



Background Note

Context

In current times, global fragmentation of alliances and institutional mandate is at a peak and it would be pertinent to engage on new consensus building efforts on philosophies of sustainable and equitable development and arrive at effective modalities of cooperation, despite significant challenges. Global South can lead the way and ensure policy spaces and enable countries of the Global South to take independent economic decisions for their economic growth and social cultural harmony.

An emerging modality of engagement being spearheaded by the Global South comprise of various models of Triangular Cooperation as a hybrid collaboration of the North and the South, strongly embedded on principles of ownership, horizontality and partnership that has the potential to emancipate countries from debilitating dependence and encourage them to expand capacities for sustainable future. The important issue of enhanced development cooperation, along with development financing has been articulated at multiple levels by member governments including from the Global South, G7 and others. The G20 during the Indian presidency in 2023 emphasized the need to enhance North-South, South-South and Triangular Cooperation (TrC) and the Brazilian G20 presidency in 2024 made trilateral cooperation one of its priorities.

This consensus on TrC is emerging from earlier experiences which have immensely helped in addressing SDGs, Agenda 2030 and development related specific challenges. It was with this perspective that the international community reaffirmed in 2019 at the BAPA+40 Conference its commitment for TrC. Its outcome recognises TrC as a complementary effort to South-South Cooperation (SSC), and its potential to provide a broader range of resources, expertise, and capacities.

The 70th anniversary of the historic Asian-African Conference organised in Bandung, Indonesia is being observed at a time of multiple crises where the world in general, and the Global South in particular needs to revisit the historical significance of this Conference which had paved the way for an enduring solidarity in the developing world.

While revisiting the Bandung Conference, it is appropriate to engage more deeply on the topics of the new development strategies along with discussions on renewed partnerships, including TrC, and amplified resource mobilisation. In an era when development cooperation is under stress, it is vital to showcase successful TrC case studies.

In the backdrop of above scenario, the two-day conference on Global South and TrC will encapsulate discussions on new development strategies, along with deliberations on the evolving norms and modalities of TrC. The conference will also see subject experts debating the issues of future Global South partnerships and the emergence and strengthening of Global South International Organisations (IOs) through sharing of development experiences.

Eminent policy makers, academics, representatives from think tanks and civil society members will lay the foundation for this two-day conference in the **Inaugural Session** by emphasizing that TrC has been recognised as a transformative approach that provides innovative and flexible solutions for rapidly changing development challenges. It is a well-accepted mechanism that incorporates the diversity of today's development stakeholders, including from the private sector, civil society, philanthropies, academia, and sub-national institutions. A cursory study of TrC projects demonstrates value addition, enables home-grown innovations in developing country pivots to test for scale and replication, and builds better trust among all stakeholders on account of participative decision making. This modality is also of key significance in taking forward the efforts for collective resource mobilisation through SDG Goal 17, where development finance related issues are explored at length.

Bandung and Beyond – Collective Will and Collective Action

The conference aims to bring in voices from the North and the South to deliberate the scope for a unified and a collective solutions' driven mandate to achieve sustainable development. The idea of partnerships has evolved since the Bandung conference with the evolving nature of TrC taking shape apart from the traditional model of foreign aid and SSC. Earlier partnerships were more among the governments but with new development stakeholders the private sector, civil society, philanthropy, academia and sub-national institutions are also getting engaged. The new formats are also overcoming the traditional format of viewing the developing countries as pivots for transferring technical and technological resources and good practices with the financial resources from the developed countries. The new arrangements are bringing them all together in a horizontal partnership to evolve the modalities of operations. It is being widely felt that resources, particularly after the COVID crisis, need to be brought back to the SDGs and climate change agenda. The collective will of realising sustainable development requires a collective action in which the TrC is slated to play a principal role. In this high-level panel, the speakers will discuss the historic Bandung Conference in the context of contemporary global development challenges.

This session is designed to:

- Revisit the principles of the Bandung Conference, which emphasized solidarity among the countries of the Global South in the post-colonial context.
- Reflect on how those ideals of economic cooperation and solidarity can guide collective responses to 21st Century global challenges.
- Encourage global collaborative approaches among governments, civil society, and international organisations for ensuring growth for all.

