Asia-Pacific Commemoration of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation
14 September 2020: Event Summary

On 14 September 2020, a commemorative event was held by the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), in collaboration with the Regional Office of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The event was held for the UN Day for South-South Cooperation (12 September 2020) which marked the 42nd anniversary of the 1978 adoption by consensus of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

Regional event in Asia-Pacific to commemorate UN Day for South-South Cooperation 2020

In the opening session, **Ms. Gita Sabharwal,** United Nations Resident Coordinator in Thailand delivered a commemorative message from Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General. In the statement, Mr Guterres underlined that: "Southern countries are demonstrating the spirit of South-South cooperation, equal partnership and global solidarity during the pandemic, by collaborating in science, technology and innovation, delivering medical supplies, providing financial resources, sending health workers and experts to bridge gaps in capacity, and sharing best practices."

In her remarks, Ms. Sabharwal recognised the leading role played by Thailand in the region in strengthening the role of South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation as critical contributors to the sustainable development agenda. She also commended the contribution made by volunteers from Thailand and other countries in achieving sustainable development goals.

Ms. Pattarat Hongtong, Director-General of the Thailand International Cooperation Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, stressed the important role played by South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She also highlighted the efforts made by Thailand

and its partners through various initiatives, including sharing Thailand's development approach of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, in achieving SDGs. Besides, she emphasised the role of youth in contributing to global development through volunteerism.

Mr. Jorge Chediek, Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation, **Mr. Olivier Adam**, Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme and **Mr. Kaveh Zahedi**, Deputy Executive Secretary for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) also delivered their remarks during the opening session. They all commended the role of volunteering and people to people connectivity as essential for progress on the sustainable development agenda. On his last engagement with the Asia-Pacific partners, Mr Chediek relayed special thanks to the Government of Thailand and UNESCAP for their support to UNOSSC during his tenure.

The UNOSSC Regional Office for Asia-Pacific shared the findings compiled from a survey of Asia-Pacific countries. The survey was sent out with objectives to better capture the scale of South-South collaboration in the COVID-19 response and recovery and to identify major areas of demand for South-South Cooperation.

Survey on Priorities for COVID-19 Recovery and South-South cooperation by Asia-Pacific regional office, UNOSSC

A publication under the UNOSSC series 'South-South in Action' was also launched during the event. This publication entitled 'South-South Volunteering as a driving force for development: Experiences from Asia and the Pacific' was jointly compiled by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Regional Office in Asia-Pacific and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) - Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. The publication focuses on the efficacy of South-South volunteerism in accelerating people to people connectivity and sharing of knowledge assets for the achievement of the 2030 agenda and other internationally agreed development agenda. Volunteers from Cambodia, China and Thailand also gave testimonials on their work pertaining to the three case studies captured in the publication.

A new 'South-South in Action' publication was launched in the event

Ms. Sroy Socheath, Director General of Youth, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Cambodia; **Mr. Ke Yousheng**, Permanent Representative of China to UN ESCAP, and **Mr. Li Jian**, Secretary-General of the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation also addressed the attendees through video messages in the event. **Mr. Neil Buhne**, Regional Director of Asia- Pacific, UN Development Coordination Office also attended the event.

The mixed on-site and virtual participation event has achieved more than 1,000 views on-line and reached over 6,000 people on Facebook.