

WHAT IS THE RISE OF SOUTH-SOUTH RELATIONS ABOUT?

Development,
not aid



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n° 70 – september 2012

www.mo.be



n° 70 – september 2012 – www.mo.be/papers
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Revised August 2012

Acknowledgements:

This is a revised version of the paper written for the VVOB, MO*, VAIS, VLIR-UOS, VVN and BTC debate on South-South Cooperation in Brussels on 30 May 2012, with the financial contribution of the VVOB. The author would like to thank Bruce Byiers, Bert Jacobs and Niels Keijzer for their most useful comments, as well as the participants to the debate for their most stimulating remarks.

[introduction]

The traditional perception of development in industrialised countries has centred on the notion of assistance. Rich nations (“the North”) can accompany and support the development efforts of poorer nations (“the South”). The quest has been to find how to best provide such support. Which programmes and policies would be most effective? How to ensure sustainability of the effort and the outcomes? How to best engage developing countries in this endeavour?

In spite of various - successive or parallel - waves of development strategies promoted by the international community¹ and bilateral donors, it remains questionable whether sustainable solutions have been found to development challenges. But in recent years, the whole approach to development by traditional actors has been further challenged by the increasingly important trend of South-South cooperation. While not new *per se*, this emerging trend offers complementary and often alternative approaches to development. While Northern development cooperation actors have often framed their approach in the “we will help you” framework, the policy discourse on cooperation among developing countries tends to be framed in a more “equal footing” approach. This discourse argues that developing countries do not need to be taught about how to grow. Instead, they can share their own development experience and knowledge in a less prescriptive, more open-ended manner, so as to generate tailor made solutions respecting the specificities of each situation. This South-South exchange is arguably driven by what Fraeters and Maruri (2010) call “the power of double demand: the desire to learn and the desire to share”.

This paper reviews the rising trend of South-South partnership and cooperation in several of its dimensions and raises issues for further debate on what this trend means for more traditional North-South relations. South-South cooperation can be considered alongside two main trends. One is the growing importance of Southern economies and their increasing connection to the world and among themselves. This is the focus of Section 2, while Section 3 addresses some of the disparities among Southern actors. The second trend is the increasing number of South-South initiatives to stimulate development, discussed in Section 4. It emerges that economic and political relations remain the predominant factor of development interaction among Southern actors. As for development partnership, it takes a wide range of forms but remains overall limited compared to traditional development cooperation. The discourse underlying the logic of interaction is however strikingly different from the one of Northern partners. Section 5 concludes with some remarks on possible consequences for the more traditional North-South relations. In particular, it is argued that a constructive North-South engagement should focus on a broad approach to development partnership, capitalizing on the experience of Southern actors, rather than a narrow agenda focused on aid cooperation, which, irrespective of its merits and know-how from Northern partners, is unlikely to generate much interest and ownership from most Southern actors, at least in at this stage.

¹ See for instance Yusuf *et al.* (2008).

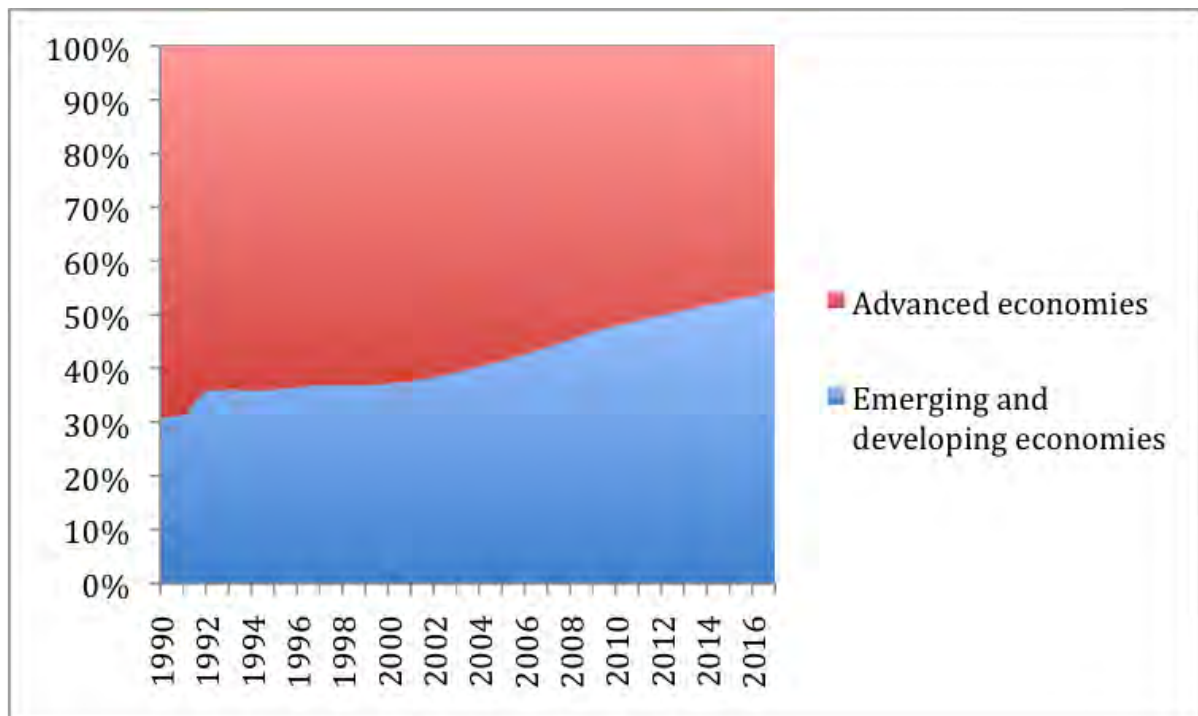
The economic rise of the South

In economic terms, what the IMF terms as “emerging and developing economies” have become increasingly important players on the international scene. They accounted for only 30% of world GDP in 1990, they now represent about half the world economy, and they are expected to reach 54% by 2017, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Emerging and developing economies accounted for close to 40% of world trade in 2010, up from less than 30% in 2000 (see Figure 2 and Table 1). Asian developing economies, and in particular China, but also other countries such as India, have been an important driving force behind this emergence. China has become a leading economic power in the world and among developing countries. While its share in world exports has increased almost three fold from 3.6% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2010 its share in developing economy exports has doubled during the same period, jumping from a higher 12% to about 24% in 2010.

This increase in trade by developing countries is not limited to commodities and goods, but also to services, as illustrated in Figure 2. As for China, while it has become the leading single country in the world in terms of merchandise exports, and second, behind the US and ahead of Germany in terms of merchandise imports, it also ranks fourth and third in the world, respectively, in terms of exports and imports of commercial services.²

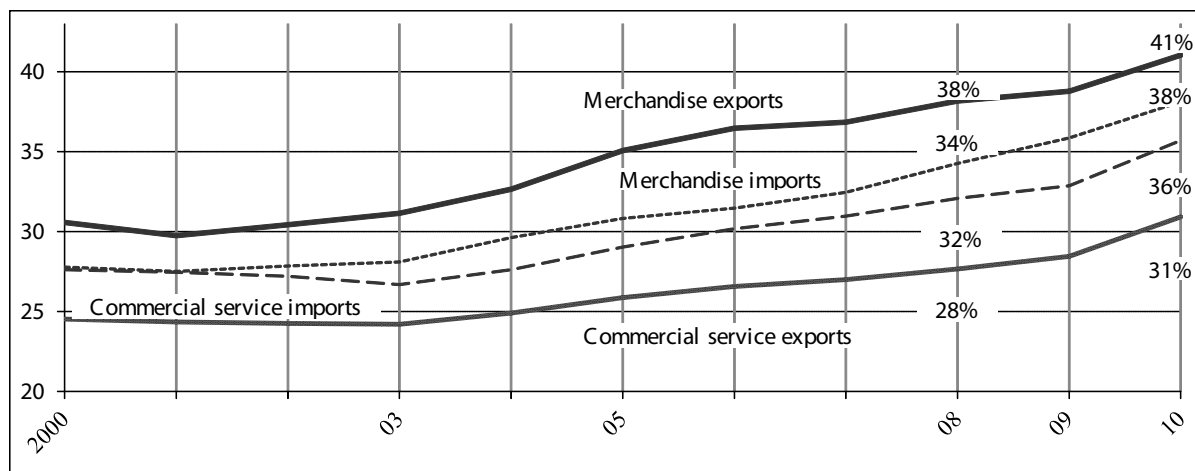
Figure 1: Share of world GDP (based on purchasing power parity; percentage)



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Statistic 2012

² WTO (2011b).

Figure 2: Share of developing economies in world trade, 2000-2010 (percentage)



Source: WTO (2011a)

Looking at the direction of trade, although North-North trade remains dominant the South has been catching up. So, while North-North exports have expanded by a factor of 3.4 from 1990 to 2008, exports from the South to the North have expanded by a factor of 6, and South-South trade by a factor of 10 over the same period, as shown in Figure 3. So, while South-South trade is not new, it has become increasingly important.

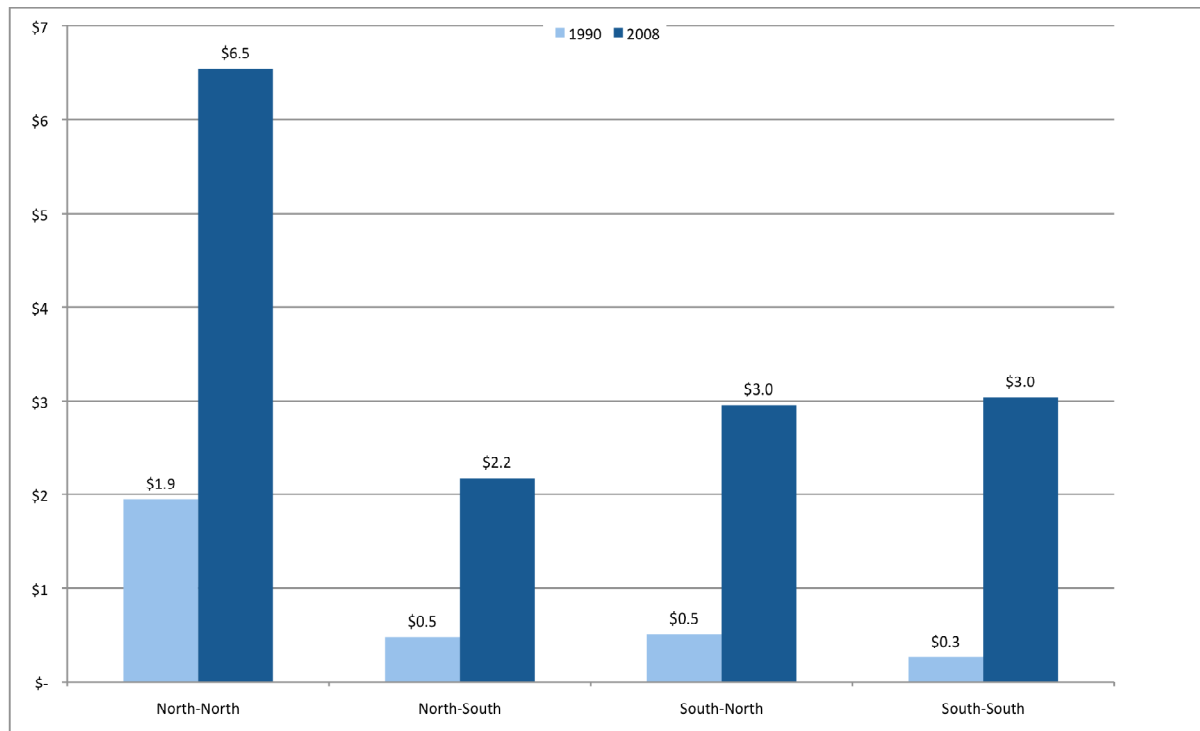
Table 1: Developing economies' trade in goods and commercial services between 2000 and 2010 (billions USD and percentage)

