

**Xiaojun Grace Wang**  
**Deputy Director, UNOSSC**  
**15 November 2019, Shenzhen, China**  
**2019 International Youth Innovation Conference**

Good morning everyone.  
Your Excellency Chairman Xu  
My friend and colleague, Ms. Fang Lin

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen  
Boys and Girls!

It is such a great pleasure for me to address you today on behalf of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

I would like to extend my warm thanks and congratulations to the Municipal Government of Shenzhen, China and to the Youth Federation of Shenzhen, and to all the partners to bring this into a reality again.

I was here last year and this year, I see many more young people coming from all over the world, from over 70 countries, to come to Shenzhen— the City of Passion, City of Youth.

As the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, our mandate is to support you to have better cooperation among developing countries, which is called the Global South, also in partnership with developed countries, the North. As we have a common goal to achieve sustainable development- for a world that we share, for a planet that we all live in.

Why Global South? Many of you coming from developing countries, what do you think the global South is offering you today? I think the global South or the developing countries, first of all, offers a constant check against reality and stimulates a sense of strong responsibility. We are the lucky ones, privileged enough to come to this amazing city to experience the speed of development. However, let us not forget:

- 1 person among every 10 people still live extreme poverty
- 1 in 9 people in the world is undernourished
- 1 in 6 women and girls (15-49) ever partnered suffer from gender-based violence
- 1 in 5 children under 5 years old suffer stunting
- Half of the people do not have essential health service to deal with major diseases and not fall back into the trap of poverty

So, these are the challenges that we all face every day. But I am not here to paint a depressing picture of the world but rather I am here to say that Global South also offers us hope, aspiration, confidence and concrete examples and confidence.

Now you are in a city (Shenzhen) that has transformed itself from a fishing village 40 years ago, to today, such a modern leading example in the world. What do you gain from it? Aspiration.

You are in a country (China), that has lifted 700-800 million people out of poverty within a short span of a few decades. What does that tell the world? It tells the world that it is possible--developing countries can achieve development in fast speed, if you have strong will, persistence and if you have the enabling policies and the right people joining hands with you. For instance for this city, it is the young people-the innovators and entrepreneurs- that are behind this development. These are the aspirations that the Global South is offering us today.

Concrete examples are coming from you. During this conference, in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA, UNLEASH, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and the Shenzhen Youth Federation we supported trainings and workshops for 28 young participants and entrepreneurs from over 20 different countries. Each of them presented amazing examples of their own start-up enterprises, their own way of supporting their communities, countries and the world. From supporting agriculture practices to be more sustainable to transforming waste into useful products. These are concrete examples, from which we can learn from each other. That is what the global South is offering you—effective and applicable solutions.

Furthermore, Global South offers us the spirit of cooperation, which is needed most in today's world. By cooperating among each other, by cooperating with Governments which are enablers, cooperating with enterprises and NGOs. You have your partners for your growth and for your creative ideas to scale-up.

Among various partners, International organizations like UNIDO, UNFPA, UNDP, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, very humbly, are providing platforms to facilitate your exchanges. At the UNOSSC, we offer you a programme called Youth4South: Advanced Youth Leadership Programme. We are going to provide end-to-end support for young people to develop, to innovate and to lead the course towards the SDGs. We just committed with African Union Commission to provide:

- 10,000 African young entrepreneurs end to end support to be connected and trained with increased knowledge and enhanced skills on entrepreneurship, finance, innovation, and digital technologies.
- 100 innovative solutions and business ideas to be incubated and funded.

We also offer you “South-South Galaxy” a global digital platform, to help you better connect with like-minded people and partners in a smart and efficient manner, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI). These are only few examples of what partners can do, so cooperation is the spirit of the global South and we also hold hands with developed countries in this endeavor.

They say that today is the best time for the young people. But I think it is young people who make today the best time for humankind. I hope that the young generation will be a generation of hope, a generation of innovators, a generation of cooperators.

Afterall, as an African proverb says: ***If all push together even mountains can be moved.***

Let us work together. At UNOSSC, we will continue to work with all the partners and with you as individuals towards building a better world for all of us.