

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE ON THE UNITED NATIONS DAY FOR  
SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION  
New York, 19 December 2008**

This year marks the fifth observance of the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation. On previous occasions, countries of the South had considerable development gains to celebrate. South-South trade and investment flows were rising, and South-South development assistance reached an estimated \$12 billion in 2006. Many developing economies were also growing at rates much faster than those of industrialized countries.

Today, the worldwide crises in finance, food and climate change call for even greater cooperation among developing countries. As never before, developing countries are collectively facing multiple global economic challenges that threaten to reverse development progress. The policy response must be bold.

That response can build on experiences gained through earlier financial crises in Asia and Latin America, and through numerous natural disasters and pandemics.

Since the 1990s, many developing countries have devised public programmes to improve access by the poor to food, credit, health, education and a host of other essential services in times of crisis. South-South cooperation should draw lessons from these programmes to protect vulnerable people today. Previous economic downturns led to a rise in debt burdens, the sale of productive assets and the sorry sight of children being pulled out of schools. We must do our collective utmost to avoid such consequences this time around.

South-South cooperation can also play a significant role in the fight against climate change. Many developing countries are adopting low-carbon development paths, backed by renewable energy and energy efficiency. Countries can share these experiences, policies and adaptation technologies.

On this United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, let us reaffirm our commitment to South-South strategies that will promote stability and well-being for all.