Kenya: Over U.S.$450 Million in Pledges, Investments As the 2013 Global South-South Development Expo Concludes in Nairobi

NAIROBI, Kenya, November 01, 2013 (UNEP) — More than $450 million was pledged between investors, green businesses, governments and other parties at the 2013 Global South-South Development Expo as hundreds of participants exchanged Southern-grown ideas, solutions and technologies throughout the week-long event.

High-level delegates from 150 countries and across the United Nations system gathered at the headquarters of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi to tackle development challenges by harnessing and exchanging innovative solutions developed in the global South.

Among the many agreements made the week were projects ranging from building organic fertilizer factories and clean energy projects in Kenya to solar power plants in Uganda to green businesses for women in Egypt.

Organized by the UN Office of South-South Cooperation and hosted by UNEP under the theme "Building inclusive green economies", the Global South-South Development Expo is the world's biggest stage for development solutions created in the South for the South.

"The theme of this year's Expo is fitting in that Southern countries have both the opportunity and the obligation to pursue a 'smarter' development course than their predecessors," said General Assembly President John Ashe.

South-South cooperation is the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. Today, over US$5 trillion in reserves are held by countries of the global South, which now also account for 47 per cent of global trade.

This unparalleled economic development opportunity could be one of the main engines of growth in the years ahead.

"As so many stories that we have heard this week demonstrate, South-South Cooperation is playing a vital role in facilitating this global transition," said UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

"Not only are these local, national and regional efforts producing positive results, but they are overcoming barriers, building new partnerships, creating new finance mechanisms, generating knowledge, sharing information, providing training and capacity building-in areas and sectors that are critical for a global transition to a low carbon, resource efficient and inclusive economy," he added.

Other high level participants throughout the Expo included former President of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa; Minister of Environment and Energy and Acting Foreign Minister, Maldives, Mariyam Shakeela; Vice-Minister of Environmental Protection of China Wu Xiaoqing; Chairman of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD Erik Solheim; UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson; UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi; Under Secretary-General-General and High Representative for the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States Gyan Chandra Acharya; Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation Yiping Zhou; and representatives of more than 25 UN agencies, funds and programmes.

"You set out this week to share best practice experiences to impact the plight of the poor and improve livelihoods. And you have delivered," said Mr. Zhou.

More than 40 companies were successfully matched and held business negotiations at the Expo's South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange (SS-GATE) event. Some 148 companies listed their projects on the SS-GATE web-platform.

At the Expo's CEO Round Table-which was attended by 21 CEOs and by Dr. Evans Kidero, Governor of Nairobi County-the Community Development Corporation Ltd., a private company based in Tanzania, and Viability Africa, LLC., based in Kenya, signed an agreement worth $21 million to build a hydropower plant in Tanzania.

A high-level Leadership Round Table brought together senior UN officials, Member States, business and corporate sector representatives to share their experiences of South-South cooperation.

Moderated by CNN journalist Zain Verjee, the event focused on green economy initiatives that have improved the Gross Domestic Product of the poor, as well as the quantity and quality of jobs, in different parts of the world. Participants also explored the role that South-South cooperation will play in the years beyond 2015.

The Expo's first Solution Exchange Forum was held under the theme "Building Inclusive Green Economies: Policy Drivers and Best Practices from South-South Cooperation". It presented examples of innovative projects in developing countries that are already contributing tangible benefits to the environment, economic development and decent job creation.

A total of 15 Partnership Forums were also held, with topics ranging from youth volunteerism to China-Africa business in support of green growth. More than 50 exhibitors showcased their innovative Southern-grown solutions in the Expo's eco-friendly pavilion.

For the first time in its history, the Expo garnered a strong online presence with the help of volunteers who collaborated remotely around the world on social media. The event was so popular that it trended on Twitter in Kenya, meaning that the message of the value and growing scope of South-South cooperation reached the next generation of development practitioners, entrepreneurs, environmentalists, thinkers and leaders.

Among other outcomes of the Expo were several major announcements by governments. At the UN Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) Forum, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) pledged to host the first global PAGE conference in March 2014 in Dubai. The PAGE partnership, launched earlier this year, assists participating countries in shifting investment and policies towards clean technology, more resource-efficient infrastructure and sustainable natural resource management.

In addition, the annual South-South Cooperation Awards were presented at the Expo's Closing Ceremony to individuals and organizations that have been prominent champions of South-South cooperation throughout the world. **(END)**