

UN@75 AND SSC : EVOLVING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



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विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

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Deutsches Institut für
Entwicklungspolitik



German Development
Institute

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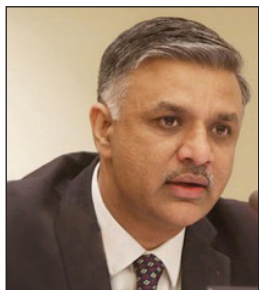
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The UN@75 and SSC- Evolving Roles and Responsibilities

16 February 2021

A webinar titled: “The UN@75 and SSC - Evolving Roles and Responsibilities” was organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in collaboration with German Development Institute (DIE) on 16 February 2021. It was organised in the preparation process of Delhi VI Conference, which will take place later in 2021. The webinar was aimed to liaise and connect with regional actors, nourish interest and also address concerns regarding South-South cooperation (SSC).

Inaugural Session



Professor Sachin Chaturvedi,
Director General, RIS

SACHIN CHATURVEDI

In his opening remarks, Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS after extending a warm welcome to the panel and the participants introduced the theme of the discussion of UN@75 and how the evolving rules for both SSC as well as UN are viewed in the current context. He noted that Hon'ble Secretary General would recall, the Busan Process at the Busan Summit on global aid architecture was a turning point in the global discussions, which gave birth to a new entity called Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC). A separate SSC dialogue also got initiated in 2012 onwards, when the first follow up meeting of the Busan Process was held in January 2012 in London. Professor Chaturvedi added that the RIS with support from Ministry of External Affairs, India floated the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) and started working from 2013 onwards to discuss what should be the narrative that South could require and how they connect themselves with a larger entity, with UNDP partnering with OECD to form what was called as a GPEDC. Professor Chaturvedi also stated that during the tenure of UNSG Excellency Ban Ki Moon, the DCF came up as a format and provided a platform for SSC as well as North-South cooperation.

Professor Chaturvedi informed that the RIS has been engaging with countries of the South and annually organizing the Delhi Process

since 2013, which brings Southern actors together. This has now been expanded by RIS to include multiple actors such as G2G, civil society, think tanks and private actors. The triangular cooperation and ideas of convergence also got a lot of prominence in last two years. Today's meeting with the DIE is a clear reflection of how think tanks from North and South may come together for creating effective global public intellectual goods, he added. The Managing Global Governance network is a prime example for this.

The DG RIS told that the RIS is planning to hold sixth conference under Delhi Process in August 2021. The RIS has already done three events: one focused on health issues and SSC, the second on science, technology and innovation and the third on global institutional architecture and SSC.



Ambassador Vijay Nambiar,
Former Indian Diplomat
and Special Advisor to UN
Secretary General

AMBASSADOR VIJAY NAMBIAR

Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, Former Indian Diplomat and Special Advisor to UN Secretary General, expressed his deep sympathy for the families of the victims of the landslide and glacier burst in Uttarakhand. He noted, “we are honoured to have in our midst the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations, The Honourable Mr. Ban Ki Moon.” He said that over the past decades, SSC has had a very positive impact in reducing asymmetries around the world and in building a more equal international community. He mentioned that the UN Secretary General Mr António Guterres had underlined and he quoted, “Southern countries are demonstrating the spirit of SSC, equal partnership and global solidarity during the pandemic, by collaborating in science, technology and innovation, sending health workers and experts to bridge gaps in capacity and in sharing best practices.” He further said that around the world, this kind of engagement is seen today as one of the most credible global partnerships of the future. As the world gets increasingly interconnected and interdependent, the South is being seen not only as a consumer, but also as a source of innovation and research & development whose benefits can be mobilised for the common good. Now this also means that while governments have a major role to play in implementing the SDGs, better institutions need to evolve for fostering multi stakeholder partnerships which cover South-South as well as triangular cooperation. Ambassador Nambiar opined that local civil society groups, local authorities as well as key constituencies like women's organisations, academic and research bodies are critical to realising sustainable development. Therefore, their roles especially in ensuring accountability in South-South and triangular cooperation should be strengthened. He noted that efforts should focus not only on

qualitative, but also quantitative aspects of such cooperation in order to enhance the benefits to the entire communities.

Ambassador Nambiar further stated that the UN is ideally constituted as the most appropriate, inclusive and impartial forum to take forward the South-South and triangular cooperation and complement the efforts to overcome the challenges of mainstreaming sustainable development at the national level. Now, the 75th anniversary of the UN provides an occasion to examine how the relationship between the UN and the South, that is, the majority of the member states has evolved. The UN, with its many development institutions, has played a major role and in the future also will have a major role to play with its various agencies, funds and programmes and specialised agencies, with substantive thematic scope, geographical as well as strong normative mandates, they have provided very, very strong support to the member states.

Now at the level of the development cooperation forum, as well as in the regional and bilateral levels, the UN can do much more to further the objectives of SSC by helping foster innovation, focusing on best practices and building on lessons from individual countries as well as encouraging attention to priority areas like climate change, public health and disaster risk mitigation. The core of objectives must be to create better, richer and more meaningful lives to the vulnerable sections of global society.

Ambassador Nambiar observed that the world has witnessed a retreat from multilateralism in the recent past. There has been an erosion of cooperation and engagement and an increase in suspicion and mistrust. The 2021 has been declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Peace and Trust. There is the new administration in the United States, hopeful signs of the winds of change blowing around most countries, and hopefully it also blows into the UN and other multilateral agencies.



Dr Sven Grimm,
Head of Research
Programme on Inter-and
Transnational Cooperation,
DIE

SVEN GRIMM

In his opening remarks, Dr Sven Grimm, Head of Research Programme on Inter- and Transnational Cooperation, DIE said, while celebrating the UN's 75th anniversary, it is important to look at what has changed over the years. First, the UN has increased its membership and broadened its geographic scope. Second, the UN has also enlarged its thematic scope. He noted that the legitimacy of the UN both in terms of the substance they work on, but also the representativeness that they provide, it is a place where we cooperate when South and North can come together.

Keynote Address



H.E. Ban Ki Moon,
Deputy Chair of the Elders,
Former UN Secretary
General and former
Foreign Minister of the
Republic of Korea

H.E. BAN KI MOON

I am honoured to speak to you and help to formally kick off today's impressive webinar, "the UN@75 and SSC - Evolving Roles and Responsibilities." Inclusion in global governance is the key in moving us forward as we strive to forge a better world for all.

The SSC and the United Nations have emerged over the years as two inherently inclusive decision-making processes that affect the present and future of mankind. They occupy important institutional spaces during a difficult period of humanity when a large number of countries were decolonised on the one hand, and the global community was looking for ways to recover from the destruction of the World War II on the other. Truly independent countries were in dire need of resources to catch up with the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of their former colonial occupiers. The developed world devastated from the World War II was looking for actions to advance global peace, besides ensuring territorial security to all sovereign nations. Both of these efforts were based on the spirit of collective action, where the intended outcome was a reduction in threats and security to the global community that would have resulted from collective inaction. Indeed, multilateralism was hailed as the most immediate and effective way to usher in peace and prosperity for all.

