

# “The silk route to New York and Paris”

South-South cooperation in the year 2015

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### *List of Abbreviations*

BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CBDR	Common But Differentiated Responsibilities
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
FfD	Financing for Development
G77	Group of 77, largest alliance of the UNGA of developing countries
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HLC	High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation
LDC	Lower Developing Country
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAM	Non Aligned Movement
NGO	Non –Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWG	Open Working Group
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South-South Cooperation
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WHO	World Health Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization

## Introduction

*“The people of our United Nations are not as different as they are told. They can be made to fear; they can be taught to hate — but they can also respond to hope. History is littered with the failure of false prophets and fallen empires who believed that might always makes right, and that will continue to be the case. We are called upon to offer a different type of leadership — leadership strong enough to recognize that nations share common interests and people share a common humanity, and, yes, there are certain ideas and principles that are universal.*

*That’s what those who shaped the United Nations 70 years ago understood. Let us carry forward that faith into the future — for it is the only way we can assure that the future will be brighter for my children, and for yours.”* Speech delivered by Barack Obama, President of the United States, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

At the establishment of the UN, 24 October 1945, only 51 countries committed to the objective of preserving peace. This membership grew to a total of 193 countries today, which agreed to accept the obligations of the international treaty of the UN Charter.<sup>1</sup> The document sets out the basic principles of international relations. It also calls for member states to adhere to other treaties, declarations and outcome documents of UN conferences. Together those documents provide the mandate and the normative framework of the UN system.<sup>2</sup> As the slightly utopistic speech of Obama highlights, an important purpose of the UN and its mandate is cooperation, next to peace and security, equal rights, self-determination and harmony. More specifically the goal is to achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, next to promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.<sup>3</sup> A huge challenge considering that three quarters of all humanity lives in developing countries, an estimated three and half billion people.

Commitment from the member states to this, as at the historical moment of 1945, didn’t change over the years. On the contrary, seven decades later, in the year 2015, the UN brings numerous high-level conferences together, focusing on thematic subjects. This includes

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the member states, the Holy See and the State of Palestine are non-member permanent observer states.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations System Staff College & UNICEF, *Handy Guide on UN Coherence* (New York: Unicef, 2015), Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> Idem.

the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UNGA, the COP21 conference on climate change in Paris, the Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa and the Sustainable Development Goals summit in New York.

The words of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strengthen this observation in the 2014 UN report ‘The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet’; “*We are on the threshold of the most important year of development since the founding of the United Nations itself.*”<sup>4</sup> The report calls for universal action against poverty. It cites the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), articulated in the year 2000. The starting-point was improving human rights, ensuring peace and economic transformation, all with the provision of sustainable development. This was, self-evident, a very ambitious plan which showcases the need and summoning for multilateral action. The MDG’s seemed to be a success, focusing on the fight against mother and child death, HIV-AIDS, as well as improving education and healthcare amongst others. In general over the 15 years from 2000 onwards, significant progress was made on all goals: four of the eight goals were already reached before the end of 2015. Although the MDG’s have improved the lives of millions of people worldwide, in the end not all goals were to be realised.

The MDG experience shows the impact of efforts from the international community, but not reaching all the goals in 2015 wasn’t unexpected. There has been strong criticism towards the MDG’s and its eventual achievements from the beginning of the project at the turn of the millennium. As Kamphof, Spitz and Boonstoppel state in their report *Financing Development now and in the future* several factors influence the success of the MDG’s:

“The financial commitment of donor countries such as the Netherlands has decreased due to the economic situation, while the developing countries have been beset by conflicts and environmental disasters: challenges which are not addressed by the MDG’s.”<sup>5</sup>

The research indicates especially the result of logical reasoning. As expected, after 15 years there are still huge differences in progress amongst countries, as well as regional differences within countries.

The view towards these kind of promises and goals often is that they are a feature of a cosmopolitan world view. This cosmopolitanism is characterized by classifying global

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet” (Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda, New York, December 2014), 46.

<sup>5</sup> Kamphof, R., Spitz, G. & E. Boonstoppel. E. *Financing for development now and in the future* (Amsterdam: Kaleidos Research, 2015), 6.

democracy into a multi-layered system of global governance, instead of seeing this democracy as a hierarchical world state.<sup>6</sup> In this approach global governance rests on the decision-making authority, which is criticized as being normatively minded. Ideas of reform put forward by these cosmopolitans tend to be disavowed as being ‘idealistic’ and ‘utopistic’ by their more realist colleagues. In particular, the division between the ‘global north’ and the ‘global south’ is central in this discussion between realists and cosmopolitanism; the realists state that political cosmopolitanism has formulated creative and far-reaching ideas about global justice and economic redistribution, but that these ideas represent only dreams of long term goals and non-institutionalised proposals. Some critics from non-governmental organisations (NGO’s) even refer to this as “magical thinking that abounds in aid circles”.<sup>7</sup>

In order to improve this and the MDG-outcome, the international political community was put to work once again. They came together in Brazil in 2012 at the so called Rio20+ conference. The outcome document “The future we want” set out a mandate to establish an Open Working Group (OWG) to develop a set of sustainable development goals as the successor of the MDG’s. Behold the birth of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2013 the co-chairs of the high-level panel of eminent persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda transmitted their recommendations on the development agenda beyond 2015. The panel stated that business as usual was not an option. Rather the Post-2015 agenda needed to be driven by five big transformative shifts: leave no one behind, put sustainable development at the core, transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth, build peace and effective, open, and accountable institutions for all, and last but not least, forge a new global partnership.<sup>8</sup> The summit was set to be the largest UN summit in a decade, with over 150 heads of state and government confirmed to attend. The goals were to offer an historic opportunity to move towards a fairer future for all, and entail the ‘Post-2015 agenda’ in order to combat differences and to continue the international efforts. For the time being the outcome was indeed positive; member states adopted the new development agenda. They promised to ‘leave no one behind’, and to combat discrimination and inequalities- both within and between countries- at its heart by establishing a set of 17 goals on which they worldwide

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<sup>6</sup> Scheuerman, W.E., “Cosmopolitanism and the world state”, *Review of International Studies* vol.40, issue 03 (2014): 419.

<sup>7</sup> “Anyone fancy a post-2015 wonkwar?,” Last modified April 30, 2013, <https://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/anyone-fancy-a-post-2015-wonkwar-me-v-claire-melamed-on-the-biggest-development-circus-in-town/>.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations. “A new Global Partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development” (The Report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, New York, 2013), 13.

agreed. However, the proposition of new goals also prompts discussion. The questions who should pay for these initiatives and who is responsible for what, and how much each country should contribute rise.

As a result, all eyes are on the UN. But although the UN does function as an important source of, amongst others, ideas and technical services in developing policies, it keeps maintaining a poor combination of the both as an international organization.<sup>9</sup> In search of the responsible agents the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) comes into play. In the cases regarding (economic) development, UNCTAD is responsible for in particular international trade within the UN. They permanently state that it is the North-South divide that is counterproductive to the generation of norms and policies<sup>10</sup>, and not the UN in itself. It is interesting that it were the developing countries who called for the creation of UNCTAD, because they felt left behind in trade liberalization and progress. Here South-South cooperation (SSC) comes into play, a concept which stimulates developing countries to work together and to contribute expertise in the process of development. As signalled critically but fair in comprehensive research done by amongst others Mark Mazower, Thomas Weiss, Björn Hettne and Arturo Escobar and especially Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner, on the actual role of an institution such as the UN to advance SSC in recent years, the implications for the organizations part of the system will not reach far. It seems that they are on board with the realists and not the reformists. However, referring to Kamphof and others again, “it is crucial that sufficient public and private financial resources are made available, as without the necessary financial resources the new goals and agreements are themselves likely to be ‘dead in the water’”<sup>11</sup>, which does show sympathy for reformism.

