



G-15 with South Centre concludes series of symposia with Geneva based International Organisations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

29 June 2015, Palais des Nations, Geneva

UNCTAD Secretary General Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi has observed that “the three pillars of the Post-2015 Development Agenda must be integrated and implemented in a manner that is sustainable, and that countries of the Global South can help promote this, by participating directly in the negotiations and by supporting the efforts of the United Nations.” He emphasized that “the ambitions of the Post-2015 Development Agenda will certainly require commitment and engagement on the part of the development community in Geneva, to have a chance of success,” and noted that “while it may seem at times that the focus is in New York or elsewhere, but in the immediate months and looking forward into 2016 and beyond, Geneva has an important role to play in the negotiations and implementation of 'the real development agenda'.”

The Secretary General's observations were delivered on his behalf by Mr. Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), at the concluding session of the series of symposia on 29th June, 2015 held at the *Palais des Nations* and organized by the Group of Fifteen,¹ in collaboration with the South Centre² in Geneva, to ascertain the perspectives of the Geneva based international organisations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The series consisted of three symposia, themed on the pillars of sustainable development goals.

The first meeting on the '**Social pillar**' of the Development Agenda, held on 30th April, 2015 focussed on Health, Education, Food Security, Migration, Labour, and Poverty & Inequality and was addressed by representatives from WHO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, FAO and UNESCO. The second meeting on the '**Economic pillar**' was held on 29th May 2015 addressed current macroeconomic policies, multilateral policy areas, particularly pertaining to Financing for Development and aspects of debt, trade and investments pertaining to the Development Agenda, with the participation of representatives of WTO, UNCTAD and WIPO. The third meeting on the '**Environment pillar**' was held on 29th June 2015 with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative

¹ The G 15 established as a Summit Level group of developing countries in 1989, following the conclusion of the Ninth Non-Aligned Summit gathering in Belgrade, the G-15 comprises 17 developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean (Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe). The aims and objectives of the Group are to harness the latent potential of the member states for mutually beneficial cooperation, besides serving as a forum for the conduct of regular consultations in pursuance of their common agenda.

² The South Centre is an inter-governmental organisation that helps developing countries to combine their efforts and expertise to promote their common interests in the international arena. The South Centre was established by an Intergovernmental Agreement which came in to force on 31 July 1995. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

for Disaster Risk Reduction Ms. Margareta Wahlström delivering the Special Address, the underlying scientific research and projections on climate change presented by representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and a representative from the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) articulating the nexus, challenges and opportunities between economic development and environmental preservation.

UNCTAD Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Reiter in his comments on behalf of his Secretary General reminded the audience which comprised of representatives of member states of the Group of 77 and China, G-15, academics, graduate students and officials from Geneva based international organisations and think tanks, that the aims of the Post-2015 Development Agenda “is nothing less than a new development blueprint for the entire planet which will not just lead towards a more prosperous future but one that is more inclusive, stable, sustainable and dignified.” He observed that this vision is one that UNCTAD has long promoted when the organisation was established over 50 years ago, where the founding text outlined that “the task of development, which implies a complex of structural changes in the economic and social environment in which men live, is for the benefit of the people as a whole....economic and social progress should go together.” The Deputy Secretary General added that “meeting the SDGs will require a fundamental socio-economic transformation, along with a significant rise in investment, both public and private, in many countries, as well as the strengthened regulatory powers, and a greater attention to distributional issues”. Mr. Reiter said “the G- 15 can also help make Official Development Assistance (ODA) become more of a viable tool for development again. Countries outside the OECD-DAC are becoming significant donors, accounting for a growing share of South-South development aid. However total levels are still far too low. Traditional ODA is still less than one-third of a percent of GNI compared to the United Nations' target of 0.7 percent. And because levels are so low, funds are understandably directed more to the urgent needs of immediate poverty reduction rather than to supporting the productive activities that will reduce poverty in the long run.”

Addressing the concluding session Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in Geneva and the Chair of the Personal Representatives of the Heads of State of the Group of Fifteen (G-15) who chaired the Session said the G- 15 was able to play a constructive role in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process. He noted that even prior to the setting up of the Open Ended Working Group (OWG), in July 2013, the G-15 initiated a briefing in Geneva with the South Centre on the Development Agenda. This was followed-up on the eve of the presentation of the UNSG's Synthesis Report, when in November 2014 the G-15 once again collaborated with the South Centre to organise a consultation on the Development Agenda. In-keeping with a mandate provided by the Foreign Ministers of the G-15, to both be actively involved in the Post-2015 Development Agenda process and to also engage Geneva based international organisations, the Group took the initiative to organise this series of symposia, which had brought the Geneva based development community together with countries of the 'Global South', and enabled channelling of the rich insights gathered to their capitals and respective delegations negotiating in New York and also at the forthcoming Third Conference on Financing for Development (FfD) in Addis Ababa in July and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) scheduled for December in Paris.

Dr. Martin Khor, Executive Director of the South Centre in a message to the concluding session said "the South Centre has been very pleased to have contributed to this initiative, and hopes that the inputs gathered through these symposia will most effectively be used by developing countries in highlighting and supporting their own views and perspectives as the negotiations for the outcome of the Post-2015 Development Agenda summit that is on-going in New York." Mr. Vicente Paolo Yu, Head of Administration and Coordinator of the Global Governance for Development Programme representing Dr. Khor elaborated that "the multiple challenges that face the global community require much greater levels of multilateral cooperation and support than ever before in the social, economic, and environmental areas. The speakers that have been invited in this series have all touched upon many of the challenges and the possible solutions that the global community could work on together for inclusion into the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The South Centre hoped that the identification of these solutions will effectively address the systemic causes as well as the symptoms of these multiple challenges to sustainable development will become the focus of the negotiations in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, together with the adoption and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals." He said "as we move beyond this symposium towards what hopefully will be effective multilateral cooperation coming out of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the South Centre looks forward to working together with the G-15 as well as other developing country institutions such as the G-77 and the NAM in order to promote the development needs and interests of developing countries in the multilateral arena."

On behalf of the G 15, the Head of its Technical Support Facility, Mr. Gihan Indraguptha thanked all participants, especially those representing the Geneva based international organisations and hoped that the series of symposia had contributed to enhance the understanding of the numerous processes that are currently under way in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda. He pledged that the G 15 will continue to remain engaged with the issues discussed during the symposia, and in also consolidating on the partnerships the G-15 had been able to build with the Geneva based international organizations.

The Secretariat of Group Fifteen:

Geneva

13th July, 2015