

Conceptual Note

I. What is Knowledge from the South?

Knowledge from the South is the regional South-South Cooperation (SSC) fair that will bring together the cooperation offices and agencies of Latin American and the Caribbean countries and the of South-South Cooperation **experiences** developed by the countries of the region. This event will be an opportunity for countries to share policies and **mechanisms** used to implement successful SSC processes and their experiences, achievements and challenges in the context of solutions to common development challenges. In addition, it will be a space conducive to the promotion of future SSC exchanges between the Cooperation Offices and Agencies and the technical teams in the region.

Knowledge from the South will take place from **May 8 to 10, 2012** in Panama thanks to the Government of this country's offer to host this event. It will be held in the City of Knowledge, a recognized knowledge hub in the region, and will be coordinated by the Center for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) jointly with the Ministry of External Relations of Panama.

Knowledge from the South fair is inspired by the thematic exhibitions organized by the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation (SSC) of the United Nations System. These thematic exhibitions seek to promote, coordinate and support South-South and Triangular Cooperation at a global level and in the United Nations System. Three global exhibitions have been organized to date: in December 2009 in Washington DC , in November 2010 in Geneva and in December 2011 in Rome.

II. Why organize a regional South-South Cooperation Fair?

The *Knowledge from the South Fair* recognizes that the region has enriching experiences in the **exchange, adaptation of solutions and the consolidation of cooperation processes**. The current development challenges and integration initiatives that are being advanced in the region have led to the intensification of efforts to establish effective mechanisms to face the common challenges to achieve social and sustainable development.

South-South Cooperation has significantly renewed the policies, tools and modalities through which countries and other key actors cooperate and exchange solutions and knowledge about their national and regional development priorities.

In this context, South-South cooperation is an appropriate modality to advance equitable national development agendas, taking advantage of the specific strengths and conditions of the region. According to SEGIB¹, these principles are shared by the integration initiatives:

- Cooperation between equals, based on **Horizontality**; that *requires countries to collaborate as partners*.
- Cooperation based on the construction of **Consensus**; that implies that *the implementation of SSC action must be submitted for consensus by the heads of each country*.
- Cooperation based on the principle of **Equity**; which is *exercised in such a way that its benefits are equitably distributed among all participants*.

Knowledge from the South will become a strategic space for evidence-based learning about the successful **experiences, solutions and mechanisms** of SSC in the region². It will also offer a stage for dialogue that will enable participants to further strengthen their cooperation on priority issues.

III. What are the objectives of Knowledge from the South?

The new realities and dynamics prevailing in the region, renewed political mandates and progress in the identification of significant SSC experiences and solutions offer a unique framework to further strengthen these initiatives. In this line, the hope is that *Knowledge from the South* will serve as a space to enable participants to:

1. Increase visibility of, share and learn from **effective South-South Cooperation experiences, solutions and mechanisms** in the countries of the region to exchange, adapt and consolidate knowledge transfer.
2. Promote knowledge exchange and transfer on issues of **Social and Sustainable Development** between countries of the region.

¹ Ibero-American Secretary General (SEGIB) SEGIB Studies N° 3, II South-South Cooperation Report in Ibero-America. October 2008

² More information about South-South cooperation in Latin America and SSC as a source of innovative practices and modalities is available in Annex 1.

3. Facilitate the definition of **new South-South Cooperation agreements** among the countries participating in the Fair.

IV. What are the thematic areas of Knowledge from the South?

The *Knowledge from the South* Fair seeks to highlight **SSC experiences** in issues of **social and sustainable development** that have proved effective in the region, and **the mechanisms** used for the exchange, adaptation in other countries, and consolidation of cooperation between countries of the region. There is a call for experiences that have generated solutions in four thematic areas:

- (I) *Social programs and social protection systems.*
- (II) *Fiscal policies to promote equity and social investment*
- (III) *Participation, inclusion and public policies*
- (IV) *Environment and disaster risk reduction.*

