SIDS, Vulnerability and Climate Change: Looking through the Lens of South-South Cooperation Practices

Dinoj K Upadhyay[*]

Shweta Shaju[**]

"Implications would be higher than expected, if the international community does not evolve greater policy synergy for implementing ambitious actions aiming to limit global average warming to 1.5°C."

Introduction

Amid the uncertainty and socio-economic and health challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the threats of climate change have further increased. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report[1] issued explicit warning of 'rapid', 'widespread' and 'intensifying' climate change, and implications for society and economy. (IPCC, 2021).

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are a group of nations recognised by their sensitivity to economic and environmental shocks. (MacFeely *et al*., 2021) Scattered across three geographical regions - the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea (AIS), SIDS form a heterogeneous group of nations and territories in terms of population, natural resources, development progress and income, among others; however, these island nations face '*unique social, economic and environmental challenge*' (UN, n.d.).

While three-fifths nations of SIDS nations belong to the category of upper middle-income countries, they are among the most vulnerable developing countries. Compared to larger upper middle-income countries, SIDS in this same income group

*Consultant, RIS. ** Research Assistant, RIS.
Views expressed are personal.

are 73 per cent more vulnerable (OECD, 2018). These island nations are highly exposed to climate change induced threats and they have considerably limited coping capabilities in terms of limited land, financial resources, services delivery and climate resilient infrastructure. Despite their existential threat and increased urgency, the outcome of global negotiations could not adequately address the concerns of these countries. Considering the high potential impact of climate hazards, and rise in global temperature beyond 1.5°C can potentially pose existential risks to these nations.

In this context, the paper analyses the vulnerability of SIDS to further aggravating threats of climate change, and how global negotiations unfold in addressing these challenges. Finally, the paper discusses the relevance of South-South Cooperation (SSC) practices in dealing with challenges of climate change as well as facilitating sustainable development in the SIDS.

Impact of Climate Change on Socio-economic Development in SIDS

The SIDS' economy is sensitive to changing climate and extreme weather conditions. Crucial sectors such as tourism, fisheries and agriculture, which are mainstays of livelihood opportunities and determinants of growth, are closely linked to climate change and highly dependent on conducive environment as well. SIDS face numerous existing challenges ranging from over dependence on one sector - primarily on tourism, higher transportation costs, outward migration, unemployment, low scale economic activities, declining marine resources coupled with ocean acidification, among others; these challenges would further escalate due to changing weather pattern. Some island nations such as Haiti, Guyana, Saint Lucia, Cabo Verde, etc account for unemployment rates more than 15 per cent with St. Vincent & Grenadines at 21.6 per cent (World Bank Data Bank). Services exports contribute on average 25 per cent to SIDS' GDP and almost half of their services exports consist of travel services (UNCTAD, 2021). On average, the tourism sector accounts for almost 30 per cent of the GDP. It is much higher in countries such as Maldives, Seychelles, St. Kitts and Nevis and Grenada with over 50 per cent of the GDP. Therefore, direct and indirect contributions of tourism to GDP and foreign revenues are as high as 72 per cent in Maldives (UNCTAD, 2020).

Climate change would also pave way for the issues of submergence, threat to agro-economic activities leading to food insecurity, natural disasters, etc. The increasing frequency of climate change induced disasters would have severe implications for adaptive capacity and socio-economic stability in these nations. OECD (2018) notes that SIDS suffer the largest relative loss from the natural disasters due to their limited capacity to respond. Annual damages experienced by SIDS during 1990-2022 is estimated to be USD 2.13 billion. (Kumar, 2022 in section SSC statistics) The SIDS are the least responsible for climate change, however they are among the most vulnerable to its impact. They are dependent on others for significant action to be taken to tackle climate change at an international level.