Moreover, the lack of clear evidence of SSC within developing nations because of UN efforts provides potential and opportunities for countries to cover their investments within South-South agreements. To simplify, the current North-South divide is overlooking existing opportunities and parts of reality, but remains in order because it is seen as the default option in the existing research and literature. As long as there is no other template made available, powerful states are comfortable maintaining the so called “fiction”.<sup>12</sup> By answering the following research question the focus in this thesis will be on the role and influence of the UN

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<sup>9</sup> Weiss, T.G., “Moving Beyond North-South Theatre,” *Third World Quarterly* 30 (2) (2009).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *South-South Cooperation in International Investment Arrangements* (New York and Geneva: UNCTAD Series on International Investment Policies for Development, 2005) 47.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, “The Road to Dignity by 2030,” 6.

<sup>12</sup> Weiss, “Moving Beyond North-South Theatre,” 278.



on SSC through the use of conferences, particularly the SDG summit and the associated Financing for Development conference; *In what ways does the United Nations Development System create new incentives for South-South cooperation through the SDG summit and Addis Ababa Action Agenda? Could these conferences provide a new global framework for financing sustainable development and a comprehensive set of policy actions through South-South cooperation?* By researching the post-2015 agenda in relation to SSC the focus will shift from the notion that the UN primarily is a carrier of technical assistance, towards the UN as transcending existing and simplistic categories of North and South.

It is evident that skepticism exists about the effectiveness of the UN system in view of global reform and the actual impact of the conferences organized in the past and in the present-day. This skepticism dates back to the early years of the UN, and continued all through the twentieth century. An explicit example of such critique is the ‘Capacity Study’ of Sir Robert Gillman Allen Jackson, who not only defended the UN in his work, but even stated that it was the best organization available for developing countries. However, he also did acknowledge the fact that the way the UN was organized at the time of writing the report, was over centralized and maybe not corresponding enough with its experts in the field. To be accurate, Jackson stated already in 1969 fairly critically that “the United Nations as a universal organization should be capable of dealing with problems of international economic cooperation in a comprehensive manner and ensuring equally the interests of all countries.”<sup>13</sup> Mark Mazower even analyzes this work as being of crucial importance for the development system by stating that the development agenda was most likely to be challenged by others if the UN failed to reform itself in basic ways.<sup>14</sup> It thus seems that the idea of reform therefore, in what kind of form possible, is present in discussing the UN by influencing the interpretations of contemporary efforts and the meaning, purpose and effectiveness of development nowadays. It would be limited to conclude that the structural inadequacies could explain the not so effective policy of the UN development system. As academic research indicates, global contestation also came forth from shifting power relations within a globalizing world such as the decolonization of countries. Confrontations about reform are also explained by the lack of trust by member states and the need for historical perspectives

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<sup>13</sup> Sir Robert Gillman Allen Jackson, *A study of the capacity of the united nations development system* (New York: United Nations, 1969), vol. 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 298.

from especially non-Western powers.<sup>15</sup> Here, SSC could be of importance and thus be an important component of the suggested reform.

To clarify, academic research has been done from the viewpoint of the classical realist vision towards global reform which could shed light on this topic in an unexpected way. Reformist theory implies that the challenges in reaching sustainable development goals and humanitarian goals could be faced by maintaining the dominant, already existing, socio-economic system. Human development, which is addressed in the SDGs as to redress ecological and social problems in particular, can be reached under this system. Yet, this does not mean that it doesn't need to be improved; Clifton and Arman speak of this improvement in terms of 'greening' the current system for example. They argue that the aims of reformism in the current system are translated by making the system more just by seeking consistent global growth and "to address problems of poverty and promote overall human wellbeing".<sup>16</sup> As will be argued in this thesis this reformist approach can be seen in the UN SDG summit as well as the FfD conference as they focus on technological advancement and the efficient use of resources to develop less disparity by using SSC as a possible starting point in addition to the already existing body of the UNDS.

The attention in the literature for furthering growth is striking, for example with a prominent role for business in order to assist 'the south' to develop sustainably.<sup>17</sup> Simultaneously the decision-making and the envisaged implementation remains dominated by states, are in line with realist theory. As Scheuerman argues in his work about the global reform, the realists often see global reform as something that represents unrealistic and utopic ideas. They oppose far-reaching global reform, depicting it as irresponsible.<sup>18</sup> As an alternative he indicates the so called progressive realists as the ones who do support serious efforts at radical international reform. In his work Scheuerman proposes the innovative idea that the approach of realists to concepts such as foreign policy initiatives and global reform are not necessarily skeptical, possibly representing the attitude which can support the 2015 agenda's. An important provision being the involvement of the world community, "from this standpoint, dramatic global reform and perhaps even world statehood constituted admirable goals, but they were only achievable if reformers figured out how the necessarily thick

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<sup>15</sup> Weiss, T.G. and Sam Daws, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 171.

<sup>16</sup> Clifton, D. & Azlan Amran, "The Stakeholder Approach: A Sustainability Perspective," *Journal of Business Ethics* 98 (2011): 122.

<sup>17</sup> Idem.

<sup>18</sup> Scheuerman, W.E., "The (classical) Realist vision of global reform," *International Theory* Vol.2 Is.02 (2010): 246-282 AND, Scheuerman, W.E., *The Realist Case for Global Reform* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

societal background for a prospective post national political order might be constructed.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, political orders and states should be backed up and generate action on the societal level, only then could long-term goals possibly be realized. As Weiss and Daws indicate the UN has traditionally provided this kind of space for the increasing ‘global civil society’.<sup>20</sup>

Critique towards the approach of progressive realists is that the realist theory conceives the world as being one single system connecting the state as dominant actor, and thus in this manner maintaining the North-South divide. The major problem which is identified by Björn Hettne, is “what *agents* of change can be identified.”<sup>21</sup> After analyzing the shifting relationships through the UN conferences it will be concluded that the existing economic system is sound and capable of providing sustainable goals, but that the current system should be made more socially just. The hypothesis of this thesis is thus that SSC can provide a model to position the rise of the South in this, which in turn would benefit the North, in line with the mentioned statement of Mazower about the necessity of reform.<sup>22</sup>

When speaking about the UN in this thesis, the focus will be on the part of the institution called the United Nations Development System (UNDS). Part of this development system are for example the earlier mentioned UNCTAD, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). These organizations only represent a small fraction of the institution, stimulating questions about how SSC functions within the enormous and fragmented realm of the UN. As Browne and Weiss argue, “the individual parts only comprise a ‘system’ in name because each operates autonomously.”<sup>23</sup> Besides in these organizations, the states come together in official meetings such as the High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation of the UNGA.

This thesis will look at the advantages and problems the UN prompts through the worldwide conferences they pledge for, and frames how the UN itself envisages further elaboration and the implementation of SSC. The force of globalization will be an important

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<sup>19</sup> Scheuerman, *The Realist Case for Global Reform*, vii.

<sup>20</sup> Weiss and Daws, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Björn Hettne, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds* (New York: Halsted Press, 1995), 118.

<sup>22</sup> We should keep in mind to be careful not to stress that development thinking is an all-embracing concept, as people from outside the ‘West’ often view development differently because of their history of being colonized. In addition, we should acknowledge that the UN conference outcomes entail very ambitious goals which are not legally binding.

<sup>23</sup> Browne, S. & Thomas G. Weiss, “The future UN development agenda: contrasting visions, contrasting operations,” *Third World Quarterly* (2014): 1326.

subject next to the quality of governments and institutions as a main focus. In addition, political mandates in relation to globalization are at the basis of development co-operation.