	Exports				Imports			
	Value	Share in world			Value	Share in world		
	2010	2000	2008	2010	2010	2000	2008	2010
Developing economies ^a	7,269	30.0	36.6	39.4	6,803	28.2	33.8	37.7
Developing Asia ^a	4,452	17.3	21.0	24.2	4,196	16.6	19.7	23.3
China	1,752	3.6	8.1	9.5	1,519	3.2	6.4	8.4
India	349	0.8	1.6	1.9	440	0.9	2.0	2.4
Other ^a	2,352	12.9	11.3	12.8	2,237	12.4	11.3	12.4
Non-Asian developing economies	2,817	12.7	15.6	15.3	2,608	11.6	14.1	14.5
Brazil	232	0.8	1.2	1.3	241	0.9	1.1	1.3
Developed countries	10,488	67.9	59.3	56.9	10,705	70.4	63.0	59.4
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)	677	2.1	4.1	3.7	522	1.4	3.2	2.9

Note: ^a Excluding Hong Kong, China re-exports or imports for re-exports.

Source: WTO (2011a).

Figure 3: Exports by region (trillions USD)

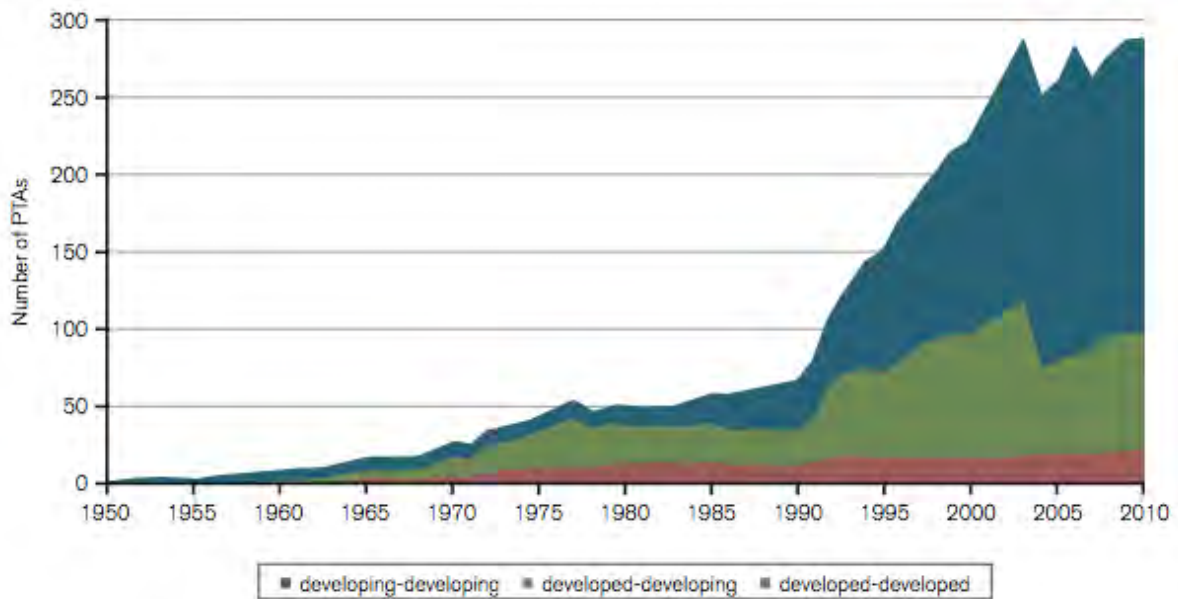


Source: OECD (2010, Figure 3.1)

This trend has been accompanied by a progressive integration of Southern economies at the regional level, through various regional integration initiatives, as well as across regions. Figure 4 illustrates this trend of increasing preferential trading arrangements (PTAs) over the last decades, notably among developing countries. Yet, much remains to be done to liberalise trade among Southern partners to reap significant potential welfare gains. In a recent study, the OECD (2010) estimated that, were the South to reduce its tariffs to the levels found between northern countries, most of the benefits would arise from South-South trade (US\$ 59.4 bn compared to only US\$ 33.5 bn for North-South trade), as shown in Figure 5. Numerous other studies also confirm the potential benefits of deeper integration among Southern countries.³ The major lesson however is that the characteristics of preferential agreements (i.e. their scope and depth) as well as their effective implementation, are key in determining their potential benefit (WTO, 2011a).

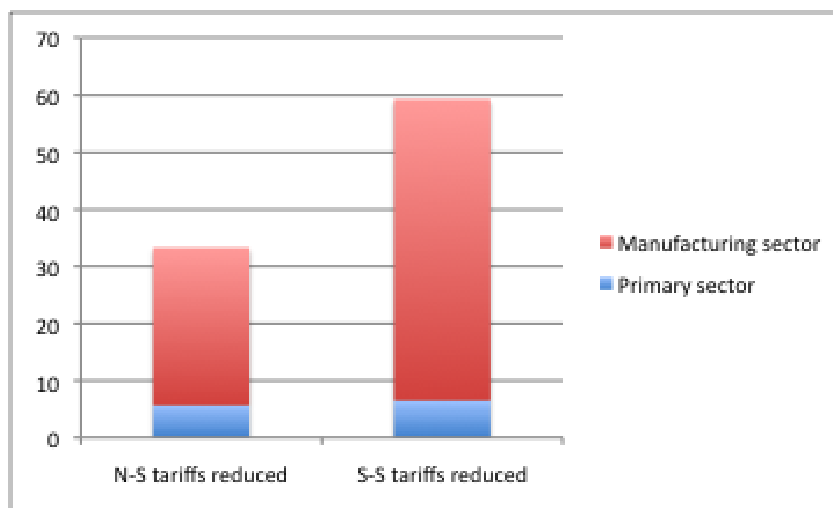
³ See for instance Bhattacharya and Das (2011) for a succinct survey in particular in the case of Asia. Considering the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), they find that gains could be significant, in particular for smaller countries. They also stress the importance of address beyond the border issues and various dimensions of regional cooperation to stimulate the benefits from regional integration.

Figure 4: Cumulative number of PTAs



Source: WTO (2012).

Figure 5: Potential gains from South trade liberalization to North-North levels (billions USD)



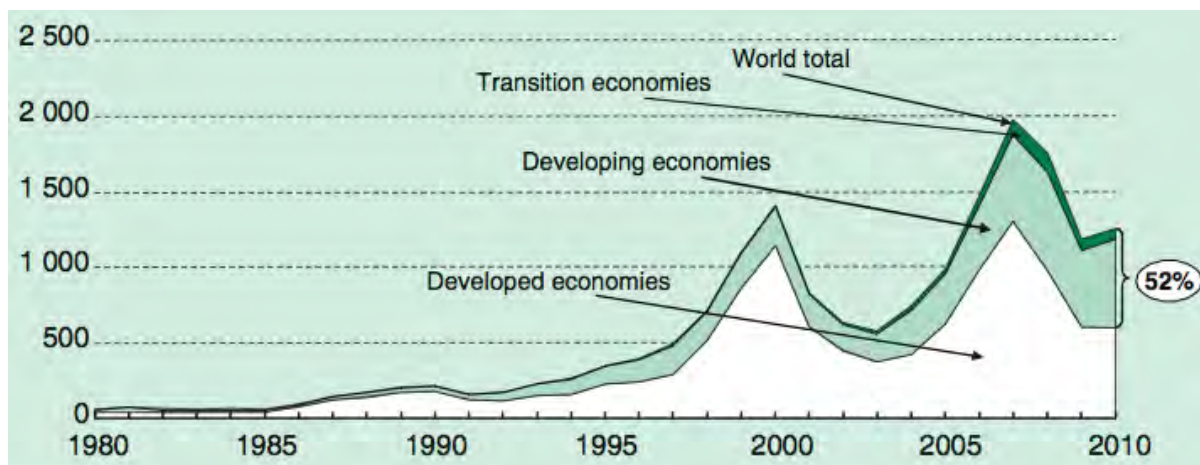
Source: OECD (2010, adapted from Table 3.5)

Investment flows are another indicator of the rising economic importance of the South. Developing countries are increasingly the destination of foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as a source of such investment flows, in particular from emerging countries such as China, India and Brazil. While until the mid-2000s FDI inflows were mainly from developed countries, by 2010 developing and transition economies accounted for more than half (52%) of world inflows of FDI for the first time,

as shown in Figure 6. In fact, it is interesting to note that while the South has experienced higher economic growth rates than the North on average,, their attractiveness to FDI has grown even faster. This can be seen in Figure 7 by looking at the evolution of the inward FDI index calculated by UNCTAD (2011), which is the ratio of an economy's share of world FDI inflows to its share of world GDP. Developing countries attract almost 40% more FDI than the size of their economy would suggest, whereas developed countries receive over 20% less.

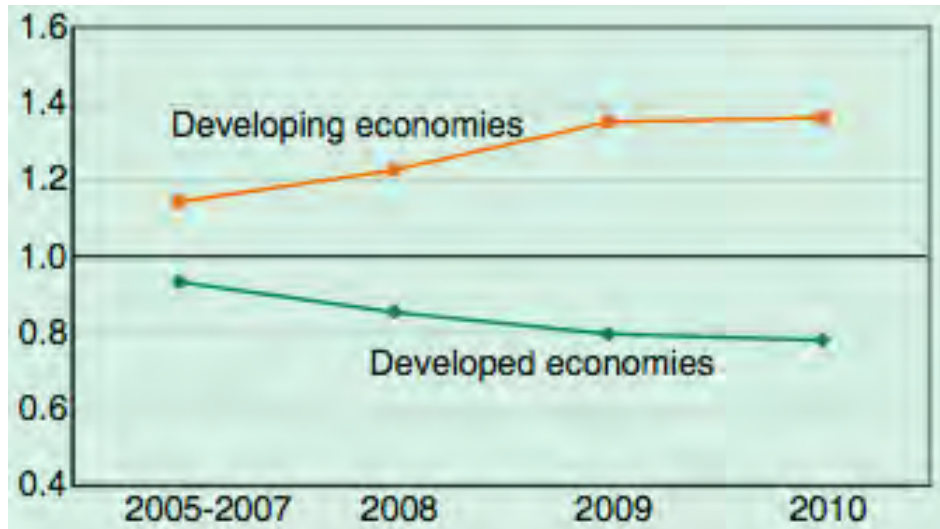
It is also interesting to note that while on the increase, there are relatively few bilateral investment treaties (BITs) between developing countries. Most bilateral investment treaties and investment agreements concern or involve developed countries, as shown in Figure 8. This picture is in sharp contrast to the situation with trade agreements, where developing countries have been more inclined to sign agreements among themselves. However, this is not surprising since most developing countries are involved in some form of regional integration process involving trade preferences, but no investment regimes, which have not been a priority for most of the poorer countries. However, with the rapidly increasing flows of investment in the South and the growing importance of the services sector in most developing countries, it is to be expected that investment agreements - in the form of BITs or other instruments – will become a more prominent tool of South-South partnership in the near future.

