

CIVIC BRICS urges BRICS to broaden Agenda to focus on Inclusive Development



Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Hon'ble Member of Parliament and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs delivering inaugural address at BRICS Civil Forum. Also seen in picture (from left to right) are Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS; Dr. Victoria Panova, Chief Advisor of National Committee on BRICS Research; Director, FEFU Oriental Institute, School of Regional and International Studies, Russia; Rev. Malcolm Damon, Executive Director, Economic Justice Network (EJN) of FOCCISA, South Africa; Amb. Shaym Saran, Chairman, RIS; Mr. Amar Sinha, Secretary (ER), MEA, GoI; Prof. Anuradha Chenoy, JNU and Chairperson, FIDC; Ms. Alice de Moraes Amorim Vogas, Climate Change and Development Associate, GIP; CEO, Associação Saúde Criança Responder, Brazil; Amb. Xie Bohua, Member of Executive Board, United Nations Association of China and Former Ambassador of China to the Republic of Vanuatu; and Amb. H.H.S. Viswanathan, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation.

New Delhi, 3 October 2016:

BRICS is an alternative forum standing up to the dominant communities shaping the world policies. BRICS countries with 3 trillion population represents about 40 per cent of World's population and contributes 20 per cent to the world GDP and are emerging as dominant forces. Today ignoring BRICS is ignoring turn of the history, said Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Hon'ble Member of Parliament and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, while inaugurating the BRICS Civil Forum here today.

The event, jointly organized by Ministry of External, Government of India, Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC), and Research and Information System for Developing Countries is an important track II event to the 8th BRICS Summit hosted by India during its Chairmanship later this month in Goa.

Dr. Tharoor highlighted the importance of the BRICS civil forum in shaping the global agenda and new world order. Issue of global justice and our exclusion from current world brings us together and we collectively demand legitimate position in the global order. The BRICS countries are making important contributions in economic growth as well as social justice, making us join the rule makers. The existing system should make room for us or collapse, he added. Speaking about the role of Civil society in BRICS Dr. Tharoor added that civil society has an important role of influencing the agenda of the summit by having a cohesive idea among them and conveying them to government. He added BRICS countries have already created the New Development Bank and there is further need to create knowledge hub among them as there is need of globalized connected networked world. He emphasized that BRICS countries have important role in creating future institutions. Civil society could help government in finding new innovative ways and in India we have realized this. Civil society has an advantage over government as they have flexibility to exercise where government fails to reach. He hoped that the deliberations of this important and timely event would feed into the agenda of the forthcoming BRICS summit.

Mr. Amar Sinha, Secretary (ER), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in his special remarks said that the deliberations would enrich the knowledge of the government. He also reiterated the point that BRICS is a forum of new ideas, shaping the global narratives. Government looks at civil society to show what BRICS can do in future. He also stated that India has invited BIMSTEC countries and want to know what they expect from BRICS countries in regard to new global agenda. If BRICS has to become more than idea, it has to reach to people and there could be no other way than civil society to go and work at the grass root levels.

Amb. Shayam Saran Chairman, RIS chairing the inaugural session said that BRICS countries are not super powers but they are shaping the world order. These countries will decide what will be the shape of new institutional order and this new order can't be decided until the action of the government are supported by the network amongst the people from different spheres of society. Government can do better if it reaches out to people through civil society.

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS in his remarks emphasized that from among the almost 100 pre-BRICS events held so far the Civil Forum seen has the largest presence from BRICS member countries and this has been possible due to the civil society engagement. He said that civil society has unique ability to get all actors together. He underlined that Russia was the first country to realize this during its presidency in Ufa. India finds value in this process of civil engagement and has decided to continue this process by organizing second BRICS civil forum. He also informed that in India, FIDC is the important instrument which has evolved in development cooperation framework. It is a tripartite initiative of the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, academia and civil society organizations.

Prof. Anuradha Chenoy of JNU and also chairperson, FIDC said that BRICS has opened various portals and BRICS multilateral model has capacity to change global governance. BRICS is opened to civil society and civil society extends its support to BRICS to dismantle supremacy of global powers, in humanitarian assistance, mutual benefit, multi-polar system, meeting of sustainable development goals, inclusive growth, pluralism and multiculturalism. She emphasized that the outcomes of this meeting will have repercussions on global civil society.

The inaugural session was also addressed by representatives from BRICS countries including: Ms. Alice de Moraes Amorim Vogas, Climate Change and Development Associate, GIP; CEO, Associação Saúde Criança Responder, Brazil; Dr. Victoria Panova, Chief Advisor of National Committee on BRICS Research; Director, FEFU Oriental Institute, School of Regional and International Studies, Russia; Amb. Xie Bohua, Member of Executive Board, United Nations Association of China and Former Ambassador of China to the Republic of Vanuatu; Rev. Malcolm Damon, Executive Director, Economic Justice Network (EJN) of FOCCISA, South Africa; and Amb. H.H.S. Viswanathan, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation.

The primary goal of the two-day long important meeting is to ensure a constructive dialogue between civil society and decision makers in the main social spheres of healthcare, food security, human security, poverty, etc as well as sustainable development, urbanisation, and financial issues.