Also, as Kazuo Takahashi indicates, these are influenced by competition emerged market forces. These are strengthened by financial market liberalization, development of financial instruments, trade liberalization and the information technology revolution.<sup>24</sup> Therefore the financial system of the UNDS will also be looked at. Because the UNDS is a system which is driven by Official Development Assistance (ODA), in itself the system is not very effective. To clarify, ODA is defined as:

“Flows to countries and territories on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)<sup>25</sup> List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral development institutions provided by official agencies and for which the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries is the main objective and which is concessional in character.”<sup>26</sup>

ODA as the traditional means to support the international community to solve problems is problematic in itself because it doesn't move with the changing world community and globalization. As Braveboy-Wagner states, ODA is “often tied to political considerations as well as economic criteria, most recently governance reform, environmental stability and economic reforms in line with the predominant liberal development model.”<sup>27</sup> So you don't have to be an economic expert to understand that more and more often market-based globalization challenges the ODA decline.

Finally, after exploring the literature about SSC it can be stated that research has been done on historical sketches of how SSC emerged and developed, including how it came to affect recent debates around the shape of global institutions. Also, maps of SSC actors and their related practices are available. Some of the different options that SSC actors have engaged in reforming global development cooperation arrangements have been outlined. However, the actual outcomes of these options have not been explored in depth by the use of sufficient recent case studies. This thesis will analyze how UN conferences try to foster SSC by forming new mechanisms of development cooperation, how the UN works with the demands of the Third World countries as a new bloc in the international system. This research

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<sup>24</sup> Takahashi, K., “Reversing the decline of ODA: How effective is the current policy agenda?” (paper presented at the United Nations convention on South-South Cooperation, Nairobi, Kenya, March, 1995), 72.

<sup>25</sup> In the juvenility of development aid, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) were founded in 1961.

<sup>26</sup> European Union and ECDPM, *Report on Development, Combining finance and policies to implement a transformative post-2015 development agenda*, (Brussel: European Union, 2015), 105.

<sup>27</sup> Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 39.

will argue from the global reformist idea and will contribute concrete and contemporary case studies to the existing literature, beginning by examining the theoretical framework of SSC by researching the international discussion about SSC in chapter 1. The actual attempt of bringing states together will be further explored in chapter 2, by assessing the attempts within the UN system through the SDG summit of September 2015. The implementation of mechanisms will be further assessed in chapter 3, by examining the financial brother of this summit, the Financing for Development conference in Addis Ababa in July 2015.

## South-South Cooperation

### *One big idea - or many small ideas*

The term SSC is often used to describe multiple forms of exchange between countries known as ‘the global South’, and emerged in the 1950s in the context of “the common struggle of former colonies to attain genuine independence and development.”<sup>28</sup> This ‘global South’ is indicated in the literature as a group of countries which “construct its narratives in a different way from those of the developed nations of Europe, North America and Asia.”<sup>29</sup> This terminology seems rather vague and open to interpretation, which not really encourages the formulation and implementation of a global development agenda. Logically the countries comprising ‘the global South’ show an enormous variety in size, resources, cultures, ideologies, economic and political structures and level of development. Nevertheless, they also share common objectives which provide these countries with a shared identity and goals to work together within the UNDS, namely the desire to exceed poverty and underdevelopment (to a greater or lesser extent). Yet despite all the possible nuances, ‘the global south’ refers best to the Afro-Asian-Latin American group who are looking to correspond to the fundamental principle of inclusive participation of a global development agenda.

However, although developing countries are actively signing international investment agreements among each other, investment agreements by developing countries in other developing countries are not yet covered by South-South agreements and cooperation. Moreover, as stated in the UN Development Strategy beyond 2015, the post-2015 framework

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<sup>28</sup> Ahmed Hussein Ahmed, “Prospects of South-South Cooperation in Trade, Investment and Technology in Africa” (paper presented at the UNCTAD 17<sup>th</sup> Africa Oilgasmine meeting, Khartoum, Sudan, November 23-26, 2015), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 4.

should “be applicable to all countries, not only developing countries.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, if the UN wants to fulfill a meaningful role within development policies it should focus on new global agreements. These global agreements could forge a new focus on global partnerships and “endorse a set of goals within which all existing UN organizations can find their place and defend acquired turf and mandates”.<sup>31</sup> A leading point of criticism towards SSC in the course of history is the notion that a lot of the institutional change in ‘the south’ is only driven by the need to survive in a system. This system is dominated by northern countries that are supposed to be “the most capable of moulding matters to suit their interests.”<sup>32</sup> Thus in order to understand the North-South divide in the UN it is of importance to sketch an historical overview, featuring the main benchmarks in the development of SSC.

The first visible manifestation of SSC was at the Asian-African conference in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955. The conference was organised by multiple countries, including Indonesia, Pakistan and India. A prominent aspect of the conference was the identity of its participants, most of the participating countries were, not by chance, newly independent. The increasing of economic and cultural cooperation and the opposing of colonialism by the conference participants were of paramount importance. As de Renzio and Seifert state in their research about SSC and development assistance “the leaders of South American and African countries hope that this cooperation will bring a new world order and counter the existing Western dominance socially, economically and politically.”<sup>33</sup> Important Southern leaders have been very critical of the Western dominance for a long time. In their vision the peoples of the “third world” were continuously oppressed by their Western fellow-creature, and should be liberated. The late president of Venezuela once called this ‘the beginning of the salvation of the people’. This movement of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism was also strongly supported in for example the Middle-Eastern region and is also noticed by Mazower, as he states: “The decolonized world combined forces with the South and Central Americans, visions of the international economy that posed a significant challenge to American development thinking and implied a quite different path for the world economy gained ground at the UN.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> United Nations Committee for Development Policy, *The United Nations Development Strategy Beyond 2015* (New York: United Nations, 2012), v.

<sup>31</sup> UNCTAD, *South-South Cooperation in International Investment Arrangements*, XIII.

<sup>32</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 212.

<sup>33</sup> De Renzio, P. and Jurek Seifert, “South-South cooperation and the future of development assistance: mapping actors and options,” *Third World Quarterly* vol.35, issue 10 (2014): 1862.

<sup>34</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 299.

Eventually, this conference led to the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), representing the countries which claimed to not align themselves with the USSR or the USA at the time. These two power blocs had stirred so much rivalry within the UN that a lot of member states grew an uncomfortable feeling with which they were unable to secure UN membership.<sup>35</sup> Apparently enough demand arose to unify in a new form of collaboration.

Following was the African-Asian People's Solidarity Organization which held its first conference in Cairo in 1958. As with the NAM, the participating countries aimed to fight for the liberation of imperialism and for independence. That this was prime time for SSC is evident, working in parallel with the NAM but concentrating on economic issues another group of developing countries became known as the 'Group of 77' (G77). The G77 was officially established at the end of the first UNCTAD on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1964. The group signed the "Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries" in Geneva and became the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the UN. Its mission statement was and still is to:

"Provide the means for the countries of the South to articulate and promote their collective economic interests and enhance their joint negotiating capacity on all major international economic issues within the United Nations system, and promote South-South cooperation for development."<sup>36</sup>

Not surprisingly the crystallisation of all these countries into a new bloc of Southern power represented a challenge to the other, industrialised and developed countries. And, as indicated earlier the efforts of these developing countries also led to the formation of a predictable North-South divide. The UN conferences of the year 2015 could offer possibilities to strengthen the cooperation between countries and to improve economic ties, transcending this level of infancy. This cooperation could give the involved countries the perspective of gaining more political power in the global arena, however without economic improvement one of the challenges remains the lack of capital. In addition, the richer countries of the South are often also the more powerful states that are better capable of articulating their voices, precisely because they can provide capital on their own conditions. As Janus and Hackenesch state in the briefing paper *Post-2015: How Emerging Economies Shape the Relevance of a New Agenda*, the new international development framework entails challenges for industrialized as well as emerging economies. They argue that "dynamics in South-South cooperation currently

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<sup>35</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, XIV.

