



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**GLOBAL SOUTH: FROM THE 'FRONT
ROW' OF CRISES TO THE 'FRONT ROW'
OF DECISION-MAKING**

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Context

- Recently, At the 81st UNGA, the External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India highlighted the Global South's disproportionate exposure to global crises and called for greater representation in international decision-making.

About the Global South & India's Perspective

- The **Global South** broadly refers to developing and emerging countries of **Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and parts of Oceania**.
- It is not a homogeneous political bloc; its members differ in economic capacity, strategic interests and political systems.
- The **developing countries** are increasingly important to the world economy, but the **principal institutions** of global governance continue to reflect the **power distribution of the post-World War II era**.
- India views the Global South through the principles of **strategic autonomy, developmental partnership, inclusive multilateralism and South-South cooperation**.
 - The **Voice of Global South Summit (2023)** was attended by **representatives of 125 countries** and was an opportunity for the developing countries to voice issues before **India's G20 Presidency**.
- India advocates '**reformed multilateralism**', a system that is more representative, inclusive and responsive.

Significance of the Global South

- Global Governance:** Developing countries constitute the numerical majority of UN members, but the **UN Security Council (UNSC) has only five permanent members**, all reflecting the geopolitical realities of 1945.
 - Greater representation of **Africa, Asia and Latin America** is therefore central to making global institutions more legitimate.
 - The **G4 (India, Brazil, Germany and Japan)** continue to advocate UNSC reform.
- Global Economy:** Developing economies are increasingly important drivers of global growth, commerce and investment.
 - South-South trade and investment** has increased dramatically in recent decades and has generated new economic ties outside traditional North-South relationships.
- Development and Global Public Goods:** The Global South has a major stake in areas including **climate change, energy security, food security, health, digital public infrastructure, AI and technology access**.
 - For example, climate shocks might be more costly to development for fragile economies.

Major Issues Facing the Global South

- Geopolitical Conflicts:** Wars and geopolitical tensions are disrupting food, fertiliser, oil and shipping lines, and disproportionately impacting import-dependent developing countries.
- Fragmented Globalisation:** Developing countries can find their access to markets, technology and essential inputs restricted by rising trade barriers, sanctions and supply-chain disruptions.
- Energy Insecurity:** Industrialisation requires cheap and reliable energy, which developing countries lack. Development can be undermined by political manipulation of energy supplies and costs.
- Climate Vulnerability:** Much of the developing world has contributed little to past emissions but is exposed to significant developmental risks from climate change.

- **Weak Representation:** Institutions like **UNSC and Bretton Woods institutions** were designed in a totally different geo-political background.
 - ♦ Reform moves slowly, despite changes in the global economic and demographic situation.
- **Fragmentation Within South:** Divisions between large developing economies, least-developed countries, small island states and commodity exporters can make collective bargaining difficult.

Role of UNGA in South-South Cooperation

- The **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** provides a global platform for developing countries to together voice their interests and deepen **South-South Cooperation (SSC)**.
 - ♦ The United Nations observes **International Day** for South-South Cooperation on **September 12**.
- **Collective Voice:** Platforms like the **G77 and China** allow developing countries to coordinate positions on development, trade, climate and global governance.
- **Norm-Setting:** UNGA resolutions have increasingly acknowledged SSC as a vital tool for development and international cooperation.
- **Institutional Support:** The UN system, especially the **UN Office for South-South collaboration (UNOSSC)**, supports information transfer, capacity building and technical collaboration among poor nations.
- **BAPA Framework:** The **Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978)** and its follow-up, **BAPA+40 (2019)** are major frameworks for technical cooperation among developing countries.
- **Development Agenda:** The UNGA is a platform for promoting common priorities, such as the **SDGs, climate justice, food and energy security, access to technology and development finance**.
- **Greater Representation:** Developing countries use the large membership of the UNGA to argue for **reformed multilateralism** including reformation of the UNSC and international financial institutions.
- **Coalition-building:** Groups such as **G77, NAM, BRICS** and regional groupings can utilise UNGA negotiations to generate wider support for Global South agendas.

Role of G20

- The G20 provides an important platform linking developed and developing economies.
- During **India's 2023 Presidency**, the **African Union was admitted as a permanent G20 member**, strengthening representation of the developing world.

BRICS

- BRICS has emerged as a major platform for South-South cooperation. Its **New Development Bank (NDB)** provides an alternative source of development finance, while BRICS expansion has widened participation from emerging economies.

India's Efforts for the Global South

- India has increasingly tried to function as a **bridge between the developing world and global institutions**.
- At the virtual inauguration of the **Voice of Global South Summit in 2023**, representatives from 125 countries came together to define common developmental priorities.
- During its **G20 Presidency in 2023**, India secured the permanent inclusion of the **African Union in the G20**, therefore bolstering the voice of developing countries.
- India has used platforms like **BRICS, IBSA, G20 and the G4** to push for a larger voice for the developing countries.
- India has facilitated South-South cooperation through development partnerships, **Lines of Credit, capacity-building and technology cooperation**.
- India's focus on **Digital Public Infrastructure, inexpensive pharmaceuticals, climate-resilient development, and disaster-resilient infrastructure** gives possible blueprints for larger collaboration.
- The ongoing diplomatic interaction includes **AI, space, health sciences, energy and connectivity** through initiatives like the India-UAE-France trilateral and the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.

Way Forward: Towards a More Representative Global Order

- **Reform Global Institutions:** Reform of the UNSC should increase permanent and non-permanent representation and make the Council more representative of current geopolitical circumstances.
- **Strengthen South-South Cooperation:** Developing nations should strengthen cooperation in technology, healthcare, food security, energy, finance and resilient supply chains.
- **Democratisation of Global Finance:** The IMF, World Bank and other multilateral financial institutions need to be reformed to better represent current economic weights and the developmental requirements of poorer countries.
- **Safeguard Strategic Independence:** Diversify supply chains, energy sources, financial channels and communication networks to minimise over-reliance on individual geopolitical chokepoints for the Global South.
- **Build Solidarity Without Demanding Uniformity:** A stronger Global South doesn't need to become an exclusive bloc, but may make multilateralism more representative, equitable and successful.

Conclusion

- The problem is not just to give the Global South a louder voice, but to make sure that its concerns convert into **agenda-setting and decision-making power**.
- India contends that a stable and lawful international order needs institutions that reflect the realities of the 21st century and not the balance of power of 1945.

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Examine the challenges faced by the Global South and discuss India's role in making the global order more representative, inclusive and responsive.

Source: IE