SIDS and V20 - A Comparative Analysis

Several indices have been in place tracking the development, vulnerability aspects of countries across the globe such as the Global Climate Risk Index[2], Human Development Index (HDI), among others. The Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) is a global alliance of countries that are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change. During the Climate Vulnerable Forum in 2015 in Lima, Peru, the official bloc of the forum - 'V20' or 'Vulnerable Twenty' was launched, which consisted of the top 20 nations from around the world that are most vulnerable by the climate-change related disasters. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Kiribati, Madagascar, Maldives, Nepal, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Tanzania, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Vietnam were the countries that made up the bloc. During the 2nd V20 Ministerial Dialogue in April 2016 in Washington, DC, the V20 recognised 23 new CVF members as incoming members in the V20 initiative. Currently, the V20 bloc consists of 48 countries, including 16 from SIDS, that are all diversely affected by climate change issues such as superstorms, storm surges, droughts, famines caused by climate factors, food shortages as a result of climate change, power outages, flash floods, mud slides, desertification, heatwaves, and other effects of climate change.

Table 1 shows the disparity in classification of vulnerable countries in V20 and SIDS grouping. SIDS is the most affected by the effects of climate change, however 42 island nations do not form a part of V20. The group of SIDS consists of island nations, whereas V20 is a heterogenous group of islands, mountainous regions and countries with coastal regions. Table 2 describes the share of SIDS and V20 in the world population, land share and EEZ. The share of population and land is significantly higher for the V20 grouping,

Table 1: Common Member Countries in SIDS and V20 grouping

V20 \ SIDS	Member	Non-Member
Member	16	32
Non-Member	42	X

Source: Author's calculation

Table 2: Comparative Statistics

	World Pop Share	World Land Share	World EEZ Share	EEZ/Land Area
SIDS	0.93%	0.92%	25.19%	29.47
V20	14.58%	11.00%	14.88%	1.45

Source: Author's calculation using United Nations Population Division estimates & Vivid Maps.

whereas the share of EEZ and EEZ/ land area is high for SIDS. The group of islands constitute less than 1 per cent of the world population, however, on average, the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is 29 times the SIDS countries' land mass. Thus, the majority of the natural resources in the SIDS come from the ocean. The difference between these two groups lies mostly in terms of the share of EEZ, which is remarkably high for SIDS compared to V20.

Going further, the paper concentrates on SIDS countries alone.

Time for Action

There is urgency amid uncertainty induced by multiple crises for the SIDS. Implications would be higher than expected, if the international community does not evolve greater policy synergy for implementing ambitious actions aiming to limit global average warming to 1.5°C. It is also a fact that these nations are suffering from consequence of actions by industrialized nations. Although SIDS' vulnerability is recognized by the international community, they lack the political clout in global politics to define climate agenda and influence the outcome. It is crucial to support SIDS' national efforts in the course of adaptation and mitigation as well as in the process of socio-economic development at grassroots level. Development financing, technology, information and knowledge sharing, etc. for economic diversification, climate resilient infrastructure, renewable energy, fresh water, capacity building, public health and so on would be essential in ushering a sustainable future for them.

Multiple topical issues, viz. climate fair share, climate ambition, climate finance, damage & loss leverage, and carbon market, are significant in handling the climate change. SIDS do not have the *luxury of time* like others because of their small share in world GDP on one hand and large share in terms of losses on the other hand (Meddeb, 2020).

Since the onset of industrial revolution, more and more fossil fuels are burnt and which has caused earth's temperature to rise considerably. High income group countries became prosperous through the untrammelled burning of fossil fuels and therefore it becomes their responsibility to contribute more towards reduction commitment, helping developing countries to achieve their target and in advancing and financing climate agreeable innovation. However, it is being evident that the countries' national mitigation contributions are deficient to achieve the 2015 Paris Agreement objective of limiting global warming to 'well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels' and in this manner unequipped for deflecting calamitous outcomes of environmental change (Höhne *et al*., 2017, 2020; IPCC, 2018b; Rogelj *et al*., 2016; UNEP, 2019, 2020; UNFCCC, 2016).

