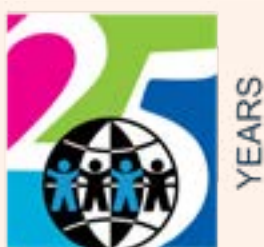


Report on

Reducing Development Inequalities through South-South Cooperation for a Sustainable Future in the post-COVID Arena - Virtual Webinar



Organised by



PUBLIC AFFAIRS CENTRE

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Preface

Public Affairs Centre (PAC) engages in action research focussing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the context of India. PAC is a not-for-profit Think Tank established in 1994 with a mandate to improve the quality of governance in India. The Centre is also a pioneer in deploying innovative Social Accountability Tools (SAT) to measure the quality and adequacy of public services. Over the years, its scope of work has expanded to include the whole gamut of research-advocacy-action to lead evidence-based research on governance across sectors, geographies, and populations in India.

PAC was one of the first civil society-led institutional initiatives to mobilise demand for good governance in India. Dr. Samuel Paul (Founder Chairman) was instrumental in establishing PAC with a select group of friends. PAC is registered under Karnataka Societies Registration Act 1960 as a Society.

Designing and Editing by: PEC

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While every effort has been made for the correctness of the data/information used in this report, neither the authors nor PAC accepts any legal liability for the accuracy or inferences for the material contained in this report and for any consequences arising from the use of this material.

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Background



The United Nations Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) had put out a Call on various themes under South South Ideas and Public Affairs Centre (PAC), was selected to prepare and present a paper on – Advancing alternative development paradigms under South South Cooperation taking up a case study on India’s Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation or the ITEC Programme. This development cooperation programme was instituted in 1964 by the Government of India with the idea to share development lessons that the country was imbibing. The idea was to develop relations with other developing countries on the basis of partnership and cooperation for mutual benefit. The paper assessed the usefulness of ITEC in the context of Global South progress and South South Cooperation. Referring to the ITEC programmes carried out with India’s neighbouring countries Nepal and Bangladesh, PAC arrived at a framework for assessment and concluded that there is a need to align such programmes to the development needs of the partner or recipient countries to meet with their national objectives and SDG Targets.

PAC in consultation with UNOSSC decided to place this paper in the broader context of addressing development inequalities among countries of the Global South, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19 that has set back the development trajectories of our countries by many years and the role that such programmes can play in mutualising risks and benefits.

Context

It is a well-known fact that economic prosperity is not evenly distributed not only between the Global North and the Global South but between countries in the latter as well. Two years of using precious resources to tackle COVID-19 has only worsened this economic disparity. Uneven rates of globalisation, technological advancement, and changes in allocation and policy implementation are all factors contributing to rising inequality within and between countries. Reduced inequality is regarded as a fundamental requirement for attaining inclusive and sustainable development, as intended by nations in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Prior to COVID-19, global poverty had been on a decreasing trend. According to projections by Brookings, the number of people living in severe poverty - defined as families with daily expenditures of less than \$1.90 in 2011 PPP terms - decreased from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 648 million in 2019 and was projected to reach 537 million by 2030. COVID-19 reversed this pattern. It is now predicted that long-term scarring will cause an additional 50 million people to live in severe poverty by 2030, bringing the total to 588 million people. (Homi Kharas & Dooley, 2021)

This follows the concern expressed by the United Nation the year before that the COVID-19 pandemic might raise global poverty by as much as half a billion people, or 8% of the world’s population, although pre-pandemic rates have been reduced by more than half since 2000. (1Nations, 2020). Given the pattern of changes in global poverty since the onset of COVID-19, it is unclear how this will influence the likelihood of upholding the pledge to “leave no one behind” in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. (Valensisi, 2020).

This would be the time for countries of the Global South to use South-South Cooperation Programmes similar to ITEC of India (on which PAC prepared a paper) to influence programmes practiced in countries following the same development trajectory so that there is mutual benefit with regard to reduction in poverty and improvement in the well-being of citizens.

In this panel discussion facilitated by Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a 27-year Think Tank working towards good governance, the panelists attempted to investigate the links between current social protection approaches and inequality in developing countries in the Global South, with a focus on political economy drivers and the role of actors and institutions in recent reform and implementation processes. The panellists will also shed light on key feasible practices such as mutualisation of knowledge and experience through programmes such as ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) to work towards an equitable and sustainable future.

