



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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“INDIA AND THE VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT: DRIVING UNITY AND DEVELOPMENT”

“India and the Voice of Global South Summit: Driving Unity and Development”

This article covers “Daily Current Affairs” and topic details of the Third Voice of Global South Summit 2024.

SYLLABUS MAPPING:

GS-2: International Relations: Bilateral, regional, and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

FOR PRELIMS:

What is the Global South summit its key members and what is the Global South?

FOR MAINS:

What are the key outcomes of the Summit and India’s leadership role in the global south, the Significance of the global south, and its role in promoting south-south cooperation? What are the issues faced by the global south countries and Ways to make the global south cooperation more relevant to tackle the global challenges?

WHY IN THE NEWS?

India recently hosted the THIRD VOICE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT in virtual mode. Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposes a human-centric Global Development Compact to boost growth in the Global South. Moreover, the Prime Minister has called on the nations of the Global South to stand united in one voice to become each other’s strength. In his opening remarks on the 3rd Voice of the Global South virtual Summit today, the Prime Minister expressed concern about the current global atmosphere of uncertainty and challenges.



Third Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS):

The Third Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS), hosted by India, is a significant event focusing on empowering developing countries and addressing global challenges.

India's Vision: The summit reflects India's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family) and aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas' (Together with all, Development for all, Trust of all, and Effort of all).

Theme: "An Empowered Global South for a Sustainable Future." This theme underscores the goal of strengthening the capabilities and resilience of Global South countries to tackle shared issues and promote sustainable development.

Purpose: The summit aims to build on discussions from previous summits and address ongoing global challenges that disproportionately impact developing countries. Key issues include:

1. **Conflicts:** Addressing regional and international conflicts affecting stability.
2. **Food and Energy Security:** Ensuring that developing countries have access to necessary resources.
3. **Climate Change:** Finding ways to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Background:

A. Inaugural Summit: Held on January 12-13, 2023, virtually.

B. Second Summit: Took place on November 17, 2023, also virtually.

Goals and Impact

1. **Expand Discussions:** The summit aims to broaden the discussions on complex challenges faced by Global South countries and explore collaborative solutions.
2. **Empowerment:** Focus on empowering developing countries through shared knowledge, resources, and strategies.
3. **Global Policy Influence:** Incorporate insights and recommendations from the summit into global policy frameworks and discussions, including the G-20 agenda.

THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

ORIGIN: Initially, the world was divided into three categories: the "First World" (Western allies led by the United States), the "Second World" (the Soviet Union and its Eastern bloc satellites), and the "Third World" (developing and often newly independent nations). This classification, first conceptualized by French demographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952, highlighted a clear division between the affluent North and the less developed South.

EVALUATION: The term "Global South" was first coined by American writer and activist Carl Oglesby in 1969. In his writings for the Catholic journal *Commonweal* during the Vietnam War, Oglesby critiqued the dominance of the Northern Hemisphere over the global South, describing it as producing an "intolerable social order."

PRESENT CONTEXT: Today, the Global South is often associated with the Group of 77 (G77), a coalition of developing nations established in 1964 to advocate for economic interests and improve their negotiating power at the UN. The G77, now encompassing 134 countries, continues to use the term "Global South," and the UN has established various bodies, such as the Office for South-South Cooperation, to address their needs and aspirations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH:

1. Economic Impact and Trade Growth:

Shaping the global economy: Saskia Sassen examines the role of the Global South in global economic networks, particularly in labour markets and migration. She highlights how the Global

South is integral to understanding global inequalities and developing policies for more equitable global economic systems.

Contribution to Global Growth: Countries of the Global South have become increasingly significant in the global economy. As highlighted by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, these countries have contributed significantly to global economic growth, accounting for more than half of the world's economic expansion in recent years.

2. Knowledge Exchange and Innovation:

Capacity building: Amartya Sen, an economist and Nobel laureate, argues for the significance of the Global South in discussions about poverty, development, and human capabilities. He emphasizes that development should focus on expanding human capabilities and freedoms, with insights often coming from the experiences of the Global South.

Innovative Solutions: Countries in the Global South often develop innovative solutions to common problems. These solutions can be adapted and applied in other developing countries, fostering an environment of creativity and practical problem-solving.