The share of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of SIDS is approximately 0.76 per cent of global emissions (Ge *et al*., 2020).[3] SIDS, as a whole, contribute less than 1 per cent to greenhouse gas emissions, however they are the most affected by such emissions and global warming, in general. Island and low-lying countries were among the first to grapple with global warming

nearly 30 years ago, as they began to experience its alarming impacts first hand. However, since they are small, developing economies, they do not seem to have efficient resources to defend against these impacts. Their ambition of meeting net zero emissions is dependent on other nations.

Since the countries' contribution to climate change and the capacity to prevent and cope with its consequences is varied, it is imperative that some countries contribute more than others. This has been identified globally and thus the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement call for financial assistance from Parties with more financial assistance to those that are less endowed and more vulnerable. To avert dangers of climate change, mitigation and adaptation measures are equally important. Mitigation efforts are required in terms of large-scale investments needed to significantly reduce emissions. Since the effects of climate change are varied and especially magnified in case of SIDS, significant financial resources are needed to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of a changing climate and therefore, climate finance is needed for adaptation.

At the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Denmark (Copenhagen Accord), developed countries committed to a goal of jointly mobilising USD 100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries in areas of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation. However, this goal was not reached (UNFCCC 2009, paragraph 8). The delivery of the said commitment by developed countries was supposed to set the tone for deliberations on future collective climate action goal, from a floor of USD 100 billion, which was decided in Paris Agreement 2015 to be agreed upon before 2025 (UNFCCC 2015, paragraph 53).

Role of South-South Cooperation

Climate urgency has renewed the urge for enhancing development cooperation and deepening of policy synergies further. SSC on climate change has gained momentum. Particularly, SSC with SIDS in areas of socio-economic development, infrastructure development, capacity building, including renewable energy, infrastructure, disaster risk reduction, agriculture, fisheries, among others have been nurtured and gradually expanded.

In the past few decades, SSC has expanded its scope and taken on new forms: facilitating regional, sub-regional and interregional integration, providing innovative approaches to collective actions and strengthening its contribution to sustainable development. In this context, the SSC Action Plan has been adopted by UN principals as a substantive pillar to support the implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's Climate Change Engagement Strategy in November 2017. The Action Plan aims to support and promote SSC and Triangular Cooperation on climate change by making use of existing network and capacity of the United Nations.

The Action Plan has four key pillars which talk about the wider political

interactions at the high level in the sideline of COP. It aims to take stock of progress of climate change plans. It also aims to have a Southern perspective of climate change action plan, organizing work, academic interactions and publications of Southern Climate Solution Series to support developing countries on developing knowledge to address climate change.

In coping with the effects of climate change on SIDS, it is worthwhile to learn from the experiences of the South, particularly SIDS. UNDP (2021) describes innovative ways in which different models of international cooperation can support SIDS to overcome shared challenges and showcases some effective SSC practices. The solutions are founded upon the critical role of SSC, which is a proven and trusted platform to share and implement solutions.

For instance, Cuba has a National Climate Change Plan called Life Task that aims to boost resilience and promote the use of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable development. Since Caribbean countries are exposed to similar environmental risks, learning from Cuban knowledge could help to facilitate cooperation between the Caribbean Island countries of Dominican Republic and Haiti. The World Food Programme (WFP) began collaborating with these Caribbean Island nations within the framework of SSC with the goal of developing disaster risk reduction capacities. Various Workshops, field visits, and deputations of experts on disaster risk management, among other things, were undertaken to identify shortcomings in each country's disaster risk management. With the help of the WFP, the countries established a set of actions to be undertaken through SSC in order to allow peer learning on disaster risk reduction in the Caribbean to continue.