Figure 6: FDI inflows 1980-2010 (billions USD)



Source: UNCTAD (2011, Fig.I.3)

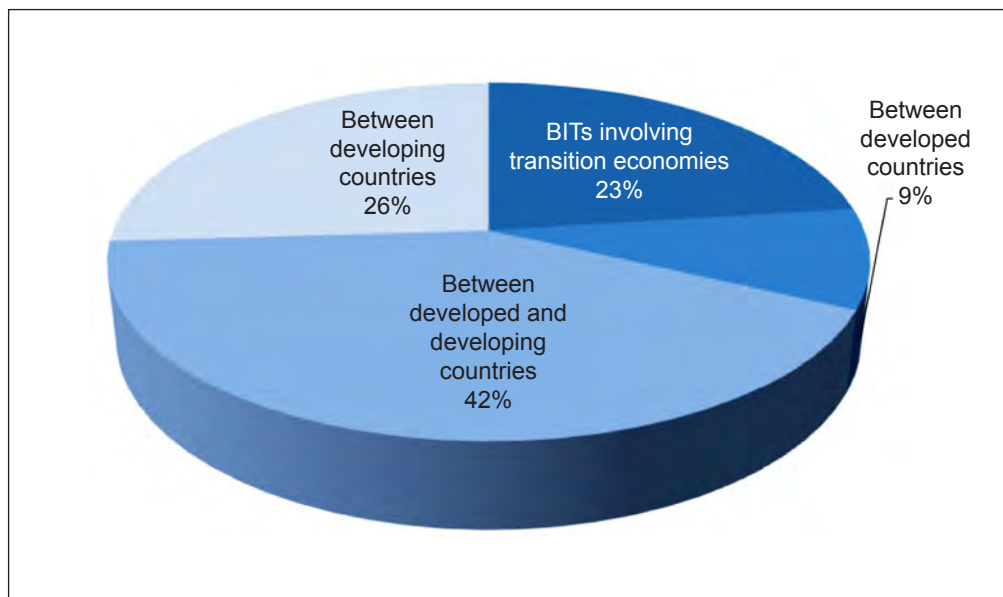
Figure 7: Inward FDI Performance index



Note: The inward FDI Performance Index is the ratio of a country/region's share in global FDI inflows to its share in global GDP. A value greater than 1 indicates that the country/region receives more FDI than its relative economic size, a value below 1 that it receives less.

Source: UNCTAD (2011, Fig. I.5)

Figure 8: Distribution of BITs (year ending 2008)



Source: UNCTAD World Investment Report 2009; reported in OECD (2010, Fig.6.1)

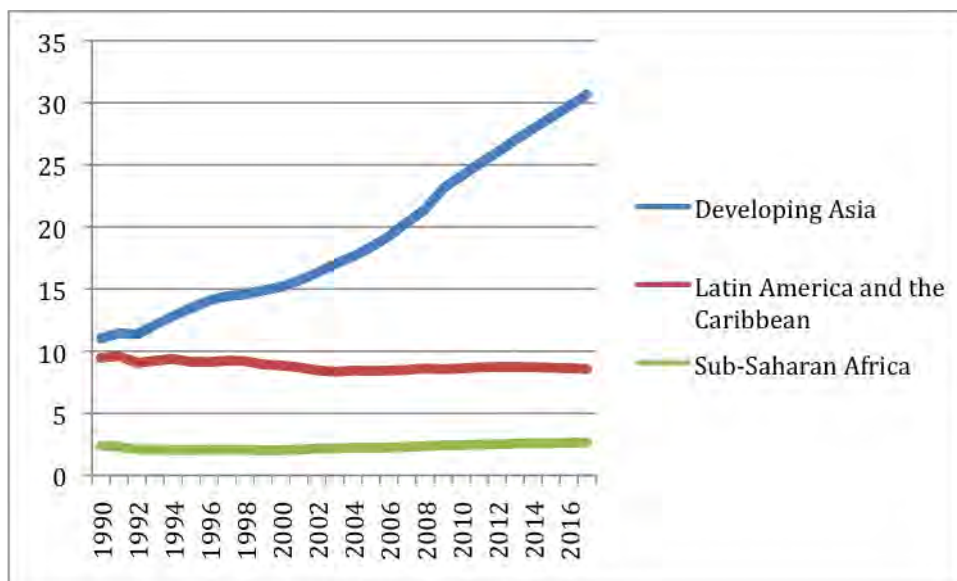


Disparities in the South: Emerging players and the rest

When considering the rise of the South, there is a natural tendency to look at the big picture. Yet looking at aggregates can be misleading by hiding huge disparities. The South is dominated by the situation of emerging players, which are themselves largely dominated by China. In terms of the dynamics of developing countries, Asia is the lead pole, followed by Latin America and only then Africa.

Most of the rise of economic power comes from Asia, as illustrated in Figure 9. Asian developing countries accounted for about a tenth of the world economy in 1990, a quarter in 2011, and are projected to reach 30% by 2016-2017. In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean have not been able to fully keep up with world average economic growth. They represented about 9.5% of the world GDP in the early 1990s, and are now expected to account for around 8.5-8.7%. As for Sub-Saharan Africa, while its economy remains marginal, it is important to stress recent dynamics. Following a sluggish decade during the 1990s, the share of Sub-Saharan Africa in the world economy has increased by over 20% during the 2000s (from about 2% in 2000 to almost 2.5% of world GDP in 2011).

Figure 9: Share of world GDP of selected developing regions
(based on purchasing power parity)

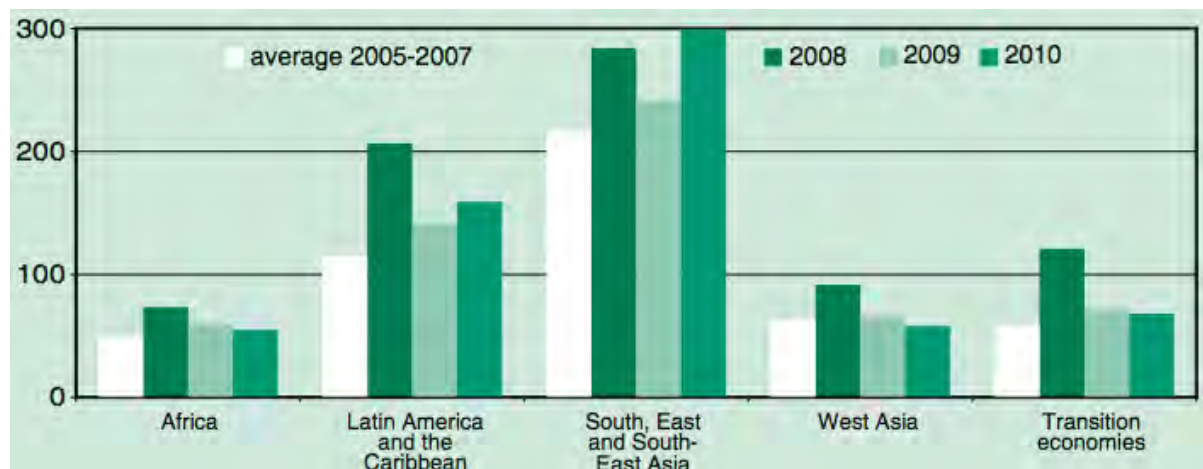


Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Statistic 2012

Asian developing countries also account for almost a quarter of world trade (see Figure 2 above), compared to less than 4% for South and Central America, and around 3% for Africa. In terms of intra-regional trade, Asia traded more than half within its region, compared to a quarter for South and Central America and only one eighth for Africa.⁴

The situation is similar for investment flows. Most FDI inflows accrue to Asian developing countries, with Africa still lagging behind, in spite of their increasing overall attractiveness (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: FDI inflow to developing and transition economies (billions USD)



Source: UNCTAD (2011, Fig.I.6)

But within each continent, there are also widespread disparities between higher middle countries and low-income / least-developed countries (LDCs). Not only their level of economic development, but also the structure of their economy varies greatly, notably in terms of their natural resource endowment (primary commodities, oil, mining, etc.), productive capacity, the contribution of their services sector, their institutional and financial development, etc. Their level of development is also no indicator of their current performance or dynamics. Hence, extremely poor countries such as Mozambique or the Democratic Republic of Congo, which rank respectively 184th and 187th (i.e. last) in the 2011 UNDP Human Development Index⁵, can still be booming, experiencing strong growth of GDP (7.1% and 6.9%, respectively in 2011)⁶ and attracting a lot of FDI, notably from Southern emerging players, mainly focused on their extractive sector.

In other words, optimism about the South, its economic development and the growing importance of South-South relations should not blind us to this strongly uneven process between and within countries, and the serious poverty challenges that the South is still confronted with. This is also the case for better off countries, as by far the largest number of poor people is located not in LDCs, but in middle income countries such as China, India and Brazil (see Figure 11).

