



## The ABCs of South-South Cooperation

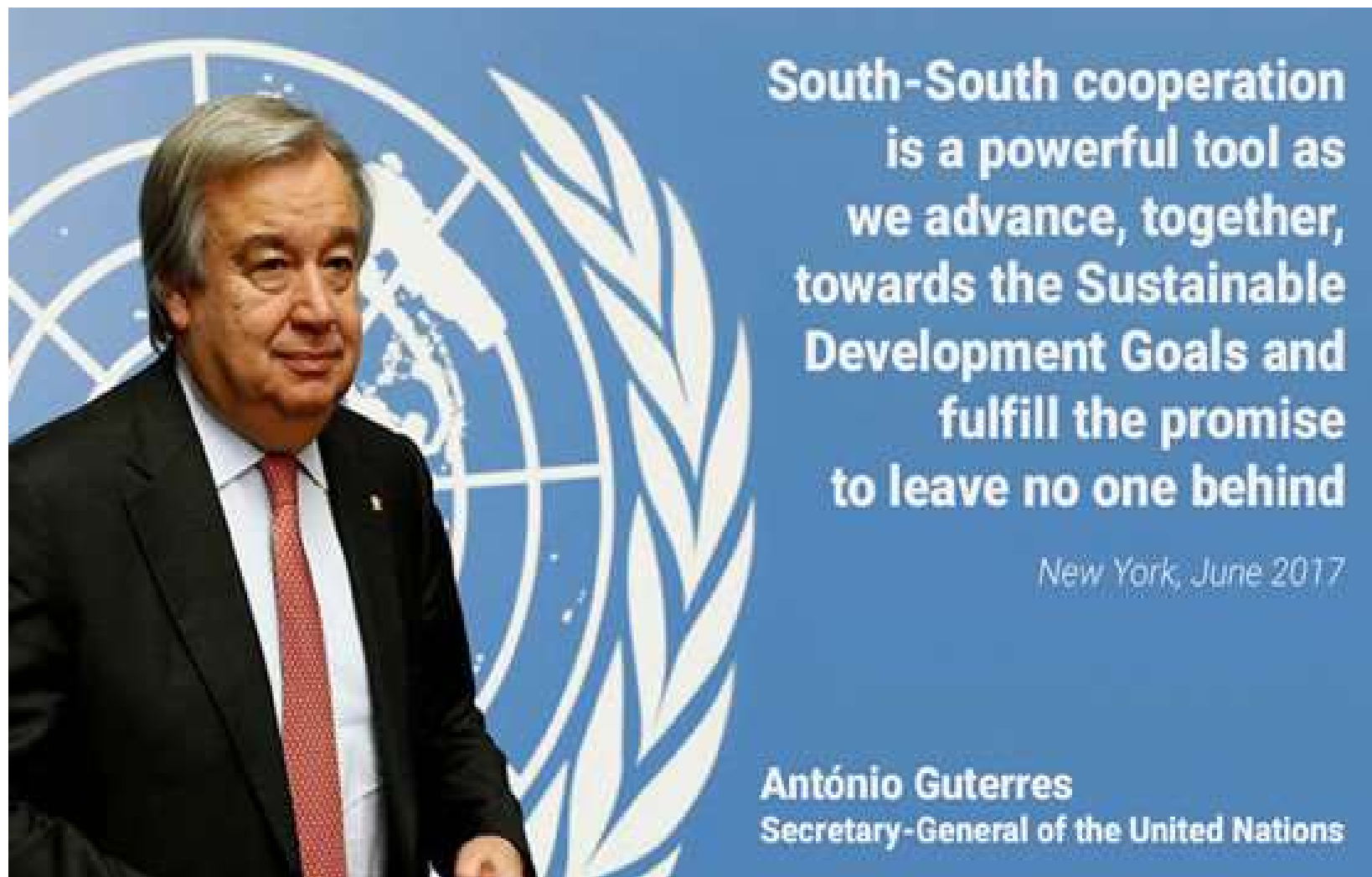


**(or everything you wanted to know about South-South  
Cooperation but were afraid to ask)**

Steve MacFeely

# The political context

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# What is South-South Cooperation?