¹ Homi Kharas, & Dooley, M. (2021, June 2). Long-run impacts of COVID-19 on extreme poverty. Brookings; Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2021/06/02/long-run-impacts-of-covid-19-on-extreme-poverty/>

² Nations, U. (2020). Ending Poverty | United Nations. United Nations; United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty>

³ Valensisi, G. (2020). COVID-19 and Global Poverty: Are LDCs Being Left Behind? The European Journal of Development Research, 32(5), 1535–1557. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-020-00314-8>

Introduction



Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander

Head- Policy Engagement and Communication,
Public Affairs Centre (PAC)

Dr. Annapoorna Ravichander, Head- Policy Engagement and Communication, Public Affairs Centre (PAC) and the Executive Director of PAC's sister concern, the Public Affairs Foundation (PAF) welcomed the panellists, observers as well as participants for the commencement of the virtual webinar on "Reducing Development Inequalities through South-South Cooperation for a Sustainable Future in the post-COVID arena".

"I know it's a good morning for many of you. Good afternoon, good evening, whichever zone you all are from. Thank you so much for joining us on behalf of all of us at the Public Affairs Centre. We will be bringing out two products here, one shall be a report and the other shall be a video. we will also be updating the meeting on all our social media platforms."

Opening Remark and setting the context

Dr Meena Nair is the Head of Research at PAC. Her area of work broadly deals with Social Accountability Tools (SATs) and their application to measure the government's quality through their services. Besides SATs, her research areas include policy analyses, service delivery issues and community engagement processes. Dr. Meena's expertise lies in small-scale interventions. She and her team work to understand if the recommendations PAC gives to the Government are both plausible and scalable.

She welcomed the panellists, observers and participants and set the context for the virtual meeting by providing insightful information about the work PAC has taken up and accomplished in the aspect of conducting this webinar to conceptualise the developmental sharings and cooperations of the south-south collaboration for a sustainable future post COVID arena.

"This webinar projects an important aspect of cooperation between countries to reduce developmental inequalities through platforms like the U.N Office of South South Cooperation that spans the countries of the global South."



Dr. Meena Nair

Head of Research,
Public Affairs Centre (PAC)

Dr. Meena briefed the panellists and audience members on the paper prepared and presented on the call directed by the UNOSSC for ease of South-South cooperation ideas for which the Public Affairs Centre was selected. The paper presented was on advancing alternative development on paradigm under South-South Cooperation for which a case study on Indian technical

and economic development was taken up. The paper assessed the usefulness of this programme in the context of global South progress and South-South Cooperation. This programme was carried out with our neighbouring countries Nepal and Bangladesh from which a framework of assessment was formulated. The conclusion to this research was the need to align such South-South Cooperation programmes to the developmental needs of our partners or recipient countries to meet their national objectives and SDGs target.

Next, Dr. Meena introduced the panellists and the observers -



Panellist 1:

Dr. Bitrina Diyamett is an Executive Director at the Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organisation (STIPRO), Tanzania, one of a few African organisations that carry out policy-oriented research in science technology and innovation. She has completed her Ph.D. in development studies from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) and was the Coordinator of Social Sciences research in Tanzania's Commission for Science and Technology. She has also worked as a Lecturer in Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Institute of Development studies.

Panellist 2:

Dr. Vaqar Ahmed is the Deputy Executive Director at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan. Earlier, he served UNDP as an Advisor and has undertaken assignments with the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and Ministries of Finance, Planning and Commerce in Pakistan. He was the Head of Macroeconomics Section in the Planning Commission of Pakistan, responsible for formulating annual, medium and prospective development programmes. He remained the Technical Associate and Member of the Task Forces, constituted by the Government of Pakistan, including the Advisory Panel of Economists (2008). He has published extensively in areas such as macroeconomic modelling, inclusive growth and infrastructure reforms, trade and taxation policies, regional trade agreements, trade in services, energy governance, border-related trade infrastructure, youth employment, women-led social enterprises and social safety nets.