V. How is Knowledge from the South organized?

Knowledge from the South has been designed as a space that prioritizes learning and the exchange of knowledge between peers. Taking advantage of the City of Knowledge infrastructure and adopting innovative work modalities, the final agenda will include three main thematic blocks:

1. **Exhibition of innovative experiences and practices of SSC.** Through the call, coordinated by UNDP, and conducted with the support of Cooperation Agencies and the Resident Coordinator Offices of the United Nations System (UNS) of the countries of the region, a number of representative SSC experiences and practices will be identified and exhibited during the event.
2. **Dialogue sessions between participants about the role of SSC in the priority thematic areas.** The event will feature presentations and workshops to enable participants to learn about the current situation and reflect upon the state of global and regional debates on SSC, understanding country priorities and interact with other participants on strategic issues. These sessions will focus on effective exchange and cooperation mechanisms, regional priorities, country capacities, the role of the UNS and the interaction between practitioners, policy makers and other actors to enhance SSC in the region.
3. **Exchange sessions** between participants on thematic areas (business roundtables between supply and demand). They will offer participants an opportunity to **articulate** exchange demand and supply in greater detail and explore alternative agreements between countries for short-term implementation.

VI. Who will participate in Knowledge from the South?

One of the main assets of the SSC is its diversity and flexibility to convene and link different development actors and unite them around common goals. Recognizing this diversity, *Knowledge from the South* will bring together representatives from:

- **Governments:** National and local cooperation authorities and technical officials with immediate responsibilities in South-South cooperation and interested in exchanging experiences.
- **Multilateral agencies and regional and sub regional integration mechanisms:** Delegates from these agencies, particularly those responsible from SSC issues.
- **Civil Society organizations, academia and practitioners:** Representatives of civil society, academia and a group of participants working on SSC issues as well as leaders of SSC projects and initiatives.

The main actors of *Knowledge from the South* will be the **successful South-South Cooperation experiences** carried out between countries of the region, or are in process. Bilateral, Multilateral, Horizontal experiences and/or Regional Projects or Integration Systems are invited to participate in the four thematic areas identified.

Experience applications must not only include the description of the cooperation **solution** but also the **mechanism** used to achieve cooperation between the countries; representatives of the selected experiences will be present at the *Knowledge from the South* fair.

The call will be conducted through the Resident Coordinator Offices of the United Nations in each country. Additional information about the call and the selection process is available in the Call document.

VII. Where is the event held?

Knowledge from the South will be held from May 9 to 10, 2012 in the City of Knowledge Convention Center in Panama City. The City of Knowledge, besides being a center of knowledge, agglomerates a large number of United Nations System regional offices and other international organizations, which has allowed it to position itself as a stage for discussion of development issues at a regional level.

City of Knowledge: From military fort to center of knowledge.

City of Knowledge originated with the idea of transforming some military areas in the Panama Canal Zone into a center for knowledge exchange. City of Knowledge is conceived as a knowledge management network, a node where various organizations come together to share, transfer and create knowledge. www.ciudadelsaber.org

VIII. What happens next?

Knowledge from the South will be the starting point in the search to create agreements and alliances in a broader and permanent process to identify and **exchange SSC experiences** in the region.

A further deepening of exchange and analysis of the **successful mechanisms** of South-South Cooperation in the region is expected following the event. There are plans to exhibit the fair materials in other regional events, maintain the dialogue sessions among participants and continue the exchange to strengthen the role of SSC to meet the challenges of the region.

The United Nations System is committed to promoting a regional SSC agenda, which respects the leadership of countries, complements the efforts being developed in other regional fields, seeks better coordination and communication between actors and contributes to the development of national and local capacities.

IX. How to become involved in Knowledge from the South?

By its nature, *Knowledge from the South* admits various forms of participation: the exhibition of experiences, plenary intervention or facilitation, or through sponsorship or dissemination of the Fair, among others. If your organization, institution or media outlet would like to participate, please contact Inés Brill, head of the Capacity Development Area of the UNDP-LAC Regional Centre (ines.brill@undp.org)