

POSITION PAPER ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FOR PRESENTATION AT THE FOURTH HIGH-LEVEL FORUM IN BUSAN

Following the Twenty-first Ibero-American Summit, and in relation to the Fourth High Level Forum in Busan, the Cooperation Officers of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Andorra, Spain, and Uruguay,

Considering that the Ibero-American countries above mentioned, have made efforts in the last five years to develop a collective view on South-South Cooperation (SSC), as reflected in the annual Report on SSC coordinated by SEGIB, a publication which provides data and analyzes cooperation between member countries;

Considering also that the Ibero-American Program to Strengthen South-South Cooperation was launched to help promote SSC in this community of interests and common bonds;

Recognizing that cooperation in the framework of the Ibero-American Conference offers an opportunity for countries with different cooperation traditions to draw together and share experiences and know-how, while exchanging views on international cooperation;

Considering that the dialogue and mutual understanding between traditional donor countries and cooperation partners in the South bear witness to the Ibero-American countries' commitment to strengthen cooperative ties with a view to advancing development and effectively addressing the structural causes of poverty;

Aware that Ibero-American countries above mentioned, view the High Level Forum in Busan – and the Aid Effectiveness process in general – from a broad range of positions although with a common base and shared principles arising from the cooperation practices and policies followed by these countries, as laid out in this document;

Recognizing that as a result of this diversity, Ibero-American countries have produced other documents and positions for presentation at the High Level Forum in Busan, such as the document agreed upon between the Central American countries and the Dominican Republic;

Declare that:

1. International cooperation is changing as the world faces new challenges and shifting opportunities to further advance development. Principles and paradigms that were formerly valid must now be revised and augmented.

2. The growth of SSC, a form of cooperation that began decades ago, clearly reflects these changes as it integrates diverse alternatives, solutions, and tools in traditional cooperation patterns.

3. SSC is not a substitute for traditional North-South cooperation, nor is it a subsidiary or instrument of the latter; it is valuable in and of itself and gains greater importance when combined with other modalities. The two modalities are fully compatible and the collective aspiration is to leverage the strengths offered by diversity in development partners to better promote coordination and collaboration between them while attempting to achieve the best results in the most efficient and inclusive manner.

4. The significance of SSC and its conceptual and practical contributions to development are the thrust behind the need to reconfigure, scale-up, and democratize the structures and mechanisms of International Development Cooperation while making them more open and inclusive and committed to promoting innovative lasting partnerships for development, based on trust and shared learning.

5. Most Ibero-American countries are contributing to global stability and sustainable development by increasingly playing dual roles as cooperation donors in SSC projects and initiatives to assist other developing countries, while also seeking the support of traditional cooperation for their own strategic sectors.

6. It is important for middle income countries (MIC) to continue receiving traditional cooperation because they still face major challenges, such as high levels of inequality and vulnerability to external shocks, in addition to major institutional challenges that require resources and technical assistance obtainable through development cooperation. What is more, without this cooperation, 80% of the world's poor would be excluded from its benefits.

They further state that in the framework of the Ibero-American Conference, member countries have identified several principles and criteria for SSC as practiced in the region.

They believe that the following principles are relevant to the discussions due to take place prior to the Busan meeting, as well as at the Forum:

7. The core principle underpinning SSC is horizontal partnership between stakeholders and the avoidance of any vertical and/or welfare-oriented relationship. Choosing to work in this manner and the experiences accruing from horizontal partnerships over the long-term are fundamental elements of SSC.

8. This type of cooperation arises through agreements between countries with similar national and global development challenges – which makes it easier to adapt activities to their common needs and prospects – while respecting local development contributions. This promotes understanding, encourages a relationship based on reciprocity between partners, and fosters mutual learning by sharing management models in use in countries of the South.

9. SSC is active in many sectors under several modalities, but one of its main strengths is the exchange of knowledge, strategies and practices, as well as capacity-building, resulting in stronger institutions and societies. The generation and transfer of knowledge for development are of paramount importance in SSC.

10. SSC is committed to the efficient and effective use of all forms of available resources, sharing and reducing costs, exchanging experiences, using human, technological, financial and other resources in a rational and unified manner and adapting them to local circumstances. In addition, SSC promotes close relationships between partners, building capacities for developing countries to manage international cooperation processes.

11. This form of cooperation bolsters relations between countries in the same region, promoting regional development and integration, as well as relations with other regions and the preservation of regional and global public goods.

They further declare before the High Level Forum in Busan, that:

12. Given the emergence of new challenges, it is necessary to devise a structure, governance, and agenda for International Cooperation that reflect the fact that alternatives and proposals to tackle the challenges to development can come from many different places and actors, of which the developing countries are one of the most significant sources. Accordingly, the active role played by these countries must be acknowledged, and strategies designed to promote their inclusion in the struggle to address global challenges such as those affecting the environment, food security, poverty eradication, economic development, and migration.

13. The generation of horizontal partnership and cooperation models based on equity, mutual benefit, trust and long-term relationships should be recognized and valued as a contribution from SSC to international cooperation policy and practice. The outcome of the Busan Meeting should aim for concrete commitments to promote horizontal cooperation partnerships that International Development Cooperation actors can put into effect according to their possibilities and capacities, mindful of their particularities and approaches.

14. The exchange of strategies, knowledge and experiences offers an exceptional opportunity to advance development and promote active participation by developing countries towards attainment of the goals of the global cooperation agenda. The Ibero-American countries above mentioned, will continue their efforts to further develop SSC concepts and strategies, and to systematize experiences and lessons learned, drawing on, inter alia, the tools developed under the Program to Strengthen SSC and those contained in the annual report prepared by SEGIB on SSC in Ibero-America.

15. International cooperation must continue to support middle income countries so as to build their capacity to face development challenges and sustain their achievements, recognizing their dual role without penalizing their development accomplishments, acknowledging their value to preserve both regional and global stability.

16. SSC should be recognized, promoted and supported through mechanisms to strengthen institutions and develop organizational and human skills, to fully leverage its value added.

17. Triangular Cooperation must be increased as it substitutes the traditional donor-recipient relationship with horizontal partnerships based on reciprocity, recognizing the capacity of developing countries to contribute to knowledge sharing, not only South-South but also North-South and South-North. Triangular cooperation must be encouraged as a mode that supports building bridges with North-South cooperation, especially when based on leadership by the requesting countries and taking advantage of the specificities and advantages offered by different modalities and traditions when assigning responsibilities.

They further declare that:

The Ibero-American countries above mentioned, will continue to encourage reflection on international cooperation, especially SSC practices and methodologies, and the strengthening of national mechanisms and systems for more inclusive, sovereign, coordinated, effective and sustainable cooperation.