Building on the model learned in Cuba, the National Meteorological Centre of Haiti implemented a numerical model that permits forecasting of possible hurricane trajectories within 48-72 hours. At the community level, Haitian employees were trained to handle hazard, vulnerability, and risk assessments. Using the experience of Cuba's Civil Defense, the Haitian government devised a countrywide hurricane contingency plan. As a result of Cuba's technical cooperation in forecasting floods caused by heavy rains, many missions of Cuban technicians were sent to the Dominican Republic to teach meteorological counterparts on how to use numerical models established by the Cuban Institute of Meteorology. These techniques have proved beneficial in strengthening the Dominican meteorological system's technical ability to predict the impact of extreme winds and heavy rainfall.

The Aviation Needs Analysis in Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) is another example of cooperation. With a combined population of 10 million people spread across an area covering 15 per cent of the Earth's surface, the PSIDS are among the world's smallest and most distant countries. Remoteness, vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters, an excessive reliance on foreign trade, fragile environments, and limited resources are some of the distinct challenges faced by them.

Civil aviation is critical for PSIDS, particularly in terms of connectivity, socio-economic development, and disaster relief. Recognizing the issues of air connectivity faced by PSIDS, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) proposed a study to identify and solve the existing challenges and demands of PSIDS in terms of aviation safety, air navigation, and aviation security during its 39th Assembly. The PSIDS Study was made possible by substantial financial and in-kind donations from Australia, Chile, China, Fiji, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, in addition to the resources supplied by ICAO.

Based on the information gathered and the analyses performed within the study's time and resource constraints, a total of 30 recommendations have been formulated to be taken forward by the PSIDS, PIF and ICAO. Some of the ICAO recommendations try to persuade aid donors, training institutions, and multilateral development banks to do more to promote PSIDS. The recommendations advocate for a holistic approach to the development and implementation of a Pacific aviation road map to ensure the region's aviation regulatory systems is effective, sustainable, and resilient.

IBSA Fund is yet another form of successful SSC in SIDS. Some projects in areas of sustainable development, livelihood, conservation agriculture, permaculture and sustainable fisheries management, have been undertaken and implemented in SIDS under the IBSA Fund. These projects have also contributed in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 'Empowering Rural Women: Scaling Up the Rocket Stove Project' in Fiji, for example, helped to improve the lives and health of women in rural regions by introducing a novel cooking method based on rocket stoves. According to the IBSA Fund Annual Report 2019, 1,350 women have been trained in the manufacture and use of energy-efficient, enhanced rocket stoves, which help to reduce the use of fossil fuels and deforestation for firewood (UNOSSC, 2020).

In Kiribati, the IBSA Fund implemented a project "Enhancing Inclusive Sustainable Economic Development via Coconut-sector Development." For the period of January 2018 to June 2020, the project had a budget of USD 315,000. The project's overall purpose is to help smallholder farmers generate revenue and improve their livelihoods by producing value-added coconut products, all while contributing to inclusive, long-term economic growth as envisioned in the national development strategy. Timor-Leste has been awarded a USD 1,428,772 grant for a project "Conservation Agriculture, Permaculture, and Sustainable Fisheries Management". The adoption of sustainable production techniques, as well as the intensification and diversification of smallholder farming and fishing systems, were supported through this project.

IBSA has provided assistance to Haiti and Saint Lucia in the areas of solid waste management and irrigated agriculture. Successful efforts in these countries piqued the SIDS' interest in collaborating. Tonga and Kiribati, for example, have expressed interest in having Fijian women trainers visit their nations to

help women in the production of better rocket stoves. At this time, the exchange is confined to knowledge sharing.

Several partnerships have been developed by India for facilitating sustainable development at the bilateral as well as regional level. India and PICs have cooperated in building infrastructure, and policy synergies at the global and regional level. India and PICs leaders met at the sidelines of UN General Assembly. In recent context, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced new grants to the India-UN Development Partnership Fund during meetings with leaders of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and PSIDS alongside the United Nations General Assembly in September, 2019. USD 14 million will be given to projects in the Caribbean and USD 12 million US to projects in the Pacific. The India-UN Development Partnership Fund supports Southern-owned and led, demand-driven, and transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and SIDS. The Fund is managed by UNOSSC, and United Nations agencies implement Fund projects in close collaboration with partnering governments.