3. Humanitarian and Development Assistance:

Emergency Response: Countries in the global south have proven effective in responding to emergencies and crises. The rapid deployment of medical and technical expertise from Southern countries can be critical in managing and mitigating the impact of disasters and health crises.

Development Projects: Numerous projects funded and implemented through South-South cooperation have addressed specific development needs, such as infrastructure development, healthcare improvement, and educational initiatives.

4. Challenging the global power structure:

Alternative model of development and democracy: Arundhati Roy emphasizes the importance of the Global South in challenging global power structures and advocating for alternative models of development and democracy. She argues that the Global South provides crucial perspectives on social justice and environmental sustainability that are often sidelined by Western-centric narratives.

Enhanced Diplomatic Relations: Collaborative projects and shared initiatives contribute to stronger diplomatic relations and partnerships among Southern countries, promoting peace and stability within regions.

5. Supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

Alignment with SDGs: South-South cooperation aligns with and supports the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The innovative ideas, energy, and ingenuity from Southern countries are crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in areas like poverty reduction, health, and education.

6. Driving Global Development: Manuela Boatcă's work focuses on the intersections of global capitalism and postcolonial theories, highlighting how the Global South navigates and resists global economic structures. She emphasizes the collective efforts of Southern countries are driving global development.

7. Cultural Preservation: Homi K. Bhabha continues to explore the cultural and political dynamics of the Global South, focusing on how postcolonial identities and experiences reshape global narratives. He argues that the Global South offers vital perspectives on cultural hybridity and resistance that challenge dominant Western paradigms.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE GLOBAL SOUTH COOPERATION:

1. NAM: The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has been a significant platform for the Global South since its inception in 1961.

2. United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC): Provides support and promotes South-South cooperation by facilitating exchanges and partnerships.

3. Group of 77 (G77): Advocates for the interests of developing countries and works to enhance cooperation among member states.

- 4. African Union (AU):** Strengthening the AU's role in facilitating trade, security, and political stability within Africa.
- 5. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN):** Enhancing cooperation on economic integration, regional security, and environmental sustainability.
- 6. Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC):** Promoting regional economic integration and addressing shared socio-economic challenges.
- 7. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa):** Enhancing collaboration on development projects and economic policies among member countries.

INDIA'S ROLE TO PROMOTE GLOBAL SOUTH COOPERATION:

- 1. Benevolent Geo-Strategy:** India's recent actions reflect a geo-strategy that integrates humanitarian values with strategic interests. For example, India's decision to export essential food grains during the global food crisis, following the Russia-Ukraine war, underscored its role as a stabilizer in global food security. This approach exemplifies India's commitment to addressing global challenges through benevolence and humanism, reinforcing its reputation as a "Vishwa Bandhu" (Global Friend).
- 2. Humanitarian Approach:** This perspective extends beyond mere realist strategies of power politics to include ideational contributions that address global concerns and promote cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's characterization of India as "Viswa Bandhu" aligns with this view, highlighting a diplomatic stance that prioritizes global solidarity and assistance.
- 3. Geo-Cultural Diplomacy:** India's stature as a "Viswa Guru" reflects its role as a global leader in promoting cultural and spiritual values. The strategic use of geo-cultural diplomacy is evident in various international engagements, such as the restoration of the Pashupatinath Temple in Nepal, the gifting of sacred relics, and the establishment of a Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. These actions are rooted in India's ancient spiritual and cultural ethos, including principles like "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family) and the Rig Vedic call for noble thoughts from all corners of the world.
- 4. India's Growing Political Influence:** India's rise as a global power is also marked by its growing geopolitical influence. The country has demonstrated leadership in addressing global crises, such as advocating for humanitarian assistance in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and promoting peace in West Asia. India's active role in multilateral organizations, including the UN, Quad, SCO, and BRICS, reflects its expanding geopolitical reach.
- 5. Geo-Economic Influence:** Economically, India's robust growth trajectory, despite global recessions, enhances its status as a geo-economic player. With projections indicating India's rise to the third-largest economy by 2027, its increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and significant consumer market further solidify its economic influence. India's participation in global trade initiatives and connectivity projects, such as the International North-South Transport Corridor and the Chabahar Project, demonstrates its commitment to enhancing global trade and connectivity.