While the United Nations provided a strong platform for SSC to flourish, the UNCTAD, BAPA (Buenos Aires Plan of Action), and the common efforts of UNOSSC (UN office for SSC) also has offered timely support to the UN, and is a systemic mandate through the creation of specific development or systems managed by the United Nations. At the same time, countries in the Global South have been actively contributing to the UN peacekeeping processes created to help strife torn regions across the globe.

Under this backdrop, today, we find ourselves at the centre of a variety of converging crisis and increased uncertainty. COVID-19 continues to upend our economies, societies, and the way of our life. Meanwhile, the climate crisis is worsening, and the efforts to achieve the UN sustainable development goals by their 2030 target have been hindered by the ongoing pandemic. Such challenges have underlined our inherent interconnectedness and also elucidated the growing need for elevating multilateralism and cooperation to boost inclusivity and

address great challenges that we face. They also necessitate an elevated collaborative approach towards the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons.

The importance of SSC and the UN scaling up joint effort to these effects cannot be over emphasised, particularly as the global community collectively celebrates UN@75 this year. This is more important than ever, as nationalism and protectionism have curtailed multilateral cooperation over the past few years. Development cooperation is now under pressure as a result of the pandemic, and the ensuing global economic crisis. Many nations, particularly those in the Global South face expanding budgetary constraints in 2021 and beyond, and traditional donors are cutting aid when it is most needed. Despite this, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that critical resources continue to reach those most in need. That assistance should be a flexible, accountable and country driven. We must remember that this is a sound investment in sustainability, inclusivity, security and prosperity.

With this in mind, I urge both you and emerging powers to continue to play an active role in this system as your countries are the stewards of our multilateral future. Indeed, you have lifted millions of people up from poverty but you can go further and help millions more. The pandemic has tested our international system and our collective resolve but it has also created opportunities. This is now your chance to assume your leadership. As such, I urge you to expand your cooperation and partnership efforts to help build it back better and greater from COVID-19 and ensure that no one is left behind. Such noble efforts are quite meaningful to me, not only as former Secretary General, but also as a Korean. I am very proud that Korea within a single generation has transitioned from a poverty stricken, war devastated, and aid recipient country to an aid donor country. So please continue to identify and expand your engagement with critical UN initiatives in the field of health, poverty eradication, climate, and peace-building. Quite simply, we will not be able to achieve the SDGs, build a peace, catalyse climate action, or persevere over pandemics without innovation, dynamism, talent and cooperation of the countries of the Global South.

Our collective future lies in your hands. I am confident that this is a future that is sustainable, inclusive, secure, and prosperous for all people and our planet. I once again, congratulate you on the realisation of this important webinar. I am confident that the insights you shared today will go a long way in blazing a new trail for multilateralism and supporting the work of the United Nations on the occasion of this landmark 75th anniversary. I thank you for your attention and active efforts to this end. Thank you, Dhanyavad, Dankeschon.

The question is how would you see the UN becoming more relevant in the light of the BAPA plus 40 and the aspirations of the SSC that is now emerging recently?

His Excellency Ban Ki Moon - I think the United Nations should really be much, much more engaging. Unfortunately, until just a few months ago, the United Nations has been very much undervalued and underused like multilateralism has been largely in disarray. This multilateralism is the backbone. There is not a single country in this world, however, powerful, resourceful, maybe who can do it alone. Now with the United States coming back to multilateralism after four years of such multilateralism under threat, I am very happy. Now then how can we attain all the 17 goals specified in the SDGs? I think we need all UN member states, particularly members of the OECD rich countries club, they should really take much stronger initiative in helping developing countries. This may be South-North cooperation instead of SSC. There are many ways South-South can cooperate among themselves. But when it comes to climate change, there is need for fully supporting financially and technologically those countries which have been affected without causing much trouble or do not contribute to cause this climate change phenomenon. Therefore, it is morally, politically wrong, if we just let them suffer all this climate impact. That is why I am also urging the OECD member states, they should pay 0.7 percent of their GNP in ODA by 2030. They were supposed to meet the target by 2015. But only six countries in this world, now United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, etc., meet this target and others need to do much more. The OECD countries have done only 0.35 per cent, just a half of 0.7 per cent. Therefore, now, while I fully support this SSC, this is a very good self-help will but at the same time that should be supported and augmented by the support from wealthy countries.

Now, there are many developing countries like India, now India is rising as one of the very strong countries in terms of GNP, but considering the huge population and huge area and huge challenges, then I think, India cannot do it alone. We need to have a much more compassionate support from the developed countries. That is the only way which I can emphasise at this time.

Panel 1: The South and the UN: Evolving Multilateralism

The session was moderated by Mr Nikhil Seth, UN Assistant Secretary General, Executive Director, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), Geneva. In his remarks, Mr Seth analysed the current trends in multilateralism and how is multilateralism

unclear. He argued that dark clouds are still hanging over people and planet. In a large part, this darkness has been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the misery, suffering and death it has brought in its way. He argued that the handling of this crisis has been also terrible and it has exposed many flaws. It has shown the absence of cooperation, compassion and solidarity between nations, especially amongst the richer nations. He underlined that the South has done much better in responding and cooperating and helping each other in the time of COVID-19 crisis, including new vaccine diplomacy - sharing the vaccines while meeting the domestic demands. But this darkness is more profound, not by the sudden events of 2020 but it is the continuation and exacerbation of deep political, economic, social and environmental crises.



Mr Nikhil Seth,
UN Assistant Secretary
General, Executive
Director, United Nations
Institute for Training and
Research (UNITAR),
Geneva

NIKHIL SETH

Mr Nikhil Seth cautioned that conflicts and geopolitical tensions and related conflicts continue unabated in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. There are so many aspects of crossing all the tipping points in environment. It is a very severe decay of natural resource base, and it is going on at a pace never seen before. Many people feel unprotected and vulnerable. The rise of racism, extreme nationalism and xenophobia has also been seen. Unfettered globalism and capitalism are making the world more and more unequal. Technology has great potential but there is also a very dark side to technology in perpetuating inequalities and making us more vulnerable to cybercrime, hate speech and intolerance. These are some of the challenges of multilateralism in the contemporary world. But multilateralism itself is changing its shape. It is not that multilateralism has ended. But it is only ended in the halls of the General Assembly and the Security Council and ECOSOC and these large institutions, intergovernmental structures, and moved away from there. Mr Seth was of the opinion that new meaning multilateralism should be given. He underlined the importance of business, and said that business produces 70 per cent of the GDP globally, and determines the quality of growth. It is likely that growth will rebound this year and come back to spectacular growth. Gender equality, environmental sustainability, decent jobs, better employment opportunities and greater equality should be promoted. Academic research should be focused on SDGs. Greater engagement with civil society should also be encouraged. The SSC is just a part of global multilateralism. There is a

need for more robust intergovernmental bodies and also to recognize the indivisibility of issues. New multilateralism needs great attitudinal and behavioural shifts. The broad objectives, for many decades of multilateralism and cooperation, are to end poverty, reduce inequality, and move our planet to sustainable trajectory. He said that here are six big transitions that the world needs today and they should also be the focus today of SSC.