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SSC is a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains.

Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts.

Recent developments in SSC have taken the form of increased volume of South-South trade, South-South flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.

Source: <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/about/about-sstc/>



## Some key dates

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- 1974** UNGA in res. A/3251, endorses the establishment of a special unit within the UNDP to promote technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC).
- 1978** Conference of the Global South adopts the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) for promoting and implementing TCDC.
- 2003** UNGA in res. 58/220 declares 19 December as UN Day for SSC. It is first celebrated in 2004.
- 2004** Special Unit for TCDC is renamed Special Unit for SSC (SU/SSC)
- 2009** High-level UN Conference on SSC in Nairobi.
- 2013** UNGA res. 67/227 reaffirms the mandate of SUSSC but renames it UN Office for SSC (UNOSSC).
- 2019** BAPA+40 - 2<sup>nd</sup> High Level UN Conference on SSC, Buenos Aires.



# Guiding principles

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SSC is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SSC agenda and SSC initiatives must be determined by the countries of the South, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.

Reaffirmed at Nairobi (2009)

UNGA (2009). Report of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. A/CONF.215/2. <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/CONF.215/2>



# Measurement: a southern perspective

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‘If measured only in monetary terms, most of SSC would become statistically irrelevant, with negative implications to the foreign policy of developing countries’

‘...the question of how international development cooperation is to be evaluated goes beyond the issue of public statistics to explicitly incorporate a political dimension’

*Márcio Lopes Corrêa (2017)*

Corrêa (2017). Quantification of South-South cooperation and its implications to the foreign policy of developing countries. South Centre, Policy Brief, No. 41, 2017. [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41\\_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries_EN.pdf)



# No consensus on scope

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Multiple versions of SSC adopted by developing countries

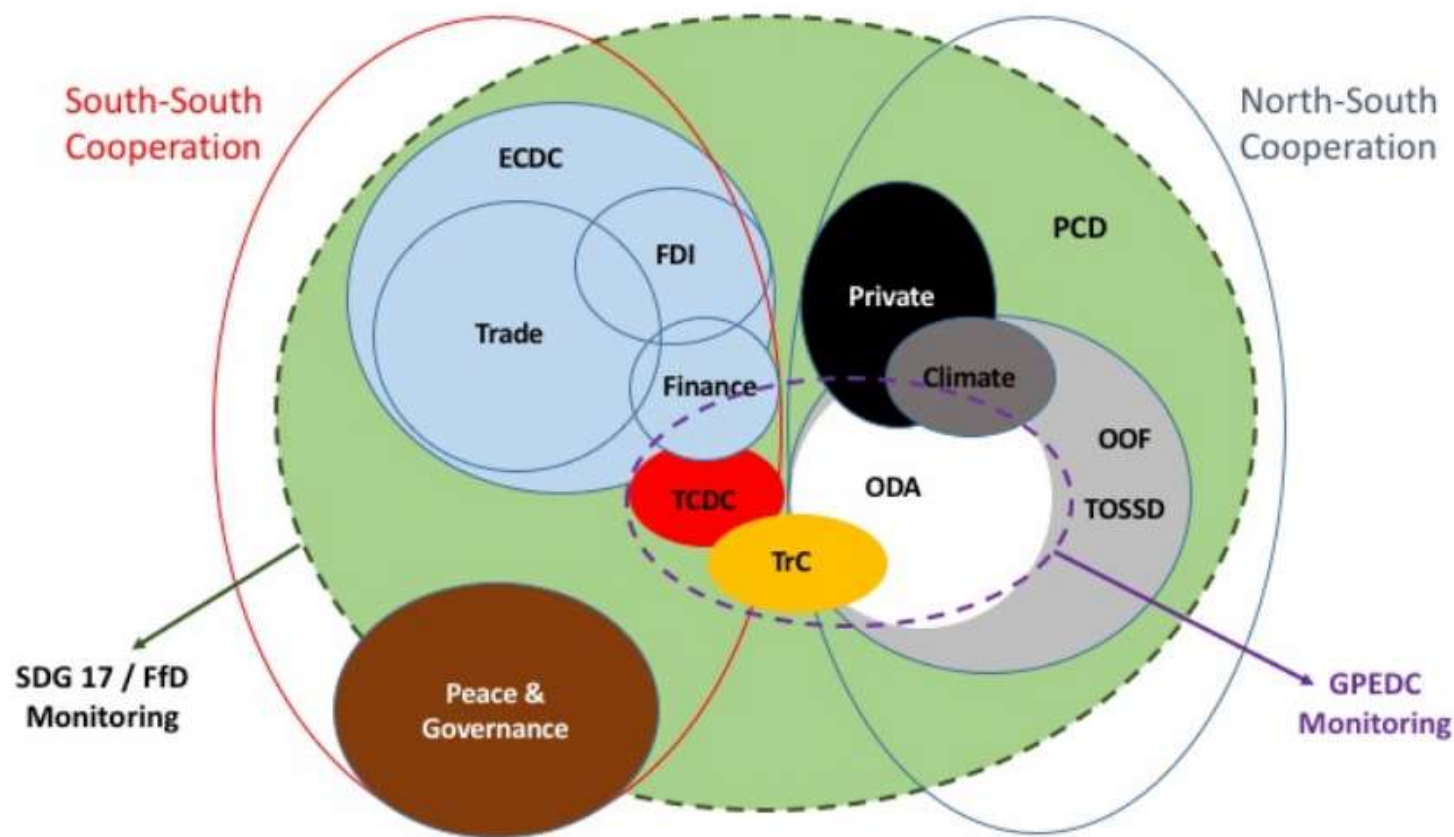
*Latin America:* prevailing view is that SSC is basically capacity building. CEPAL/ECLAC and SEIGIB trying to develop common quantification framework.