Special Session on Agriculture as Driver of Growth in the Global South in partnership with ICRISAT

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of livelihoods, employment, and food security across the Global South. The sector contributes significantly to GDP and employs a large share of the population, particularly women and youth. However, the potential of agriculture to drive sustained, inclusive growth is often underutilized due to structural challenges such as low productivity, climate vulnerability, land degradation, and limited access to finance and technology.

This session is designed to:

- Examine the transformation of agriculture into a high-value, technology-driven sector including the role of agri-tech, precision farming, and digital infrastructure.
- Revisit Cross-country knowledge sharing through South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and policy frameworks and institutional innovations supporting rural transformation

New Development Strategy and Scope for Partnerships

While development sensibilities are highly localized, the new development philosophy that cuts across all geographies and perhaps relevant for societies at various income level is centered on sustainable transformations based on principles of access, equity and inclusion – to deal with resource gaps, accommodate heterodox pathways and minimize inequalities. Climate change related dilemmas are of paramount significance as development objectives for a vast number of countries of the Global South remain work in progress in the face of bottlenecks to achieving the SDGs. The purported roadmap for net-zero and carbon neutrality is rather poorly conceived due to unequal burden of emissions and the necessity that carbon footprint remains under check as developing countries need space to legitimately grow in size of their GDPs. This calls for collective efforts towards sustainable consumption and production practices extending to lifestyle shifts, along with the involvement of community led development patterns. This also calls for ethically motivated financing and decision making across organisations, both international and national to address developmental gaps and generate solidarity and confidence among countries. Such values and norms of fairness and equity is fundamental to creating a sustainable future.

This session is designed to:

- Rethink development models which strike a balance between economic growth and climate change and use of technology as a force for good.
- Reflect on the expanding nature and scope of partnerships to bring in TrC, Public-Private Partnerships, and involvement of communities in the development debates.
- Encourage diverse modalities of mobilization of resources to realise the SDGs.

Norms and Modalities for Triangular Cooperation

TrC has been recognised as a transformative and flexible methods of development cooperation along with the traditional aid, and SSC. In plenary II, the subject experts will propound the evolving norms and modalities for TrC towards bringing in a better harmony between the provider, pivot, and partner countries. In order to strengthen the norms and modalities of TrC and development cooperation through ‘development compact’ coupled with the showcasing of successful case studies in subsequent sessions along with sectoral examples in this domain will further buttress the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the TrC on the ground. Specific actions are of importance in this regard that have gained prominence in recent years. Think-tank and civil society engagement with key organisations like the G20 have further elevated the cause. The ideas of strengthened local ownership, kinetic partnerships of all relevant actors, and the idea of good governance have brought in a fresh impetus to TrC.

Reforming the model of economic activity and entrepreneurship towards greater social and environmental accountability – and continuously expand the pace and space of social entrepreneurship development is of the essence. Social entrepreneurs may be effective in delivering products and services that are ethically and culturally embedded, based on regenerative principles and community ownership and for leveraging local skills and knowledge. Second, countries should reimagine the methodologies for measuring sustainable and inclusive development going beyond the narrow focus on economic prosperity. The expert community and key organisations are making good progress on instruments like “wellbeing index” and for early adoption of such methodologies towards comprehensive set of indicators and metrics across countries as per their needs and relevance.

This session is designed to:

- Encourage discussions around strengthened local ownership, kinetic partnerships of all relevant actors including communities, civil society and social entrepreneurs, towards evolution of norms and identifying relevant modalities.
- Reimagine the methodologies for measuring sustainable and inclusive development going beyond the narrow focus on economic prosperity.

LiFE and Sustainable Development Partnerships

A new development paradigm towards sustainable, equitable and low carbon pathways would require deep transformations as all societies, in the North and in the South, are poised to adopt sustainable consumption and production practices including circular economy, and carefully drive changes based on behavior shifts, community partnerships and social entrepreneurship. Partnerships would be further driven by ethical and value-based economic systems, technology development, and global governance; and measuring wellbeing going beyond GDP. India’s strive for Lifestyles for Environment (LiFE) which has also been recognized by the COP/UNFCCC and the G20 offers new opportunities of sustainable development partnerships for the Global South by leveraging Triangular Cooperation modalities.