Mr Seth briefly described the transitions. One is transition in public health; it could not have been brought to us more forcefully than last year. This has to be driven by the SDG which relates to universal health care. The second transition is in the field of agriculture and food systems in a water-stressed world to end hunger and malnutrition. The third transition is very closely tied to climate change. It is the transition in our energy systems with a focus on access to all, with a focus on renewables, and a focus on efficiency. Fourth, a transition is needed in urban settlements, for sustainable cities. 70 percent of all of us will be living in cities in a very short couple of decades. Fifth is putting the digital revolution and technology in the service of the poor. Technology has the potential, but it has had several divides that technology has thrown up, digital divide, the gender divide, the divide between rural and urban, the divide between nations, all that have got worse in a sense with the way in which the digital revolution is used. A dramatic transition in educational systems is also needed and the potential for democratising education using digital technologies. It is affordable, and it can reach people in the millions, not in the tens or thousands. Transition in our finance system is also required, in the aid system, in the trade system, in the investment system and in the debt system. Over the years, general positions of developing countries in multilateral foras focused a lot on the last transition, on finance, aid grade, debt and investment. But SSC should now not only focus on these issues, this is a political fight that the South has been having for a very long time, but also the focus should be on the other five transitions.



Professor C S R Murthy,
Former Professor,
Centre for International
Politics, Organization
and Disarmament,
School of International
Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru
University

C S R MURTHY

Professor C S R Murthy, Former Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University appreciated the efforts put in by both the RIS and DIE in order to bring together minds and hearts from across the globe, especially the Global South to take stock of the historical processes associated with the contemporary issues of development and multilateralism. He offered some of the general propositions by way of considering what is evident from 75 years of the UN, multilateralism, and their interface with the Global South.

Firstly, Professor Murthy contended that these 75 years represent an interesting intersection between the founding convictions of the United Nations associated with the management of the world economy on the one hand, and some of the fundamental principles of multilateralism on the other. He said that the UN's convictions were firstly, Unitarian. The world economy is an interdependent single, inseparable whole. Secondly, the management of the world economy would be by equal participation with equal voting privileges. Third, the management of the world economy towards development would be guided by the value system of equity and justice. The poor, the disadvantaged, would be catered to sufficiently and satisfactorily. Intersection happens with the principles of multilateralism as John Ruggie has argued in several of his writings. Through indivisibility principle, multilateralism across the board represents the issue linkages contemporarily in the past two-three decades. Second is the equality of rights and obligations. Third is diffused reciprocity with reference to the give and take in the negotiation process. The give and take need not necessarily be in one specific context, one specific subject area, but a loss at one time in one area could be expectedly compensated with gains in a longer time frame in a different issue area. In other words, a very mature outlook towards the negotiation scenario would further the cause of multilateralism.

On the historical association between multilateralism and the United Nations, Professor Murthy highlighted the evolution of multilateralism with UN characteristics. There is also now multi layered multilateralism as we see in the 21st century currents and cross currents. Having said so, speaking from the vantage point of the United Nations, it must be noted that the 75 years represented a kind of expectations revolution in the work of the United Nations. In the early years, the UN role in economic development was essentially a side show. This view is reinforced by a reading of the Charter where - in the development project was not given sufficient attention and precedence compared to peace. But over the years especially in the post decolonisation years, there has been a perceptible elevation of development at par with peace.

This was accompanied by very significant revolution in the ideational framework of the United Nations. The work of the United Nations can be captured in reference to three aspects of development. One is intellectual aspect. The other is institutional aspect, while the third is operational and technical development assistance aspect. The intellectual underpinnings in terms of ideas and authoritative study reports were provided by the second United Nations, the international bureaucracy, committed to the ideals of the Organization. The active advocacy and support to the causes of Global South is best exemplified

by the work of UNCTAD during 1960s and 1970s. The ideas of economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) along with its sister proposition for technical cooperation among developing countries resulted from the deliberations and declarations in the early decades. Again, there is the idea of human security that emphasizes freedom from the fear and want, one of the best examples of raising the awareness about the interconnectedness not only horizontally but also vertically of the dynamics of the development. Institutionally the United Nations comprises 41 entities, including training and research institutions like UNITAR. Institutionally the UN has expanded in order to embody and advocate the needs, aspirations, and apprehensions of the Global South countries. Some of them are not very active nowadays, but some of the other institutions like Global South Centre are taking the place of the marginalised institutions. A reference is already made to the UN Office for SSC. Surely 1970s represented a brilliant atmosphere of ambitious ideas getting thrown up, but of course, the divide between implementation experience and the expectations was predictably unbridgeable.

Professor Murthy acknowledged the fact that has acquired its own salience in the times of post-cold war world driven by the globalization of production and consumption. The developing countries are no longer a monolithic group unmindful of their own particular situations and needs. As a corollary, the UN approach to them has to be variegated in pursuance of what is known as common but differentiated responsibility in offering and organizing suitable packages of policy advice, help in institution building and evaluation to particularly the landlocked, Small Island and conflict afflicted countries. So, it is paying attention to the more deserving in pursuance of the equity principle which they institutionally espouse, right from the foundational stage. There are setbacks of course. We must also take stock of the lessons that could be drawn. One lesson is the futility of inflated expectations about automatic outcomes of resolutions, of voting behaviour. Numerical majority would not result automatically in effective, concrete results, and cooperation cannot be expected through a strategy of confrontation. So United Nations wittingly or unwittingly got entangled in this war of expectations and the phenomenon of dialogue of the deaf in 1970s, coincided by the competitive multilateralism with UN competing with Bretton Woods institutions. Thematically, he opined that the South is not the monolithic block. There are very many shades and shapes. Some of that was evident in Copenhagen Summit and in various other multilateral settings. Especially the emergence of Brazil, India, South Africa as rising powers, of course along with China is an important boost to the rest of the Global South countries. In fact, trade and aid from

the leading middle income countries to the fellow developing countries is growing. For example, development partnership component in the Indian budget has grown threefold in the last about 20 years. In the case of the World Health Organization (WHO) alone, the financial contribution from the BRICS countries went up three times during the short span of less than 10 years (2012-2021) from 6.7 percent to 18.5 percent. It is not a question of demanding from advanced countries, but also an attitudinal transformation in sharing resources for development and enhancing influence by working through multilateral channels.