A Commonwealth Window has also been established within this Fund, representing USD 50 million over a period of five years. Established in June 2017, the Fund has already enabled 44 development projects in 44 countries across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Projects cover a range of SDG thematic areas including climate resilience, environmental sustainability, gender equality, renewable energy, improving women's and maternal health, water and sanitation, education, employment and livelihoods, disaster recovery and risk management, agricultural development and infrastructure.

The role of SSC, now, is more crucial than ever before in assisting SIDS in not just recovering from the pandemic, but also in making greater and faster progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Conclusion

Considering the growing threats of climate change and vulnerability of the SIDS, it is crucial to take effective measures. However, the outcome of COP26 does not live upto the expectation. It appears that developed nations are not keen on sharing more burden for providing additional resources for loss and damage. Greater cooperation is expected from the relatively developed nations in mobilizing sufficient financial resources for effectively dealing with severe impacts of climate change; however, they have not fulfilled their commitments. At the same time, it is observed that cooperation in broader ecosystem of SSC has been increasing. The principles and modalities of SSC are more people-centric and without conditionality. The South has already made considerable efforts facilitating sustainable development partnership. India is an important development partner of SIDS both at the bilateral as well as multilateral level. India has voiced their concerns at various multilateral forums, and has taken initiatives for promoting renewable energy, training and capacity building for sustainable

practices at the grassroots level. It also strives for triangular cooperation for building "resilient, sustainable, and inclusive infrastructure"(CDRI, n.d.).[4] Indian CSOs and private sector are also engaged in the widening and deepening of the development partnership of India and SIDS.

Endnotes

1. Working Group I contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report released in August 2021
2. Global Climate Risk Index is published annually by the international environmental think tank 'Germanwatch'. The Index analyses the extent to which countries and regions have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heat waves etc.). The impact is calculated in terms of fatalities and economic losses, both.
3. As of 2018, SIDS contribute 374 metric tonnes of GHG emissions out of world total of 48.9 gigatonnes.
4. Launch of 'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States' (IRIS) at COP26, CDRI

References

CDRI. (n.d.). Launch Of 'Infrastructure For Resilient Island States' (IRIS) at COP26. [Press Release] *Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).* Retrieved from https://www.cdri.world/press-releases/launch-infrastructure-resilient-island-states-iris-cop26

Ge, M., Friedrich, J. & Vigna, L. (2020). 4 Charts Explain Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Countries and Sectors. *World Resources Institute (WRI)*. Retrieved from https://www.wri.org/insights/4-charts-explain-greenhouse-gas-emissions-countries-and-sectors

Höhne, N., den Elzen, M., Rogelj, J., Metz, B., Fransen, T., Kuramochi, T., Olhoff, A., Alcamo, J., Winkler, H., Fu, S., Schaeffer, M., Schaeffer, R., Peters, G. P., Maxwell, S., & Dubash, N. K. (2020). *Emissions: World has four times the work or one-third of the time*. Nature, 579 (7797), 25-28. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-00571-x

Höhne, N., Kuramochi, T., Warnecke, C., Röser, F., Fekete, H., Hagemann, M., Day, T., Tewari, R., Kurdziel, M., Sterl, S., & Gonzales, S. (2017). The Paris Agreement: Resolving the inconsistency between global goals and national contributions. *Climate Policy*, 17(1), 16-32. https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2016.1218320

IFRC. (2020). 2020 Annual Report. *The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*. Available at https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/20210902_AnnualReport_ONLINE.pdf

IMF. (2021).World Economic Outlook- FAQ. *International Monetary Fund (IMF)*. Retrieved from https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/faq.htm#q4b

IPCC. (2021). Working Group I contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report. *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).*