<sup>36</sup> "About the group of 77," The Group of 77, Accessed January 02, 2016, <http://www.g77.org/doc/>.

provide limited incentives for emerging economies to actively support a new agenda.”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, that these emerging economies are weak and the institutions they foster for cooperation among these countries “are still in their infancy.”<sup>38</sup> But this wasn’t necessarily unfavourable, because there were and still are also advantages to gain from such a divide.

This discussion based on equity shows the financial relations and tensions between countries. In situations like this, the Western, ‘developed’, countries are distinctly trying to move away from the traditional donor-receiver paradigm with a strong North-South distribution towards stronger South-South focused financial flows. And although the SSC should stimulate the developing countries to stand on their own two feet, it can be used to their own purpose. A clear example of the possible financial success of new SSC can be found in the years 2008 and 2009, in which the UN budget for peacekeeping was increased. The G77 directly saw an opportunity and pressured the UNGA for additional funding of many development organisations as well.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the ‘underdeveloped’ countries are continuously pledging that they are still in need of this financial assistance. This also has an unfortunate side because the Secretary-General of UNCTAD already signalled in the 1980’s that the process of economic cooperation among developing countries should occupy an important place in the economic strategies and policies of developing countries.<sup>40</sup> They thus should not rely solely on ODA. Rather, the rapid economic growth of some of the developing countries could be used to improve the growth of less developed, neighboring countries. Evidence that this is indeed possible can be found in for example the outcome of the high-level Multi-stakeholders Strategy Forum which focused on the scaling-up of global support for South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the post-2015 agenda. Research concluded that “all member countries of the Group of 77, regardless of their size or level of development, have accumulated varying degrees of capacities and experiences in development that can be shared on a South-South basis.”<sup>41</sup>

Another example of such a clear demand from the G77 was to increase the principle of ‘Common but Differentiated Responsibilities’ (CBDR) for the whole post-2015 agenda, as originated in the 1992 Rio Declaration. Western countries admittedly have accepted a larger

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<sup>37</sup> Hackenesch, C. and Heiner Janus, *Post 2015: How Emerging Economies Shape the Relevance of a New Agenda* (German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik: DIE, 2013), 1.

<sup>38</sup> Idem.

<sup>39</sup> Browne, S. & Thomas G. Weiss, “The future UN development agenda,” 1330.

<sup>40</sup> Pavlic, B., *The Challenges of South-South Cooperation* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983): ix.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, “Scaling-up Global Support for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda” (concept note presented at the High-Level Multi-stakeholders Strategy Forum, Macao, China, 25-26 august 2015), 1.



responsibility towards worldwide problems, such as climate issues, but weren't willing to accept CBDR over the entire width of the post-2015 agenda, because of the financial obligations and expectations it entails. However, the demand from the G77 forms a straightforward test of solidarity between countries. Such a broad application of CBDR wouldn't stroke with another important principle, namely that countries have the primary responsibility for their own development. Clearly, the different groups within the realm of international relations all have their own articles of faith concerning this issue. The G77 often asks for CBDR, in which 'the north' pays for sustainable development, alongside policy space with regards to international obligations, the right to development and foreign occupation. Western countries on the other hand often accentuate shared responsibilities, human rights, gender equality, justice, sustainability and accountability. Researchers of the ECDPM (European Centre for Development Policy Management) state that it depends on the issue area; "allocation of responsibilities may include considerations of historic and current responsibility, capacities and space and right to development."<sup>42</sup>

This discussion never loses attention fully in the changing world economy which was caught by financial depressions. For example during the depression in 2008, the marked deterioration weakened the international cooperation for development, moving away from financing development and aid. In turn, this challenged the former receiving countries and their mutual collaboration in SSC. New or re-emerging player's needed to increase their importance in the field of development cooperation. In the 64<sup>th</sup> session report of the UNGA, the UN stated that;

"Paradoxically, the rapid deterioration of the global economy over the past several years has created a number of new opportunities for South-South cooperation, as many countries now look to one another and to their innovative cooperation mechanisms to facilitate market recovery and ensure greater stability in future at the global and local levels."<sup>43</sup>

As Pavlic also remarks; "In view of the prospects for the world economy for the coming years, it has become an imperative if the developing countries are going to be able to envisage the transformation of their economies and the growth rates they need."<sup>44</sup> When they continue to do so, they will be able to question the traditional hurl and predominance of established powers and forms of development cooperation. Research already shows that South-South

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<sup>42</sup> "Discussion Paper No.173," ECDPM, accessed on October 19, 2015, [www.ecdpm.org/dp173](http://www.ecdpm.org/dp173).

<sup>43</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "The State of South-South cooperation" (report of the Secretary-General, New York, August 24, 2009), 5.

<sup>44</sup> Pavlic, *The Challenges of South-South Cooperation*, ix.

investments significantly increased as early as the 1990's<sup>45</sup>. The possibilities generated an ambition to be treated as equal economic powers within the international arena. Strengthened by the feeling of a shared political and economic history the Southern countries are provided with the sense of a common identity.<sup>46</sup> The post-2015 agenda should be used to encourage this vivacity.

When linked to international relations theory it basically implies that they have been swimming against the current of international relations theory for a while, namely in the opposite direction of structuralist theory. Structuralist theory assumes an asymmetry between the North and the South, which is caused by the division of economic powers. It implies that economic strength determines the place of a society in a hierarchical world, in which poor and underdeveloped states are dominated by rich and developed states. However, research shows that 'the south' is no longer necessarily subjected to 'the north'. To clarify, Wallerstein argued in his structuralist theory that the global order should be considered as a social system with clear borders between the core and its peripheral regions.<sup>47</sup> Within this global order and its capitalist world economy, division of labour is fixed and development is seen as something nearly impossible. Nevertheless, the mentioned shifts in investment flows towards developing countries in the 'global south', deviate from this structuralist theory and indicate a "structural transformation of the global economy in which the world's economic centre of gravity has moved towards the East and South."<sup>48</sup> This is sequenced by a shift in wealth. Institutions and organisations should thus be in search for innovative ways to stimulate new forms of cooperation, and trying to find an answer to the financial question. There are already leading initiatives to be distinguished, as de Renzio and Seifert argue;

"The major shift happened in the years leading up to the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in the South Korean city of Busan. The Busan Partnership Document, as the final declaration is called, marks a turning point and gives full legitimacy to SSC as a development cooperation modality."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Aykut, D., & Ratha, D. "South-South FDI flows: how big are they?" *Transnational Corporations* vol. 13(1) (2004): 149-176.

<sup>46</sup> Syed Farhan Ali Bokhari, "South-South Cooperation: reasons, problems, strategies" (MA thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1989), 1.

<sup>47</sup> Wallerstein, I.M., *The Modern World System I* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), vol. 1-2.

<sup>48</sup> Henrik De Jong, "South-South Cooperation and Economic Development: the impact of foreign direct investment" (MA thesis, Erasmus University Rotterdam), 4.

<sup>49</sup> De Renzio and Seifert, "South-South cooperation and the future of development assistance," 1863.

It is also of importance that with the introduction of the World Wide Web and other innovative technologies, world trade has become more open and free but the playing field has been far from levelled for the countries of ‘the south’. Research demonstrates that expanding economic opportunities in Southern countries is a very effective way to reduce poverty and improve the lives of hundreds of millions people in the ‘global south’. As mentioned before, in the existing structure of developing aid it is assumed that financial, as well as technical assistance will be provided from ‘the north’ to ‘the south’. As development aid was institutionalized the idea of SSC was largely toned down. As Mazower illustrates the policies of the UNDP were generated in the 1960’s by the Kennedy administration, and “was keen on showing Third World leaders that Western know-how would be made available to help them.”<sup>50</sup> However, more often voices are rising in the changing world order that plead for the strength and agency of the ‘global south’. Southern countries can learn from one another, but there is a real need for a formal mechanism to connect Southern expertise.