4 For 2010. WTO (2011b)

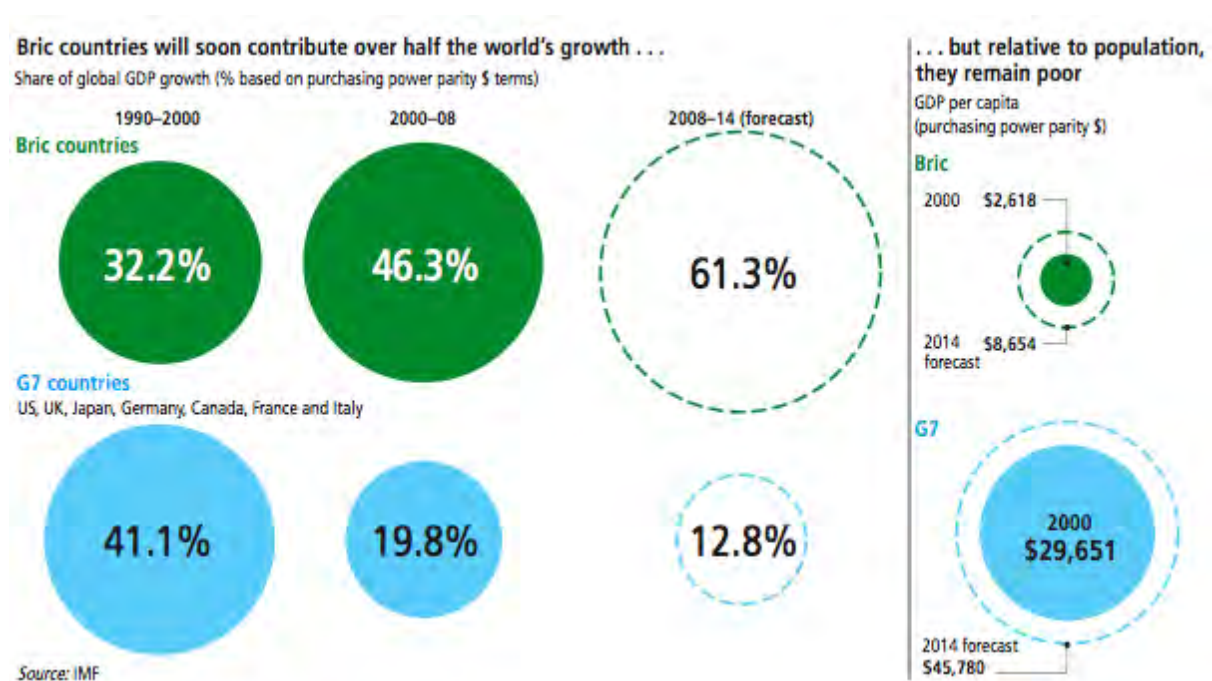
5 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

6 IMF (2012).

Emerging players: a dominant factor

The BRIC or BRICS - with the inclusion of the much smaller but symbolically important South Africa - have become a major factor in the global economy and in South-South relations. The internal dynamics of the BRICS, their increased role in the international arena and the growing ties among them has been well acknowledged. They have experienced significant growth over the last decade and will soon become a major contributor to global economic growth (see Figure 11). In 2010, the BRICS accounted for over a quarter of the world GDP (22.6%, without Russia, the double of their share in 1990), 15% of global trade in 2010 (12.7% without Russia), and 17.8% of global FDI inflows (14.5% without Russia), as shown in Table 2. The BRIC also accounted for 60% of the net capital inflows to developing countries in 2010.⁷

Figure 11: Growing BRIC remain poor



Source: World Bank and IPEA (2012)

⁷ See World Bank (2012). Within the BRIC, Pollock and Levent (2011) also notes that, over the 2005-2010 period, half of the net capital flows to the BRIC went to China, indicating the predominance of China, with Brazil, India and Russia having an equal share of the rest.



Table 2: BRICS in the world economy (percent)

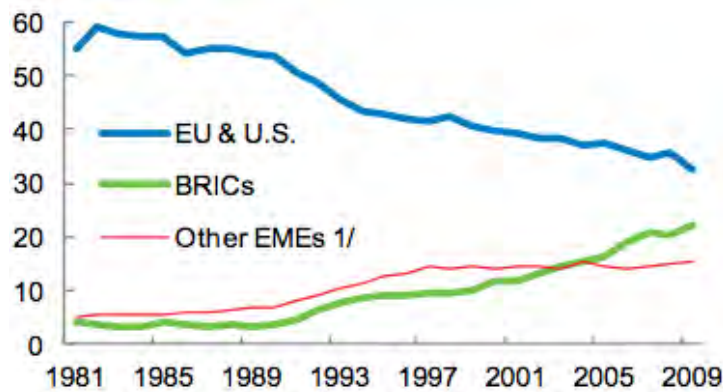
	Share of world GDP		Share of world trade		Share of global FDI inflows	
	1990	2010	1990	2010	1990	2010
Brazil	3.3	2.9	0.8	1.2	0.5	3.9
India	3.1	5.4	0.5	1.8	0.1	2
China	3.9	13.6	1.6	9.2	1.7	8.5
South Africa	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.5	0	0.1
<i>Total BICS</i>	<i>11.2</i>	<i>22.6</i>	<i>3.5</i>	<i>12.7</i>	<i>2.3</i>	<i>14.5</i>
Russia	-	3	-	2.3		3.3
<i>Total BRICS</i>		<i>25.6</i>		<i>15</i>		<i>17.8</i>

Source: IMF and UNCTAD, as reported in BRICS (2012)

From a development perspective, the primary interaction of the BRIC is with developed countries (in terms of increased ties and economic relations) as well as among themselves (in terms of fast growing economic, political and development cooperation). The BRIC, though heterogeneous in their relations with other developing countries, have also played an increasingly strong role in the development of many of the poorer countries. The primary effect has been through trade. Not only has the share of trade with the BRIC consistently increased for low-income countries (LICs) and Africa (see Figures 12 and 13, respectively) but also the intensity of trade of BRIC trade with LICs, which is higher than their relative size would suggest: the collective share of LICs' exports is 70% higher than the share of collective BRIC exports in the world.⁸ There is a risk that low-income countries that are rich in natural resources do not diversify their economy and trade, and remain too focused on satisfying the high demand from the BRIC for primary commodities. However, trade with the BRIC offer new opportunities for developing countries in the sense that they can diversify the destination as well as the source of their trade, and can create new opportunities for diversified and innovative production through these economic growth dynamics.

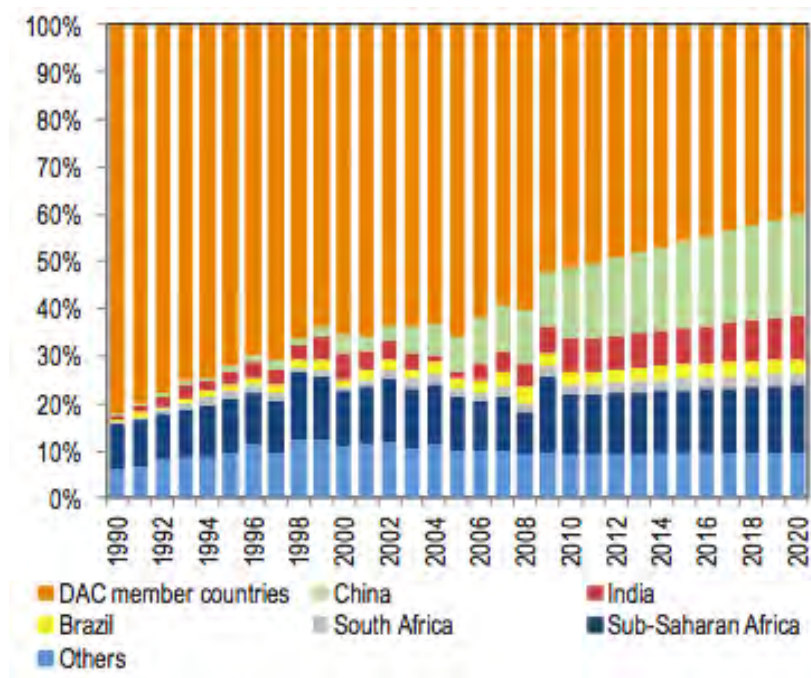
8 IMF (2011a).

Figure 12: Share of LICs trade by partners (percentage)



Source: IMF (2011a).

Figure 13: Share of Sub-Sahara African exports by partner (percentage; estimated and projected)



Source: IMF (2011b).

Rising foreign direct investment by the BRIC, and in particular China, are also playing an increasingly important role in development, including in Africa. According to the IMF (2011a), BRIC's FDI to LICs amounted to US\$ 2.2 bn in 2009, 40% of which was destined to Sub-Sahara Africa. The proportion was even higher for China, since near half of the Chinese US\$ FDI flows to LICs - and above 60% excluding Pakistan⁹ - was destined for Africa (in particular resource-rich countries such as the Nigeria,

9 Pakistan moved out of the LIC classification in early 2010.

Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Niger).¹⁰ As for the stock of outward Chinese FDI to the LICs, it is 20 times higher in 2009 (at US\$ 13.2 bn) than in 2003.

Interestingly, the IMF (2011a) has conducted formal estimations of the overall effect of the BRIC on growth of poorer developing countries. The results suggest that “a 1 percentage point increase in BRIC’s demand and productivity leads to a 0.7 percentage point increase in LICs’ output over 3 years and 1.2 percentage point over 5 years”. The main channel of transmission is through trade (which accounts for 60% of the impact). This has helped to dampen the effect of the global economic crisis on the LICs.

Yet, focusing solely on the BRICS can be misleading. First, the coherence of the BRICS as a group is questionable, as they differ considerably in terms of size, economic power and population (e.g. China vs. South Africa), developing perspective (e.g. Russia cannot be considered among developing countries part of “the South”)¹¹, economic and institutional governance (e.g. China is no democracy), political power in international affairs (e.g. only China and Russia are permanent members of the UN Security Council with a veto power), etc. Several sub-configurations are therefore also commonly referred to, such as IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa in terms of South-South cooperation – see Section 4.1) or BICS (see Table 2).

Second, other countries have also been considered as additional relevant emerging players, or countries having emerged¹². This is the case of South Korea (BRICKS). But several others have been suggested. In the context of Africa, Freemantle and Stevens (2012) have recently argued to focus on Africa’s Emerging Partners 10 (EM10) instead, which consists of the BRICS plus Indonesia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Turkey, to better reflect the importance of these economies in the world and as emerging trade partners of Africa, as illustrated in Figure 14.

The imbalance of economic power in the South is thus a prominent feature of South-South relations, and a source of synergy as well as potential competition and tension among the partners. The emergence of an increasing number of new economic poles in the South is also an important source of diversification of partnerships and possible modes of exchange and engagement. Reducing the focus on South-South relations in a generic manner, and contrasting it with more traditional North-South relations is thus over simplistic and misses one of the key components of the international foreign and economic relations of our increasingly globalised world: that is its diversity and heterogeneity.

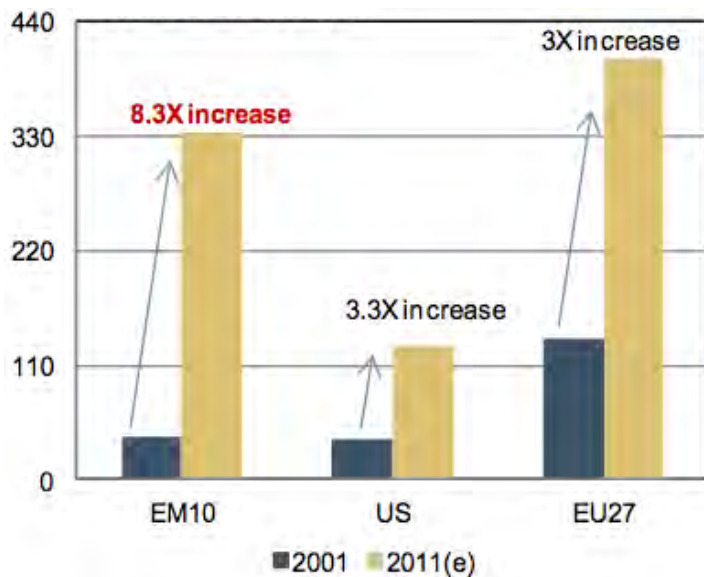
Any serious analysis of South-South relations and their impact on the relationship with more traditional partners should therefore take into account the complexity in this multi-polar world where development partnerships can emerge along different axes and common interests, not necessarily divided along North-South lines. Section 4 reflects some of the diversity of the South-South relations, while Section 5 offers some broader considerations for the traditional North-South relations and for addressing development partnerships and effectiveness at a global level.

