2.1 Global perspectives

Several UN Agencies and major developmental partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions agree on the pressing need for strengthening SSC, because it is a vehicle for boosting economic growth and a crucial platform for achieving the global developmental agenda. Most importantly, it is a manifestation of solidarity and collective self-reliance for developing countries in the implementation of global developmental goals through technical cooperation. Therefore, enriching the aid effectiveness agenda (Paris Declaration) with the practices and experiences of SSC becomes an urgent task for all partners involved, including global and regional platforms e.g. EU/ African Caribbean and Pacific mechanisms, UN/TCDC and NEPAD, which could act as catalytic agents in this process.

The past five years have witnessed continued growth in SSC, especially with the growing importance of a new economic block comprised of emerging economies led by the ‘Big Five’—Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa also known as the BRICS. Furthermore, India, Brazil and South Africa have been part of an initiative, known as IBSA, working to drive SSC by promoting job growth in the face of the global economic slowdown. IBSA supports nations through their IBSA Facility Fund for Alleviation of Poverty of Hunger used to implement cooperation projects in LDCs and countries recovering from conflicts. To support activities, each IBSA country contributes USD $1 million per year to the fund. IBSA projects include the construction of a sports complex in Ramallah, a solid waste collection project in Haiti and the refurbishment of health units in Cape Verde. So far the fund has implemented four projects in Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti and Palestine; it has current projects in Burundi, Cape Verde, Cambodia and Guinea-Bissau; and the fund has several projects in the pipeline for Laos, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Sudan, South Sudan, East Timor and Vietnam1.

On a bilateral level, IBSA countries have been actively engaged in promoting SSC and triangular cooperation. The Government of India has been a leader in SSC displaying vast partnerships across Asia and Africa. In Africa alone, trade between India and Africa is

---

1 Deen, Thalif. Brazil Revs Up South-South Cooperation. IPS news. 19 August 2011
expected to rise to $90 billion in the next three years\(^2\). As a part of IBSA, India hosted the “Innovations in Public Employment Programmes and Sustainable Inclusive Growth” in March 2012 in New Delhi to ‘share knowledge between countries to ensure better cohesion for overall inclusive growth with equity\(^3\) Twenty-two countries from Asia, Africa and Southern America attended.

Brazil is also at the forefront of SSC. The country has established itself in Africa through homegrown companies Petrobras, Vale, Embraer and Odebrecht in more than 20 countries. Nigeria, Angola, Algeria, South Africa and Libya comprise the share of Brazil’s main markets where they have invested more than $10 billion in 2009. In the aviation business alone, Brazil has sold four aerial surveillance aircrafts and about 150 commercial jets to Africa. They are also investing in energy, infrastructure and agriculture on the continent and elsewhere. For example, Brazil is supporting the development of an experimental cotton station in Mali, a rice station in Senegal, vocational training center and food security program in East Timor and soybean production in Cuba. Brazil also provides technical expertise and assistance in the development of agriculture technology in Haiti, vocational training center in Paraguay. In 2010 Brazil signed 21 international agreements with one regional organization, CARICOM, for the Caribbean.\(^4\) Recently, the Brazilian National Development Bank (BNDES) has committed to provide the Government of Kenya with a loan worth around USD $230 million to assist in road construction in the capital city Nairobi and assist in the mechanization of agriculture.

2.2 UN-Habitat

In the particular context of UN-Habitat, the global developmental goals remain closely related with the urban agenda. Improved SSC bears the potential to facilitate the development of the urban agenda as a component of the MDGs and requires massive efforts by partners to continue promoting sustainable urbanization through technology, information, expertise, training and lesson sharing. This is in direct line with the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), which encourages all development actors, including providers of SSC to build more effective and inclusive partnerships for development.

For the first time, the Government of India is committing funds to UN-Habitat for the reconstruction of houses damaged and destroyed by three decades of conflict. Through its High Commission in Sri Lanka, the Government of India has invited UN-Habitat to undertake the construction of 16,800 houses. More than 40,000 families will be assisted in the north and east of the country. Over a period of three years, this project will improve the security of tenure and promote pro-poor land and housing.

China has been active in Africa where they have been working with UN-Habitat to provide technical assistance, training and facilitating city-to-city exchange. In the Lake Victoria Region, for example, 45 mayors, town clerks, urban planners and other professionals from 17 cities in the Lake Victoria region paid visits to Shanghai, Hangzhou, Shaoxing and

\(^{2}\) African Business. No 386. May 2012. p. 8  
\(^{3}\) ILO  
Zhangjiagang before the Fourth World Urban Forum in Nanjing. As a follow up, a seven member delegation from Yangpu District of Shanghai visited Mwanza in Tanzania, Kisii and Kisumu in Kenya and Entebbe in Uganda in East Africa to look for cooperation opportunities. In West Africa, a study tour to Rizhao and Kunshan was organized for 12 mayors and representatives from Treichville, Bamako, Cotonou, Dakar and St. Louis in 2010. They also visited various projects such as those for coastal, housing, solid waste disposal, drinking water supply and wastewater treatment, and industrial development. In recent years, training for six urban planners from Kisii and Kisumu was organized in Shanghai, with the support of Yangpu District and Tongji University. As for technical assistance, the Yangzhou Municipality has supported the building of a housing complex in Dar es Salaam for female-headed households. Four engineers and construction managers worked to provide technical assistance for the project in Dar es Salaam where solar heaters and solar street lights were also provided.

