



**CLOSING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. JOHN W. ASHE,
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA & BARBUDA
IN NEW YORK ON BEHALF OF THE HONOURABLE W. BALDWIN SPENCER,
PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ANTIGUA &
BARBUDA AND CHAIRMAN OF THE HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON
SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, 13 June
2008)**

Mr. President,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cote d'Ivoire,
Mr. Executive-Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Honorable Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Allow me to express our deep satisfaction on seeing this high-level Conference on South-South Cooperation concluding successfully its deliberations.
2. We have come to the end of our Conference. The outcome has been extremely successful. We have agreed that developing countries have accumulated varied degrees of development capacities that can be shared and could be used through a platform. South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion.
3. The vital importance of South-South Cooperation as a key element in the development agenda of our countries has been reiterated. The obligation of the North to support financially and technically South-South Cooperation in the interest of global harmony, equity and development was emphasized. We have agreed that the current international architecture needs to be reformulated in order to respond to the new realities and opportunities for development including triangular cooperation.
4. We have also agreed on the need to reinforce coordination of policy and joint negotiating positions on major issues on the international agenda that requires adequate and technical support and internal coordination. Strengthening existing multilateral funding mechanisms for South-South Cooperation and promoting regional, inter-regional and sub-regional sectoral cooperation in strategic fields are determinant in this endeavor.
5. We are very pleased that the Conference has launched the Development Platform of the South, a very important framework for policy decisions and actions that will guide our countries in their efforts of achieving economic development. I would like to reiterate that we need to view the Development Platform for the South as a self-sustaining process requiring continuous updating and refinement in order to effectively deal with contemporary challenges faced by our countries. The Development Platform for the South is a valuable tool for strengthening South-South Cooperation by providing new approaches to actions of the South in the international economic area.
6. Furthermore, the Platform is a strategic tool for political guidance, a compass for the South, which contains the goals and aspirations for economic growth and prosperity in the South. It will contribute to build South-North coalitions on developmental and related issues of global interest

such as climate change, biodiversity, natural disasters, sustainable development in global governance. It will also most of all optimize the voice and participation of developing countries in the international fora.

7. We are pleased that the Conference agreed on the need for the forthcoming UN Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held at the highest political level, as well as the need to assess the progress made in South-South Cooperation and undertake actions and initiatives to overcome the obstacles and constraints to its implementation. It was also concluded that South-South cooperation is distinct and separate from North-South cooperation and ODA.

8. The UN Conference should elaborate important measures for further implementation of South-South Cooperation as well as tackle the new challenges on emerging issues. The decision we have taken today will enhance our discussions during the preparatory process of the United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation.

9. The valuable contributions made during this High-Level Conference were extremely useful and I wish to congratulate all of you for the launching of the South-South Fund for Humanitarian Assistance and Development and invite all of you to the signing ceremony to be held next September in New York on the occasion of the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the G77.

10. In conclusion, allow me to express our sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting this important high-level Conference. I also wish to thank the local authorities, particularly His Excellency Mr. Apollinaire N'DRI Governor of the district of Yamoussoukro as well as H.E. Mr. Zacharia Fellah, Coordinator of the Organizing Committee. Let me also thank very sincerely Mr. Mourad Ahmia our Executive Secretary and his competent team for the excellent arrangements made for the success of this Conference. My thanks also go to all the local staff and the interpreters, as well as the media and press, who have contributed directly or indirectly to the success of the Conference.

11. I wish to all of you a safe return trip and thank you.