IPCC. (2018b). *Summary for policymakers*. In V. Masson-Delmotte, *et al*. (Eds.), Global warming of 1.5°C Summary for policy makers. (p.33). Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Retrieved from http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/

MacFeely, S., Peltola, A., Barnat, N., Hoffmeister, D., & Hopp, D. (2021). Constructing a Criteria-Based Classification for Small Developing States: An Investigation. *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).*

Meddeb, R. (2020). Small island developing states do not have the luxury of time. *UNDP Blog.* Retrieved from https://www.undp.org/blog/small-island-developing-states-do-not-have-luxury-time

Rogelj, J., Elzen, M., Höhne, N., Fransen, T., Fekete, H., Winkler, H., Schaeffer, R., Sha, F., Riahi, K., &Meinshausen, M. (2016). *Paris Agreement climate proposals need a boost to keep warming well below 2 °C.* Nature, 534(7609), 631-639. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature18307

OECD. (2018). Making Development Cooperation Work for Small Island Developing States. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).*Retrieved from http://library.lol/main/802047F24CA8D29D4B0D8604D56D74D2

UN. (n.d.). About Small Island Developing States. *United Nations (UN).* Retrieved from

https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/about-small-island-developing-states

UNCTAD. (2021). Small Island Developing States Face Uphill Battle in COVID-19 Recovery. *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).* Retrieved from https://unctad.org/news/small-island-developing-states-face-uphill-battle-covid-19-recovery(Accessed 1 October 2021)

UNCTAD. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism in Small Island Developing States.*United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)*.Retrieved fromhttps://unctad.org/news/impact-covid-19-tourism-small-island-developing-states,

UNDP. (2021). Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development in SIDS. *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).* Retrieved from https://www.unsouthsouth.org/2021/07/07/good-practices-in-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-for-sustainable-development-in-sid-advancing-samoa-pathway-and-achieving-sustainable-recovery/

UNDP-HDR. (n.d.). Data Centre: Human Development Index (HDI). *United Nations Development Programme-Human Development Report (UNDP-HDR).* Retrieved from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi

UNEP. (2019). *Emissions gap report 2019*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). https://doi.org/10.18356/ff6d1a84-en

UNEP. (2020). *Emissions gap report 2020*. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). https://doi.org/978-92-807-3812-4

UNFCCC. (2009). *COP Decision 2/CP.15: Copenhagen Accord*. Bonn, Germany: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change(UNFCCC). Available at https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2009/cop15/eng/11a01.pdf#page=4.

UNFCCC. (2015). *COP Decision 1/CP.21: Adoption of the Paris Agreement*. Bonn, Germany: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change(UNFCCC). Available at https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/ eng/10a01.pdf#page=2.

UNFCCC. (2016). *Aggregate effect of the intended nationally determined contributions: an update - Synthesis report by the Secretariat*. Marrakech, Morocco: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change(UNFCCC). Available at http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/cop22/eng/02.pdf

UNOSSC. (2020). IBSA Fund Annual Report 2019: India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation. *United Nation Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).*

World Bank. (2019). *New country classifications by income level: 2019-2020.* Retrieved from https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2019-2020

16TH INDIA-US DEFENCE POLICY GROUP MEETING

Regional matters of mutual concern were discussed, including about South Asia and the Indian Ocean Region ahead of the India-US 2+2 ministerial dialogue. Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar led the Indian delegation, while Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl led the American group at the 16th India-US Defence Policy Group.

Ways to improve collaboration with like-minded allies in order to keep the Indo-Pacific free and open was deliberated upon. Officials said that the meeting advanced an ambitious set of bilateral priorities, including information-sharing, high-end maritime cooperation, logistics, and defence trade, reflecting India and the United States' growing defence ties.

Source: SNS. (2021, October 09). India, US discuss situation in South Asia, cooperation in Indo-Pacific. *The Statesman*. Retrieved from https://www.thestatesman.com/india/india-us-discuss-situation-south-asia-cooperation-indo-pacific-1503016539.htm