This session is designed to:

- Elaborating how LiFE offers new pathways of mitigating and adapting to climate change; and for tackling rising inequalities within and among countries.
- Exploring how Triangular Cooperation can be promoted for adoption of LiFE inspired initiatives in the Global South

Successful Case Studies and Sectoral Specificities of Triangular Cooperation

Various countries of the Global North and the Global South have emphasized on exploring TrC as a new modality for inclusive and collective development. A characteristic of TrC approach is to leverage domestic development innovations and partnerships with development actors to scale up initiatives. The idea of relevant, cost-effective and time-tested development solutions has been extended through these TrC partnerships. The successful model of TrC is replete with positive case studies from across the Global South which have metamorphized the lived realities of peoples and communities. This session will showcase some of the positive case studies strengthening the value of mutual learnings in two parallel sessions namely, Action Lab I on Agriculture, Health, SMEs, Entrepreneurship and Action Lab II on Digital Solutions and Energy, Gender, Biodiversity and Disaster Management

This session is designed to:

- Reflect on the best practices emanating from various successful case studies from across the Triangular Cooperation.
- Envision best practices as guidelines and standard operating practices thereby bringing coherence between the relevant stakeholders.

Scope for New Partnership for Global South through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation

ITEC has been India's flagship capacity building and technical cooperation initiative instituted in 1964, thus celebrating the 60th Anniversary. Till date it has trained more 225,000 professionals hailing from 120 countries in more than 2500 courses. This session will delve into the scope for new partnership for the Global South in the realm of capacity building.

This session is designed to:

- Envisioning sector-specific training for the Global South leveraging AI and Big Data.
- Examining capacity gap to anchor the demographic dividend in the Global South.

Preparing for Future - Global South IOs and Triangular Cooperation

There need to reform existing formats of engagements for addressing climate challenges; constraints related to finance and even working out our responses for fundamental challenges,

like hunger and poverty. G7, G20, BRICS, IBSA and many such organizations would have to be viewed from the perspective of access and equity.

With rising global fragmentation of alliances and institutional mandate, it would be pertinent to explore how Global South ensures its leadership and relevance. There is need to reform existing formats of engagements for addressing climate challenges; constraints related to finance and even working out our responses for fundamental challenges, like hunger and poverty. G7, G20, BRICS, IBSA and many such organizations would have to be viewed from the perspective of access and equity.

Global governance hitherto led by major economic powers now has to be positioned to align with the aspirations and priorities of the Global South, where one may expect far more balancing act and potential to go beyond institutional rigidities and geographic limitations. The reform of the global governance framework that has long been withheld due to institutional inertia may now be driven by thematic priorities arising out of existential threats.

This has created a new momentum and partnerships around issues of meeting the SDGs, financing of development, climate resilience and adaptation, sustainable agriculture, global commons, public health and one-health, renewable energy transitions and disaster preparedness among others. Across various such subjects' individual countries are ill-prepared to face the consequences and take corrective measures even as technological disruptions are causing deep distress arising out of erosion of trust and transparency. Hence variable geometry of international partnerships on thematic priorities would set the norms for future engagements. In this regard, new institutional mechanisms via different modalities have come up in different regions of the Global South which have added to the operationalisation of development cooperation on the ground like DAKSHIN from India, AU-NEPAD in Africa, and SEGIB in the Ibero-American region. Establishment of such South based International Organisations within the TrC ecosystem may be harnessed as a strategic pathway to refocus efforts and reinvigorate progress on global public goods.

This session is designed to:

- Envisioning Global South IOs to provide development solutions relevant for the wider world.
- Reflect on coordination challenges in the era of fragmented multilateralism and to explore opportunities of how Southern led IOs may contribute more substantively.
- Encourage institutionalisation of the Southern and other knowledge systems through these IOs.

Engagement with NETRA for Development of North-East

North East Training, Research and Advocacy Foundation (NETRA) is a globally recognized research institute that act as catalyst for the transformation of North-east India. NETRA conducts high quality, independent and policy driven research, training and advocacy on relevant development issues and help promote all round development of North East India. RIS supports and closely collaborates with NETRA and its distinguished members on research, workshops and outreach. In this session, we propose to revisit on-going research activities of NETRA and present key findings for strengthening collaborations and partnerships. Engagement with participants of the conference would help in enriching the research agenda and consolidate the future course of action.