The marking of special initiatives to strengthen SSC also confirms the process of reform within the UN. To institutionalise these connections the UN established a special ‘unit for South-South Cooperation’ in 1978 in order to promote trade, collaboration, and sharing technical and economic knowledge and skills between the ‘global south’ in the late 1970s.<sup>51</sup> The unit receives direction and guidance from the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (HLC). The committee is part of the UNGA and follows and reviews progress in SSC. From this point onwards, the UN more and more often tries to convey that SSC and the significant efforts of solidarity by emerging economies is encouraging. Decades later it still continues these efforts by stating that “more countries will need to commit to increasing their contribution to international public financing and set targets and timelines to do so.” In turn, South-South technical assistance and the sharing of experiences through regional fora should be promoted.<sup>52</sup> It even proclaims that with the establishment of new institutions of SSC, new opportunities to finance sustainable development investments are presented. Players such as the BRICS Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are part of these new institutions.<sup>53</sup>

But these aspirations have to be converted to the practical level of policy initiatives in order to be implemented. “The rapid growth in SSC requires greater efforts by Southern

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<sup>50</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 294.

<sup>51</sup> “Special Unit for SSC,” High-level United Nations conference on South-South Cooperation, Accessed on November 03, 2015, [http://southsouthconference.org/?page\\_id=29](http://southsouthconference.org/?page_id=29).

<sup>52</sup> United Nations, “The Road to Dignity by 2030,” 32.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*: 26.

partners at arriving at a common and acceptable definition of the term ‘South– South development cooperation.’<sup>54</sup> This is a common statement in research about SSC in which exploring possibilities to make policy dialogue more productive is essential. Nevertheless, the question remains if one big idea in support of transformative, inclusive and integrated policy is even possible. Of concern is that the outcome of OWGs institutionalized within the UN will not provide countries with sufficient control practically, thus not being ‘fit for purpose’ in a multi polar world. Even UN foundation delegates express these kind of concerns, stating that the UN certainly is successful in driving policy, norm setting and stimulating action, but that they can be characterized as a table tennis match at the same time. In these matches around thirty donors play the Lower Income Countries, with the Middle Income Countries as spectators on the gallery.<sup>55</sup>

The growing cohesion of the underdeveloped nations in this system was fixed on representing their solidarity, and supposedly “impressed and disturbed Western diplomats”.<sup>56</sup> Striking is that the shared aspiration of solidarity has not decreased in the increasing globalizing world. Although SSC has newly come into existence in the recent past, attracting attention in the intergovernmental dialogue, it has been noticed that the efforts to define SSC has focused in particular on the paradigm of North–South cooperation. As mentioned in the report of the *Conference of Southern providers* the result is that “the expectations from SSC have increased manifold to the extent that the basic principles of this form of cooperation may be compromised.”<sup>57</sup> After imperial domination feelings of greater unity could be considered as transcending individual aspirations, and voicing unified purpose and demands through formations and organisations.

It’s evident that a lot of different players and initiatives have tried to influence or emphasize this form of cooperation. Comparing academic research, official government papers, and non-governmental initiatives amongst others will leave the reader vertiginously in the realm of UN projects. In more recent years, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in May 2001, is often referred to as emphasizing the “importance of South-South cooperation in capacity-building and setting best practices,

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<sup>54</sup> De Renzio and Seifert, “South-South cooperation and the future of development assistance,” 1864.

<sup>55</sup> Wilton Park, “Beyond aid: innovative governance, financing and partnerships for the post-2015 agenda conference” (report presented at the open forum on the post-2015 agenda, West Sussex, Wilton Park, February 25-27, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 300.

<sup>57</sup> “Conference of Southern Providers. *South–South Cooperation: Issues and Emerging Challenges: Conference Report*,” United nations, Accessed October 10, 2015, [http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/dcf\\_delhi\\_conference\\_report.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf13/dcf_delhi_conference_report.pdf).

particularly in the areas of health, education, training, environment, science and technology, trade, investment and transit transport cooperation.”<sup>58</sup> This event was followed by three International Conferences on Financing for Development. One held in Doha, one in Monterrey, and one in Addis Ababa with special focus on SSC, triangular cooperation and financial strategies. Simultaneously the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 adopted a special declaration which focused on SSC and interregional action. Not unexpected, the UN even proclaimed a ‘United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation’ on the 19th of December, 2003. The resolution adopted for this day (58/220) serves not only to focus attention on SSC, but also to promote more extensive participation and cohesion in SSC efforts after the establishment of the MDGs.

To conclude, literature written about SSC elaborates on possible options and scenarios to evolve a common agenda for the diverse SSC actors, but we need to keep analysing the process from this point onwards. Next to the indicated examples of SSC in history, the first option which can be identified is the building and strengthening of global partnerships. An already existing example is the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). The GPEDC as a multi-stakeholder partnership provides an open, inclusive space to tackle underlying challenges facing international development co-operation. The second option is to strengthen SSC coordination, although realistically, some countries may already be latecomers to development and will not find autonomous space for policy. As Nayyar states, the national development objectives are significantly reduced because of “unfair rules of the game in the world economy. In a world of unequal partners, it is not surprising that the rules of the game are asymmetrical in terms of construct and inequitable in terms of outcome.”<sup>59</sup> The third, and the point of focus, is to increase the UN role and to work from the already existing foundation. The following sections will heighten this role, and maps the possibilities to construct authority to make and implement rules. If the southern countries are able to forge a common interest in the negotiations with ‘the north’ and within the UNGA they could create space for national development, thus reshaping the rules of the game.

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<sup>58</sup> “United Nations day for South-South Cooperation,” United Nations, Accessed on November 17, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/events/southcooperationday/background.shtml>.

<sup>59</sup> Nayyar, D., “*Development through globalization?*” (paper presented at the UNU-WIDER anniversary conference ‘Wider Thinking Ahead: The future of development economics’, New Delhi, India, June 17- 18, 2005), 5.

## The UN system- SDG summit

On the 25th of September 2015, the UN formally accepted the SDGs in the UNGA. The member states decided to use a new and innovative, constituency-based system of representation that was very special to limited membership bodies of the UNGA and different from previous conferences. This means that most of the seats in the OWG were shared by several countries, thus the process called for cooperation at every stage of the process.<sup>60</sup> The so-called 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development became the first resolution which was agreed upon during the 70<sup>th</sup> UNGA. The Agenda, the outcome document of the post-2015 negotiations, compiles a political declaration, seventeen goals (appendix) and 169 sub goals, in addition to agreements on implementation and monitoring of its progress, and represents a member state-led, and unique intergovernmental process. In this manner the UN is generating the opportunity for SSC to reform the global regulations of development and finance. They provide the states that are part of southern alliances with an opportunity to form blocs of power in the negotiations and to deliver input from an overarching southern point of view.

Already mentioned, the balance of the global economic but also the political power is still shifting. Developing states as well as new actors are gaining influence and are more often in a position to support international development. At the same time traditional donor countries are experiencing economic setbacks (the European report on development largely identifies these as those belonging to the OECD).<sup>61</sup> As Herrero and others state; “In the post-2015 narrative, the North-South divide is replaced by a shared universal commitment to achieve a transformative agenda for sustainable development and tackle common challenges, with differentiated responsibilities.”<sup>62</sup> Referring to the speech delivered by Pope Francis, the equality and dignity of all human individuals is central not only in the work of the UN, but especially in this new agenda for both state and non-state actors. These kind of statements do live up to the call by Weiss to focus more on the need for a human-centred focus in development theory, albeit that this speech manifests itself with a chiefly stirring function. Nevertheless, the complex structure of the UN already is hard to coordinate in the international environment and ever changing requirements of member states<sup>63</sup>, let alone

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<sup>60</sup> The member states were divided in the African Group, the Latin American and Caribbean Group, the Asia-Pacific Group, the Western European and Others Group and the Eastern European Group.