Panellist 3:

Karin Fernando is a Senior Research Professional at the Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka. Her work revolves around designing and managing research and policy interventions around the topic of sustainable development and exploring the root causes and the scientific, socio-economic, and institutional processes and interlinkages that need to be understood to deal with the environment and poverty nexus. Previously, she was the Project Management Specialist at USAID. She was also the Communication Officer in Practical Action, formerly known as the Intermediate Technology Development Group, where she was involved in planning, implementing, and monitoring the projects under the Agro Processing Programme of the organisation. She has also written extensively on sustainability, climate change, social welfare, etc., in Sri Lanka.

Panellist 4:

Dr. Fahmida Khatun is currently the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh. She is also a Member of the High-level Advisory Board on Productive Capacities Index of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She taught Economics at universities in Bangladesh and England. She was also a Visiting Fellow at various research organisations in Norway, South Korea, and India. Dr. Fahmida is a part of various policy-making bodies of the government and non government organisations in Bangladesh and other countries. She was also a member of the Panel of Economists for the Eighth Five Year Plan (2021-25) of Bangladesh Planning Commission. She was a Director of Janata Bank Limited during 2008-2011, the second-largest state-owned bank of Bangladesh and a Director of the SME Foundation of Bangladesh.

Observer 1:

Dr. Chukwuka Onyekwena is an Executive Director at the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA). He has a degree in MSc Economics from the University of Kent and completed his PhD in Economics from University of Portsmouth, UK. He has also worked as a Research Director and Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA). He was a part-time Lecturer in the Department of Economics, University of Portsmouth, UK and worked as a Research Assistant in the Research Department of Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC).

Observer 2:

Leandro Echt is a Consultant, Evaluator and Researcher in International Development in Tallahassee, Florida. He is a Political Scientist with over 15 years of experience in the International Development and Public Policy fields, supporting the use of evidence in decision making and facilitating multi-stakeholder processes, with a focus on gender and equity. He has also worked with different Think Tanks, international organisations, NGOs, government agencies and political parties through programme evaluation and organisational assessments, capacity building and research projects. He was also a Senior Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Adviser at Rutgers International, Chair of the facilitators network International Support Group and Coordinator of the Influence, Monitoring and Evaluation Programme at the Argentinean Think Tank CIPPEC (Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth). He also teaches political science-related courses at the higher education level.



Audience

Dr Meena Nair also addressed the audience who registered for this Virtual Webinar to set forth the context to the notable panellists and observers. The audience mainly consisted of Academicians, Researchers and professionals from peer Think Tanks as well as UN Agencies.

“In the aftermath of COVID 19, which led to setbacks of developmental trajectories of our countries by many years, initiatives like developmental cooperation programmes can play an important role in neutralising the risks and benefits”

Putting forth the context, she initiated the dialogue with her first question for the panellists to address developmental inequalities among countries of the global South.



Question 1:

Post COVID-19, what are the challenges that your country / region faces in ‘Building Back Better’? Do international capacity building programmes help?



Panellist 1:



In response to the guiding question, **Dr. Bitrina** directed our views to the understanding of the nature of economies of the developing and least developed countries in the pre-COVID 19 era, which needs to be discussed as building back isn't the same for these developing and least developing countries. She mentioned that the need to be self-reliant was a major take back from this pandemic crisis when the developing countries were busy working in silos to gather evidence

to counter the pandemic forgetting the (other) developing countries. In certain least developing countries of Africa the contribution on knowledge intensive and manufacturing sectors is as low as 1 per cent compared to other well-off countries like Malaysia, which contributes up to 39 per cent for exports., she said, thus it becomes difficult to create employment in least developed and developing countries. So, Dr. Bitrina underlined that building back in context

to these countries means building back their economies so that the creativity and potential of the people can be utilised properly. She mentioned it can also be achieved by contributing and collaborating by the developing countries in enriching technology and innovation.

“When you look at the social and economic indicators of development, you find a correlation between the positive indicators and the export of knowledge-intensive products.”

“We all know that during the peak of the pandemic, every country, every region was on their own. We are saying that this is the time to collaborate, but it was the time countries were on their own. So, the lesson here is that being dependent is not good.”



