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North-South relations and their impact in the Mediterranean region

Lakhdar Brahimi

Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations

We have unfortunately not been able to obtain the full text of the communication by Mr Lakhdar Brahimi, Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations Organisation. A brief synthesis of the ideas put forward during Mr Brahimi's talk is provided below.

Developing countries should draw a number of lessons from the way in which aid has been provided by northern countries for the southern countries. This aid was to ensure food security and sustainable development, two objectives that still remain to be attained but that require a number of conditions to enhance better exploitation and management of natural resources in southern countries.

The results of co-operation between northern and southern countries are somewhat negative, particularly with regard to the transfer of technology. The saying '*What is good for the USA is also good for the rest of the world*' has been used as a principle too often.

Transferred technology must first be tested and adapted to local conditions if it is to lead to effective tools in agricultural development. Indeed, it seems essential to develop both local knowledge and innovation capability in each country.

The southern countries are faced with many internal challenges. These include, for example, how to face problems resulting from population growth, from the degradation of soil and water resources. Agriculture and food security are major national preoccupations in these countries.

These negative trends can be reversed through substantial investment in the region's own human resources, in particular through the promotion of continuing education.

It is time for the southern countries to go ahead by relying above all on themselves. They must be driven by faultless determination to co-operate without inhibition within the framework of a new partnership.

