



Global South Matters

DAKSHIN

Global South Centre of Excellence

23 May-29 May, 2025

IN FOCUS

FASTAG: India's Digital Public Infrastructure for Vehicles

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India has many categories of roads such as national highways, state highways, expressways, district roads, rural roads and many others. About two decades ago, most of these roads did not have tolls, i.e., one need not have to pay to drive on those roads. However, with the advent of “Public Private Partnership” (PPP) model where private enterprises were allowed to collect toll from vehicles that pass on these roads, while maintaining these roads, for a number of pre-determined years per segment of the road, There were also “Build Operate Transfer” (BOT) contracts between Government of India (GoI) and private enterprises. Under these contracts private enterprises could build roads, maintain and collect tolls from vehicles for a pre-determined duration and then transfer the operations of the road to the GoI. So, these private enterprises were in effect “toll operators”.

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Key Developments in the Global South



IFAD Calls for Inclusive Investments and an Increase in South-South Cooperation

The UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) played a prominent role at the II Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security, Fight Against Hunger and Rural Development conference, held in Brasilia this week. The Fund's Vice President, Gerardine Mukeshimana, emphasized that sharing practical, locally adapted, and sustainable solutions among countries with similar contexts, or South-South cooperation, is one of the most effective ways to transform rural areas and empower rural communities. It also presents an opportunity for multilateral development institutions to evolve and scale up solutions.

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Tanzania's Foreign Policy Launch Strengthens South-South Cooperation

Tanzania's new Foreign Policy framework, which was recently launched in Dar es Salaam calls for deeper Afro-Latin American solidarity and cultural diplomacy. It highlights the historical ties and shared development priorities between Tanzania, Brazil, and Cuba. The policy was launched on 19 May during an event officiated by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan. The launch was also attended by Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, members of the Diplomatic Corps, senior government leaders and representatives from the private sector.

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Brazil Strengthens Agricultural Cooperation with Africa

The Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAPA) has officially opened nine new markets across Africa, primarily in agricultural technology, embryo transfer, live animals, and genetic material. The announcement was made during the closing ceremony of the II Brazil-Africa Dialogue on Food Security, the Fight Against Hunger, and Rural Development, held this Thursday (May 22) at the Itamaraty Palace in Brasília. Eight of the new markets are with Benin, covering the export of live cattle and buffalo, in vivo and in vitro bovine and buffalo embryos, bovine and buffalo semen, hatching eggs, day-old chicks, swine semen, Brachiaria grass seeds (*Brachiaria* spp.), and apples. Another market was opened with Senegal for the export of bovine and buffalo embryos.

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Angola and Brazil Sign Six New Bilateral Cooperation Agreements

Angola and Brazil signed six agreements on May 24, 2025, to strengthen bilateral ties. The deals span human rights, agriculture, energy, and security cooperation. Bilateral trade reached \$1.2 billion in 2023, with potential for further growth. Following his official visit to Brazil, Angolan President João Lourenço signed six cooperation pacts on May 24, 2025, alongside Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, marking another milestone in strengthening bilateral ties between Luanda and Brasília. The first memorandum of understanding was reached between Brazil's Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship and Angola's Ministry of Social Action, Family, and Woman Promotion, aiming to promote

good practices for the rights of people with disabilities, leprosy patients, as well as children and adolescents.

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Ethiopia and Brazil Advance Strategic Partnership

Ethiopia and Brazil are intensifying bilateral cooperation across key sectors including innovation, aviation, and agriculture, following high-level engagements led by Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister Temesgen Tiruneh during an official visit to Brazil. On the sidelines of the visit, the Deputy Prime Minister met with the Vice President of Brazil to discuss expanded cooperation in trade, agriculture, investment, and manufacturing. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to strengthen bilateral ties, with a particular focus on agricultural collaboration.

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IWMI Signs Agreements with Western African Partners

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) announced two strategic partnerships that will significantly enhance water security, climate resilience, and policy innovation across West Africa and the Sahel. IWMI signed a five-year agreement with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission to enhance governance of transboundary water resources across ECOWAS member states. This partnership aims to co-develop digital tools for drought and flood forecasting, promote knowledge and data exchange through regional platforms, and support biodiversity conservation and agrifood system resilience.

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WHO Thanks India for Support to Pandemic Accord

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) has thanked India for its commitment and support to the historic Pandemic Accord. After three years of negotiations, the Agreement was adopted by consensus by member countries of the WHO at the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva this week. India is also a signatory to this treaty, which has been in talks since the Covid-19 outbreak, which killed millions of people worldwide. The treaty aims to bridge global healthcare gaps and inequities in case of future pandemics. Addressing the WHA, via videoconferencing, PM Modi said the WHO Pandemic Treaty is a shared commitment that requires greater global cooperation.

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African Union and WHO Renew Strategic Partnership

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the African Union (AU) Commission renewed their longstanding strategic partnership today with the signing of an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva. This renewed agreement reaffirms the joint commitment to advancing health security, universal health coverage, and sustainable development across the African continent at a time of unprecedented financial challenges in the global health landscape. Building on the foundation of the 2019 MoU, the renewed agreement streamlines and strengthens collaboration across all AU entities.