Panellist 2:



Dr. Vaqar drew attention towards the perspectives related to the conditions of the government, which were under tremendous stress and were facing fiscal constraints, especially as most of the developing and least developed countries experienced tremendous setbacks, especially on the SDGs. He said these governments (in developing countries) attempted to first protect the people who were worst hit by the pandemic, especially during the lockdown, so they

(the governments) had to support these vulnerable groups and at the same time had to exhaust the fiscal capacities to sustain the economy while remaining in the state of shock and dealing with the pandemic and further provide them with subsidies and relief to move past the shock. He underlined how it became challenging for the governments to work on building back the economy of their countries as most of the revenue was exhausted by the time things became stable. In such a situation, Dr Vaqar pointed out the need for the active participation of the private sectors, which could not only support the industries and services sector but also help procure food resources and essential commodities amidst the world-wide inflation of oil prices and appreciation of the US Dollar against other currencies. Also, the requirement of South-South collaboration became imperative in supporting the exhausted government revenue to help each other build back and learn from each other.



"We thought that most of the social protection, which had been designed or put in place for Covid, would go away quickly. Subsidies will be rolled back eventually. But we are now seeing that due to the unprecedented inflation and there's so much political pressure on the government too, therefore they may not be able to roll the subsidies back."

Panellist 3:



Karin pointed out that similar challenges were faced by the global South nations. She underlined that though there might be cultural similarities, focussing on the diversities within these nations makes problems of these regions complex. She emphasised on the fact that with the experience of the pandemic, we, as the developing nations, need to learn a lot through sharing and collaborations in terms of adapting the strategies and policy interventions of other developing and

least developed countries, focusing on replicating the same things and learning about them. Karin mentioned that the outcome of this (South-South) collaboration and cooperation can also be sharing the resources available to the global South countries, where the conditions are similar making it more accessible and available to the people. She also pointed out the dependence of these developed countries on the natural resources which is similar in context to the developing countries and the impact of climate change which has adversely impacted the global South; climate change impacts the natural resources causing constraints over their availability. Karin said these collaborations can help in better management of transboundary resource sharing while at the same time it is important to emphasise on the issues specific to the global South. She also spoke about the partnership programmes, especially in the field of Agriculture, which the majority of developing countries depend on and highlighted that collaborative efforts on the basis of technological transfers help in growing the scope of Agriculture and curbing the inequalities of development faced by these developing countries against the developed countries. Such technological transfers not only help in eliminating the crisis but at the same time provide a long-term effect on the infrastructural as well as developmental aspects of the nations.

An important aspect of this discussion was that Karin emphasised on the need for proper monitoring and recording of the tangible outcomes of these capacity building programmes so that they can be well utilised, adapted and implemented according to challenges faced by the nations.

"If the resources are available for South- South Cooperation, where the conditions are similar, then they should also be more accessible and available to the people."

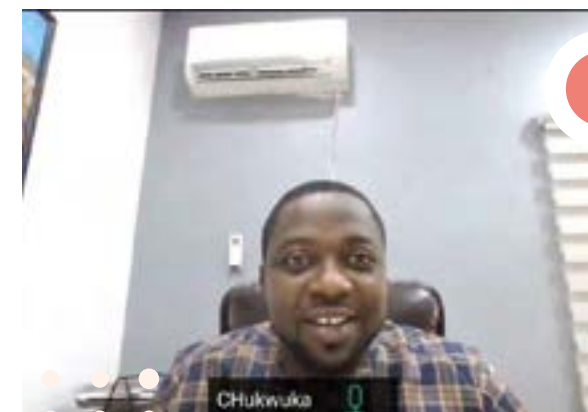
Panellist 4:



Dr. Fahmida spoke about the problems of global South such as majority of the population still living under the below poverty line and with the COVID conditions such vulnerable groups of people further exacerbated so the recovery steps for these countries with such unique problems faced a lot of challenges; a few of the challenges that she pointed out were: the problem of resource constraint, limited fiscal space, lack of a robust health system which has lead to health crisis and policymakers struggling to anticipate the implication of various policies as they are coherent with each other and the impact of one policy intervention on others, importance of institutional governance reforms, as it has important implications on resource allocations, the utilisation of these resources and access of those resources by the people who are left behind also addressing the perennial problem of adverse impacts of climate change faced by these countries belonging to the southern part of the world. A very important point forth by her was the pervasive effect of technology in creating inequality in terms of education within the global North and South which needs to be addressed.

"I would mention that the importance of institutional reform governance is imperative as they impact resource allocation, the utilisation of these resources and access of those resources by the people who are left behind."

