

# Voice of Global South Summit

---

**Amit Arora\***

India hosted the Voice of Global South Summit on 12-13 January 2023. The summit was one of the biggest virtual gathering of leaders and Ministers from the Global South. The deliberations had participation of more than 125 countries.

Through this conference, India assessed the developmental priorities of developing countries which are not represented in the present G20 forum. The primary aim was to understand what the Global South expected India to accomplish through its current Presidency. The main idea behind the conference was to keep developing countries involved in the G20 initiative.

Twenty-nine nations from Latin America & the Caribbean, forty-seven from Africa, seven from Europe, thirty-one from Asia and eleven nations from Oceania took part in the deliberation.

The summit hosted ten sessions held on 12-13 January 2023. Both the inaugural and closing sessions were at the Head of State, hosted by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The theme of the inaugural session was "Voice of Global South – for Human-Centric Development" and that of closing session was "Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose".

Eight ministerial level thematic sessions had the following themes:

- Finance Ministers' Session on: Financing People-Centric Development
- Environment Ministers' Session on: Balancing Growth with Environment-Friendly Lifestyles (LiFE)
- Foreign Ministers' Session on: Priorities of the Global South – Ensuring a Conducive Environment
- Energy Ministers' Session on: Energy Security and Development- Roadmap to Prosperity
- Health Ministers' Session on: Cooperation to Build Resilient Healthcare Systems
- Education Ministers' Session on: Human Resource Development and Capacity Building

---

\* GDC Manager, Global Development Centre at RIS

- Commerce and Trade Ministers' Session on: Developing Synergies in the Global South – Trade, Technology, Tourism and Resources
- Foreign Ministers' Session on: G20: Suggestions for India's Presidency

The discussions helped in deliberating upon the priorities of the Global South. In the opening remarks, the Prime Minister of India emphasized on the need for providing space to the voices of Global South and democratization of the established global governance institutions based on the evolving world order. He reiterated that countries of Global South are looking for globalization which brings prosperity and well-being to humanity. Prime Minister reassured the participants that views and aspirations of Global South would be raised appropriately during the current G20 Presidency of India.

PM further reiterated India's position of helping the countries of the South by sharing its developmental experience. He pitched for a greater role of developing countries in shaping humanity's common future with global agenda of *Respond, Recognize, Respect* and *Reform*: The focus should be on human-centric development, which should be equitable for all geographies. In this report there is need to: respond to the priorities of the Global South by framing an inclusive and balanced international agenda; recognize that the principle of 'Common but Differentiated Responsibilities' applies to all global challenges; respect sovereignty of all nations, rule of law and peaceful resolution of differences and disputes; and reform international institutions, including the United Nations, to make them more relevant.

President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique laid emphasis on having dedicated efforts to bring global attention on promoting developing world's interests. Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari brought to the fore the issue of huge debt burden that many nations are facing. This had derailed their respective development plans. The other leaders also underlined that countries of Global South should present "a common agenda" to highlight "our collective demands to the Global North".

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on Bangladesh, showcased a bouquet of six proposals; maintaining world peace and stability; creating a new paradigm to tackle inequality holistically in accord with SDGs; special financing for the most vulnerable nations; bridging digital divides; ensuring that all human beings, including Myanmar's Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh, have an equal right to lead a decent life; and strengthening South-South and tripartite cooperation to ensure global human development.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced five new proposals during the conference:

- *Arogya Maitri* (Wellness Friendship) – Under the project, India would offer necessary medical supplies to countries of the developing world impacted by natural disasters or humanitarian crises.
- Global South Centre of Excellence – Realising that there is a scope of learning for the Global South from each other's development experiences, India would establish the CoE. The CoE would carry out research work on development

solutions or best-practices of southern countries, which can be scaled up and adopted by other countries from Global South.

- Global South Science and Technology Initiative – India has achieved substantial success in the field of space technology and nuclear energy. Under the initiative, India would share its expertise with other developing countries.
- Global South Young Diplomats Forum – The forum would help young officers of respective foreign ministries connect amongst each other.
- Global South Scholarships – India would provide scholarships to students of developing countries to pursue higher education in India.

The discussions had some definite results, with the following broad agreement:

- South-South Cooperation is important and there is an urgent need of formalizing global agenda jointly.
- There would be special focus on traditional medicine, with impetus to creating regional centres for healthcare. Emphasis will be given to deployment of digital health solutions.
- Emphasis should be on use of technology for distance education and sharing of best practices in professional training so that all stakeholders can be benefitted.
- There should be greater emphasis on deployment of digital public goods in developing countries to increase financial inclusion.
- Further focus should be on investing in connectivity infrastructure.
- It is strongly felt that developed world has not met its commitment on climate finance and technology.
- Sustainability calls for the significant management of emissions in production and shedding away ‘use and throw consumption’, with focus on environment and sustainable styles.

Over the years, India has given voice to the aspirations of the Global South. The main aim of this digital conference was to understand in detail the needs of the southern countries at the micro level. It also attempted to gauge the innovative ideas and suggestions of the top leadership from different countries.