



OPENING REMARKS DELIVERED BY MINISTER MARCELO SUAREZ SALVIA, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF H.E. AMBASSADOR JORGE ARGUELLO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE INFORMAL BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON "SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT" (South Centre, Geneva, 8 July 2011)

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I would like to thank the South Center for convening this important Brainstorming Session on South-South Cooperation on Science and Technology for Development. I would also like to thank Ambassador Rebeca Sanchez Bello, Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, Coordinator of COSTIS for her able leadership and her valuable support to the G-77 efforts to promote Science and Technology. I wish also to acknowledge the support of the Chair of G-77 Paris Chapter and all the distinguished participants who responded to the South Center's invitation and for their contribution.

2. As you may recall, the Second South Summit held in Doha in 2005 requested that "the South Center in coordination with the Chair of the G-77, member states as well as relevant UN agencies to undertake an inventory of the exchanges of expertise and experiences among research institutions and universities in developing countries and to establish South-South networks among relevant research institutions and universities to facilitate the exchange of programmes, students, academia, researchers and provision of scholarships and grants". Today we are pleased to note that the South Center is convening such important brainstorming session in response to this relevant mandate by the South Summit in order to advance the cause of science and technology in the South.

3. As you may recall also, the Second South Summit mandated the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and stressed the urgent need "to strengthen cooperative efforts to build and to utilize networks, institutional capacity and expertise in areas, such as science and technology, research and standards development and requested the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation in collaboration with the South Center to facilitate this objective. In this regard, the Summit also mandated "to establish a network of "centres of excellence" from existing scientific and technological institutions in developing countries to allow scientists and engineers to interact with each other including through frequent exchange programmes and make use of state of the art research facilities offered by these centres". Therefore, we are pleased today that the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation has responded positively to this mandate by providing valuable support to this process and collaborating with the South Center.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. As you are aware, science and technology are critical in meeting development goals in the South. Most developing countries are facing today serious challenges in building their national science and technology base that would address the needs of their economic and social development. In fact, science and technology has shown to be an engine for socio-economic

development of any nation. In this respect, it is vital to strengthen educational institutions and research and development (R&D) organizations in developing countries. Therefore, special efforts must be made to build South-South partnerships and Networks to respond to the needs of developing countries.

5. In this context, the G-77 South Summit in Havana in 2000 encouraged South-South scientific organizations and research institutions dealing with science and technology to further expand their South South fellowships and training programmes and develop dynamic strategic alliances with governments, private and public enterprises, universities, laboratories and civil society. In response to this mandate, the Ministers of Science and Technology met in Dubai in 2002 and Rio de Janeiro in 2006 and decided to establish a Global South-South Network of Scientific Institutions, namely Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South (COSTIS).

6. The Ministers also called on partners institutions including the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the South Center, the Academy of Sciences for the Developing World (TWAS), and the UN system to support this initiative. We are very pleased today to acknowledge the support of various institutions that already agreed to provide to COSTIS, particularly the UN Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the South Center, the OPEC Fund, the PGTF and the Islamic Development Bank.

7. The Network's goal is to enhance cooperation among existing scientific institutions and research centers of the South. It will promote the development of collaborative programmes between its members and scientific institutions and organizations of the South in the strategic areas which are of critical importance to developing countries, such as biodiversity, climate change, water, biotechnology, and new and renewable sources of energy. COSTIS will be built on the basis of existing Networks, at the regional, sub-regional and inter-regional levels in order to avoid duplication of efforts. COSTIS as a global South-South Network will operate in a flexible manner on the basis of designation of focal point institutions in different fields of cooperation in various regions. COSTIS will not be a new institution or bureaucracy but rather a Network of the existing institutions in the South to be operating using existing resources and facilities in the South.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Since the launching of the Network in November 2009 on the occasion of the World Forum on Sciences in Budapest and in accordance with relevant mandates, considerable efforts were made by G-77 with the support of our Executive Secretary, Mr. Mourad Ahmia, in New York in close collaboration with our Focal Point in Paris Chapter, Ambassador of Venezuela, Coordinator of the initiative to operationalise COSTIS. I am very grateful for Ambassador Sanchez's and Mr. Ahmia's able leadership and dynamism in steering the process.

Following are some of the achievements made by G-77 since the launching of COSTIS:

- Creation of Website for COSTIS hosted by G-77 in New York and the establishment of a Directory of scientific institutions in the South and launching of Fund raising campaign by G-77 Chair in New York.
- Launching in partnership with CBD Secretariat an inter-regional Network of scientific institutions on biodiversity.
- Launching of the intergovernmental preparatory process to host technical preparatory meetings of COSTIS and establishment of database on South-South Trends on Science and Technology in the South.

- Finally, adoption by the Executive Board of UNESCO at the initiative of G-77 a decision requesting UNESCO to support G-77 in resources mobilization. We look forward to receive from UNESCO an update on the outcome of these efforts in response to this mandate.

9. In conclusion, at this stage, it is essential for the institutions of the South, particularly the South Center, the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and other committed UN institutions, to provide the necessary assistance to this initiative in response to the South Summits mandate to link the southern scientific institutions and engage them in a truly genuine partnership that will benefit developing countries.

I wish all success to your deliberations.

Thank you.