Observer 1:



Dr. Chukwuka highlighted important points from the discussion of the above panellists and underlined the requirement to focus on international technical cooperation in certain areas such as managing Public Finances, ways of increasing Revenue, particularly the resource-dependent countries, the need to diversify their resources and proper management of these resources so that at times of crisis like COVID, vulnerable

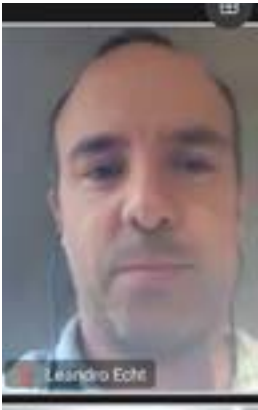


people can be well protected at the same rendering the necessary support of the governments to the economy of their countries. Dr. Chukwuka also pointed out the health crisis faced by the southern nations and the requirement to explore non conventional ways of dealing with potential inflation by focusing on the structural factors that lead to a rising prices on how to effectively tackle them.

“Ways of increasing revenue, particularly the resource dependent countries needs to diversify their resource management which the crisis taught.”



Observer 2:



Leandro conceptualised the topics and themes brought forth by the panelists by eliciting certain points such as the need to collaborate with the global South to provide support in terms of finances and relying on each other rather than completely relying on the northern part of the world. He also spoke about the need to share knowledge, especially knowledge intensive and technological assistance which became an important intervention especially mitigating the adverse impacts of the COVID crisis faced

by the world. He also emphasised on the role of the state in countering these issues along with the support of international collaborations which can help the already exhausted government and the importance of the private sectors in helping deal with constraints of revenue of the government of the developing nations.

“A private sector, especially in developing countries can provide solutions using the knowledge capacity and resources along with the state’s role.”

“Power relations between the global North and the global South needs to be analysed and how we can mitigate that and work around it.”

Key Highlights



- COVID-19 forced many countries to cope on their own and it became imperative post the pandemic to build self-reliance through building back their economies, but in a more collaborative manner by enriching technology and innovation.
- There is a need for continuous active participation of the private sectors to help procure food and essential commodities, the lack of which is still felt in many developing countries and SSC should support building back exhausted government revenues through G-to-G support systems.
- Technological transfers between countries can go a major way in curbing development inequalities with support through proper monitoring and recording of tangible outcomes that can measure the impact of such capacity-building programmes.
- Inequality in terms of access to resources to build robust health systems, institutional reforms, technology to address education and climate change need focused need-based capacity building programmes that find contextual solutions to managing public finances ...through international cooperation.



Dr. Meena Nair then initiated the dialogue with her second questions for the panellists.



Question 2:

How can we strengthen knowledge-sharing and use risks to face future challenges, like the recent pandemic?



Panellists:

■ **Panellist 1: Dr. Bitrina** reiterated the importance of knowledge sharing being an imperative step in the cooperation programmes of the global South. She also drew attention to the source of funding for these knowledge-intensive contributions, which are majorly controlled by the developed countries; hence, the priorities are set by these developed nations, overshadowing the requirements and contributions on these knowledge-based platforms by developing nations. The power play of the West when it comes to making important decisions with regard to research initiative is very critical as it reveals the undermining of the requirements of contextual research with respect to the concerns specific to the global South. South-South Cooperation requires economic cooperation in terms of pooling of resources and equity in access to knowledge sources such as research centres.

“The southern researchers are producing knowledge and the North decides because they are the ones who fund and determine what areas to be prioritised.”

■ **Panellist 2: Dr Vaqar** reiterated that knowledge can never be monopolised. It is imperative for the global South to collaborate on strategies and learning, especially in the context of countering the crisis of the pandemic. He stated that the best learning comes through adverse situations and each country has its own way of curating their solutions according to the context. So, it is very important to share and adapt to these best practices. He focused on the essential collaboration within academics and within governments and private institutions, he added, these factors positively impact the structural crisis of these southern nations. He emphasised on the need for Government-to-Government learnings, innovative roles that regional forums can play, with them also setting thematic focus points for countries to come together and share.

“These think tanks have a much bigger responsibility when we talk about knowledge sharing, which are focused on addressing aspects such as the post pandemic revival. It’s this knowledge collaboration role, which think tanks and others will have to play, as we move ahead.”

