

Editorial

We feel happy to present the joint issue (3 & 4) of volume 7 of Development Cooperation Review (DCR).

The global perspectives on development and the consequent means to achieve them for billions of people across the globe are facing geo-political and technological contestations. Wars and conflicts are evident in several locations. The spread of artificial intelligence (AI) to facilitate automation of routine productive works is also being felt. These concerns get further elaborated as we wonder about the role that we are required to play in maintaining a co-habitable existence of people and the planet. The observed gender inequality is also a matter of grave concern in taking care of the contestations mentioned. The growing inequality, increasing debt profiles of countries in need of further resources to move forward, and the expanding technological divide among countries point to the necessity of thinking about people-planet interaction in new ways that would reduce conflicts, inequalities and spread the benefits of development beyond the confines of history and geography.

The present issue is a compendium of contributions that touch upon these concerns in contextualised perspectives. The first article by Ansoumane Sacko and Mariama Cire Diallio, titled “How can Environmental and Ecological Perspectives be Highlighted in Developmental Programmes” emphasises on the importance of balanced people-planet interactions in view of the fact that it is important to consider natural capital as an asset integrated into the economic choices of development. The authors proposed a road map in the African context to provide important reflections on the interdependence of people – health, livelihoods and wellbeing – and natural capital and call for a green and fair economic recovery. The opportunities can be realised through a participatory engagement of communities in decision making. This approach can be further strengthened through empowering women and younger generations.

The next article by Kiari Liman-Tinguiri and Zacharie Liman-Tinguiri –“Reforming the Financing of Multilateral Development Aid in the Sahel: Towards a More Targeted and Effective Approach” expresses concerns about the reality that instead of the expected global convergence of income and livelihood status argued at the end of Second World War, there appears an increasing divergence across the world. Almost 60 per cent of the people living in extreme poverty in 2030 will be residing in fragile states or in conflict as has been found in a report from the World Bank. The paper argues in favour of creating a more effective global collective action

process in a multilateral framework to take care of the crises faced by the countries in conflict, as it is time to realise that the episodes of fragility and conflicts. If not managed effectively today, it may expand to the seemingly peaceful regions of the globe. The earlier multilateral efforts did not help much. It raises the reality of the failure of 0.7 per cent commitment of Gross National Income (GNI) from the developed countries in international cooperation, on the one hand, and the dire socio-economic impacts of Structural Adjustment Programme initiated by international financial institutions to take care of the debt crisis of the 1980s, on the other. Having identified the root causes of persistent poverty and the resultant socio-economic fragility prevailing in this region the authors argue in favour of a multilateral mechanism that takes care of the observed contradictions between the necessity of aid and the resulting risk of dependence. Such measures, the paper identifies, should emphasise breaking the structural causes of poverty and stimulate the socio-economic participation of the population – the desired beneficiaries of aid.

The necessary efforts at providing strong multilateral support to global development cannot be thought of in the presence of existing strong gender inequality. “Development Finance and Gender Budgeting” by Marija Risteska provides a framework on how the multilateral development finance agencies can systematically integrate gender in public finance management to ensure gender-sensitive budgeting. In this exercise, she considers the policies of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank (WB) and the European Union (EU) and highlights a gap analysis of gender with respect to Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability framework for the assessment of Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (PEFA GRPFM) and the Sustainable Development Goals indicator 5.c.1 (SDG5c1). The analysis observes that while some of the responses exhibit some progression, others are yet to be initiated. The three agencies also exhibit different levels of achievement. In response to the analytical observations, the paper recommends that these agencies have to make further efforts to initiate gender-mainstreamed approaches in their public finance allocation mechanisms to achieve gender equality.

There has been an ongoing debate about the features of “Global South”. While most of the arguments run in terms of giving a geographical perspective of the term, with some arguing that such a division of the world is possible and another group looking into the heterogeneity that exists among the southern countries and thereby questioning the relevance of such a grouping, the paper by Milindo Chakrabarti titled “An Action Plan for Global South: The Indian Perspective”, argues that it has to be looked through a historical lens. The “Global South” is an aggregation of mostly countries which suffered the curse of extractive colonisation during the last few centuries, even though there are few exceptions which were not formally colonised. Colonisation also historically linked some countries belonging to “Global North” but they provided land for permanent settlement to emigrants from the European colonisers. Extractive colonisation was geared to the principle of extraction of both

human and natural resources to ensure the growth of the coloniser countries. The historical process of extraction still goes on even after the formal decolonisation process has been initiated since the end of World War II, creating the division between North and South. This distinction is evident from the recent publication of a report by a panel constituted by the United Nations that finds all the decolonised countries facing external vulnerabilities, economically, environmentally and socially. The paper looks into the similar realities that obtain in the countries identified as a group of “Global South” and argues that the southern countries have to engage in a clear process of collective action in a spirit of solidarity that helps each of them to move forward in achieving their desired state of development. The philosophy of global compact pursued by India in propagating South-South Cooperation may be one way of facilitating such active collective action among the southern nations.

