

Special Lecture Series on the Global South

DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence initiated its inaugural lecture as a part of its ‘Special Lecture Series on the Global South’ on 25 April 2025 at RIS. Dr. Amrita Narlikar



delivered the inaugural lecture. Professor Sachin Chaturvedi; DG RIS welcomed the participants at this new endeavour launched by RIS and led by DAKSHIN. He laid out the DAKSHIN's vision of sharing India's development experiences and perspectives with fellow developing and partner countries as an outcome of India's commitment at the Voice of the Global South Summit during India's G20 presidency. He noted that agriculture, health and digital solutions have been identified as sectors whose development experiences are to be shared with the partner countries. He acknowledged the importance of bringing in evidence-based research that can be theorized for shaping an understanding of the Global South. He asserted the importance of academics in devoting more attention to this process besides observing the rhetoric of the diplomatic and political community regarding the Global South at various multilateral platforms. He, thus, urged DAKSHIN to garner efforts to involve more academicians who can contribute to theorizing this process by knitting the right evidences together. He acknowledged that such efforts are all the more needed vis-à-vis the changing geopolitical landscape manifesting itself in forms such as the demise of Washington Consensus, monopolization of supply chains, etc. He lauded India's efforts in institutionalizing its development process during the last ten years through Aadhar-enabled e-payment services, UPI, digital public infrastructure, and new concepts of development like LiFE

(Lifestyle for Environment). He further highlighted the importance of bringing new issues such as social equity and incorporating and theorizing concepts such as access, equity and inclusion-related issues in the developmental framework to uphold harmony and coexistence in the Global South. He noted the prominence of the report prepared by N.K. Singh and Larry Summers that re-defines and articulate a roadmap for the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), ensuring access to capital for the Global South countries and saving them from indebtedness. He concluded by applauding the efforts made by DAKSHIN in reaching out and entering into MOUs with multiple think-tanks across the Global South, thereby, further enriching this network.

Ambassador Kanwal Sibal in his remarks as the Chair observed that the Global South is a relatively contemporary theme compared to concepts such as developed, developing and least-developed countries. He noted the importance of India's G20 presidency as a monumental success with the leaders' declaration upholding the narrative of the Global South. However, given the changing nature of the contemporary geopolitical landscape and divergences within the Global South countries, he underscored the importance of making efforts that would uphold the momentum of development in the Global South countries.

This was followed by the keynote lecture delivered by Dr. Amrita Narlikar on 'When the Tables Turn: The Global South in an Era of Instability'. She initiated her talk by complimenting RIS's role as an imminent part of Task Force 3 - 'LiFE, Resilience, and Values for Wellbeing'; Think Twenty 20 (T20) during India's G20 presidency and the institution's efforts in conceptualizing the Global South followed by the commencement of DAKSHIN. Following this, she noted that her definition of the Global South includes countries that are part of Asia (excluding China), Africa, Latin America and the Middle East which share a history and experience of colonialism and deprivation; such that their collective agenda lies in reforming/rebooting of global governance institutions for a seeking a more equitable distribution of global resources. She underscored that just like the Western countries and the European Union are distinct in terms of ideologies, and their economic and political spectrum, the Global South is also not a monolith with the middle-income economies still lagging in terms of development. However, she pointed out that despite this diversity within the Global South, it remains united in voicing its concerns for the development of its masses. She further stressed that it assumes importance for the global community to consider the narrative of the Global South that upholds the concerns of priorities of the developing countries instead of pursuing concerted attempts to dismiss this concept. Following this, the lecture pivoted around four focal points; outlining the contemporary global challenges that affect all countries; and which not only magnify differences among the Western countries but also perpetuate a North-South divide in terms of their perception and approaches, noting the lacuna in governance systems that shape global policies, the improved bargaining position of the Global South nations given their unique heritage, culture and ideologies, and the timely actions that need to be pursued by the Global South nations for their development by leveraging the contemporary developments in transformative geopolitical landscape. She also observed that old mechanisms of global governance have also failed in promising a fairer world to global biodiversity and species other

than human beings. She, thus, noted that given the declining efficacy of global governance institutions, it is pertinent to give space to the voices in the Global South as agenda-setters and balancers for a fairer, inclusive global order. Given the tensions in Trans-Atlantic relationships and between the United States and China, she pointed out that it is timely for the Global South countries to boost connectivity, interoperability and, harmonizing standards, norms and values. Her lecture concluded by outlining that given the contemporary tensions in the global tariff regime and the weaponisation of interdependencies, time remains for researchers and policymakers in universities and think-tanks to make meaningful contributions that remain bereft of Western political thought and ideologies and resort to ideologies and concepts such as the South-South cooperation. Such practices would ensure that the priorities of the Global South are not dissolved by placing alternative Southern viewpoints in focus. She urged practitioners to move out of their technocratic silos, and disciplinary comfort zones to ensure that policy formulation remains informed with the embracing of diversities of countries and academic disciplines that would reshape and re-scope global governance and forge new partnerships and alliances.

The lecture was followed by a series of engaging discussions and questions by the audience and participants. Ambassador Kanwal Sibal appreciated the role of the Voice of the Global South Summit and India's G20 presidency regarding shaping the common priorities of the Global South in the face of cross-cutting issues; unlike the past G20 presidencies. However, he also noted that there are existing divergences within the Global South countries. He also touched upon the evolving contemporary security landscape in the West and the challenge of the reformation of the global governance systems including the international finance systems. The programme concluded with Professor Gulshan Sachdeva; Chief Coordination, DAKSHIN thanking the speakers, Chair and the participants for such a wholesome discussion at the inaugural lecture series of DAKSHIN.