The Government of Italy has been actively working with UN-Habitat in Somalia in providing basic urban services and improving shelter delivery for Internally Displaced People in Baidoa and Jowhar, and promoting decentralization and local governance in Somali cities and towns. Italy also supported the Berbera Technical & Institutional Assistance Project and the ongoing Mogadishu Participatory District Rehabilitation Project. Currently, the Government of Italy is in negotiations with UN-Habitat to grant two million Euros towards improving the port of Bossaso in Northern Somalia. Outside of Somalia, the Government of Italy has also been active in Kenya where they have provided support towards the provision of cleaner water and improved sanitation in several towns in Lake Victoria and in upgrading and supporting facilities for community youth. Italy has also provided support towards activities in Bosnia, Albania, and Herzegovina and Serbia in the housing and local development planning sectors.

2.3 Economic growth and emerging trends

Apart from the support to key regional platforms, including the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD), the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD), and the Assembly of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development of LAC (MINURVI) serve as a platform for policy dialogue, lesson sharing and act as a mechanism for strengthening UN-Habitat South-South and triangular cooperation, the Agency has contributed in other ways, such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and along regional mechanisms such as mentioned above..

South Africa, Nigeria, Namibia, Rwanda, Kenya have shown noticeable growth. Between 1984 and 2010, per capita growth rates in a few emerging countries averaged more than 3 percent per year, and the average incomes increased by more than 40 percent in this period, characterized by a global financial turmoil. Some observers even project that by 2020 Africa’s GDP of US 2.6 trillion and African consumer spending will rise to US 1.4 trillion in the same period.

5 Robert Araeb, a partner of KPMG, Namibia
In a comparative analysis of the continents by way of GDP, Africa’s economic indicators exceed those of India and Russia, but fall marginally short of those of Brazil. USAID data\(^6\) provides evidence of 17 emerging countries in Africa which are creating growth without relying on oil or mineral exports, with indications of promising opportunities to replicate success in other countries in the continent. However, this remains a very volatile growth as Africa commands less than 2 percent of global trade with about 14 percent of the world’s population living in its cities and towns. Governments must therefore intensify efforts to encourage strengthening of rural-urban interlinkages manage open, free-market economies by expanding trade and investment opportunities, strengthening the private sector, increasing agricultural productivity, improving natural resource management, as well as increasing rural incomes.

3. **OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

SSC is meant to foster a greater exchange of skills and knowledge among partners and stakeholders from the developing South, with a particular focus on development and prosperity. This objective will provide the focus for the proposed event during the WUF 6, in Naples.

The specific objectives of the proposed special session on SSC during WUF 6 will be to explore and exchange views and experiences on the following key questions:

(i) As we are preparing for the third global conference of UN-Habitat (Habitat III), how do developing countries understand their contribution to improving SSC for the promotion of the urban agenda? Is there enough political will or should it be complemented by efforts to facilitate access of the poorest countries, including LDCs, to financial and economic markets to achieve that objective?

(ii) What can be realistically expected of the more conventional development cooperation and assistance, while an unprecedented financial crisis and its subsequent budgetary constraints continue to put enormous pressure on governments in developing countries, jeopardizing ongoing international efforts to reduce poverty around the world?

(iii) What is the level of involvement of cities and the participation of local governments in SSC activities, as they remain key to ensure its successful outcomes?

(iv) In a globalized world, does the concept of “city diplomacy” underlying the practice of decentralized cooperation make sense to national governments and other actors in SSC?

(v) How can SSC be better utilized in support of local fiscal regulations to further empower local authorities, including through capacity building and strengthening of the regional cooperation?

(vi) How can the aid effectiveness agenda, as understood within the context of the Paris Declaration, be enriched with practices and experiences from SSC as a contribution to global development policies and new appeals for promotion of the urban agenda?

---

\(^6\) Steve Radelet, Emerging Africa, USAID
The above questions provide a focus for rich and enlightening discussions. It is expected that participants will provide recommendations highlighting the options available to promoting the urban agenda through SSC. Special emphasis could be put on three main tasks of SSC, including:

a. boosting existing information systems to generate quantitative and qualitative data for measuring, assessing and accounting for partners’ inputs in a transparent, regular and timely manner,

b. committing to sound result management systems that enable partners to show the scope, relevance and impact of SSC knowledge exchange and learning, and

c. supporting much needed mutual accountability, especially at the regional and country levels

d. Taking the opportunity of their relatively lower urbanization level to promote the development and growth of smarter cities through innovative legislation and planning policies.

4. NEXT STEPS AND EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE NEXT FORUM

4.1. Proposed Structure

- Welcoming remarks (Moderator/Anchor Mark Eddo from ME Media):
- Statements by a representative of Italian Government, ED/UN-Habitat / UNDP SS, EU and ACP Secretariat.

(Brief statements in support of SSC and urban development)

- Exchange of regional experiences: Panelists from the following emerging countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Turkey, and Nigeria.

(Each panelist to provide a precise answer to a specific question from the moderator)

4.2. Expected Accomplishments

(i) Recommendations on the relevance of SSC and action plan to be implemented in the promotion of the urban agenda;

(ii) Network of SSC partners for a better urban future established for knowledge exchange and learning; and

(iii) Improved collaboration with UN-Habitat towards WUF6 and Habitat III Conference;

Focal point:
Alioune Badiane
Email: alioune.badiane@unhabitat.org