Professor Murthy suggested that multilateralism is facing the challenge of relevance in the current century. It is not multilateralism of governments any longer; it is multi-multilateralism. Many of the South countries like India, for example, are wary of the non-governmental and private actors. The Gates Foundation's role in WHO is not seen very kindly by India. In other words, Global South must be more open just as they are becoming open in negotiating with Global North; it must also be open to working in partnership with various other stakeholders. Finally, he noted that now the year 2021 represents a kind of crossroads for multilateralism to evolve progressively into a vertical multilateralism apart from being horizontal multilateralism which some people may characterise as multi-stakeholder approach. Multilateralism hence needs some kind of progressive evolution and here in also lies the key for the future of the Global South and the UN.



Professor Elizabeth Sidiropoulos,
Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), Johannesburg

ELIZABETH SIDIROPOULOS

Professor Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), Johannesburg said that the South has stepped up over the last two decades in terms of its engagement in global issues and is actually driving some of these agendas. It is probably also true to say that the South must play a much more assertive role, as multilateralism has been threatened and is in a bit of disarray. She argued the trust deficit and the legitimacy deficit sometimes appear across the board when we're talking about global governance. That is largely driven by the fact that global governance in its entirety has not really been able to come to terms and address globalisation's discontents; the winners and the losers, the inequality and what that then leads to in terms of nativism, chauvinism, etc, we have seen rising in the world. There are amazing structures and visions and aspirations in Agenda 2030, in the SDGs. But there is a huge gap between that aspiration and concerted and coordinated efforts, and of course, the role of the North.

Professor Elizabeth Sidiropoulos said that the world has changed quite significantly in terms of the kinds of actors that we need to recognise. So, of course, the South has had a very special relationship with the UN, even though many of the countries were not there at the beginning, when the UN was created in 1945. But it has become inclusive. It is a legitimate body of global governance. One way many countries of the South really feel at home, maybe not in all the organs of the UN, but certainly the UN, as the quintessential apex of our global governance. In an interconnected world solutions are interconnected, the South wants multilateral governance to focus on development; probably first and foremost, a fairly level playing field. The principle clearly of multilateralism clearly carries with the considerable legitimacy, because it is intended to be inclusive in its processes of developing norms, etc. It is effective, provide for burden sharing in a context where norms and actions are owned by all but not necessarily everybody has the same amount of responsibility in certain areas. An interesting point to consider now is that we in the South have always favoured a more multi-polar system, thinking that that would actually strengthen multilateralism and global governance where you do not have a dominant hegemon who calls the shots. Clearly multi-polarity is characterised by a diversity of pull. So there is greater power diffusion. But that is also complicated. The management of multilateralism in the last few years has contributed to some of this gridlock. Therefore, it is a necessary part of the evolution of multilateralism. But being in it at the moment is very unsteady and unsatisfying, for those of us who feel committed to addressing global challenges.

Professor Elizabeth Sidiropoulos argued that the great powers use multilateralism when they cannot exercise their outside options that easily, or they are in a position to exert power in shaping the outcomes. The UN lies at the apex of our global governance system. It clearly requires a bit of a facelift for bringing it into 21st century. The same applies to a whole host of bodies in the global governance system. We need to look at the structures, the architecture, content the rules and processes. There are key challenges of our times that have huge relevance for the Global South, which now also resonates in the North, around globalisation. Inequality about winners and losers cannot be solved entirely at a domestic level. We can beat about and say that African countries have poor governance and do not have the right policy frameworks. But at the end of the day, there is also a superstructure that needs to be addressed. Then, of course, there are transnational threats, pandemics, climate change, etc.

She was of the opinion that citizens are losing faith in institutions of global governance. They do not see material circumstances improving significantly. Clearly, these are all big challenges. They do not just depend on as member states do. It also is about how the South and Southern groupings actually step up to the plate so that this gridlock. But it not is going to be overcome too quickly. Nevertheless, it is our central focus, how to overcome it, as we develop strategies to ensure that global governance fragmentation does not become so acute that the whole multilateral edifice collapses.

She noted that African states and institutions have built up agency in global matters over the last two decades but they still remain comparably weak. Africa is very much interested in the UN and the multilateral system, but African countries have limited power to arrest this fragmentation. This is not necessarily a barrier to working to build a strategy. This is something that African states are also sort of coming to. Sometimes you have to work outside of formal structures. Sometimes you also have to take the initiative continentally in the way that we have come together on continental free trade area. We have also to engage with non-state actors on developing this reform agenda that is grounded in rebuilding legitimacy in global governance institutions. It is also important to prioritise, particularly in this power transition. We cannot focus on everything but we also need an agenda that goes clearly beyond the regions and focuses on the global issues. Let us be really specific about what our priorities can be. Let us select what we need to tackle first and what is easier to tackle. Because if we do not change, if we do not try to address those key issues, which are specifically around inequality, inclusivity and climate. We will not really be able to move out of the big developmental challenges that we are facing.

Finally, she argued that the COVID-19 has presented a unique possibility of transformation. But where crises are fairly common, fundamental transformations are not fairly common. They require planning and they require power. As we try to see for how we can both reinvigorate multilateralism and how we can make multilateralism really deliver on the key priorities of the developing world, these points should be considered.



Ms Rashmi Banga,
Senior Economic Affairs
Officer, ECIDC-GDS,
UNCTAD, Geneva

RASHMI BANGA

Ms Rashmi Banga, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, ECIDC-GDS, UNCTAD, Geneva said that UNCTAD is a living example of SSC. Way back in 1964, developing countries came together to institutionalize SSC within the UN Development work and UNCTAD was created along with G77, which is the alliance of developing countries. At that

time, SSC was thought mainly in terms of technical assistance. The SSC meant learning from each other sharing policy experiences and also having technical assistance projects. But over time, countries realised that it is important to take it forward from cooperation to integration. In 2009, there was a unit on economic cooperation and integration among developing countries in UNCTAD, which is Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries (ECIDC). It was created under the Office of Secretary General. The SSC can be taken forward in terms of economic integration in the areas of trade, investment, finance and technology.

She agreed with concerns related to multilateralism and also with respect to SSC. The South is more vulnerable and has been economically hit harder than the North. It will also take more time to recover because as developed countries are bailing, putting in trillions of dollars as bailout and relief packages, the South and developing countries are not able to have that kind of fiscal space to help revive their economies. We think that it is important to have more South-South solidarity to come out of this crisis faster, stronger with sustainable growth and resilience.

