
Promoting International Peace and Security for Sustainable Development: Role of NAM



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The global economic and finance prospects for recovery continue to be challenging particularly for developing countries.

About six decades ago the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established under the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru from India, President Josip Broz Tito from Yugoslavia, President Sukarno from Indonesia, Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah from Ghana and President Gamal Abdel Nasser from Egypt, the five founding fathers of the Movement, along with twenty other visionary leaders of the global South.

They gathered in Belgrade in September 1961, a few years after the first ever Asia-Africa developing countries conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. Inspired by the Bandung principles of promoting mutual interest, solidarity and respect for national sovereignty, the NAM was born.

The first meeting of the Non-Aligned countries envisaged to exchange views on international problems with a view of contributing more effectively to world peace and security and peaceful cooperation among peoples. The objective stated in 1961 remains undeniably relevant today and continues to highlight the need for the existence of this Movement for the years to come

Over the past six decades, the Movement remained a valuable platform for dialogue and solidarity among countries of the developing world and most recently, economies in transition. NAM has managed to build upon its rich diversity, transforming the Movement to an exemplar instrument in unison. Together South is stronger, South is heard and South makes an impact.

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The numbers speak for themselves. NAM is today a unique Movement with 120 members. It represents two thirds of the UN membership. 10 other countries and 17 intergovernmental organizations are party to NAM today as Observers of the Movement. Several other developing countries participate in NAM Summits as guest countries such as what happened in the last NAM Summit successfully held in Isla Margarita in Venezuela last September 2016. The NAM is alive and active and has become a driving force in defence and in support of the strengthening of multilateralism and the United Nations.

As the World commemorates the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late Nelson Mandela of South Africa, it is pertinent to recall his vision for this Movement. In his welcoming inaugural speech to the NAM Summit in 1998 in Durban when South Africa became the NAM chair, after having just led his country out of the horrors of Apartheid, he said “the achievement of our (NAM) goals depends critically on the collective interests of the developing countries being effectively addressed”

NAM is a key vehicle to address the collective interests of the global South. Mandela also called upon NAM to defeat the hostile offensive which seeks to present this glorious Movement, representing billions of people, as a mere talk shop and anachronism in world politics. A few years later in 2003, Mandela’s successor, President Thabo Mbeki, said that “our resolutions must have greater meaning than the mere fact that we adopted them. Our Movement has to continue to exist and make its weight felt, not because it has managed to exist for a number of decades, but because it is relevant to the solution of the problems that confront all humanity

during the post-Cold War period”.
Institutionalisation of the Platform

The South Centre is the intergovernmental and multilateral policy research think tank of the developing countries. It was created by the “Spirit of Bandung and NAM”, and stands ready to continue working together with the Movement and its economic arm, the Group of 77 and China, in its endeavours for a better world.

Since its establishment in Geneva in 1995 and coming from the South Commission under the leadership of the late President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, South Centre has worked closely with NAM and the G77 and China and its member states in many areas such as economic, social, health, trade, development, environmental and climate issues, in order to defend our interests, to make a real contribution to the key challenges facing developing countries and to promote a more just and equitable

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international world order that could create an environment for development to the benefit of all peoples

Apart from acting as a platform for developing country delegations’ meetings on a day-to-day basis in Geneva and to some growing extent in New York and other multilateral forums to promote the debate and coordinate their positions in the various multilateral negotiating forums, the South Centre also gives important priority to monitor developments in international affairs and provide action-

oriented analysis and recommendations to the developing countries.

Challenges and Way Forward

The global economic and finance prospects for recovery continue to be challenging particularly for developing countries. Various reports and articles released in 2017 by the South Centre, many of which were carried also by international media, analysed the situation 20 years after the Asian crisis broke out and 10 years since the Lehman crisis that triggered the global crisis. The conclusion was that some of the key lessons have not been learnt. There is need to prepare for the next crisis that is impending.

Meanwhile, in line with the trend that started a couple of years ago, more developing countries have become more vulnerable to debt problems, with some more countries having to seek bailout loans from the IMF. The volatility of capital flows and currency levels has also continued, as several developing countries continued to experience net capital outflows to developed countries in 2017.

The uncertainties in the finance area are bound to affect the real economies of developing countries; the actual events that will unfold are of course still the subject of some speculation.

The South Centre had been following these developments closely in 2017 and has been warning developing countries about the impending crisis and the need to take crisis avoidance or mitigation actions as soon as possible.

In addition to continued global macroeconomic volatility, developing countries continue to face challenges to their development as a result of increasing climate change impacts on their countries and economies.

Global trade flows remain stagnant, and the potential for global trade wars has just recently dramatically increased, with clearly negative impacts for developing countries; technological advances in robotics, automation, telecommunications, manufacturing, transportation, energy, and other areas present both opportunities and challenges for developing countries.

Global health challenges are arising. The threat of health pandemics arising from fragile health systems and emerging challenges such as antimicrobial resistance, compounded by difficulties in access to affordable medicines in many developing countries arising from both cost and the impact of the patent system, is becoming more real.

Conflict situations in many developing countries continue to be major issues; and internal and cross-border movements of people arising from economic or environmental pressures or conflicts continue.

With this regard, South Centre announced its full support for the State of Palestine, the newest member having joined the South Centre last June 2017. South Centre joined voices to the longstanding support and call of NAM for a peaceful resolution of the cause of the Palestinian people.