



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

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Item 3 c of the Agenda

Meeting Record

Meeting of the Experts of the G-15 Steering Group¹ with the South Centre

Venue: South Centre Premises, Geneva; Date: 28 June 2013

1. As a follow-up to the decision taken at the Personal Representative-level G-15 Steering Group Meeting on 12 June 2013 and in light of the unavailability of the Executive Director of South Centre in Geneva during coming weeks, the experts/delegates from the Steering Group met with Mr. Vincente Paolo B. Yu III, Head of Administration and Coordinator of the Global Governance for Development Programme at the South Centre.
2. The delegate from Sri Lanka, on behalf of the Steering Group of G-15, while thanking Mr. Yu III for agreeing to meet at a short notice, highlighted the importance of the meeting as perceived by the Steering Group of the G-15. Strengthening of the institutional networking and cooperation between the G-15 and the South Centre was considered important to initiate dialogue with South Centre to scout for ideas based on shared perceptions, objectives and values. At the focus of the meeting was the G-15's desire to connect with the South Centre's current areas of engagement, especially on the matters of shared interests such as the Post-2015 development agenda, lessons from MDGs and on the South Centre's latest research studies and future direction pertaining South-South Cooperation. G-15 was particularly interested in knowing whether South Centre would be able to assist it by way of expert advice and technical support towards identifying and potentially setting up thematic area clusters.²
3. The delegate from the Arab Republic of Egypt, in his capacity as the member of the Steering Group as well as the Chair of the Working Group of Sectoral Cooperation, also expressed his sincere thanks to the South Centre for the meeting. He was of the view that the

¹ Steering Group comprises Troika and Egypt supported by TSF

² It was a follow-up of the discussion held at the last meeting of the G-15 Steering Group on 12 June 2013.

Post-2015 development agenda opens up a great opportunity both for the G-15 and South Centre to foster and promote close consultation, cooperation and coordination for synergistic gains. The Group of Fifteen regards South Centre, as a much sought after think tank for developing countries, with which G-15 has a lot to learn and benefit from, even though not all the members of G-15 are represented at the G77. The Egyptian delegate also inquired on ways to strengthen the collaboration and cooperation between the two organizations, especially with regard to benefitting from the latest research, analysis, news and information that would also enrich the Quarterly Information Bulletin of G-15 and enhance G-15's networking with the Third World Network. G-15 membership will also like to benefit from the other meetings and forums organized by South Centre where G-15 can participate.

4. The delegate from Iran, while assuring of his delegation's full commitment, support and allegiance to any form of engagement and cooperation that may develop between G-15 and the South Centre, underscored the importance of greater cooperation and collaboration in the areas of mutual interest and those in which the rich pool of expertise at the South Centre especially as a credible "think tank" can feed to the agenda of G-15 and provide new ideas for its future course of action.

5. The delegate from Brazil fully endorsed the points made by the delegates from Sri-Lanka, Egypt and Iran and hoped for enhanced engagement with the South Centre.

6. Mr. Yu III from South Centre welcomed the idea of enhanced engagement with the G-15 and expressed his Centre's full support and cooperation within the framework of its mandate. Recognizing the fact that not all members of G-15 are members of the South Centre, he was sure that both sides will respect political sensitivities. Mr. Yu III expressed willingness of the South Centre to not only engage with G-15 but also respond positively to the requests for thematic/programmatic and other technical briefings and updates, in the areas of shared interests. He proposed that perhaps it may be useful to organize a meeting between Ambassador Minty and Mr. Khor with the G-15 Ambassadors to explore further concrete areas of engagement and cooperation. Furthermore, Mr. Yu III appreciated the suggestion of strengthening liaison and interaction between the Secretariats of the two organizations and welcomed the sharing of information and reports, as appropriate.

7. The delegate from Egypt, referring to the growing need for up-to-date and helpful assessments with reference to the achievement of MDG's as well the progress being made with regards to the framing of Post 2015 development agenda and the SDGs, warmly welcomed the opportunity of benefitting from potential South Centre briefings, subject to discussion at the upcoming PR's meeting. The delegate felt that such a briefing can help in promoting greater interaction among member states on the important subjects.

8. Fully acknowledging the suggestions and the focus on Post-2015 development agenda, Mr. Yu III expressed willingness of South Centre to design briefings for G-15 members, if requested. In return, Mr. Yu III solicited support of G-15 members in getting appropriate contacts and help for South Centre in better connecting with prominent research and development institutions in G-15 member countries, particularly those working in the areas of economic / political economy research. This was felt important given that South Centre is currently engaged in strengthening the network of research institutions in developing countries and helping build their research and analyses capacities. Noting that South Centre's work primarily focuses on: Climate Change; Trade; Intellectual Property; Health; Development Policy and Macro-economic issues, Mr. Yu III also mentioned South Centre's work on WTO negotiations; with G-33 on Food Security; and with G-20 on subsidies among others.

9. In pursuance of the discussion at the last Steering Group meeting of G-15, the Head of TSF inquired from Mr. Yu III, if the South Centre is also actively engaged in the area of "Migration" in the context of the Post-2015 discussions. Noting that although "migration" has been flagged by the South Centre's Board during the last few meetings, the capacity and engagement in this area has been so far limited. The Egyptian delegate further highlighted the importance of the subject in the context of Post 2015 development agenda, especially its impact on displacement, climate change and resilience of cities and hoped for some engagement on the subject.

10. The delegate from Iran inquired how the South Centre, through its think-tank expertise and conduct of feasibility studies, can help G-15 on its two initiatives: 1) Private Sector Engagement through the G-15's Business Council [Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industries and Services], where besides routine business gathering for acquaintance on each other's capacity, capability and preferences, may also potentially explore technical and/or ambitious framework such as "Generalized Special Tariffs among G15 member states" and 2)

Establishing the G15 Financial Institution with an ambition to set up a Bank in the long term. Mr. Yu III expressed willingness to discuss the two initiatives further to better appreciate how South Centre can best assist in light of its expertise and current programming. Also on the subject of establishing Cooperation Bank, Mr. Yu III cited the efforts underway at BRICS and IBSA on this matter and suggested G-15 to review how they can best add value in such an initiative.

11. The delegate from Brazil suggested the need for brainstorming on whether a briefing by South Centre to the G-15 PR's could potentially raise any political sensitivity, given some difference in membership between the two institutions. It was generally felt that ideally briefings should be held on issues, identified in advance, where there is a general convergence between the members of the two institutions. Mr. Yu III further suggested that it should be noted that South Centre is a "think tank" for developing countries and its briefings are not on behalf of its member states and they do not necessarily represent any particular member position/s.

12. In closing, the delegate from Sri Lanka, on behalf of the Steering Group, thanked all present for attending this meeting and for their valuable contribution and discussion. The delegate expressed keen interest in taking this dialogue further for synergistic gains in areas of shared interests.

14. On this note the Meeting was formally declared closed.