She highlighted some concrete areas and concrete steps that South-South solidarity can achieve in terms of helping the South in recovering faster. When you say recover faster, we need vaccines to recover faster. We also see the growing inequality in vaccine access. While rich countries have already pre-booked millions of doses of vaccine, there are poor countries, which are still waiting for the first consignment of the vaccines to arrive. Just to give you an example. Switzerland with a population of 8.5 million has booked or pre-booked 30 million doses of vaccines. South-South solidarity can really help and we are seeing that India has set up an excellent example by sharing and sending the vaccines. More than 20 million doses have been sent to neighbouring countries and other countries. India and South Africa have tabled temporary WTO-TRIPS waiver, which has been supported by 100 developing countries, but which has been blocked by the rich countries. South-South solidarity can really help in bringing the vaccines to the doors of poor countries if this TRIPS waiver goes ahead.

Ms Banga opined that just TRIPS waiver may not help. It is also important to have the finance available to set up the manufacturing capacity to increase the production of vaccine. In this area, there is a need to increase the financial cooperation between the Southern partners. The regional development bank like the BRICS New Development Bank can be explored. New capital injections need to be given to these regional development banks like the BRICS Development Bank or Islamic Development Bank or AIIB so that they can have regional

responses. Countries within their membership can recover faster and have faster access to vaccines. This could be one concrete step where South-South solidarity can help developing countries to recover faster. But along with recovering faster, it is also important to recover better, and to recover better, it is important to revive your industrial and your trade growth.

Ms Rashmi Banga mentioned that during the pandemic, the big tech firms and digital platforms in developed countries have experienced many fold increases in their profits. Just to give you an example, Apple Inc is now US \$2 trillion. That is the market capitalisation value of Apple Inc. It is more than the GDP of 82 percent countries in the world. If you are having this kind of inequity, inequality in terms of big tech firms and digital players in the developed countries competing with SMEs in the developing countries, it is important for governments to revive the growth of these SMEs. They are shutting businesses because of pandemic. For this, the governments will have to give additional financial support as well as industrial subsidies. But again, we know that developing countries have lost their policy space of giving industrial subsidies to their domestic firms. One suggestion that we have is that developing countries under the South-South solidarity should raise the issue of a temporary WTO peace clause on the agreement of subsidies and countervailing measures in the WTO. That will give policy space to developing countries to revive their industrial growth as well as their export sector. So, these could be some of the concrete ways in which South-South solidarity can help to recover better.

She said that the other thing is that it is important to also build resilience and have sustainable growth post recovery. We all know that because of pandemic, because of digital technologies, and also because of the policies of the West, like industrial sovereignty of the EU, and the US, global value chains will shift. They will become shorter; they will go closer to the home countries. The industrial robots have decreased the importance of low-cost labour in the developing countries in the manufacturing of the developed countries. In order to look at how to engage in the global value chains, it is important for Southern countries to have Southern led value chains. For this South-South solidarity can also contribute. There is a need to have SSC in new areas like health. There can be SSC in medical research. In health-related products, value chains can be formed. It is extremely important that the South cooperates with each other to set up the digital infrastructure. Finally, she said that a South-South 10 point progressive digital cooperation agenda is proposed in the UNCTAD. Using that, digital infrastructure can be developed by South. For the south, instead of negotiations,

it is the cooperation that will help in the digital economy. It is very important to revive the trust in the process of multilateralism as well as in the institutions, especially the UN institutions. That can happen if concrete steps are suggested and these recommendations are taking on board. A multi stakeholder approach to work with civil societies, NGOs, trade unions, and not just the governments are important.



Mr Carlos M. Correa,
Executive Director, South
Centre, Geneva

CARLOS M. CORREA

Mr Carlos M. Correa, Executive Director, South Centre, Geneva said that the South Centre itself is a manifestation of SSC. It is an institution of developing countries working for developing countries. He addressed on the interface between the United Nations system and SSC.

The first observation he made was in relation to the creation of the United Nations. As it was mentioned by the former UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, one of the main objectives of the UN was to maintain peace and security and this is clearly explained in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. But the UN system also aimed at addressing economic and social issues in particular through international cooperation. The Charter of the United Nations in Article 50, Paragraph 2 highlights the need for international cooperation in relation to economic and social issues. The United Nations has had a major role in monitoring economic and social developments, in assessing them, in highlighting or creating awareness about injustice, asymmetries, and inequality. It has played an enormous role in terms of promoting the respect of human rights.

Mr Carlos M. Correa stated that the SSC is as one category of international cooperation with a very specific characteristic of cooperation among developing countries. But in fact, if we look at the origins of the concept, we will see that it was very much associated with the United Nations system. Thus, the first important international conference on the subject, BAPA, organized in 1978, was a UN Conference that reflected the importance of what at that time was called technical cooperation; a working plan in order to increase technical cooperation among developing countries was adopted at the Conference.

He highlighted a paragraph of the BAPA 1978 Outcome document, which said “the entire United Nations Development System must be permeated by the spirit of TCDC (Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries) and all its organization should play a prominent role as promoters and catalysts of TCDC.” It added that there was a need for UN entities to reorient their internal policies and procedures

to respond adequately to the principles and objectives of TCDC. So, it was very clear at the very origin of this movement towards SSC that the UN system should play an important role as promoters and catalysts of this cooperation. In fact, this conference was somewhat the outcome of the emergence of the South, of the organisation of developing countries. It has been already mentioned that the creation of UNCTAD in 1964 was a milestone. The Non-Aligned Movement launched in 1961 was also an initiative of the countries of the South, which was later followed by the setting up of the G77.

The conclusion is that in the very origin of these important actions to strengthen the SSC, the United Nations system was present or was seen as one of the main tools to promote and work as a catalyst of such cooperation. It took some time however within the system of the United Nations to take some concrete actions in particular, to undertake what is called as streamlining of SSC to the system. So you can see a number of references to SSC in some UN resolutions in the 1990s. SSC was scaled up and many important actions were taken, like the establishment of a high-level committee on SSC, and of course, of the UN Office on SSC and more recently the organisation of the second conference on SSC, BAPA plus 40. At the level of declarations, it can be said that SSC has permeated quite significantly the UN system; at the level of operations by UN agencies, though, the picture is more mixed. Some agencies such as FAO, ILO, UNITAR have indeed taken SSC as an important part of their strategies, objectives and activities.

He also noted a certain dichotomy. As mentioned, SSC technical cooperation received an initial impetus from the United Nations. However, some of the basic principles of SSC were developed outside the UN system. They were endorsed by the 15th Summit of the NAM in July 2009. One of the principles is that SSC and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South. This was somehow reiterated in the BAPA plus 40 Outcome document, which said the SSC is the primary responsibility of the South and it is indicated that the role of the UN is to support SSC. The UN has an international vocation because we also have developed countries as important parties to it. However, SSC must remain under the control of and its agenda should be set by developing countries. Is there a tension between the United Nations and actions in connection with SSC? All we say is that there is a need to find the appropriate relationship between the UN system and G77 plus China, which is carrying forward the SSC, and the countries that are actually engaged in SSC.