DCR routinely engages with practitioners to elicit their views on development cooperation. The interview section of the present issue captures our interactions with H.E. Albert Muchanga, the Honourable Trade Commissioner of the African Union. H.E. Muchanga dealt with several questions ranging from the agenda of the African Union in the G20 platform to the other prominent priorities of AU, besides identifying the role of the Global South in advocating for more equitable development policies. The issue of the interaction of the AU with other multi-governmental institutions like the EU and ASEAN also came up in the discussion. He shared his ideas about sustainable development in the African continent, moving away from the extractive model of development followed thus far by the leaders across the globe. In his response, H.E. Muchanga was very categorical about the collective roles of annually rotating chair of the AU and the chairperson of the AU Commission, with the AU Commissioner of Economic Affairs playing the responsibility of G20 Sherpa. From a long-term perspective, going beyond the G20 platform, he puts emphasis on three interrelated issues. They are looking out for a high rate of inclusive growth and sustainable development that would require increased investments in Africa, de-fragmentation of the African economy using the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and closer harmonisation of the policies of the member states. Regarding the developmental strategies of Global South H.E. Muchanga indicated the importance of building stronger coherence among the member nations so that they are heard as one voice in a truly multilateral framework. Adding value to resources that are today exported as primary products is also high on the agenda of the AU. Such an effort will also increase the scope of employment among the African population, reducing possible illegal emigration to other countries in the world. He also emphasised the linkage between poverty and sustainable development, indicating that they cannot go together. In this context he feels that the growing number of younger population in the African countries are simultaneously the opportunity and challenge being faced by the AU. The opportunities are to be mainstreamed through giving space to enhanced entrepreneurship and innovative practices.

AfCFTA, as a specific effort and continental economic integration in general, will pace the movement towards sustainable development and inclusive growth. In this context, he emphasised the development cooperation activities being taken up by Indonesia, India and China with the AU as effective measures to promote Southern perspectives of development cooperation. Creation of the African Trade Observatory and operationalising African Credit Rating Agencies are some of the internal efforts to promote the development of the members of the AU.

The clear divide between Global South and North was brought into the academic platform by Raul Prebisch in 1949 when he analytically argued that the global economy is structurally divided into two groups: an industrialised “centre” and the export dependent “periphery”. The argument was found worthy to be pursued by others in later years and gave rise to an important argument referred to as Dependency Theory in literature. In our book review section, we have picked up a book titled *Dependency Theories in Latin America: An Intellectual Reconstruction* edited by Andre Magnelli, Felipe Maia and Paulo Henrique Martins. Mario Pezzini has reviewed the book, to note how the idea of dependency has been revisited in the light of contemporary challenges like economic globalisation, political upheaval and ecological crises. He argues that the book attempts to situate these challenges in within broader global debates on social theory. It not only looks into an important intellectual tradition, but also invites the readers to rethink the ways in which knowledge circulates between the global North and South. The volume is considered essential for not only Latin American scholars, but also political economists and international development experts as it critically puts its central argument that dependency is not just an economic condition, but an ongoing process linked to global power structures, including those that determine environmental and climate policies.

The final section in this issue is devoted to SSC Statistics and centres around the importance of BRICS+ in the global economy. There is a clear realisation that the role of BRICS+ as a collective group is becoming increasingly important in the global system. Sushil Kumar, while collating the data for the countries in BRICS+, observes that the shares of BRICS+ in global GDP and global trade have been experiencing an increasing trend since 2000. Same phenomenon is observed with respect to intra-regional trade in BRICS+.

This issue highlights some of the disastrous problems being faced across the globe, in terms of the sustainable co-habitation of people and planet, increasing inequality that persists across geographical and historical realities and even around gender and expresses the need for collective action in a multilateral framework of trust and reciprocity. Views expressed by different authors in this issue are personal. Usual disclaimers apply.