



Trade Union Reaction to the BAPA+40 Outcome Document on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

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Trade unions believe that the BAPA+40 Outcome Document is a mere starting point to broaden the scope of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and enhance its true potential as a driver of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Trade union priorities for action are:

- 1) **SDGs and decent work at the centre of SSTC**: All SSTC actors must prioritise those SDGs related to decent work and climate justice in all SSTC projects and programmes (such as SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 13 and 16) in line with the Outcome Document's reference to scaling up SSTC towards decent work for all and in line with the Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- 2) **Enhanced effectiveness of SSTC**: Define adequate accountability mechanisms for SSTC as an essential condition to measure its development impact. Equally, the human rights-based approach and the development effectiveness principles must be at the heart of SSTC, building on the Outcome Document's commitment to increase mutual accountability and transparency, as well as to foster processes of impact and quality assessment in a results-oriented manner, including information and data collection on SSTC.
- 3) **Enabling environment and social dialogue**: The Outcome Document fails to refer to an enabling environment for civil society organisations and trade unions. This is a missed opportunity in SDGs' terms, especially SDG 17.16 and 17.17. Member States must seriously commit to reversing the trend of shrinking civic space. This includes respecting and implementing freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue, in line with SDG 8. As recognised in the 2016 GPEDC Nairobi Outcome Document, such commitment must also include support to social dialogue with the business sector and support to trade unions as promoters of sustainable development.
- 4) **Democratic ownership of SSTC policies**: Increase UN Member States' commitment to involving trade unions and social partners in policy dialogues when defining SSTC priorities and implementation strategies and when monitoring and evaluating results, as well as when providing support for capacity building of social partners to implement the SDGs. This is in line with the Outcome Document's encouragement to Member States to strengthen coordinated mechanisms to leverage the expertise of multi-stakeholder partnerships to support SSTC initiatives.
- 5) **Domestic resource mobilisation**: We regret the weak references to the role of SSTC in strengthening domestic resource mobilisation in the Outcome Document. SSTC must be pivotal in expanding the fiscal space of developing countries. In particular:
 - At the international level, **SSTC must promote a rules-based and fair multilateral trading and fiscal system** that tackles tax avoidance and evasion. SSTC must also focus on reducing

unfair competition practices in trade relations based on social dumping practices and violation of labour standards.

- At the national level, **SSTC must promote key tools for equality and gender inclusion, such as reforms that foster universal social protection coverage, build progressive fiscal systems, ensure living wages for all and invest in the care economy.**

- 6) **Shared technology and Just Transitions:** SSTC must **address systemic issues on technology access, sovereignty and transfer**, enabling developing countries to collectively manage challenges and benefit from the evolution of technologies. Therefore, SSTC actors must promote **Just Transition processes** to ensure technology contributes to social progress and environmental sustainability and does not lead to precarious jobs.
- 7) **Business accountability:** “encouraging business practices to be aligned with the sustainable development goals”, as the Outcome Document reads, is not enough. Private sector engagement in SSTC programmes must include clear accountability mechanisms to ensure the development impact of such engagement. Thus, SSTC actors must **promote the implementation of international labour standards, responsible business conduct based on due diligence, and fiscal and environmental liability**¹.

For trade unions, the 2030 Agenda is much more than a set of objectives. It is about policy changes and global shifts that the world needs urgently.

It is clear that more ambitious commitments are needed to strengthen SSTC’s alignment with the 2030 Agenda and to enable the Global South to become a key player in the global governance of development cooperation.

¹ ITUC/TUDCN, 2019, Aligning private sector investments in development with the SDGs, available at: <https://www.ituc-csi.org/aligning-private-sector>