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# North-South cooperation a historic responsibility: India

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**NEW DELHI:** India has launched a vigorous defence of its overseas aid programme while arguing why the aid it was receiving from the North should not be reduced.

India faces the prospect of receiving lesser aid from the North — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced plans for cutting aid to India and the U.K. has already firmed up plans to do away with it by 2015.

Delivering the keynote address at a meet on South-South Cooperation, Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai argued that North-South cooperation was a historic responsibility while South-South cooperation was a voluntary partnership.

In the present global realities, it is “self-evident” that while South-South cooperation supplements North-South cooperation, it is not yet in a position to replace it

in any significant measure. The North-South engagement leads the aid process and should continue to do so. Mr. Mathai wanted developing countries to “resist” excessive emphasis being placed on South-South cooperation as a crucial pillar of the global development agenda.

“We should reinforce the argument that while South-South cooperation and the voluntary efforts of developing countries such as India would continue to play an important role, it would be a travesty to project them as the principal new component of a redefined Global Partnership for the new Agenda. South-South Cooperation has to be accompanied by a significant enhancement of North-South aid flows, not their diminution,” he observed.

The two day Conference is being organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries

(RIS) in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and the U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

As for India’s aid programme, Mr. Mathai pressed the point about India’s engagement being demand-driven and responding to the developmental priorities of its partner countries. “India does not attach conditionalities, does not prescribe policies and does not challenge national sovereignty,” he said

Through concessional Lines of Credit, one of the active components of the Indian development cooperation portfolio, over 150 lines of credit, totalling over dollars 9.5 billion, have been allocated for Africa and other developing countries to finance projects ranging from drinking water schemes to power plants to technology parks and railway infrastructure.