Mr Correa argued that the United Nations must act as a promoter, as a catalyst of SSC, not as an implementer. SSC has become an important

tool today to deal with development issues, including poverty reduction and addressing inequality. It is crucial for the entire multilateral system to work as a promoter and a catalyst of SSC while respecting that SSC is owned and its agenda should be set by developing countries themselves. So, the challenge, in a nutshell, is to find a constructive framework for a constructive relationship between the United Nations system and those who implement SSC to continue. There is a need to effectively streamline SSC into the UN system, including its different specialised agencies so as to ensure that SSC continues to be and expand its role as an important tool for development.

Panel 2 – SSC and the UN Development System



Dr Silke Weinlich,
Senior Researcher, DIE

SILKE WEINLICH

The session was moderated by Dr Silke Weinlich, Senior Researcher, DIE. She noted that focus would be on the UN Development System (UNDS) which has been the largest multilateral development player. In 2018, the UNDS has spent about 36 billion US dollar on development and humanitarian activities and most of this, of course, in countries of the Global South. The UNDS consists of a large number of heterogeneous entities that vary in their mandates, activities, size and funding; they range from UN funds and programmes such as UNICEF or the UN Development Programme to specialized agencies such as ILO, the WHO, or smaller entities, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that has also sometimes a field presence.

Such a diverse set of organisations also has a very diverse set of functions ranging from providing a forum for dialogue, for decision making and norm setting at the level of member states, research, advocacy, policy advice, capacity building, technical assistance, and humanitarian aid. Dr Silke Weinlich argued that this multifaceted profile, and this broad thematic and geographic scope, the UNDS is uniquely placed to be an important change agent. It can help governments and citizens to advance the transformation towards sustainable development. It should be playing a proactive and important role in implementing the Agenda 2030. The value of the UNDS has become apparent during the COVID pandemic, when UN country teams have been supporting government and others not only to tackle the health crisis but also formulate a socio-economic response.

The evolution of the UN and its development system has been tightly intertwined with the evolution of developing countries and SSC. Many UN entities were indeed founded in reaction to a rising demand from developing countries and Southern thinkers have decidedly influenced UN development thinking. Southern countries hold the majority of seats in their most of the governing bodies of UN entities. Many UN entities are particularly well trusted partners. The promotion of South-South and trilateral cooperation through the UNDS has gained prominence in recent years.

She further added that at the same time that the UNDS has a great degree of dependency on northern countries, and this is most visible in its funding structures. In 2018, the top three government contributors, the US, Germany and the UK, accounted for nearly half of all contributions made by the member states. In the same year contributions by all UN programme countries, including China amounted for a mere 13 percent. UN member states acknowledged that this is a problem. In the recent ambitious reform, they pledged to increase the number of contributing countries. This is not only about money, but it is also about a broader ownership of the UN development system.



Dr Sebastian Haug, DIE

SEBASTIAN HAUG

Dr Sebastian Haug, DIE noted that the UN has been a key platform and effective accompanying processes related to Southern member states trying to get more space in international affairs, also related to the question of SSC.

He shared insights from recent research on how the UN has engaged with South-South and triangular cooperation. The UN as a platform and a forum has been the key for SSC and Southern activities in multilateral affairs. Against this backdrop, the UN entities have been repeatedly asked to mainstream their support for South-South and triangular cooperation. Indeed, there is a wide variety of evidence in terms of brochures, reports, booklets on the initiatives and projects that the UN has supported with the aim of supporting SSC. But there is very little systematic evidence on what the role of UN funds, programmes and specialised agencies has looked like.

He said that he looked at 15 different UN entities and analysed to what extent and how they have engaged with this idea of mainstreaming SSC. Mainstreaming goes to the heart of institution processes and tries to put an issue like SSC at the core of what an organisation is doing. He shared the four main findings coming out of that research. One is related to basic terminology, how over the last 40 years in terms of

official UN documents, there has been a trend away from the previous focus on so-called technical cooperation among developing countries towards South-South and triangular cooperation. Today, South-South and triangular cooperation is the key umbrella term used to talk about collaboration among developing countries at the UN. This rise in terminology has been accompanied by different understandings of and approaches towards SSC.

Dr Haug noted that one approach has focused in a rather narrow way on South-South as a set of technical cooperation modalities, where principles attached to SSC like mutual benefit or equality have been translated into cost sharing agreements. This is an approach that has been particularly strong in Latin America. He said that there is also a broader take on SSC that understands as a very broad political narrative, where principles are used and mentioned but not operationalised. Then there is another rather broad approach that is particularly prevalent among UN entities and that is seeing SSC as an umbrella term for all kinds of interstate cooperation beyond ODA, beyond traditional North South schemes. That is just to give you an idea of the complexity attached to some of the things we have been talking, which makes it a bit complicated to analyse in coherent ways what different UN entities have been doing in terms of supporting South-South.

In order to provide a first step, Dr Haug shared a scorecard. Looking into these 15 UN entities, he tried to analyse to what extent they have been discussing South-South and taken analyse up South-South in their institutional processes in terms of strategies, annual reports, publications, monitoring frameworks, funding and budget issues, and their organisational setup.

Based on this analysis, scores have been assigned. The UN entities that have been at the forefront of pushing for the agenda of South-South across what they are doing institutionally. There are other entities, which are called wavers were also quite strong in supporting South-South and have retreated a bit over time. So there is a mixed picture. Then there is a set of entities which are called stragglers that have not at all, or only a bit engaged with referencing South-South in their work. So, this scorecard is a reference point, it is not an evaluation of programmes and projects on the ground. It is a first mapping of what different UN entities have done institutionally to engage with South-South and triangular cooperation.

He explained that he tried to look at dynamics shaping these mainstreaming efforts and focused on three main issues that he wanted to briefly illustrate with reference to how much UN entities have

mentioned South-South in their annual reports. So, over the last, let us say from 2000 to 2015, we see ups and downs but there is an upward trend in terms of UN entities explicitly mentioning South-South when they talk about what they do.

Over the last few years, however, there has been a downward trend. The UN entities around the turn of the millennium and afterwards thought that engaging with SSC would allow them to widen their donor base. They have realised that this has not really worked. Providing resources to UN entities has not been one of the key results of that process. As a reaction to that, less and less people within UN entities, apart from some champion entities, work on SSC. They do not push through the agenda as much as they used to before. May-be most importantly, and increasingly, SSC has become part of member states' geopolitics, tensions mainly between China and the US, but also other key players, where, especially from a Northern Western perspective, SSC is seen more and more as an umbrella for China to expand its clout. He provided an illustration of that dynamic and showed a figure on the relation between the extent to which entities received funding from China and their scores on South-South mainstreaming efforts. We see that there is a positive correlation between receiving more funding from China and engaging more with mainstreaming SSC. This needs more research in terms of understanding the dynamics behind funding structures. But this is just to give you an idea of some of the dynamics at play behind SSC mainstreaming efforts.