<sup>61</sup> European Union and ECDPM, *Report on Development*, 52.

<sup>62</sup> “Implementing the Agenda for Change: An independent analysis of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF Programming,” ECDPM, Accessed on November 01, 2015, [www.ecdpm.org/DP180](http://www.ecdpm.org/DP180).

<sup>63</sup> Weiss and Daws, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, 564.

broaden this to the attention, acceptance and cooperation at the individual level of all humans involved in the agenda, also referred to as the ‘national level’.

Thus, with the agreement on the SDGs the UN created high expectations, as new approaches are needed to live up to these expectations, raising a key role for the partnerships. This last recommendation entails a transformative shift towards cooperation and mutual accountability in which SSC in all probability will play a crucial role. As Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner reasonably states this participation of the ‘global south’ provides economic as well as social gains. Yet most importantly it creates diplomatic advantages, because the UN functions as an organization in which smaller and less powerful states “have a voice in world affairs”. Thus in the ideal elaboration of the plans they will be able to form coalitions.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, as indicated the UN system is highly fragmented and as mentioned earlier its members are in more than one perspective not always in harmony (cultural, political, etc.). This fragmentation is amongst others also due to the increased use of earmarked contributions and the inability of donors to invest in the overall purposes of individual organisations within the UN. However we should stick to the argument that although SSC contributes to the simplified and artificial division of the world into opposing regions it seems to be the best option as no other format is available yet.

In practice it turned out to be an almost overwhelming task. During the negotiations in New York it became clear that reciprocity was an important condition for the success of the agenda, also after the negotiations in the process of implementation. An explicit ‘offer’ from the developed countries became essential, because they were likely to deviate from the traditional paradigm of development aid as was known from the outset of the UN era. As the ECDPM states in their discussion paper *Universality and differentiation in the post-2015 development agenda*, countries bear an appropriate burden in helping others to achieve their national development outcomes and SDG targets (e.g., by providing financial assistance and taking part in broader international cooperation to benefit one or a specific group of countries).<sup>65</sup> At the same time, tired of waiting for assets to trickle down from the developed nations, the developing countries are beginning to realise that they can better cooperate with each other from the bottom-up. However, the realisation of achieving needs will not be reached by working together in itself. They should be driven by specific efforts from certain rising countries, with countries such as Brazil, China and India as important southern regional actors.

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<sup>64</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 6.

<sup>65</sup> “Discussion Paper No. 173,” ECDPM, Accessed on October 19, 2015, [www.ecdpm.org/dp173](http://www.ecdpm.org/dp173).

Evidently there needs to be a shift from the theoretical drawing-table towards the practical implementation of the SDGs, as the 2030 agenda eventually will stand or fall by its mobilizing capacity. The introduction of the goals invited all countries and stakeholders to participate, however, the goals need to be translated to the mentioned national level, with an important focus on outreach. In order to realise the goals a broad effort of making non-financial agreements, such as good governance and exchanging technologies and knowledge, as well as financial means such as trade, investments and ODA available is necessary. In order to achieve this the UN installed multiple expert groups in which the southern states are also included.

According to Janus and Hackenesch developing extensive mechanisms for the exchange of ideas as well as knowledge and information is of huge importance. They signal that policy makers who are involved in the development process in the emerging countries have not found a place to really elaborate on their ideas, because the existing global fora (G-20, World Trade Organization, Bretton Woods institutions) are “strongly dominated by industrialized countries.”<sup>66</sup> Thus, the focus should be on opposing these rising economies in their own categorization as being ‘developing countries’ within the UN, and providing them with a comprehensive and universal accessible framework such as the SDG summit. The analysis of the EU report corresponds to this in suggesting that the constraining factor of the post-2015 development agenda will not be a lack of funds, but the way these financial means are confined, mobilized and used.

However, the normative role of the UN is for all countries reaffirming the universality of the agenda. Universality is not such a difficult topic, but it is important that there will be differentiated support to each country. Moreover, a universal mandate does not necessarily means universal presence. The UN should undoubtedly focus on developing institutions, capacity building, improving policies and an enabling environment, but realistically the UNDS cannot and should not do everything in the implementation of Agenda 2030. It has to build on its comparative advantages. It cannot be denied that new forms of partnerships are needed, as the UN cannot be working alone on the SDGs, but in order to accomplish this we should be careful with goal based finance, as it would further contribute to the existing silos within the UN-system. As Helen Clark argues the goals will not be achieved with a “business-

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<sup>66</sup> Hackenesch, C. and Heiner Janus, *Post 2015: How Emerging Economies Shape the Relevance of a New Agenda* (German Development Institute/Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik: DIE, 2013), 3.



as-usual approach.”<sup>67</sup> Rather, “success will depend on world leaders’ ability to apply lessons from past experience to develop effective policies and programmes, and find ways to finance them.”<sup>68</sup>

## Implementing Mechanisms- The Addis Conference

Next to the SDGs negotiations, negotiations were going on simultaneously in the field of financing these goals and the means of implementation. This FfD progress is intertwined with the post-2015 agenda and incorporates every aspect of how to finance the new agenda. The conference in Addis Ababa was the largest ever held in Ethiopia, and the only large international conference in 2015 in Africa. This was in itself an huge stimulating fact for the economy in Africa leading up to, and during the conference. In addition, it provides the African nations with direct trust from the UN. The importance of the conference for African member states was emphasized by the enormous amount of heads of state and heads of governments from African countries. In total 193 countries participated, sending over 7.000 members of delegations which could enjoy 200 side events en marge of the conference. The conference followed the Monterrey Consensus of 2002 on FfD, which focused predominantly on the role of aid. Monterrey was the first UN summit to address key financial and related issues pertaining to global development.<sup>69</sup> It also called for the strengthening of the UN leadership role in promoting development. In 2008 the shift in focus towards global partnerships was kicked off in the follow-up, the Doha declaration. In the version of 2015 the UN acknowledges that better and more coherent policies and financial contributions of all kinds will be needed.<sup>70</sup>

The continuous argument about the dominance of industrialized countries is that economics is not always regarded as the suitable science for implementing a cultural discourse. Meanwhile, it is exactly this cultural discourse that is of high importance for SSC. Also because the economic policies of the SDG’s should be implemented in various cultural environments. In researching how this could be done, the fascinating work of Mazower

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<sup>67</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Global Development Goals, Partnerships for progress”(paper presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, November 17-20, 2014), 23.

<sup>68</sup> Idem.

<sup>69</sup> “History of the FfD process,” United Nations, Accessed on January 06, 2015, <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/conference/history.html>.

<sup>70</sup> European Union and ECDPM, *Report on Development*, 2015.

addresses the question if the rise of the Third World meant the end of the West in the 1970s. He states:

“Helping forge a new international partnership between a newly reorganized Europe and a newly cohesive South seemed both morally right and strategically prudent, especially to the socialists and social democrats who dominated much of the decision making in the Community in the 1970s. They understood the world as a set of interdependent economic relationships rather than a zero-sum power struggle between states: Southern collapse would necessarily harm the North.”<sup>71</sup>

Following Escobar this “anthropology of modernity centred on the economy leads us to question the tales of the market, production, and labour which are at the root of what might be called the Western economy.”<sup>72</sup> The important notion is that the economy is a cultural production, “a way of producing human subjects and social orders of a certain kind.”<sup>73</sup> Although the agenda of coherence, aid and trade, fragile states, gender equality and partnerships are evidently supported, discussion did exist in the negotiations as well as after agreeing on the outcome document about the hierarchical importance of subjects, in which Western standards did not hold true for everyone, especially not for the decolonized ‘global south’. Yet, for a clear understanding of the needs of the developing world, understanding some important subjects at first is crucial.