¹⁰ China MOFCOM (2011).

¹¹ Russia, traditionally anchored in Europe, has more recently developed its ties with Asia, however, which led Carrère d’Encausse (2010) to describe Russia as being between two worlds, Europe and Asia.

¹² It is indeed questionable as to whether the terminology “emerging” is still appropriate for the BRICs, given their current status.

Figure 14: Africa's trade with the EM10, US and EU (billions USD)



Source: Freemantle and Stevens (2012)

South-South cooperation: an alternative approach?

Beyond economic relations, South-South relations have also grown as a result of a deliberate political strategy to promote South-South forms of cooperation and partnership, as illustrated in Section 4.1. The premise is that developing countries share common problems and challenges, and while some have been doing better, and reached higher levels of development, they still share common experience and background, which can benefit poorer developing countries. The notion of solidarity and mutual benefit from cooperation is also very much at the heart of the principles of this Southern cooperation. South-South cooperation is also perceived as an alternative to the North-South dominant framework of development cooperation. In particular, South-South cooperation is about development as an end, not as a means in the form of 'official development assistance'. Hence, while the North-South cooperation discourse is largely focused on aid as a key mean to stimulate development, the South-South discourse on development keeps away from the aid approach. This helps explain the difficulty and at times reluctance of many emerging players to engage with traditional donors on the aid effectiveness agenda (see Section 5).

A range of arenas

South-South cooperation is nothing new. Without looking at ancient history,¹³ numerous examples can be found since World War II of this endeavour to forge alliances among developing nations.¹⁴ A prime example stems from the Cold War, with

¹³ For instance, Snow (1988) claims that trade relations between China and African date back as far as 200 BC.

¹⁴ See for instance Morais de Sa e Silva (2010),

the Non-Aligned Movement initiated in the early 1960s, to raise the Southern voice in international relations. The decolonisation movement also played a critical role in strengthening Southern relations and at times solidarity.

G77 and the UN system

The Group of 77 (G-77), established in 1964 at the end of the 1st United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), is a formal forum of cooperation set up by the South in the context of the structures of the United Nations (UN). This has included the adoption of formal structures such as the Charter of Algiers in 1967, and numerous following declarations, among which the Buenos Aires plan of action for promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries in 1978, the Caracas Declaration in 1989, the First South Summit in Havana in 2000 (with its Programme of Action) and the 2nd South Summit in Doha in 2005, as key stepping stones in continuous efforts to strengthen South-South cooperation.

The UN has been instrumental as a forum and tool to strengthen South-South cooperation. The *High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation*, a subcommittee of the General Assembly, provides a political forum for UN member states to follow and guide issues related to South-South cooperation. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) and in particular the *Special Unit for South-South Cooperation* have been central elements of the efforts to promote South-South cooperation. The UN *Special Unit for South-South Cooperation* also manages the *United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation*. The purpose is to stimulate exchanges among Southern actors and promote good practices. This takes place through exchanges among academics, under the on-line *Global South-South Development Academy*, through exchanges on sciences and technology issues, with the *South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange*, and broader sharing of good practices, most notably with the *Global South-South Development Expo*. Numerous other UN organisations have also been active in South-South cooperation. This includes the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which has established a South-South Coordination Unit, produced specific guidelines and organised high-level meetings and UNCTAD, with its natural focus on trade and development among Southern actors. In fact, nowadays most UN agencies have some South-South cooperation actions in one form or another.¹⁵

There are numerous other forums of South-South partnership. In the multilateral arena, besides the G77, the LDCs Group has been instrumental in pushing a common development and trade agenda by some of the poorest countries in the world, notably at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Doha Round of negotiations, as well as at UNCTAD.¹⁶ Other coalitions of developing countries, such as the G33 in the WTO or the G24 in the IMF, have also emerged as venues to strengthen cooperation and defend common interests, with mitigated success, among a sub-set of Southern countries in the multilateral arena.

¹⁵ In their review of UN activities on South-South cooperation, Zahran *et al.* (2011) find that “most organizations had programmes and/or projects identifiable as support to [South-South cooperation] either at headquarters, regional and/or country level, including FAO, ILO, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, WFP, and WHO, in particular the Regional Office for the Americas/PAHO. In other organizations, such as IAEA, ICAO, IMO, UNEP, WIPO and WMO, [South-South cooperation] is subsumed under the regular technical cooperation programmes.”

¹⁶ For a discussion on South-South cooperation for LDCs, see for instance Ladd (2010) and Malhotra (2010).

The ACP Group

The Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States is probably the largest formal entity of developing countries joining together, with 79 countries. The Group has a set of formal institutions, which, in addition to the Summits of Heads of States, include a Council of Ministers, a Parliamentary Assembly and a Secretariat. While the *raison d'être* of the ACP Group stems from its institutional relations with the European Union (EU) - as former colonies from European countries - in the context of the Lomé Conventions and now Cotonou Agreement, its development also represent a unique form of South-South solidarity and alliance cross-continents. The future of the ACP Group might also depend on its capacity to strengthen its solidarity and common interests beyond the EU and to become financially more independent of the EU.¹⁷ Interestingly, South-South cooperation *per se* is becoming higher on the agenda of the Group, which organised on 5-6 March 2012 in Brussels the First Meeting of The Building Block On South-South and Triangular Cooperation.¹⁸

Regional cooperation

The more common dimension of South-South cooperation, though not necessarily couched in these terms, are the numerous forms of regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration processes among Southern partners, in Africa, Asia and Central and South America. Indeed, regional integration is the prime and often most comprehensive framework of cooperation among neighbouring developing countries. The scope, depth and modalities of cooperation and integration vary among regional groupings, including in terms of their economic, political, security, technical, cultural, social and development dimensions. While it would be beyond the scope of this paper to review regional initiatives among developing countries, special attention should be given to Africa, which is high on the development agenda of the continent.

In view of the limited capacity and widespread poverty challenges in Africa, the opportunities for synergy at the regional and continental level are important. This is true of course in economic terms. Effective economic integration is arguably less pronounced in Africa than in Asia, where in spite of less comprehensive integration agreements, effective trade integration is much higher, as illustrated in Figure 15. A number of studies from the World Bank, UNCTAD and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have highlighted the potential benefits and current challenges of regional integration in Africa.¹⁹ Regional economic communities (RECs), but also other economic and cooperation groupings²⁰, have a critical role to play in the creation of larger regional markets with coherent and business-conducive environments. This includes addressing not only traditional tariff barriers to trade with the creation of free trade areas and customs union, but also the establishment of common regulatory frameworks to address beyond-the-border barriers to trade,²¹ and

17 On the future of the ACP, see notably Laporte (2007; 2012) and Mackie *et al.* (2011).

18 www.acp.int/fr/node/1138

19 See for instance Brenton and Isik (2012), UNECA (2010) and UNCTAD (2009).

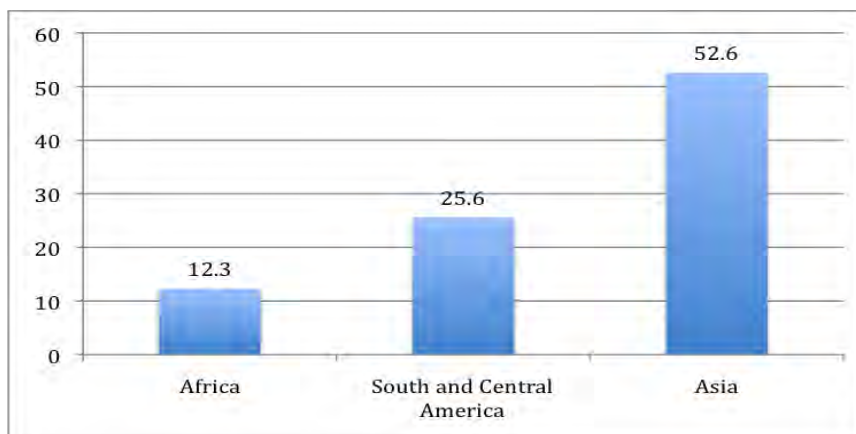
20 These include regional groupings along the management of public goods for instance, such as the Mano River Union or the Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries, as well as opportunities for special economic integration zones (for a recent discussion on the latter in the context of the East African Community, see Dobronogov and Farole (2012).

21 Cadot and Gourdon (2012) suggest for instance that non-tariff barriers such as sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures in Africa could contribute to raise prices by 12% to 25%. See also Brenton and Isik (2012) for a recent comprehensive discussion and set of recommendation; and the first issue of *GREAT Insights* (ECDPM, 2012) dedicated to the Africa Summit on intra-Africa trade.

to develop productive capacity and regional infrastructures.

Providing an overarching coordination role and political/institutional leadership, the African Union (AU), in particular, is an ambitious framework to address a wide range of development challenges at the continental level, from security issues to better governance, political coordination, economic and trade cooperation, infrastructure and industrial development, health and social matters. In this context, one should stress the catalytic role the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) could play in principle, as part of the AU setting.²² This is part of an endeavour by Africa to take its development agenda in its own hands. It is based not only on pan-African master plans for development, though these play an important – arguably too prominent – role. But it is also part of a concerted effort to stimulate exchanges of experiences at the continental level, promoting mutual learning and where possible greater cooperation. In this regard, South-South cooperation can be seen as a global public good, and African integration and cooperation framework has a regional public good.

Figure 15: Share of intra-regional trade
(percentage of the total trade for each region)



Source: WTO (2012).

Continental dialogues

Africa has also developed formal platforms to engage some of its key new partners from the South. The prime example is the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000 to “to further strengthen the friendly cooperation between China and Africa [...], jointly meet the challenge of economic globalization and promote common development”.²³ While most relations between China and Africa take place at a country level in a bilateral manner, the FOCAC offers a more political and strategic platform for interaction. The principles are very much based on the notion of equal partnership, as stated again in the Beijing Declaration of the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation on 23 July 2012: “We believe that the China-Africa cooperation, featuring mutual benefit, equality, openness and inclusiveness, demonstrates the solidarity and mutual support between developing

²² For a discussion of NEPAD in the context of South-South cooperation, see for instance Mayaki (2010).