■ **Panellist 3: Karin** reiterated the need to make space for knowledge sharing, which is not only accessible to the online forums. She underlined that availability of these resources in different languages is also imperative in terms of enhancing the accessibility of these knowledge-based resources. She also talked about the importance of treatise at the same time emphasising the importance of focusing on the strategies to empower the mechanism to implement them as just the act of signing treatise and sharing knowledge would be fruitful until and unless it is backed by some evidence of problem-solving capabilities with respect to the issues concerning to the developing countries.

“Just having the knowledge is really not going to turn into a development impact. So, is there a way to actually push for programmes that are not just the capacity building component but also implementable and feasible in the context of the developing countries?”

■ **Panellist 4: Dr. Fahmida** emphasised on the need for the space required for enhancing and enriching the knowledge sharing among the southern parts of the world by eliciting certain areas which act as a bottleneck when it comes to collaboration and sharing of knowledge such as knowledge generation with respect to what is relevant in the context of the domestic issues as well as international alignment of these issues. She also spoke about the utilisation of these resources in a tangible way, the importance of the development of infrastructure within developing countries, initiatives like student exchange programmes can enrich the knowledge and databases. She reiterated the importance of partnership at the Think Tank level, Government to Government, and the inclusion of Private sectors.

“Knowledge is a driver of progress. But, on the other hand, it can also create inequity.”



Observers:

■ **Observer 2: Leandro** emphasised on the importance of learning the problems exclusive to the concerns related to the developing countries and mainstreaming the strategies used by these countries to tackle their issues. He also mentioned about the imperative roles of think tanks and current academia to document evidence-based data to record good governing practices – he encouraged collaboration among policymakers in policy interventions specific to the issues of developing countries.

“We should try to generate more equitable conditions in knowledge, production and monitoring.”



Key Highlights

- While there is inequity in knowledge production that is more concentrated in the Global North, developing countries of the Global South should have access to knowledge that matters to them. SSC should support knowledge generation in the Global South and help countries to pool resources for contextual application of that knowledge.
- G-to-G learnings especially in the areas of health care, social protection, disaster reduction should be brokered, and regional forums should be more innovative in providing platforms to do so with special thematic focuses over time to be able to deal with issues.
- Regional or country-level political economy can skew benefits but technological innovations backed by capacity building on technology application and reduce mutual risks.
- Strong support for knowledge generation, building capacities to utilise the knowledge, through institutions such as Centres of Excellence where there is an exchange of knowledge between governments, think tanks, students, with support from private funding as well, is a critical need.

On the concluding question, Dr. Meena posed:

Question 3:

What would you envision if we create a cooperative framework to bring countries towards reducing development inequalities?

Panellists:

- **Panellist 1: Dr. Bitrina** emphasised on reducing inequality to make sure that everybody in the country can access decent employment opportunities and to achieve this, there's a need to collaborate on the employment generation areas. She rendered an example specific to African countries and their reliance on natural resources so the importance of enhancing the capacities of these areas to create employment and increase the per capita income of these least developed countries – innovation therefore matters.
- **Panellist 2: Dr. Vaqar** reiterated that the role of private sectors needed to be boosted for sustainability. Private sectors can contribute in providing monetary stability to the country. Different private institutions of different countries need to collaborate on the issues specific to the global South which can be achieved through inclusion of the idea of social entrepreneurship under the ambit of social definition, he said.
- **Panellist 3: Karin** reiterated the importance of focussing on the gaps created when it comes to measuring the outcomes and viability of different capacity building programmes. She emphasised on the diversity prominent to the different regions within the global South and a holistic approach to make a framework on certain principles such as poverty, building resilience, trade, accountability and transparency, to work on while keeping in mind the indicators in achieving progress on following the principles.

Observers:

- **Observer 2: Leandro** pointed out the complex issues of the global South and to deal with these complex issues, the global South would need its own version of solution which might be complicated in its nature. To achieve this, he underlined, the countries need to include all the stakeholders while formulating the solutions concerned with the developing as well as the least developed countries. He mentioned that to achieve the goals and implement these solutions there's really a need to focus towards an inclusive, participatory consultative approach as well.