Professor Paulo Esteves,
Pontifical Catholic
University of Rio de Janeiro
(PUC-Rio), Brazil

PAULO ESTEVES

Professor Paulo Esteves, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Brazil explored the role that the UN can play in triangular cooperation. It is a reflection on a research we have conducted in 2016-2017 on Brazil-UK triangular initiatives, along with partners in Africa. During the 2010 decade, the UK adopted two programmes to be executed in Brazil. Both programmes aimed at strengthening Brazil development cooperation in Africa in the fields of agriculture, food security, gender, and social protection. Expected outcomes of such programmes, target primarily Brazil's government, and were related to behavioural change in practices of development cooperation carried on by the Brazilian Development Agency, ABC.

Clearly in second place, these programmes targeted partners in Africa where some development impact was expected. In any case, the programmes were designed to influence policies in Brazil rather than producing impacts at the country level or at the global level, in terms of policies in such sectors. Brazil due to its own institutional bottlenecks

for implementing South-South and triangular cooperation programmes and projects, has to rely, in most cases on international organisations, particularly on the UN to implement such projects. In that sense, in triangular cooperation with Brazil often includes a fourth partner, or, as we have called it, a triangular cooperation with Brazil often generate a 3 plus1 arrangement. Engagement of international organizations, particularly the UN, in middle income countries is remarkably different from the work they perform in low-income countries. Much of their work in middle income countries focuses on policy development, and sometimes implementation. In the case of Brazil, the partnership between its government and the UN has established three policy centres that have been working as global hubs in the field of social protection, the IPC-IG related to the UNDP, food security World Food Programme Centre for Excellence against hunger and sustainable development with the Rio plus centre.

These centres performed three key tasks to support policy development in Brazil and abroad; to work as hubs connecting Brazil Policy Network in each one of these cases to partner with countries via SSC and as a SSC agent to disseminate Brazilian experience, promoting policy dialogue, managing knowledge and building capacities in partner countries.

The 3 plus 1 arrangement helped to overcome Brazil's institutional bottlenecks. During the economic and political crisis in Brazil 2015-2016, UN agencies upheld and implemented triangular cooperation project even though mandated ministries faced significant changes after Dilma Rousseff's impeachment.

Hence triangular cooperation benefited from the UN Global Policy centres to overcome unforeseen risks related to Brazilian domestic policies. The three plus one arrangement goes beyond implementation though. Throughout the global centres, UK, Brazil, African countries triangulation adopted parallel tracks model four of implementation combining policy development and implementation of food security projects on the ground. The first track, the policy development track led by the FFP, implemented programmes around activities such as visits, international seminars, advice and support for policy design and implementation with regard to technical assistance, policy dialogue, support for action plans and national consultations. Many countries in Africa today have a school feeding programme, a national school feeding programme that was created by the leadership of the FFP. Even the African Union now has a school feeding programme for the entire continent that was created with the support of the FFP Centre for Excellence against hunger.

The second track implemented school feeding pilot trials in five low-income countries. These pilots have articulated various models of units from smallholder farm with different school feeding programmes. The parallel tracks approach has the potential to generate endogenous solutions, enhancing ownership and strengthening local authorities' commitment towards food security programmes,

The 3 plus 1 model has shown that when the UN comes to the triangular arrangement, it plays a role of levelling the field and transforming those previous roles of facilitator, - beneficiary, and pivotal countries.



Mrs Anita Amorim,
Head, Emerging and
Special Partnerships
Unit, International Labour
Organisation (ILO)

ANITA AMORIM

Mrs Anita Amorim, Head, Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit, International Labour Organisation (ILO), said that BAPA plus 40 gave us some key recommendations for the UN system and she noted that some of the key recommendations were exactly strengthening the South-South platforms, strengthening triangular cooperation as a complement to South-South, and providing support in exchange of good practices. Making sure that South-South continues to be self-driven and also triangular cooperation in policy dialogues in the UN were also systematically focussed on. In addition, continuation of the South-South and triangular cooperation arrangements, creation of platforms and digital networks were also discussed.

She questioned whether the multiplicity of definitions of SSTC really is problematic, as put forward by Sebastian Haug. Is there a need for a definition? In fact, having one definition sometimes limits and there should be flexibility on the evolution of SSC. There has been an evolution of the understanding of what SSC is in the UN. It moved from technical cooperation to development cooperation.

The triangular cooperation group created by Canada, which is part of the GPEDC, is a little bit, let us say, North interpretation of how to support South-South and triangular cooperation. That definition entails the concept of pivotal country, facilitator country and recipient country, which is a little bit old fashioned, in terms of the SSC as envisaged at the BAPA conference.

South-South and South-South-North partnerships are very important. But how would then the triangular corporation maintain the aspects of mutual benefit, solidarity and non-interference in domestic affairs? In dialogue, supporting a South driven approach with northern countries is not that simple in reality.

The question is how to best to institutionalise SSC so that goes beyond instances such as China's giving some money, Brazil's giving some money, or Russia is giving through BRICS some money, so how to institutionalise it better is the main question.



**Professor Milindo
Chakrabarti,**

Editor, Development
Cooperation Review

MILINDO CHAKRABARTI

Professor Milindo Chakrabarti, Editor, Development Cooperation Review said that the definitions of SSC had been used in a number of cases, in a number of senses, and the term sporadic has been used. He noted that we are not able to capture the spirit of SSC, when we make the term 'sporadic'. The term 'sporadic' has got a negative connotation. The SSC is very much characterised by a spirit of plurality. If plurality is considered sporadic, there will be some problems in really understanding the issues linked to SSC. Rather, SSC considers this plurality as its strength rather than as its weakness. He also added that technical cooperation should be accompanied by a policy dialogue. It should not be and must not be accompanied by policy conditionality. That is where SSC becomes very important and very effective. It can provide some ways to the understanding in real sense of the term of the triangular cooperation.

Professor Milindo Chakrabarti argued that looking into the history of the creation of United Nations reflects that the creation of United Nations and the idea of SSC went simultaneously. They were separate and these two processes went on initially independently of one another. SSC started in the 1940s. India was a part of that. It was engaged in SSC even before independence. China had also been engaged in SSC since 1949. These two processes went on simultaneously. But the crisis of that period was twofold. On the one hand, there was a crisis of territorial security on the part of the developed nation. And on the other hand, there was a crisis of developmental security on the part of the newly decolonised country. The latter were also suffering from a threat of re-colonisation. The UN provided a solid platform for both these ideas of crisis to be considered simultaneously. The UN became a very important and strong force towards creating a multilateral process in the global society.

