

Global South Matters



DAKSHIN Weekly Newsletter (25 Oct -31Oct, 2024)

Public Lecture by Professor Winston Dookeran



Professor Winston Dookeran, current Secretary-General of EUCLID (Euclid University), visited DAKSHIN at RIS to deliver a lecture on the subject “Some Global Issues for Caribbean Development and Diplomacy”. He previously served as Central Bank Governor, Minister of Finance and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago. The lecture was also attended by the delegates from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, His Excellency Dr Roger Gopaul, the High Commissioner of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) to the Republic of India, and researchers and faculty of RIS, along with the DAKSHIN team. The eminent scholar is a recipient of Trinidad & Tobago's highest honour, the Order of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago in Economics in 2015, and India's prestigious overseas award, the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman (PBSA) for meritorious achievements in public service in 2017.

Prof Dookeran began his lecture by emphasising on the Gandhian bond between India and T&T. He critically examined the impact of globalisation on the Caribbean, highlighting key challenges related to development, sustainability, and diplomacy. He asserted that “looting at CARICOM (Caribbean Community) is an expression of globalisation”. A critical part of Prof. Dookeran’s lecture focused on the theme of globalisation and its effects on the Caribbean. The Caribbean is shaped by inhabitants who came from various parts of the world, including India, Africa, Asia,

Spain, Portugal, and the Middle East. He noted that much of the modern Caribbean history has been shaped by iconic figures such as Brian Lara, the world-renowned cricketer, and V.S. Naipaul, the Nobel Prize-winning author.

Prof. Dookeran noted that the Caribbean remains trapped in a "middle-income development trap." The region has struggled to move beyond certain economic thresholds, in part due to its colonial legacies, which continue to hinder growth and sustainable development. He stressed that overcoming these obstacles will require international support and a rethinking of the current global development framework. He remarked that environmental fragility is rising in the Caribbean, which also faces challenges of sovereign debt while pursuing climate action and sustainable development. He underscored that the Caribbean is actively finding solutions to climate actions, sovereign debt and growth. The Caribbean remains trapped in a middle-income development trap and the region has struggled to move beyond certain economic thresholds, in part due to its colonial legacies, which continue to hinder growth and sustainable development.

Prof. Dookeran stressed that overcoming these obstacles will require international support and a rethinking of the current global development framework. He proposed a social compact between finance & security that is undermining global prosperity. He highlighted the issue in terms of connectivity through the oceans and issues of global tax justice. He highlighted the need for a reboot of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and suggested a rotating seat in UNSC for small and developing nations to ease access and eligibility of funding. He pointed out that funding through IFIs has not led to meaningful development in the region.

Furthermore, Prof. Dookeran underscored the need for a "one world information space" where national and international spaces can cooperate more effectively. This would require a new model of global cooperation to bridge the gaps between local development needs and global governance structures. He also advocated for examining the changing role of the State in development, particularly in the context of globalisation. He highlighted that the Caribbean diplomacy is at a standstill and a social compact is the only geopolitical option for small countries in the Global South. Another important theme in the lecture was the historical and cultural relationship between India and the Caribbean. He emphasised that Indian ethos, particularly the philosophy of *Advaita* (non-dualism), is based on collectivism, which resonates with the collective cultural identity of the Caribbean. However, he urged India and the Caribbean not to focus solely on the cultural, diaspora, and identity issues but also on broader themes such as sustainability, infrastructure development, and reforming IFIs. He also expressed the need to bring in the concept of Converging Caribbean into the development debate.

His Excellency Dr Roger Gopaul stressed the importance of the "Easternisation of Western civilisation" in his remarks, emphasising the growing influence of Eastern philosophies and practices on the West. He noted the historic significance of four Caribbean Prime Ministers visiting India, underscoring the deepening ties between the two regions. For collaborations between T&T and India, he highlighted areas like digital transformation and T&T's participation in the Indian Solar Alliance. He concluded by quoting a verse from the Upanishads: "To the wise, the world is one family," symbolising the unity and interconnectedness of all nations. Thanking Prof. Dookeran, Prof Sachin Chaturvedi, DG - RIS, emphasised the concept of the "Social Compact" as a vital tool for addressing issues of connectivity and tax injustice, advocating for the creation of a local framework to solve such problems. He also highlighted the importance of applying an access

and inclusivity lens to international financial institutions (IFIs). Drawing from Gandhi's ideas of trusteeship, he pointed out the "5 Facets of Life," stressing their relevance in contemporary development. The idea of a social stock exchange was also discussed.