The Addis Ababa Outcome Document eventually dedicates two clear paragraphs to the interpretation of contributing to SSC. In para 56 the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives stress the fact that it should function as a complement, not a substitute, to North-South cooperation. It thus not adheres to the demands in the academic literature so far, which mostly called for a new system substituting the North-South divide. It does match the progressive realist call for stronger national governments and policies by stating that the SSC “should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit”<sup>74</sup>, but is complementary to cultural differences. This conditionality is of crucial importance, because bilateral agency is linked to multilateral exchanges. In addition, paragraph 57 literally seeks support for a voluntary way of increasing contributions

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<sup>71</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea*, 312.

<sup>72</sup> Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012) , 59.

<sup>73</sup> Idem.

<sup>74</sup> United Nations, “Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)” (Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015, New York General Assembly, 17 August 2015), Paragraph 56.

of SSC to poverty eradication and sustainable development, thus not imposing the ‘northern’ way on ‘the south’. By referring to the provisions of the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on SSC the UN seeks “to commit to strengthening triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation.”<sup>75</sup>

The existing notion that ‘the south’ adopts many institutional mechanisms normative and structurally from ‘the north’<sup>76</sup> again proved itself not inherently negative. That this is not a problem for the G77 and China became once again evident in Addis Ababa when the Minister of Finance of South Africa, Nhlanhla Musa Nene, spoke on behalf of these participants. He noted that the UN “was in a unique position to strengthen international cooperation for sustainable development and the integration of developing countries in international forums.” But most importantly he stressed “that North-South cooperation should remain at the core of sustainable development and the global partnership, and that traditional official development assistance should be maintained. Only a scaled -up global partnership could ensure meaningful development.”<sup>77</sup> However, we have been witnessing a long-term decline in the share of core contributions to the majority of the major UN funds and programmes since the 1990s. It thus seems to be more important than ever to make funding both qualitatively more effective and in nominal terms more adequate. With the rise of the concept of Global Public Goods it seems out-dated to assume that all development assistance has to emanate from the same source of foreign assistance. As the WHO defines “no one can be excluded from their benefits and their consumption by one person does not diminish consumption by another.”<sup>78</sup> It would instead seem natural to argue that national funding, through the budgets of line ministries, could also share in the responsibility of ensuring that the Global Public Goods are safeguarded. This also implies that there is indeed an inherent voluntary character, inherent because the worldwide character of Global Public Goods makes it nearly impossible to not be a part of the new plans of the UN.

In addition, in order to address the earlier mentioned ODA issues, the financing of the UNDS must be firmly reinforced in order to underpin a system that is fit for purpose. To achieve the SDGs the international community will have to develop strategies and instruments

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<sup>75</sup> United Nations, “Addis Ababa Action Agenda,” Paragraph 57.

<sup>76</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 212.

<sup>77</sup> United Nations, “Report of the third International Conference on Financing for Development” (Report presented to the United Nations, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, July 13-16, 2015), 63.

<sup>78</sup> “Global Public Goods,” World Health Organisation, Accessed on January 05, 2016, <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story041/en/>.

capable of leveraging resource mobilisation for sustainable development. ODA resources can constitute a significant tool in facing these challenges, but catalytic measures – such as innovative modalities for guaranteeing loans and creating synergies between public and private flows of money – will have to be investigated in order to make existing ODA even more productive. Innovative financing, both in terms of innovative sourcing and innovative spending, has the potential to make an important contribution to the UNDS. It is however of vital importance that innovation does not blur the agreed principles. Multilateral financial institutions and development cooperation agencies must avoid creating high-risk instruments in their hunt for innovative solutions. This creates possibilities for further research.

With the agreement on the Addis Agenda for Action the sting seemed to be out of the debate about the SDGs. The agenda appeared to be much broader than its predecessor in Monterrey, because simultaneously the Post-2015 Means of Implementation (SDG17) were negotiated. Next to the subjects of domestic resource mobilization, private investments, trade, international cooperation on finance and technical issues, debts and systemic issues from Monterrey, the subject's technology and knowledge, multi stakeholder partnerships, policy coherence, building of capacity, accountability and monitoring, were prominently featured on the Addis agenda. In addition important on the road to success is the way states handle data, and if they even have the capacity and are able to do so in a transparent matter. Transparency-hardly existent in Doha- is now a prominent subject throughout the document: on budgets, aid flows, tax and extractives and data, including recognition that greater transparency is essential for SSC and can be provided by publishing timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on development activities in a common, open, electronic format.

While reading the document it can be highlighted that importance is prominently attached to good governance, finance, knowledge and partnerships. With this emphasis it anchors the earlier mentioned conditions of broad means of implementation necessary to reach the SDG's. It is also in agreement with the condition of the existing literature that developing countries should agree that trade is the engine of economic growth in SSC.<sup>79</sup> In practice the effectiveness directly shows in the Addis Agenda by presenting the first ever recognition of the GPEDC in a UNGA document and a recognition of shared common goals and common ambitions to strengthen international development cooperation and maximize its effectiveness, transparency, impact and results applying to both DAC donors and South-South providers. In addition, a successful outcome depended on concrete agreements about stimulate

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<sup>79</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 39.

investments in infrastructure, and for example in sustainable energy. The key was public-private forms of financing and an increasing capacity of international financial institutions. Besides, agreements about *social protection floors* were mentioned as an important aspect of the conference in Addis. The notion of the new social compact focused on unfinished business of the MDGs and effectively captures the importance of leaving no one behind and ensures that MDG issues remain prominent in the broader post-2015 agenda. It rightly highlights the importance of domestic resources and allocations for quality services between countries of the south, as well as effective international support.

The eventual document is long and as a result of the sometimes painful negotiations not always accurate. Addis showed that the relations within the UN are under pressure due to changing relationships. The BRICS and especially India radiated that a failure of the negotiations wouldn't hurt them, and they targeted on a larger role for the UN in multiple areas. The Lower Developing Countries (LDCs) and the African countries feared that their interests were not getting enough attention, also within their own group of negotiations (the G77). Ethiopia at first picked up the role of dealmaker in an insecure manner, but was eventually able to reach an agreement. They did this through compromising on the strengthening and designation of a UN tax committee. With this the Addis agreement was a fact, almost completing the post-2015 building.<sup>80</sup>

Another example of such an external coming together of players is the in Addis Ababa introduced 'Addis Tax Initiative'. Agbu states that "technological acquisition embodies the movement and procurement of equipment and the appropriate knowledge and skills required for the production of societal needs."<sup>81</sup> In Monterrey in 2002 it required hard work to even get this on the agenda, while it was a central point of focus in Addis which gave the opportunity to work it out in concrete activities. It no longer was seen as a replacement of ODA, but as an

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<sup>80</sup> In para 28 of the Addis Ababa Outcome Document (July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015) a reference to tax committees are made directly as it states; "We stress that efforts in international tax cooperation should be universal in approach and scope and should fully take into account the different needs and capacities of all countries, in particular least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and African countries. We welcome ongoing efforts, including the work of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, and take into account the work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the Group of 20 on base erosion and profit shifting. We support strengthening of regional networks of tax administrators. We take note of ongoing efforts, such as those of IMF, including on capacity-building, and the OECD "Tax Inspectors without Borders" initiative. We recognize the need for technical assistance through multilateral, regional, bilateral and South-South cooperation, based on different needs of countries."

<sup>81</sup> Agbu, O. A., "Manpower training and the acquisition of steel technology at Nigeria's Ajaokuta Steel Complex," *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs* 24 (2) (1998): 21-32.

important source of income for sustainable development. As the initiative commits not only donor countries but strongly targets its arrows on recipient countries of the South to support tax reform in developing countries, it indicates that the developing countries want to vent as much benefit possible from initiatives by new forms of cooperation.