²³ www.focac.org/eng/tjda/tjij/t933522.htm

countries. [...] China and Africa will continue to deepen the new type of strategic partnership of political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchanges".²⁴ In this process, the China-Africa cooperation is keen to demark itself from the more traditional North-South cooperation, to strengthen the voice and role of the South and "to narrow the North-South gap". In practical terms, this mainly translates into commitments to strengthen diplomatic and political ties between China and African countries, exchange and cooperate on trade, investment, poverty reduction, infrastructure building, capacity building, human resources development, food security, hi-tech industries, international issues (such as peace and security, economic and financial matters), cultural matters, education, tourism and sports. The FOCAC has so far played little attention to regional matters. However, China has recently financed and built the new headquarter of the AU (an important symbolic gesture) and has committed to pay greater attention to its cooperation with the AU, NEPAD, African sub-regional organisations and integration process.

While the FOCAC is of symbolic importance, its practical relevance will continue to depend on the ability to translate broad engagements into concrete related actions at country and hopefully regional levels. In this respect, the onus is mainly on African countries and regions to engage China in a more coordinate way and share among themselves their experiences with China so as to enable them to address issues of common concerns in a collective manner through the FOCAC.

Another platform is the Africa-India Forum, whose first summit was held in April 2008 in New Delhi and the second in Addis Ababa in May 2011. This initiative seems to be partly a response, or complement, to the FOCAC. While less prominent than China in Africa, India is playing an increasingly important role on the continent, which justifies such a forum for addressing common issues with Africa. The Africa-India *de facto* covers many of the themes raised in the FOCAC. The development discourse is also worth noting, which places South-South cooperation not in opposition to the traditional North-South cooperation, but rather as an innovative complement. This is well reflected in the 2011 Addis Ababa Declaration:²⁵

"We affirm the critical importance of South-South cooperation as an instrument that can effectively supplement existing international efforts and lead to tangible and real benefits for developing countries. We stress that South-South Cooperation should be a supplement to North-South Cooperation and not a substitute for it. We recognize that significant diversity prevails among individual countries in Africa, about thirty three (33) of which are listed among the Least Developed Countries. Collectively, these countries confront some of the most persistent, pervasive and complex development challenges. Accordingly, we will explore new and innovative ways to supplement the mainstream effort to assist these developing countries and look for out-of-the-box solutions."

Only time will tell whether the Africa-India Forum and related framework for cooperation will be effective in practice. But its political and economic relevance is certainly going to grow rapidly.

²⁴ www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t954245.htm

²⁵ www.indiaafricasummit.nic.in/?1503

From the BRICS to IBSA

Other streams of South-South cooperation and partnerships involve smaller groups of Southern partners across continents. A prime example is the BRICS. This is the case not only in terms of their sheer economic size and economic relations among them, as discussed above. The BRICS also offers a framework under which major actors from the South can exchange views, coordinate international positions and stimulate development initiatives. While the BRICS have been very active on the international arena as a group, in formal or informal ways, they have made limited direct effort to coordinate their approach to and activities towards developing countries. At their last BRICS Summit in March, however, the proposal has been made to consider the creation of a BRICS Development Bank “for mobilizing resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies and developing countries, to supplement the existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development”.²⁶ Should such a Bank materialise, it could have significant impact of developing countries, perhaps not so much in terms of additional funding opportunities, but more as an institutional setting for the BRICS to establish some concerted approach to development financing.

An interesting cooperation framework, which could hold useful lessons for any future BRICS greater engagement on South-South cooperation, is the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) trilateral initiative, a *de facto* subset of the BRICS group. The Brasilia Declaration of 6 June 2003²⁷ established the IBSA setting as an open and flexible coordination mechanism among the three countries. While stressing the democratic values of the IBSA members, it aims at stimulating dialogues and exchanges on political, governance and social issues, as well as a broad range of sectoral issues.²⁸ Several forums for dialogues and exchanges have also been set up to stimulate interaction among a range of IBSA stakeholders, including an Academic Forum, a Businessmen’s Forum, a Women’s Forum, a Parliamentary Forum and a Forum of Intergovernmental Relations and Local Governments. Interesting, an IBSA Fund was created, where each member country contribute US\$ 1 million per year, a relatively small amount all considered.

Other platforms

Parallel to these more formalised settings for Southern countries’ cooperation, a number of initiatives have emerged to stimulate South-South exchange of information and experiences among various stakeholders. These include for instance the South-South Opportunity platform (www.southsouth.info), the South-South Learning on Social Protection gateway (<http://south-south.ipc-undp.org>), an initiative of the UNDP International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, South-South News (www.southsouthnews.com) as a news platform on development efforts towards the Millennium Developing Goals in the South, or the South-South Win-Win? site <http://ipsnews.net/south-south>, an Inter Press Service (IPS) initiative to provide a media platform on South-South cooperation. Another example is the recently launched *Practice in Participation* web platform, (www.practiceinparticipation.org), at the initiative of

26 Dehli Declaration, Fourth BRICS Summit, 29 March 2012. www.bricsindia.in/delhi-declaration.html

27 http://ibsa.nic.in/brasil_declaration.htm

28 16 areas, organised along sectoral working groups, have been identified: agriculture, health, education, public administration, revenue administration, human settlements, science and technology, trade and investment, culture, defense, information society, social development, energy, environment and climate change, transport, and tourism.

some Asian civil society organisations, with the aim to promote participatory approaches in areas such as institutional strengthening, programme management and monitoring and evaluation in South-South cooperation.

Principles of South-South cooperation and financial flows

South-South initiatives of cooperation and partnership are therefore numerous, follow various modalities and involve a wide range of actors. However, South-South cooperation is interestingly guided by a key set of principles that seem to be broadly shared by Southern actors, including emerging powers such as the BRICS. It rests on the principle that South-South cooperation, its agenda and development objectives should be set by countries of the South. It should not be driven by charity and power/dependency relationships. On the contrary, it claims to be based on the principles of equality, solidarity, the respect of national independence and ownership, mutual benefits (promoting win-win outcomes) and complementarity. The principle of non-interference in domestic affairs is key, notably in terms of governance and policy recommendations, respecting the need for national solutions and appropriate policy space. Greater attention is given to partnership and exchanges of experiences, in particular through technical cooperation and knowledge transfer. South-South cooperation is often project based, usually without conditionality in terms of governance, economic policy or reform process. It is often acknowledged as involving low transaction costs, with a rather fast delivery.²⁹

Described in such a way, it appears as a very attractive way of promoting development in the South, with no strings attached. The reality is somewhat more complex, however, as discussed in Section 4.3.

The focus on mutual learning and exchanges on good practices, without promoting a certain model of development and imposing a set of policy recommendations, has been particularly appreciated by developing countries. The emphasis on traditional – more technical – sectors, such as education, health, agriculture, transport, technical cooperation, has also been identified as one of the added value of South-South cooperation.

Take the case of health. Arguably, South-South cooperation, led by the BRICS, has contributed to a “shift in paradigm”. Based on their domestic experience and policies in the health sector, they are increasingly contributing to regional and global health initiatives, notably by providing increasing levels of assistance, developing innovative mechanisms of cooperation and providing low-cost medicine (drugs, vaccines, diagnostics).³⁰

It is also worth noting that *aid* or *development assistance* are not part of the South-South cooperation rhetoric. This is in sharp contrast with traditional development partners, which commonly identify themselves as *donors*, and have elaborated sophisticated concepts and practices around the notion of aid and its effectiveness, as discussed below.

Nonetheless, major developing countries do provide increasingly significant financial flows to their Southern partners. Indeed, an increasing number of developing countries have established strong initiatives to promote South-South cooperation

²⁹ See for instance Mwase and Yang (2012), Puri (2010), UN-ECOSOC (2008).

³⁰ GHSi (2012).

including through financial means. Since the notion of aid, let alone an agreement of what is considered and can be reported as aid - i.e. official development assistance (ODA) according to the definition of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) – is not part of the South-South cooperation framework, data collection on the level of such financial flows from developing countries to support development are somewhat difficult to assess. Nevertheless, according to some recent estimates, 25 countries have such South-South agendas (including countries such as Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa), accounting for about 10% of overall development cooperation flows in 2009, i.e. US\$17 billions.³¹ Figure 16 provides an indication of the aid equivalent as reported by the DAC, illustrating that in the 'aid business', traditional donors remain key actors, in spite of the recent increase development assistance flows from non-DAC members. Figure 17 provides recent estimates for the activity of the BRICS, which account for some of the key Southern providers of financial assistance. Though their direct contributions remain small compared to those of traditional donors, they are growing fast: the BRICS are rapidly becoming significant actors of development cooperation. India has recently launched its own development agency, the Development Partnership Administration (DPA), reportedly committing about US\$ 15 billions over the next five years.³²

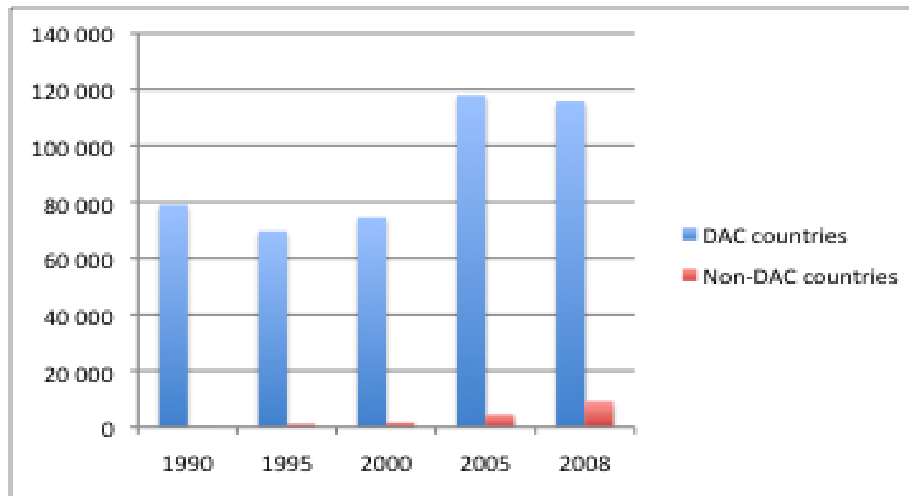
Table 3 also summarises key characteristics of that support. While China and Russia have no development agency, the other BRICS have either just established one, as in the case of Brazil, or are in the process of setting one up, as in the case of India and South Africa. This is again a difference between IBSA and the BRICS, where IBSA is likely to pay greater attention in the future to traditional donors discourse and experience. It is important to note that, compared to their overall economic influence in some developing countries, IBSA developing financing remains small, and is unlikely to become dominant any time soon. In China, there are also discussions on setting a more consistent development support strategy; but no development agency in sight. It is rather telling that the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) takes the lead on development financing, with EXIM bank and the China Development Bank as the two other major institutions providing loans.



