

DAKSHIN Events

Dialogue with the Ambassadors of the Global South



The inaugural session of DAKSHIN's "Dialogue with the Ambassadors of the Global South" marked an important beginning in facilitating mutual learning and cooperation among countries of the Global South. Prof. Gulshan Sachdeva, Chief Coordinator, DAKSHIN, in his introductory remarks emphasized that the initiative is not merely about promoting India's development story, but about engaging in serious exchanges of ideas and experiences with other countries from the Global South. Following this, he provided a background about the inception of the centre, its vision and mandate. He further elaborated on the different verticals of the centre, its major activities and its growing collaboration network with other think tanks and research institutes of the Global South. He mentioned that the choosing Egypt as the first partner in this dialogue series was deliberate given the relationship between both the nations is rooted in civilisational exchanges

dating back over 4,000 years. Recent years have seen continued high-level engagements, establishment of strategic partnership as well as collaborations under multilateral forums like BRICS and G20. Egypt is seen as a natural partner for India in shaping the future of Global South cooperation.

Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, in his remarks as the Chair, underlined the critical need for the Global South to unite in a rapidly changing and uncertain international environment. From the COVID-19 pandemic to ongoing conflicts in Europe and West Asia, the global order is increasingly defined by instability. These crises disproportionately affect developing countries whether through rising energy costs, food insecurity, debt burdens, or disrupted supply chains. In this context, he stressed that countries of the Global South must come together not just to share their development experiences, but also to assert their collective voice on global platforms. India, he noted, has taken a leadership role in this regard by convening the Voice of the Global South Summits during its G20 Presidency, and by securing African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member.

Ambassador Kamel Zayed Galal, the Ambassador of Egypt to India noted that the Global South must come together, not just in response to geopolitical challenges, but also anchored firmly in its own principles. He cautioned against aligning solely on the basis of shifting national interests, urging instead a principled solidarity rooted in historical experience, shared values, and the long struggle against injustice. He began with a powerful quote from the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead which they consider as the Book of Life, underscoring the importance of self-awareness, imagination, and cause-effect thinking in development. Egypt, he explained, has long drawn on its civilizational legacy and historical lessons in pursuing national development. He then traced the evolution of Egypt's development journey across distinct phases. The first began after the 1952 revolution, focused on institution-building in the context of Cold War politics. The second phase followed the 1973 Yom Kippur War, after which Egypt negotiated peace with Israel and sought regional stability. The third phase, beginning in the 1980s, was marked by the rise of religious and sectarian regional actors. In the 1990s, Egypt embarked on liberal economic reforms that achieved high growth but failed to trickle down to the majority, contributing to the unrest of 2011 and 2013. He observed that since the election of President El-Sisi in 2014, Egypt has launched an ambitious and transformative reform agenda. These reforms aimed to address macroeconomic instability,

attract investment, increase resilience to external shocks, and lay the foundations for inclusive growth. The reform programme has focused on six key pillars: strengthening governance, improving the business climate, labour market reforms, human capital development, productive diversification, and financial inclusion. The ambassador elaborated on Egypt's large-scale infrastructure and connectivity projects, which aim to unlock the full potential of its geography and population. Only 6 percent of Egypt's territory lies along the Nile, which witnessed historically concentrated economic activity. The government has responded with projects like the New Administrative Capital and an expansive highway and rail network to integrate the country's regions and reduce geographic inequities. These domestic investments are tied to broader regional integration efforts, including trade corridors linking the Mediterranean and the heart of Africa, modernization of the Suez Canal, and regional energy partnerships with countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Cyprus, and Greece.

Ambassador Galal also emphasized that digitalisation is another core theme in Egypt's development approach. Through initiatives like Digital Egypt, the government is transforming governance and service delivery. Digital infrastructure investments—such as data centers and submarine cable landing stations—are also positioning Egypt as a key data and communication hub between Africa, Asia, and Europe. These investments are about more than just economic growth; they reflect a commitment to building a future-ready, inclusive, and participatory development model.

He concluded by reaffirming Egypt's belief in South-South Cooperation as a foundational principle of its foreign policy—not one driven by charity or conditionality, but by partnership, equality, and mutual respect. Through this dialogue, both sides agreed that in an era of fractured geopolitics and contested global institutions, the Global South must assert its voice. Egypt and India, with their rich civilizational legacies and modern reform experiences, can together lead this transformative journey for the Global South.