ISSUES HINDERING COOPERATION AMONG GLOBAL SOUTH COUNTRIES:

Economic Disparities and Resource Gaps

Uneven Development: Significant economic disparities exist among Global South countries. Wealthier nations within the Global South, such as Brazil or South Africa, may have different priorities and capacities compared to less developed countries.

Resource Constraints: Limited financial and technological resources can impede the ability of poorer countries to engage in and benefit from cooperative initiatives.

Political and Institutional Challenges

Political Instability: The recent Bangladesh incident is a sign of political instability. Some countries face political instability and governance issues, which can disrupt cooperative efforts and undermine trust among partners.

Institutional Weaknesses: Weak institutional frameworks and limited capacity for effective policy implementation can hinder collaborative projects.

Diverse Priorities and Objectives

Conflicting Interests: Countries may have differing national priorities and objectives, making it challenging to align goals and strategies for cooperation.

Regional Focus: Regional conflicts and rivalries can also impact the willingness and ability of countries to cooperate on broader South-South initiatives.

Lack of Coordination and Communication

Fragmented Efforts: Efforts and initiatives are often fragmented, with limited coordination between countries, which can dilute the impact and effectiveness of cooperative actions.

Communication Barriers: Language differences, varying levels of technological infrastructure, and limited communication channels can hinder effective dialogue and collaboration.

Limited Access to Technology and Innovation

Technological Gaps: Differences in access to technology and innovation can create disparities in the ability to participate in and benefit from collaborative projects.

SUGGESTION TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH:

Address Structural Inequalities: Jomo Kwame Sundaram highlights the need to address structural inequalities that exist among Global South countries. Cooperation efforts should include mechanisms to reduce disparities and ensure that all participating countries can benefit equally from collaborative initiatives.

Strengthen Regional Integration: Encourage regional integration efforts that build on existing regional frameworks and agreements to enhance cooperation and coordination among neighboring countries.

Focus on Human Development: Amartya Sen emphasizes the importance of focusing on human development and capability enhancement rather than just economic growth. He suggests that South-South cooperation should prioritize improving education, health, and overall well-being, which can enhance the effectiveness of collaborative efforts.

Promote Inclusive Growth: Encourage policies that ensure inclusive growth, so that the benefits of cooperation are widely shared among different segments of society, reducing inequalities and fostering more sustainable development.

Promote Social Economy Initiatives: Jean-Louis Laville advocates for incorporating social economy approaches in South-South cooperation. This means focusing on cooperative models, social enterprises, and community-driven initiatives that align with the needs and priorities of local populations.

Enhance Collaborative Networks: Build and strengthen networks of civil society organizations and grassroots groups across Global South countries to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaborative projects.

Enhance Technological and Knowledge Transfer: Promote the transfer of technology and knowledge between countries in the Global South to build capacities and foster innovation. This includes establishing platforms for sharing best practices and successful experiences.

Ways suggested by the Indian PM: In his closing address of the Summit, Prime Minister Modi emphasized the necessity of a Global Development Compact, advocating for a human-centric approach to development. He underscored the importance of setting priorities that are multi-dimensional and sensitive to issues like debt sustainability and the overall progress of countries.

CONCLUSION

As India continues to leverage its strengths and foster international partnerships, it plays a pivotal role in advancing the collective interests of the Global South and promoting a more inclusive and

equitable global order. The recent virtual summit underscores India's unwavering commitment to the Global South and its foreign policy principle of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family).

PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. Consider the following organizations/ groupings:

1. Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
 2. BRICS Group
 3. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)
 4. G4 Group
 5. Uniting for Consensus (UfC) India is a member of how many above-given organizations/ institutions?
- A. Only two
B. Only three
C. Only four
D. All five

ANSWER: B

MAINS QUESTION

India's foreign policy is based on the integration of humanitarian values, cultural diplomacy, and geopolitical strategy and these principles contribute to advancing the collective interests of the Global South and promote a more inclusive and equitable global order. Analyze with examples. (250 words 15 marks)

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