31 Puri (2010).

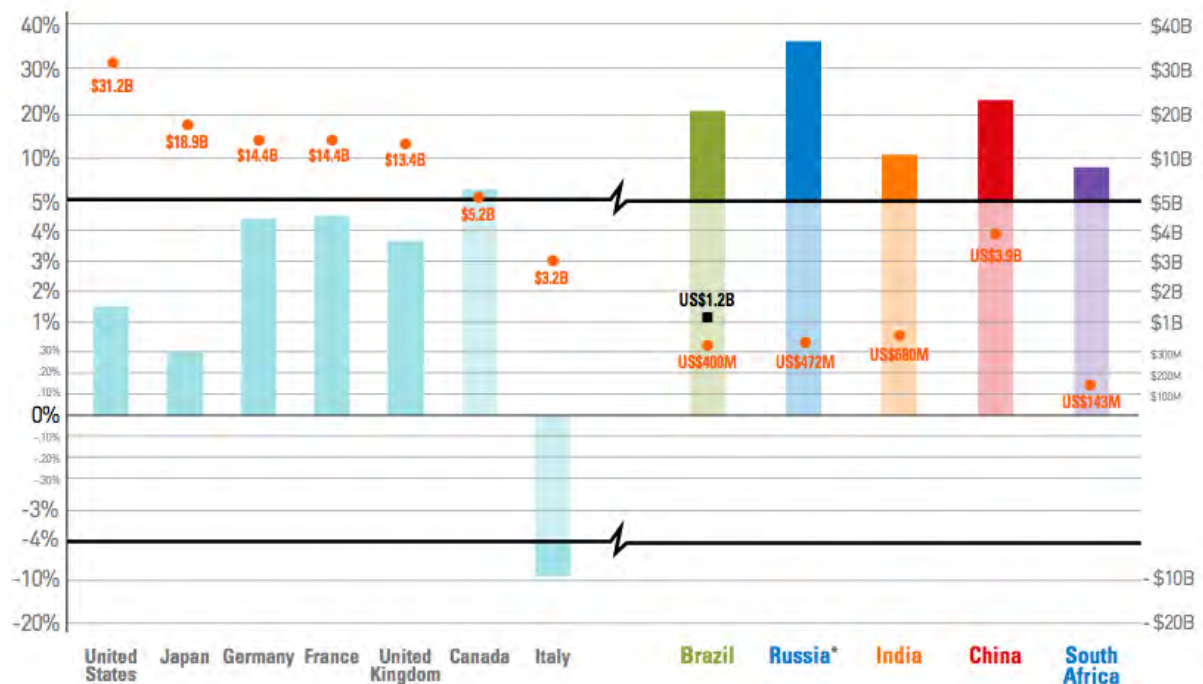
32 Taneja, Kabir, "India sets up global aid agency", *The Sunday Guardian*, 1 July 2012, www.sunday-guardian.com/news/india-sets-up-global-aid-agency

Figure 16: ODA according to the DAC (2007 constant prices, net disbursement, millions USD)



Source: OECD (2010, Table 3.6)

Figure 17: Foreign development assistance – “Traditional” donors vs. BRICS
Estimated annual growth rates (2005-2010; percentage) and absolute values (2010, USD)



Source: OECD; Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) Report, 2011; *Inter-Press Service*, “Brazil, Emerging South-South Donor”; *The Economist*, “Speak Softly and Carry a Blank Cheque”; Deauville Accountability Report G8 Commitments on Health and Food Security, Ministry of Finance of Russian Federation, 2011; Union Budget and Economic Survey, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India; Government of India official; “The Dragon’s Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa,” D. Brautigam; World Bank Open Data; GHSi Analysis

Note: *Russia pledged to steady foreign assistance disbursements between US\$400M and US\$500M

- Annual Growth (2005-2010)
- Absolute Foreign Assistance (2010)
- High Estimate, Absolute Foreign Assistance (2010)

Source: GHSi (2012)

Finally, it is important to stress that, as in other areas, the lumping of the BRICS, let alone South-South cooperation, in one bloc is however somewhat artificial. While there are similarities in approaches, and particularly in the way they may differ from traditional donors,³³ there is also a wide array of forms of engagement and approaches to development among developing countries. That is, the way Russia conducts its South-South cooperation cannot be easily compared to the way in which a country like Brazil cooperates with other countries. This is in fact well recognized, since one of the key objectives of South-South cooperation is to build on this diversity and learn from one another, to adopt the most appropriate solution for each specific context, which differ from country-to-country and sector-to-sector. So, the commonality of some key underlying principle should not mask the wide disparity of approaches – or what some would call the richness of experiences in South. Besides, there is often no real, or at least sufficient, coordination effort among BRICS members, and even more so among Southern actors, in their cooperation with other Southern partners. South-South cooperation is thus often a patchwork of diverse experiences with little coordination effort, with some notable exceptions however, as in some of the regional dimension South-South cooperation.

Table 3: BRICS Foreign Development Support

Indicator	Brazil	Russia	India	China	South Africa
Launch of Foreign Assistance Program	1960	1955	1964	1950	1968
Estimated Absolute Foreign Assistance [2010]	US\$400M – US\$1.2B	US\$472M	US\$680M	US\$3.9B	US\$143M
Foreign Assistance Estimated Compound Annual Growth Rate (2005 - 2010)	20.4%	36.1%	10.8%	23.9%	8.0%
Central Assistance Agency	Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC)	None currently; RUSAID launch currently on hold	Development Assistance Partnership (oversees administration); central agency to launch in 2012	None currently; MOFCOM manages majority of assistance projects	None currently; South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) planned
Foreign Assistance Regional Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latin America Africa Lusophone countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CIS region Looking toward Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional neighbors (i.e. Bhutan, Afghanistan, Nepal) Increasingly looking toward Africa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa Asia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africa
Foreign Assistance Sector Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Education Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Education Food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Information technology Training and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Industrial development Energy resources development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peacekeeping Democracy promotion

Source: GHSi (2012)

³³ Mwase and Yang (2012).

South-South cooperation faces many challenges

While the advocates of South-South cooperation have emphasised its mutual benefits, it is not without its own drawbacks and numerous challenges. Some of the initiatives are too ambitious and lack effective financing, coordination mechanisms and follow ups. The issue of capacity is a severe one. Most southern partners lack capacity and often resources. So while cooperation and exchanges are laudable ambitions, the capacity to engage with other Southern actors is often limited, and thus may not have the priority it deserves.

One of the main weaknesses is the lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the activities undertaken under the aegis of South-South partnership and cooperation. To start with, there is too often a lack of transparency and information on Southern cooperation, the terms and conditions associated with the engagement. It is also important to pay greater attention to the evaluation of the achievements and development impact of projects undertaken. If South-South cooperation is to be based on learning from mutual sharing of experience, proper evaluation of these experiences must take place to ensure that the right lessons are learnt. However, reporting and impact analysis are not carried out systematically and in an open and transparent manner. One of the most comprehensive assessments to date of South-South cooperation has been conducted by the Task Team on South-South Cooperation of the OECD, which carefully reviewed 110 cases of cooperation, in an effort to draw lessons.³⁴ Southern actors should pay more effort to review their own activities in this regard. As argued by Andrade (2009), “Cooperation in the South will have to develop its own body of knowledge, including the design, implementation and evaluation of cooperation programmes.”

While South-South cooperation, in particular from emerging players such as the BRICS, provides a good opportunity for additional financing, loans provided may have a detrimental effect on the level of indebtedness of poorer countries, particularly in the long run. This may turn out to be counter-productive, and runs contrary to the effort of the multilateral community, notably through the IMF and the World Bank. Chinese practices in this regard, notably through the ‘Angola mode’ of packaging infrastructure development with deals on access to natural resources, has come under increased scrutiny.

The asymmetry between actors from the South has also called into question the notion of mutual benefits. Aren’t large investments by the BRIC in developing countries to access natural resources increase the dependency of these resource-rich countries to their natural resources? And aren’t cheap exports from countries such as China further preventing industrialisation attempts from poorer developing countries, notably in Africa? Or on the contrary, can the resource curse be avoided and emerging players heaving investment in extractive sectors favour a rapid development of poorer countries, favouring a resource blessing?³⁵ These remain mainly open questions, though some evidence suggests that natural resources, when well managed, can be a blessing. Similarly, some argue that the ‘Leading Dragon Phenomenon’ can prevail, suggesting that as China and other emerging economies experience rapid growth and development, wages increase and their production move from low-skilled labour-intensive to higher-skilled more capital-intensive industries, leaving space for poorer

³⁴ TT-SSC (2010).

³⁵ For a discussion, see Bilal et al. (2012) and references therein.

countries, notably in Africa, to initiate their own labour-intensive industrialisation process and hence diversify their economy.³⁶ The point here is not that development support from emerging partners is good or bad *per se* for poorer countries, but that the effectiveness of the support depends. There is in fact some uncertainty as to the ultimate outcome on development. This is to be expected of course. But the key lesson is thus that South-South cooperation, like North-South cooperation, should be conducted carefully and better assessed, so as to identify the factors that enhance the likelihood of beneficial impact on development. In other words, South-South cooperation is not immune to many of the challenges of more traditional development cooperation.

International and multilateral forums have been instrumental in facilitating and supporting South-South cooperation. But they also have been faced with their own constraints and limitations. The UN system, as a prime platform to strengthen South-South cooperation, has enjoyed mixed results. The UN Special Unit on South-South Cooperation has been very active, but its wide mandate is not matched by adequate funding, and there is an overall weak coordination and governance system to address South-South cooperation in the UN system (see Box 1).

Box 1: Challenges in addressing South-South cooperation within the UN system

According to the report of the UN Joint Inspection Unit (Zahran *et al.*, 2011) on South-South cooperation,

“To attain full impact, however, current United Nations institutional arrangements should be improved in terms of overall system-wide policy frameworks, governance, coordination, structures, mechanisms and dedicated resources.” In particular, South-South cooperation suffer from the following challenges within the UN system:

- no common definition applied to distinguish traditional triangular technical cooperation from South-South cooperation;
- lack of dedicated intra-agency support structures;
- weak overall governance structure, mandate and working methods to address South-South cooperation;
- poor application of guidelines and guidance;
- weak coordination mechanisms;
- weak reporting mechanisms;
- Insufficient funding: an ambitious mandate, not matched with resources;
- more effective action at regional level needed; and
- triangular cooperation lacks coherent strategy and policy.

Source: Zahran *et al.* (2011).

³⁶ See for instance Chandra *et al.* (2012).

Regional integration processes, while a very active dimension of South-South cooperation, are also encountering numerous hurdles and have often led to disappointing results. This is the case in Central and Southern America and in Africa in particular, where the very ambitious agendas have been slow to translate into concrete actions, and effective integration has been hampered by diverging political and economic interests, and rivalries. But beyond their direct economic achievements, regional integration frameworks also serve as important tool to foster diplomatic relations and contacts among a range of concerned stakeholders in a region. These political and socialisation dimensions should not be underestimated.