*Asia:* focus mainly on trade, investment and economic cooperation – blended finance, grants (although there is also technical cooperation and training).

*Africa:* AU NEPAD trying to replicate Latin America. But probably more aligned to Asian perspective. Argue that humanitarian, safety and security can be justified as support to sustainable development.



# The confusing world of development cooperation



Source: Besharati and MacFeely (2019). Defining and Quantifying South-South Cooperation, UNCTAD research paper no.30, SER.RP/2020/2.





# One possible framework?

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A multifaceted data set integrating the following components:

1. appraisal of inputs compatible with monetization;
2. quantifying the volumes of all types of in-kind resources mobilized by South-South partner countries, regardless of their position as providers or receivers, and for which monetization is not the best indicator;
3. assessment of the connection between financial and nonfinancial inputs and outputs; and
4. evaluation of the results attributable to these initiatives and to their respective beneficiaries.



# Continued absence of data

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Given the importance of South-South cooperation, there must be a way of monitoring it and analyzing the data. This analysis is crucial if we are to achieve our development goals

H.E. Ms. Cecilia Rebong  
Ambassador and Permanent  
Representative of the Philippines  
and Chairperson of the Group of 77 and  
China in Geneva (2015)



# South-South Trade

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## UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics

<https://stats.unctad.org/handbook/MerchandiseTrade/ByPartner.html>



## Further reading...

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Corrêa (2017). Quantification of South-South cooperation and its implications to the foreign policy of developing countries. South Centre, Policy Brief, No. 41, 2017. [https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41\\_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries\\_EN.pdf](https://www.southcentre.int/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/PB41_Quantification-of-South-South-cooperation-and-its-implications-to-the-foreign-policy-of-developing-countries_EN.pdf)

Besherati and MacFeely (2019). Defining and Quantifying South-South Cooperation. UNCTAD Research Paper No. 30, SER.RP/2019/2. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2019d2\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2019d2_en.pdf)

Hoffmeister (2020). Development Status as a measure of development. UNCTAD Research Paper No. 46, SER.RP/2020/5. [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2020d5\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ser-rp-2020d5_en.pdf)

