



South-South and Triangular Cooperation as drivers of SDGs

TRADE UNION KEY ASKS FOR THE BAPA+40

In order to achieve sustainable development, the trade union movement calls for a *New Social Contract* for governments, business and workers, with a floor of a universal labour guarantee for all workers. This means rights are respected, jobs are decent with minimum living wages and collective bargaining, workers have some control over working time, social protection coverage is universal, due diligence and accountability drive business operations, and social dialogue ensures Just Transition measures for climate and technology.

The SDGs represent a key avenue to foster a new developmental model demanded by trade unions worldwide. Development cooperation, including South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC), are critical elements to support change along this path.

Trade unions call upon the UN Member States to include the following priorities in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document:

- 1) **SDGs and decent work at the centre of SSTC:** SSTC initiatives must be focused on promoting the achievement of SDGs. In line with *Agenda 2030* and the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, generating full and productive employment and decent work for all is key for the promotion of sustainable development. Therefore, we ask that explicit references to the decent work agenda be included in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document, and we call on all SSTC actors to 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).
- 2) **Human rights-based approach and development effectiveness principles underpin SSTC:** All types of development cooperation – being North-South, South-South or Triangular – should promote human rights, be in line with the international social and environmental ratified instruments and respect the principles of development effectiveness. Explicit reference to these should be included in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document as critical means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- 3) **Enabling environment and social dialogue:** We call on Member States to reverse the trend of shrinking civic space for CSOs and trade unions. This means respect for and implementation of freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue, in line with SDG 8. As already recognised by the *2016 GPEDC Nairobi Outcome Document*, such commitment includes support to social dialogue with the business sector and to trade unions as promoters of sustainable development.
- 4) **Democratic ownership of SSTC policies:** Trade unions are development actors in their own right. We ask for an explicit reference to trade unions in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document when referring to key actors for multi-stakeholders' partnerships and participation in SSTC. We call on all SSTC actors to involve trade unions and social partners in policy dialogues when defining priorities, when



monitoring and evaluating results, as well as when supporting capacity building initiatives to implement the SDGs.

- 5) **Enhanced effectiveness of SSTC:** We welcome the commitment – included in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document – to enhance the effectiveness of SSTC by increasing mutual accountability and transparency. Likewise, we welcome the encouragement to foster country-led processes of impact and quality assessment in a results-oriented manner, which should happen in line with the goals and targets of Agenda 2030, and including information and data collection on SSTC programmes.
- 6) **Domestic resource mobilisation:** Advancing towards the SDGs also depends on countries' fiscal space. In this sense, SSTC should play a key role in strengthening domestic resource mobilisation:
 - At the international level, SSTC should promote a rules-based multilateral trading and fiscal system tackling tax avoidance and evasion. SSTC should also focus on reducing South-South unfair competition practices in trade relations based on social dumping practices and violation of labour standards. The BAPA+40 Outcome Document should reflect those references.
 - At the national level, SSTC should promote reforms to foster universal social protection coverage, build progressive fiscal systems and ensure living wages for all, as key tools for equality. Equally, investing in the care economy is essential to promote gender-inclusive development through SSTC. An explicit reference to those policies should be included in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- 7) **Shared technology and Just Transitions:** SSTC should address systemic issues on technology access and transfer in order for developing countries to collectively manage challenges and enhance the benefits from the evolution of technologies. In this sense, we call on SSTC actors to promote Just Transition processes, to ensure technology contributes to social progress and environmental sustainability. SSTC programmes focused on equal access to and use of technology are crucial to achieve Just Transitions for climate mitigation and resilience, while empowering workers and communities.
- 8) **Business accountability:** Private sector engagement in SSTC programmes must be aligned with the SDGs and comply with the development effectiveness principles. In order to do so, and coherently with the 2016 GPEDC Nairobi Outcome Document, we urge SSTC actors to promote the implementation of international labour standards, responsible business conduct based on due diligence, and fiscal and environmental liability¹.
- 9) **Complementarity and specificity:** We welcome the current connotation of SSTC as a complement, not a substitute, to North-South Cooperation. At the same time, thanks to its emphasis on shared values and priorities within similar development contexts, SSC has the potential to expand the global governance of development cooperation by enabling developing countries to play a greater role in shaping international decision-making processes.

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