Key Highlights

- It is important to build capacities with an intention to create employment opportunities.
- The role of private players is crucial especially for providing financial support in the form of social entrepreneurship.
- A common set of principles should be the base for building a framework for South-South co-operation.
- All the stakeholders should be involved in framing a solution-centric approach for solving the problems in the developing as well as least developed countries in global South.

Closing statement and Vote of thanks

Dr. Meena thanked all the panellists, observers as well as the participants who helped in creating a space to exchange a dialogue and coming together as countries of the southern part of the world. She added that there are questions which need to be explored and worked on in the future to formulate a sustainable and tailored piece of solutions specific to the problems of the developing as well as the least developing countries.

Summary

In the Virtual Webinar, the speakers provided their insights on how to collaborate and achieve sustainable social, political, economical, technological and innovation development in the developing and least developed countries in the global South in the post-COVID arena. This aligned with the UNOSSC definition of “South-South cooperation” which is “a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains”.

The discussion helped in creating a vocabulary around self-reliance within the individual countries as well as the South- South cooperation. The speakers underlined the context of the similar as well as the diverse culture of different regions in the global South to render to the audience an inclusive as well as multidisciplinary discussion on these complex issues faced by the members of the global South.

The Virtual event identified certain palpable gaps and issues that need to be focussed and researched on when it comes to bridging the gap. The development and technological advancements in the global South are exacerbated by the hard blow of the burden of Post- pandemic recovery which is more difficult for the developing as well as the least developed countries in comparison to the developed countries. This crisis has made us realise the dire need for South-South Cooperation to counter the widening gap of disparity in the global level and get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals together and avoid overreliance on the developed countries. The global South collaborative efforts should not just be limited to academics, but at the same time knowledge sharing among the governments to understand, contextualise and emulate successful models (like IITs in India), and coming together and engagement of private sectors is also crucial for funding sustainable development-oriented projects.

There is a felt need for either strengthening current participatory arenas or co-create such platforms where programmes address underlying principles of countries such as prioritisation, building resilience, accountable and transparent systems, and access to data and information through common Centres of Excellence.

Annexures

Annexure 1: Agenda



The poster for the Public Affairs Center Virtual Webinar is titled "Reducing Development Inequalities through South-South Cooperation for a Sustainable Future in the post-COVID Arena". It is scheduled for Friday, July 28, 2022, from 3.30 to 5.00 p.m. (IST). The event features four panelists: Bitrina Diyamett (Executive Director, Science, Technology and Innovation Policy Research Organization, Tanzania), Dr. Vaqar Ahmed (Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Pakistan), Karin Fernando (Team Leader, Sustainable Development, The Centre for Policy Analysis, Sri Lanka), and Dr. Fahmida Khatun (Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh). There are also two observers: Leandro Echt (Evaluation, Evidence, Policy, Think Tanks, USA) and Dr. Chukwuka Onyekwena (Executive Director, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Africa). The webinar is facilitated by Dr. Meena Nair (Head- Research, Public Affairs Centre (PAC)). The poster includes the Public Affairs Center logo and the website www.pacindia.org.

Public Affairs Center
organises
Virtual Webinar

**Reducing Development Inequalities through
South-South Cooperation for a Sustainable
Future in the post-COVID Arena**

Friday, July 28, 2022 / 3.30 to 5.00 p.m. (IST)

Panelists

- Bitrina Diyamett**
Executive Director
Science, Technology and
Innovation Policy
Research Organization,
Tanzania
- Dr. Vaqar Ahmed**
Joint Executive Director
Sustainable Development
Policy Institute,
Pakistan
- Karin Fernando**
Team Leader
Sustainable Development,
The Centre for Policy Analysis,
Sri Lanka
- Dr. Fahmida Khatun**
Executive Director
Centre for Policy
Dialogue,
Bangladesh