The challenge is to prevent conflicts and wasteful efforts in “Summit mania” (i.e. going from Summit to Summit with no concrete deliverables and hence progress in the regional integration initiatives). Soderbaum (2012) also refers to ‘regime-boosting regionalism’, by which some head of states seek to boost their own standing and legitimacy through the regional framework, generally for domestic purposes, with no real concern for effective regional integration process. This may partly explain the discrepancy between regional commitments and their poor level of implementation at national level. This problem is at times further compound by the role of ‘regional hegemon’ that larger countries can play in stimulating or hampering regional integration processes,³⁷ such as South Africa and Nigeria in Southern and West Africa respectively, or Brazil in South America. In this regard, IBSA seems to have been more effective in promoting South-South cooperation at a wider level, and among the three members (notably through trade),³⁸ than in convincing their respective regional neighbours of the mutual benefits of their leadership role in regional integration.³⁹ So power relationship also characterizes South-South partnership, in particular at the regional level, and may not necessarily be perceived as mutually beneficial by all actors.

About development, not aid

South-South cooperation and partnership has been on the rise and is here to stay. Besides increasing the sources and amounts of resources available for development, it definitely offers alternatives ways to approach and finance development. In particular, the focus is on development, not aid. South-South cooperation has also been couched in very attractive rhetoric for many developing countries, which greatly contributes to its appeal. While it is not without its own challenges, it raises two serious questions to the approach of traditional (i.e. DAC) donors. The first one is: how can South-South cooperation best contribute to development and complement efforts by traditional donors? The second one is: why South-South cooperation seems for many developing countries more attractive than traditional development cooperation?

Consider first the question of the complementarity between South-South and North-South cooperation. The donor community has welcomed South-South cooperation as a useful and complementary way to support the development

³⁷ Draper (2010).

³⁸ Bratzel (2011).

³⁹ Vieira and Alden (2011).

endeavour of Southern countries. This is even more so as emerging players are taking on a heavier burden on financing development at a time where donors' budgets are under tight constraints due to the economic and financial crisis.⁴⁰ As the role of emerging players increases in the global economy, so should their involvement and responsibilities in global affairs, including in supporting development efforts. The DAC started to pay greater attention to South-South cooperation, notably with the creation in 2008 of a Task Team on South-South Cooperation, which has been instrumental in reaching out to the South and documenting their development cooperation initiatives.⁴¹ It led to the adoption of the *Bogota Statement* "Towards Effective and Inclusive Development Partnerships" of 25 March 2010 at the *High-Level Event on South-South Co-operation and Capacity Development*.⁴² It is a key document in that all development actors, including the donor community, recognize the key role of South-South cooperation for development and commit "to promote and implement good practices from South-South cooperation and capacity development to support countries in achieving the Millennium Developing Goals. Dynamics and complementarity between North-South-South - or triangular - cooperation have also been sought."⁴³

However, traditional donors have also attempted to 'capture' some of the South-South cooperation approaches so as to make them fit the Northern agenda of the DAC. It seems to be a recurrent underlying complaint by some members of the donors' community that, while diversity in the form of South-South cooperation is welcomed, it remains a pity that Southern actors, and in particular emerging players – i.e. mainly the BRICS and notably China – "are not more like us". Indeed, the donor community has worked hard to develop a set of core principles of what constitutes 'good aid' practices. These are captured most notably under the aid effectiveness agenda, as embodied in the Paris Declaration of 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action of 2008.⁴⁴ Having defined good principles and effective practices, donors from the North do not see why cooperation actors from the South do not embrace similar core principles. To some extent, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation of 2011⁴⁵ was also a concerted effort by traditional donors to bring on board Southern actors, to the aid effectiveness and wider (emerging) development effectiveness agendas.

The reaction by Southern actors, and in particular emerging players, has been rather cautious, when not irresponsive at times. While there is value for Southern parties, increasingly involved in financing development cooperation, to share experiences with traditional partners, there is a strong reluctance to engage on the traditional aid agenda, which they perceive as ideologically charged. As a result, the Busan outcome document makes frequent references to the benefits of South-South and triangular cooperation; but it also stresses the specificities of South-South engagement. More importantly, it stresses that "[t]he principles, commitments and actions agreed in the outcome document in Busan shall be the reference for South-South partners on a *voluntary basis*"

40 In 2011, aid by traditional donors felt for the first times in fourteen years, by 3%. [www.oecd.org/document/3/0.3746.en_21571361_44315115_50058883_1_1_1_1_00&en-US\\$01DBC.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/3/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_50058883_1_1_1_1_00&en-US$01DBC.html) Given the time lag due to commitment and programming cycles of aid by most donors, this probably reflect the budgetary pressures experienced by many donors since the 2008-2009 crisis.

41 OECD (2010).

42 www.oecd.org/dataoecd/1/23/45497536.pdf

43 See Rampa and Bilal (2011).

44 [www.oecd.org/document/18/0.3746.en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1_00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/18/0,3746,en_2649_3236398_35401554_1_1_1_1_00.html)

45 www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhl4/component/content/article/698.html

(*emphasis added*).⁴⁶ The problem is that the donor community tends to act as a 'gentlemen's club', the 'DAC club', where new members (i.e. the emerging players from the South) are welcome but should adopt most of the core rules of the club. The difficulty lies in the fact that these new comers mostly do not see themselves as donors, and have no real intention to become members of such a traditional club with its set of traditions and customs.⁴⁷

If development partners from the North and the South want to engage in constructive and open dialogue on an equal footing, they will have to find a more neutral platform, such as the G20 or another international institutional setting. The DAC can make useful contributions, but cannot credibly transform itself into such an open, more neutral platform. A second condition to facilitate the dialogue between North and South development partners is to move away from standard rhetoric, on each side. Donors speak a jargon that is difficult to understand and follow for actors not versed in the aid principles and philosophy. If you have any doubt, ask any private sector actor!⁴⁸ Similarly, South-South cooperation is too often wrapped into nice rhetoric (e.g. win-win, solidarity, etc.) that often fails to translate into practice. Pragmatism should thus guide the complementarity between the North and the South.

In this respect, the *Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation*, called for in the Busan Partnership agreement and whose mandate was adopted at the end of June 2012, is an interesting initiative. It will bring together not only providers, but also recipients of development cooperation⁴⁹, as well as other relevant stakeholders (private sectors, civil society organisations, parliamentarians, international institutions), to address development effectiveness, as outlined in the Busan Partnership. The OECD and the UNDP will provide a joint secretariat function.

Establishing the legitimacy of the Global Partnership will be key. The broad membership of the Global Partnership and its Steering Committee is a prime element. The more prominent role given to a UN institution, such as the UNDP, in assisting the Global Partnership could also turn out to be critical, to move beyond the traditional OECD framework. These elements should contribute to legitimise the Global Partnership in the eyes of many Southern actors.

However, many challenges remain. Broader participation may reduce the effective functioning of the Partnership, a common criticism to many UN fora. Traditional donors may also continue to play a *de facto* dominant role, hence reducing the sense of ownership by some Southern actors. Yet, ownership by all members will be key if Northern and Southern partners are to fruitfully engage on development matters. In this regard, the absence of any BRICS member in the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership is not a good sign.⁵⁰ Besides ownership by South and the capacity to effectively engage in the international development agenda, the thorough monitoring and assessment of the functioning of the Global Partnership will be required.⁵¹

46 This kind of language is all the most revealing in a declaration that is not legally binding in any way.

47 This is not to say, however, that traditional donors do not have their own internal divergences within this DAC club.

48 Interestingly, the barriers between the development community in the North and the partners in the South is somewhat reflected by the divide between donors' community and the private sector approaches. They meet, talk about complementing one another, but come from very different angles, often with different interests and strategies.

49 Some Southern countries are both.

50 www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=748

51 See notably the discussion by Kindornay and Samy (2012), as well as the indicators, targets and process for monitoring, officially proposed for the Global Partnership, available at www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhlf4/images/stories/Indicators_targets_and_process_for_global_monitoring.pdf

The capacity to deliver on the Busan agenda will be a central element of the legitimacy of the Global Partnership and in bridging the North-South divide. To do so, it might be tempting to focus on a narrower agenda of development, starting with the unfinished aid effectiveness agenda. This would be misleading however, if it were to be done at the detriment of the broader development effectiveness agenda. A comprehensive development agenda should be the starting point, along key priority areas. Aid should be addressed only at the margin of the Global Partnership, in particular in this initial stage, so as to reflect concerns and priorities of Southern partners. It is first about development, not aid. Constructive engagement can then follow on a more traditional aid effectiveness agenda, as a complement to a well-established development effectiveness framework, which reflects the priorities of developing and emerging countries.

This leads to the second question, regarding the perceived preference among developing countries for the emerging South-South over still predominant North-South cooperation. Given the efforts by traditional donors to address a wide range of development challenges, it is surprising that aid often has such a bad press.⁵² This is often the case of the EU in Africa, which is discomfiting, as the EU is the main economic partner, key political ally and main aid provider of many of the poorer countries in Africa. The EU has also been a strong supporter of South-South cooperation, notably by providing significant support to regional and continental integration dynamics. Why is there no greater enthusiasm toward the EU endeavour to support development? There is no simple explanation. However, one of the reasons lies in the attitude of the EU towards many developing countries and in particular Africa. Contrary to many Southern actors, the Europeans have by and large so far failed to recognize that Africa is growing fast and thus to adapt to this new situation. They still tend to see Africa as a problem case, which needs solutions. In doing so, the EU too often adopts some patronising rhetoric, which is counter-productive and undermines the credibility of the equal partnership approach it claims to promote. By comparison, South-South cooperation become then relatively more attractive and a real alternative. One of the key lessons of the financial and economic crisis, which affects so badly the European economy, is that there are no simple recipes. Old certainties and well-accepted economic orthodoxies should be questioned. This is true for the economic crisis affecting rich nations. But it also applies to developing countries, which have ground to become more critical and inquisitive about the advices received from development experts and officials.

As a result, less focus should be put on aid relations and more attention should be given to economic, political and strategic relations. The greater emphasis by the international community and the EU on the role of private sector for development is a welcome one, to the extent that it leads to a broader agenda for equitable and sustainable growth. Economic interests should also be better identified and recognized. At the same time, the EU should not give in on its core values and principles, many of which are universal ones. A more mature relationship between Europe and Africa, and more broadly the North and the South, should be based on the recognition of their respective interests and priorities, as well as shared values.

Hence, for North-South cooperation to flourish, it should not be based on a dependency relationship, but on a more open one, where solutions can be found jointly,

52 See for instance Moyo (2010) and the huge media attention it has attracted, arguably not deservingly.

where innovative solutions are stimulated and the risk of failure, through informed trials and errors, becomes again part of the development toolkit of Northern partners. Such a context would also then favours innovative triangular cooperation and fruitful exchanges between the North and South in their relationship with Southern parties.



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