He argued that there is a clear clarion call for mainstreaming SSC because of the crisis of the present century. It is no longer the crisis of territorial security. Developmental security has become a common issue across the North and South. Because of globalisation, because of increasing interdependence in the global system, and because of the growth of technology that helps monopolisation and increasing returns

to scale, we have become increasingly interdependent. That is the reason that we would like to again go into the issue of mainstreaming SSC into the UN system. It is a problem on both sides and both the sides are equally concerned as to how to go about it. Why did it happen? It happened because the growth of technology has outpaced the growth of the other supporting institutions that are required to support it. The social institutions, the political institutions, did not grow at that rate, given the rate at which the technology developed over the years. Along with that, if we take environmental institutions and ecological institutions, there is a threat to these environmental and ecological institutions as well because of technology.

He noted that the issue is to create a common platform where we can get a perspective of multilateralism. With the Territorial Security Council, we should start thinking about a Developmental Security Council in the UN system, where the issue of development would take the centre stage because territorial security is no longer a very important problem facing the world. But developmental security in terms of the existence of Homo sapiens has become a much more important issue today. All expert organisations, specialised organisations, can be brought under the umbrella of the Development Security Council, which can be created through a process of election. Actions by UNDP or the actions by FAO or the actions by ILO cannot be independent of one another. There is an improved necessity for greater coordination across these separate and different UN organisations.

In his response to questions, Dr Sebastian Haug questioned whether mainstreaming is a good idea. Another research finding is that many actors engage in various forms of cooperation which they do not call SSCT. Ongoing strategy and action plan processes at the UN Office for SSC is the key. The key is that UN member states get on board across North and South.

In the Q&A, Professor Paulo Esteves said that the most important thing in defining the SSC is to understand the politics behind the categories. When member states and UN entities are adopting these categories, they are intending to highlight the difference of the beneficiary country. This is important. When we do not adopt a category that discriminates between roles, we are thinking about our horizontal or equal partners. He contended that these countries are equal or have the same position. What has Brazil learned from any African country, or what any OECD donor has learned from any beneficiary? These countries are not equal. They do not occupy the same position. Therefore, their position should be understood. It is not saying that Brazil is exporting its own policies, but for Africa or Latin America,

it is completely different. Inspired by the Brazilian experience, the FFP was able to create a regional framework for school feeding, and several national frameworks for school feeding. He also said that a common definition for SSC is needed, a common definition to work through heterogeneity and variety. We can keep variety with a common definition. Second, there is need to think about the responsibilities of emerging powers of middle-income countries.

Weaving the Threads Together: Key Insights

In her concluding remarks, Dr Silke Weinlich made four key points. First, it is important to talk about the UN and the role of the Global South and SSC. Second, there is a need for transformation towards sustainable development. The biodiversity loss, climate change, inequalities, poverty are pressing problems. Therefore, all hands need to be on deck and insights gained from experiences in the Global South as much as from other countries is needed. Third, the UN and SSC should be discussed together while the UN has its flaws, as the only inclusive multilateral organization it is the only which can attempt to ensure all countries play according more or less to the same rules. Bringing in the perspectives of all countries everywhere, it should protect the weaker from the stronger and from those who do not obey the rules. So we need to invest into the United Nations. She highlighted that in her research together with colleagues, she has described the UN as a common good in itself, which suffers from collective action problems, which suffers from loss of trust. All countries and also other stakeholders need to invest into the UN to overcome some of its flaws, and to turn it into a better forum to tackle global problems. Fourth, the Southern actors have something to contribute, the northern actors have something to contribute and it is also important to cross the bridges and build alliances, which are important and which can really move things forward. In September 2021, the UN Secretary-General is expected to present his ideas on how to take forward UN reforms as an outcome of the political declaration at the occasion of the UN@75 anniversary. What kind of recommendations will he provide? It would be very interesting to discuss these and other recommendations and think about how we could really help turn the UN into the institution that the world needs.

Ambassador Nambiar argued that there are still large number of committed countries, particularly middle-income countries, which do still see the salience of multilateralism and multipolarity. In fact, new multilayered multilateralism is moving away from states to

constituencies of academia, youth, young entrepreneurs, business, etc. It is at the same time true that there is a major trust deficit and there is legitimacy problem. This is something which needs to be addressed. Gridlock through governance failures and government fragmentation cannot be afforded. Therefore, in many ways, we are looking at various institutions, including the UN to deliver. How, it gets mainstreamed or SSC gets mainstreamed, is difficult to say. Ambassador Nambiar also noted that the idea of development security is important. It is not only the technological growth that is outpacing other things, but it is also the new gaps, and the asymmetries, which have been created both within the developed world as well as within the middle-income countries. That itself is creating certain dilemmas, and certain kinds of traumas, which need to be resolved through some kind of a multilateral process, which addresses economic security. But he noted the questions whether it can be institutionalised within the UN system through a Developmental Security Council. Even the attitudinal prism of the United Nations and the developmental structures of the United Nations, which were in the past, looking at most TCDC and later on, SSC through the prism of the OECD are going to change now. There is no question that it will have to change. To some extent, the same old things of inclusivity, transparency, accountability and equality are coming into the picture; not just in terms of SSC, not just in terms of triangular cooperation, but also in terms of North-South.

Ambassador Nambiar was of the view that the development cooperation, new creature, has included the South in a big way has to actually be informed of the same norms; the same kind of principles, and the same values, which we have been talking about traditionally. That is the most important, takeaway you will probably get from both the larger picture as well as the more direct picture. The very differentiated impact the pandemic has had on the developed world and the developing world and the more vulnerable countries makes that amply clear for things like WTO waivers of intellectual property for drugs and vaccines and subsidies for small and medium enterprises. The South led value chains, South-South digital cooperation, all these things are self-evident; they have to be done. They eventually will come about irrespective of what the kind of the debates and the acrimonies that they will generate.

Finally, he argued that the developmental security must be seen, from the point of view of the most vulnerable countries. It is all right for us to talk about being able to maximise our developmental cooperation and triangular cooperation. But it is the same thing about Mahatma Gandhi who said that, when you look at a problem, you look at how

it will affect the poorest. I think it is important for us to use that same logic, that same prism to determine how we will deal.

In his concluding remarks, Professor Sachin Chaturvedi said that the United Nations is what the members are and everybody has emphasised the role that the members can play. The idea of SDGs is basically inclusion in the global order and inclusion is possible when the needed moral compass is retained. But moral compass has been lost in international relations in over the years. Those who are powerful, those who can contribute monetarily to the institution, and those who have muscle to get away with, have created disequilibrium for many others. This needs to be corrected. The South, even if in this part of inclusion effort, would also have to be responsible. Therefore, the South cannot be asking just for the territory and reclaiming the space. The South would have to be equally responsible when the opportunity is coming in.

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