Observers

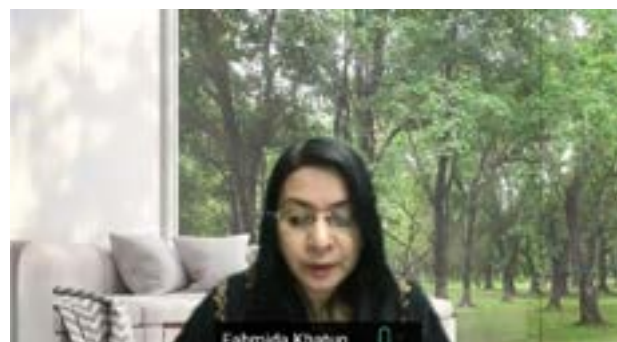
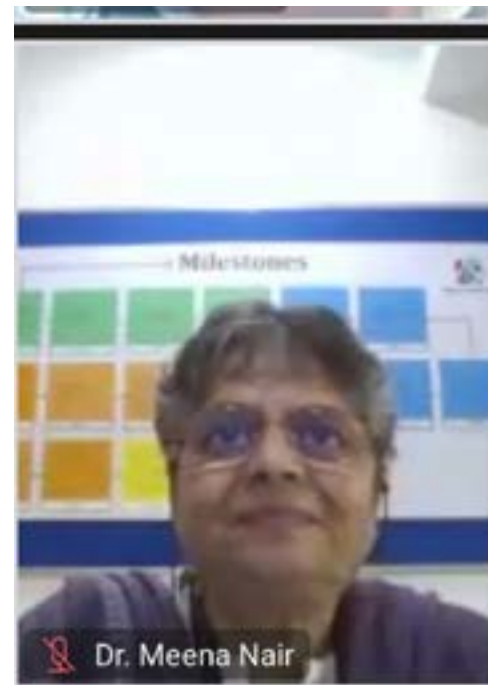
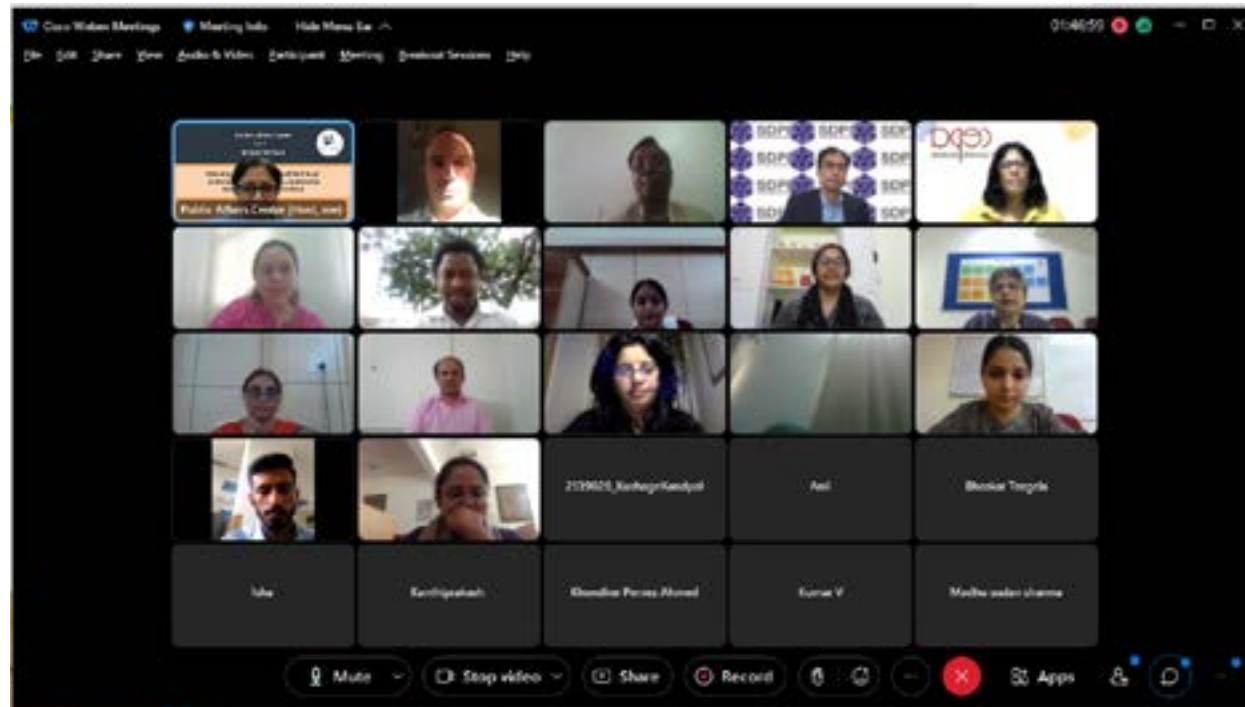
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Annexure 2: Snapshots



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