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African Countries Commit to Strengthen Cross-Border Health Collaboration

Twelve African countries have joined hands to facilitate stronger cross-border collaboration to respond, prevent and control disease outbreaks. The continent has recorded over 16,398 confirmed mpox cases and 1,180 deaths in 22 countries as of February 10, 2025. “Epidemics do not have borders, hence the need to reinforce cross-border collaboration and coordination. An agreement is therefore critically important to drive political momentum, reinforce the enabling environment and strengthen governance,” said Dr Linda Mobula, World Bank Senior Health Specialist in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

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Egypt and Sudan Discuss Health Cooperation

Dr. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health and Population, met with Dr. Haitham Awadalla, Sudan's Minister of Health, to explore opportunities for joint cooperation in the health sector between the two countries. This meeting took place on the sidelines of the second edition of the World Conference on Population, Health, and Human Development (PHDC24), held under the patronage of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, with the theme “Human Development: For a Sustainable Future” in the new administrative capital. Additionally, the meeting reviewed potential collaborations in pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical production.

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African Health Ministers Seek Ways to Bolster Polio Outbreak Response

African health ministers gathered today to seek ways of ramping up measures to halt the outbreak of Wild Poliovirus Type 1 in southern Africa, where the virus has been detected in two countries and a large-scale multi-country vaccination

campaign is underway. The ministers from Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe met on the side-lines of the 22—28 May World Health Assembly in Geneva with World Health Organization (WHO) officials, representatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rotary International and UNICEF. They discussed the recent wild polio outbreaks as well as the ongoing efforts to end vaccine-derived poliovirus in Africa.

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Nigeria Vows Support for Equitable Digital Infrastructure

The federal government has expressed its commitment to supporting a robust and equitable digital infrastructure landscape across West Africa and emphasised the need for Africa to leverage the internet to strengthen our economies and achieve a digital future that is resilient, inclusive, and safe. Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani, who stated this at the West Africa Internet Governance Forum 2025 on Friday in Abuja, observed that in an era where digital technologies are transforming every facet of life, resilience, inclusivity, and safety are no longer optional — they are essential.

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Kazakhstan, Rwanda Boost Bilateral Relations

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev described Rwandan President Paul Kagame's visit to Kazakhstan as historic, marking the start of a new chapter in relations. Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Murat Nurtleu met with Rwandan Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Olivier Nduhungirehe, to discuss cooperation in trade, logistics, the defense industry, and digitization. Kazakhstan also proposed organizing mutual trade missions to encourage business contacts and promote direct interaction between chambers of commerce.

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Chad Seeks to Bolster Its Digital Infrastructure

Landlocked Chad aims to reduce reliance on Cameroon for international internet access

- Plans include new IXPs and regional redundancy links with Algeria, Libya, and Nigeria
- Connectivity disruptions and infrastructure gaps underline urgency of reforms

Chad, a landlocked country, largely relies on Cameroon for its international connectivity. This heavy dependence comes with several other challenges that impact the quality of telecom services in the country. Chadian

authorities are planning initiatives to strengthen the digital infrastructure to improve frequently disrupted connectivity. Chad plans to establish Internet Exchange Points (IXPs) in major cities to enhance local accessibility and reduce latency.

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Malawi Nears Full Scale Digital ID Rollout

The government disclosed these plans recently during the ID4Africa 2025 AGM in Ethiopia. In a session that was dedicated to country progress reports on identity, the Principal Secretary of Malawi's National Registration Bureau (NRB), Mphatso Sambo, presented a detailed explanation of the country's identity journey, noting the road covered and the activities lined up. Malawi's road to an inclusive digital services ecosystem is underpinned by a strong legal ID adoption trend, with 12.5 million citizens already enrolled for a national ID, representing almost 100 percent of the total eligible population.

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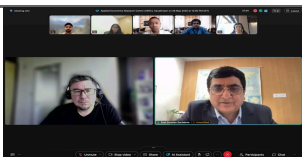
DAKSHIN Network and Collaborations



DAKSHIN Participates in a Workshop at the The Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance

DAKSHIN at RIS joined the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town in an international conference held at Cape Town, South Africa on 26-27 May 2025 to discuss mutual supportiveness of trade and sustainability as South Africa heads towards the final months of its G 20 Presidency.

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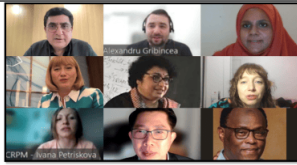


Meeting with Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC)

DAKSHIN Team and Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC), Kazakhstan had a successful online meeting on 28 May 2025. Professor Gulshan Sachdeva; Chief Coordinator, DAKSHIN initiated the meeting by providing a background about the inception of the centre and its vision and mandate. He highlighted that DAKSHIN's role in conducting workshops on emerging issues such as circular economy, digital public infrastructure, and gender-led development, and facilitating technology transfer by inviting proposals from other countries of the Global South. Following this, Mr Zhanybek Aigazin; General Director, Applied Economics Research Centre (AERC) gave a brief presentation about the institute. He pointed out that rural development, limited progress of the small and medium enterprises, fiscal deficit and increasing fiscal expenditure are some of the contemporary challenges that Kazakhstan needs to address in order to steer clear of the middle-income trap. Further, he also expressed that the institute is also willing to share their developmental reforms and experiences with other countries too. Professor Gulshan Sachdeva concluded the meeting by expressing that a virtual workshop/webinar could be conducted on the issue of middle-income trap by DAKSHIN and AERC; this could also

include other think-tanks from Central Asia and the Global South. Following this, both the delegation agreed to sign Letter of Association (LoA) in order to formalize their association.

DAKSHIN Events



Workshop “Strengthening Gender-Responsive Budgeting in the Global South”

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a powerful tool for promoting equity, accountability, and inclusive development. Recognizing this DAKSHIN-Global South Centre of Excellence, RIS, India and Center for Research and Policy Making (CRPM), Macedonia jointly organized a workshop on Strengthening Gender-Responsive Budgeting in the Global South.

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