Eventually, efforts within the UN operate by building and strengthening broad-based partnerships with a range of organizations, including both internal as well as external players. The tax initiative of the Netherlands together with the US, UK and Germany comes in response to the call in the proposed Addis Ababa Accord by ‘the south’ for more technical cooperation in the field of taxation/domestic revenue mobilization. The proposed Addis Ababa Accord sets out the importance of domestic revenue for financing development, calls for substantial additional development cooperation in this area as well as specifically highlights the importance of tackling tax evasion and avoidance. Presently the initiators and some other countries are approaching a number of other countries to join the Initiative. SSC will be welcomed and supported. In this way the Addis Tax Initiative commits providers of technical cooperation in taxation/domestic revenue mobilization that join the Initiative to considerably increase their spending on technical cooperation in the field of domestic revenue mobilization and taxation. As a matter of fact the aim is that donor countries and organizations will collectively double their technical cooperation in this area. The Initiative is proposed as a partnership between providers of technical cooperation and partner countries. Partner countries, who will join, will commit to step up domestic resource mobilization in order to increase the means of implementation for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and inclusive development.

## Conclusion – What’s positive?

As indicated in the introduction the aim of this thesis was to answer in what ways the UN creates new incentives for South-South cooperation through the SDG-summit and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The topicality of this research fills the gap in the literature which arose after the last large UN conference on the SDGs and FfD in 2008. This is important because the international organizations and institutions serve as platforms which allow less powerful states to find each other and to build coalitions, and are subsequently of substantially importance for the ‘global south’. Clearly the critique towards such summits was that the envisioned ‘cosmopolitan’ global reform is not so obvious for everyone thinking about

international political theory. As the realists are generally skeptical about the theory that international institutions such as the UN can alter structure it is not surprising that they are not cheering in the frontlines. In addition the well-argued work of Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner rightfully questions whether the structural changes of ‘global south’ institutions reflects true commitment of member states. It is very convincing that these only reflect superficial constructions that are dependent of external pressure.<sup>82</sup> However, a lot of the work and goals within the agendas of the summits are highlighting state driven policy changes, focused on the (shifting) power relations among nations. As this thesis has shown the formation of blocs and shifting relations can be used in the benefit of the southern countries. It is not structuralist theory nor common realist theory which can support the new UN agenda. As indicated the progressive realists are the ones who do support serious efforts at radical international reform, transcending the notion of their realist colleagues that these ideas represent only dreams of long term goals and non-institutionalised proposals.

Yet, we should also keep in mind that the term SSC is not a reference to monolithic countries. The ‘global south’ includes a range of different habits and cultures, in which SSC highlights some shared characteristics. In addition, after analyzing the shifting relationships through the UN conferences we should keep in mind that it can be said that the existing global economic system is sound and capable of providing sustainable goals, but that the current system should be made more socially just. SSC forms an alternative addition to, instead of a full replacement of the North-South dichotomy and the Northern economic, political and cultural dominance. SSC can provide a model to position the rise of ‘the south’ in this. Southern growth and stability and cooperation should be considered as a factor that could benefit ‘the north’, in line with the hypothesis of Mazower. SSC should in this case be more transparent and more systematic, for instance by being clear about commercial versus concessional transactions.

Also important is that national political communities should support these post national governances. These governments need to be able to rest on a corresponding society. So while much has been accomplished in SSC, vast challenges and enormous opportunities lie ahead. As de Renzio and Seifert state in their work and ideas about SSC, the different actors could greatly benefit from increased coordination and from developing a joint position. As the power relations and the international aid architecture in the world are constantly changing, cooperation is needed. They opt to push for “a transfer of the norm setting function

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<sup>82</sup> Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, 212.

historically played by SSC to a more representative UN body” or to “strengthen intra-SSC coordination mechanisms aimed at developing consensus and promoting knowledge exchange, institutional strengthening, and sharing of good practices.”<sup>83</sup> As the Secretary-General of the UN communicates;

“The new paradigm of accountability that we seek is not one of conditionality of North to South, nor South to North, but rather one of all actors- governments, international institutions, private sector actors, and organizations of civil societies, and in all countries, to the people themselves. This is the real test of people-centered, planet-sensitive development.”<sup>84</sup>

It has become clear that SSC not only creates opportunities for southern countries, but also creates new challenges for ‘the north’. As indicated in this thesis the evolution of SSC is moving the global balance of power around. Although the pressure on northern countries is reduced, for example through fewer claims on aid programs, these countries will have to face new challenges. With the increasing control of ‘the south’ over its future, the developed nations can no longer count on access to their consumer markets and raw materials. In contrast, rich rival countries in ‘the south’ are increasing their influence. Moreover, researches note that environmental, human rights, and intellectual property rights issues have created North-South tension.<sup>85</sup>

The year 2015 and its conferences have so far proven to be important because of two motives. On the one side the balance of political power, and on the other side the economic well-being of states. These two factors are interconnected because newfound economic powers could alter the balance of existing political powers. As southern states are becoming less dependent upon northern states for their economic well-being they can be seen as a competitive framework to North-South relationships, and they are taking stronger positions in multinational organizations such as the UN. However, the efforts of such an organization remain of pivotal importance. As Global Envision in exploring market-driven solutions to poverty state: “Future agreement on important international and multilateral issues in areas of trade, environmental protection, and human rights will require broader outreach to achieve true international consensus.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> De Renzio and Seifert, “South-South cooperation and the future of development assistance,” 1872.

<sup>84</sup> United Nations, “The Road to Dignity by 2030,” 40.

<sup>85</sup> “South-South Cooperation defies the North,” Global Envision, Accessed on November 05, 2015, <http://www.globalenvision.org/library/3/1371>.

<sup>86</sup> Idem.



Therefore it can be stated that the UN creates incentives as well as new mechanisms for SSC through the SDG summit and Addis Ababa Action Agenda by increasing the institutional capacity of the UN system. Countries that are facing similar challenges learn from and share with each other through new UN forums. However, as Weiss argues “the UN continues to struggle with member states that align themselves along regionally defined ideological and economic divisions, especially the North–South axis. The predictable antics between the industrialized north and global south continue to impede any sensible grouping of the majority of voices, which should change from issue to issue.”<sup>87</sup>

Following the efforts of the MDGs the conferences create leverage for developing countries because of the international commitment to respond to the economic and social needs in the world on the highest political level, although the non-lawfully binding character will leave the eventual outcome and effectiveness in practice unpredictable. In addition, the commitments change the way countries regard the international economic system, as shaped during the colonial period. As we need to move beyond orthodox regional divisions, this mechanism can thus provide a new global framework for financing sustainable development. A comprehensive set of policy actions through SSC stimulates the agenda by providing strategic planning and coordination developed for SSC. The UN conferences force the actor’s part of the SSC to face the pressure to redefine itself, but should overcome the problem of powerful states in ‘the north’ and ‘the south’ being comfortable with maintaining existing blocks of power and set roles. As research on the UN system shows these fixed roles oppose any global democratic means for dealing with most of the problems generated by globalization, “the North because global democracy would challenge its privilege, and the South because global democracy would require local democracy.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Weiss, “Moving Beyond North-South Theatre,” 273.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid: 282.

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Appendix: Sustainable Development Goals

<b>Goal 1</b>	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
<b>Goal 2</b>	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
<b>Goal 3</b>	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
<b>Goal 4</b>	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
<b>Goal 5</b>	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
<b>Goal 6</b>	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
<b>Goal 7</b>	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
<b>Goal 8</b>	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
<b>Goal 9</b>	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
<b>Goal 10</b>	Reduce inequality within and among countries
<b>Goal 11</b>	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
<b>Goal 12</b>	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

<b>Goal 13</b>	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
<b>Goal 14</b>	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
<b>Goal 15</b>	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
<b>Goal 16</b>	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
<b>Goal 17</b>	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

*\* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change*

(Source UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform)