BRIDGING HORIZONS AND CONTINENTS:

Forging Transformative Pathways in **South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial intelligence
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development
BAPA	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BAPA+40	second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRIC	Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China
BRICS	Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CDP	Committee for Development Policy
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLAC FUND	China-LAC Cooperation Fund
CLAI	China-LAC Industrial Cooperation Investment Fund
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECDC	Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ESIAs	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FSDR	Financing for Sustainable Development Report
G20	Group of 20
G-77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIBS	Gordon Institute of Business Science
GII	Global Innovation Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GNP	Gross National Product
GORD	Gulf Organisation for Research and Development
GPI	Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
HIPCs	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
IBSA	India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank

IFIs	International financial institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LDCs	Least developed countries
LICs	Low-income countries
LLDCs	Landlocked developing countries
LLMs	Large Language Models
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDBs	Multilateral development banks
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
MICs	Middle-income countries
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MVI	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NDB	New Development Bank
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGTF	Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation
R&D	Research and development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SICA	Central American Integration System
SICE	Sustainability, Impact & Circular Economy
SIDS	Small island developing States
SSC	South-South cooperation
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	Science, technology and innovation
TCDC	Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TrC	Triangular cooperation
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations development system
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNFSSC	United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
VNRs	Voluntary National Review
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Foreword

We stand at a pivotal moment in history for global development cooperation. As we mark the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, we also face a world transformed by extensive and rapid change. Multilateralism is experiencing a period of profound and multifaceted transformation; the climate crisis has intensified into an existential threat; digital innovation is reshaping economies and societies; and a fragile post-pandemic recovery continues in the wake of COVID-19. Moreover, recent trade tensions have exacerbated economic uncertainties, posing significant challenges for the economies of the Global South. The convergence of these forces has created a complex global landscape, characterized by a polycrisis of interlocking challenges that risks derailing progress towards sustainable development. Yet this is also a moment of great opportunity. Now more than ever, South-South and triangular cooperation – as complements to North-South cooperation – stand out as crucial pathways to navigate these turbulent times and drive our shared agenda forward.

South-South and triangular cooperation is vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and revitalizing global development cooperation. The principles of solidarity, respect for national sovereignty, and mutual benefit and learning that underpin South-South cooperation have proven their value: developing countries exchanging knowledge, technology and resources have accelerated progress on poverty reduction, healthcare, education, infrastructure, digital transformation and climate action. By sharing solutions tailored to local contexts, countries of the Global South are advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in ways that traditional models often could not. At a time when international partnerships are under strain, South-South and triangular cooperation injects much-needed trust, equity and ownership into development efforts. This helps to reinvigorate multilateral collaboration, ensuring that all countries – large or small, regardless of income or level of human development – have a stake and a voice in our collective pursuit of prosperity and sustainability.

The Pact for the Future, adopted during the 2024 United Nations Summit of the Future, calls on the world to reaffirm multilateralism and renew our commitment to working together. In that vision of a reinvigorated multilateral system, South-South and triangular cooperation modalities are key enablers of global solidarity. They embody an inclusive multilateralism built on partnership among equals, and they foster a sense of shared destiny across developing countries. South-South and triangular cooperation is helping the efforts to bring multilateralism back from the brink, proving that cooperation between countries of the Global South can drive solutions that benefit all humanity. From joint efforts to combat climate change and humanitarian crises, to collective bargaining for fairer trade and finance, cooperation within and across the Global South strengthens the fabric of international cooperation and makes it more representative and just.

Rising to the challenges of today's world will require nothing less than innovation, resilience and transformative partnerships across the Global South and the North. We must embrace novel approaches and technologies to solve complex development problems – from digital platforms that connect entrepreneurs and researchers across continents to South-South scientific collaboration on vaccines and clean energy. We must build resilience by learning from one another's experiences in managing crises, whether preparing for climate shocks, improving food security or strengthening health systems. And we must forge truly transformative partnerships that break traditional silos: Governments, civil society, the private sector and multilateral institutions all have roles to play in an inclusive coalition for sustainable development. No single country or region can overcome the intertwined challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change and digital divides alone but by pooling strengths and working in concert, developing countries can co-create solutions on a scale commensurate with the ambition of the 2030 Agenda. The countries of the South are bridging horizons and continents, demonstrating that through unity, ingenuity and determination, we can turn shared challenges into shared victories.

It is in this context that the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) is proud to present the *Global Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation 2025: Bridging Horizons and Continents – Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation*. This flagship report offers a forward-looking perspective on how South-South and triangular cooperation can be strengthened and reimagined for our times. It distills extensive research and on-the-ground insights into actionable guidance for the future. It examines the major trends in reshaping development cooperation, highlights successful South-South cooperation initiatives across regions, and outlines innovative strategies to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of South-South and triangular cooperation. It also looks into the perceptions of youth on South-South and triangular cooperation to make sure that such perspectives are taken into consideration. Moreover, it provides concrete recommendations for national governments, regional bodies and international partners to harness the full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation as drivers of sustainable development and mainsprings of a more equitable global order.

The time for action is now. The challenges before us are undeniably daunting but the opportunities to build a better future are just as immense. As the *Global Report* emphasizes, we stand at the threshold of a new era of cooperation that can translate solidarity into solutions. Our collective responsibility is to ensure that the momentum of South-South and triangular cooperation grows and delivers on its promise.

Let us commit to investing in the ideas and partnerships that will shape a more inclusive and resilient world, noting that the true measure of success will be the improved lives of people across the Global South and beyond. With unity of purpose and bold action, we can forge the transformative pathways needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and uphold the ideals of the United Nations Charter for generations to come.

Together, we can embrace this transformative journey – one that harnesses the wisdom, resources and solidarity of all countries to create a more just, prosperous and sustainable future for all.

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Bridging Horizons and Continents: Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The present report provides a comprehensive overview of the current state and future potential of South-South cooperation (SSC), offering insights and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders. It underscores the importance of collective action and innovative thinking in addressing the complex challenges of our time and achieving the vision of a more equitable and sustainable world. The report aims to contribute to the evolution of SSC as a more effective, credible and impactful approach to development collaboration. South-South cooperation has emerged as a vital paradigm in international development, offering an alternative to traditional North-South cooperation by emphasizing horizontal relationships, mutual benefit and solidarity among developing countries. While it has made significant strides in fostering solidarity and collaboration among developing countries, the evolving global landscape, marked by increasingly complex challenges, presents a pressing adaptation challenge that threatens its effectiveness and credibility. Failure to address these limitations and continue with a "business-as-usual" approach risks undermining the relevance, credibility and potential of SSC to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development in the Global South. This report explores how SSC mechanisms can adapt to changing contexts and emerging needs to enhance their effectiveness, concluding with actionable recommendations to strengthen the role of SSC in global development.

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Key Messages

The rise of the Global South is reshaping global power dynamics, elevating the relevance and potential of South-South cooperation.

Triangular cooperation is **a strategic bridge**, amplifying South-South cooperation through complementary partnerships.

In a world facing a deepening polycrisis, the **need for solidarity, resilience and collective self-reliance** through South-South and triangular cooperation has never been greater.

South-South and triangular cooperation is entering a bold new era, one that calls for **strategic repositioning and transformative thinking**.

South-South and triangular cooperation is a vital channel for the Global South to strengthen its **collective voice** and shape **regional and global governance**.

South-South and triangular cooperation offers unique pathways to **accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, anchored in shared experiences and adaptive, locally grounded solutions.

To leave no one behind, South-South and triangular cooperation must champion **inclusivity, equity and genuine multi-stakeholder engagement**.

Digital transformation is a game-changer for South-South and triangular cooperation, amplifying its reach, efficiency and inclusivity in unprecedented ways.

While South-South and triangular cooperation continues to evolve and expand, **structural and operational challenges** still limit its full transformative impact.

Unlocking the full power of South-South and triangular cooperation requires **integrated platforms for knowledge exchange, financing and shared innovation**.

The future of South-South and triangular cooperation is one of mainstreamed, dynamic and high-impact collaboration, driven by bold ambition and sustained commitment.

Executive Summary

Introduction and context

The *Global Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation 2025: Bridging Horizons and Continents – Forging Transformative Pathways in South-South and Triangular Cooperation*, commissioned independently and published by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), represents a significant milestone as the third edition in a series that has become an essential resource for understanding the evolving dynamics of cooperation among countries of the Global South. It arrives at a juncture of profound global transitions.

The report emerges at a pivotal historical moment, coinciding with the sixtieth anniversary of the Group of 77 (G-77), the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference and the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations – all landmark events that have shaped the trajectory of South-South relations and global development cooperation. These anniversaries serve as powerful reminders of the long journey of the Global South towards self-determination, collective agency and a more just international order. The report aims to honour this legacy by offering a forward-looking perspective that challenges conventional thinking and inspires concrete actions. It moves beyond a foundational understanding of SSC, assuming a baseline familiarity with its principles, to delve into how SSC can be strategically repositioned to navigate the complexities of the current global environment. The central premise is that a new era of SSC is dawning, requiring a departure from traditional paradigms and an embrace of inclusivity, adaptability and innovation. The report meticulously examines the evolving dynamics within the Global South, the shifting priorities of SSC, and the critical role of Southern engagement in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a call to rethink, revitalize and reposition SSC as a cornerstone of international cooperation, capable of unlocking immense potential within the collective strength of the Global South.

The timing of this report is particularly significant since as it comes amid profound and multifaceted shifts reshaping the geopolitical, economic and social landscapes, particularly for countries of the Global South. These transformations include the ongoing reconfiguration of global power dynamics, the rise of multipolarity, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the accelerating climate crisis, the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the growing uncertainty in the global economy triggered by recent trade tensions. The convergence of these forces has created what many call a “polycrisis”: multiple interconnected crises that compound each other and threaten to derail progress towards sustainable development.

The report seeks to fill critical gaps in knowledge by addressing how SSC can adapt to and leverage the changing global landscape, particularly in response to contemporary challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, geopolitical realignments and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It underscores the enduring relevance of solidarity, mutual benefit and national ownership – the foundational principles of SSC – while advocating for innovative approaches that can effectively address the complex challenges and harness the emergent opportunities of the twenty-first century. The core message resonates with a spirit of optimism and a call to action: that through enhanced collaboration, strategic partnerships and a renewed commitment to shared goals, the countries of the Global South can collectively forge pathways towards a more equitable, resilient and prosperous future for all. This report posits that SSC, complemented by triangular cooperation (TrC), is not just an alternative but an essential modality in the global development architecture, uniquely positioned to empower Southern countries to shape their own development trajectories and contribute meaningfully to global governance and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This renewed vision for SSC also necessitates a deeper appreciation of its role in fostering peace and security, extending beyond purely economic or technical exchanges. By addressing root causes of conflict such as poverty, inequality, resource scarcity and weak governance through collaborative development efforts, SSC can contribute significantly to building more stable, resilient and peaceful societies. For instance, joint initiatives in sustainable agriculture and water management can mitigate resource-based conflicts in transboundary regions, while shared educational programmes foster intercultural understanding and tolerance. Furthermore, the platforms for dialogue and mutual understanding inherent in SSC can serve as crucial mechanisms for preventive diplomacy, confidence-building and conflict resolution within the Global South, thereby

strengthening regional stability and reducing reliance on external interventions, which may not always align with local contexts or priorities. The interconnectedness of development and security, long acknowledged in theory, finds practical and impactful expression in a robust, proactive SSC framework that champions human security in its broadest sense. This encompasses physical safety, economic security through livelihood creation, social security through access to essential services such as health and education, environmental security through climate action and sustainable resource use, and political security through good governance and respect for human rights. This holistic approach, driven by Southern priorities and drawing upon diverse Southern experiences, offers a powerful pathway to sustainable peace. It complements traditional security mechanisms with a development-first orientation that builds trust, fosters shared prosperity and creates an environment where cooperation flourishes. Conflict is less likely to take root. The shared journey of development becomes a profound peacebuilding exercise, weaving a complex tapestry of interdependence, mutual respect and shared destiny that underpins a more harmonious global order and strengthens the collective voice of the South in advocating for international peace.

Through this comprehensive analysis, the report provides policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders with innovative strategies and actionable recommendations to revitalize SSC as a cornerstone of global development in the twenty-first century. It challenges conventional thinking and offers fresh insights to enhance the effectiveness of SSC as a vital and dynamic force for sustainable development, emphasizing innovation, inclusivity and adaptability as key elements for addressing the challenges and opportunities of our time. As the world faces increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, this report serves as a call to action and a roadmap for reimagining South-South cooperation as a transformative framework for fostering resilience, equity and sustainable development across the Global South and beyond.

Key findings: Understanding the evolving landscape and imperative for SSC

Throughout its chapters, this report meticulously dissects the multifaceted dimensions of South-South cooperation, offering a comprehensive analysis of its historical evolution, contemporary challenges and future potential. A central finding is the undeniable rise of the Global South as a pivotal actor on the world stage, characterized by increasing economic dynamism, demographic weight and political influence. This is evidenced by the growing share of global GDP attributed to Southern economies, the increasing volume of South-South trade and investment, and the more assertive role played by Southern countries in international forums such as the G20 and BRICS+. This ascent is not monolithic, however; the report highlights the significant heterogeneity within the Global South, encompassing a diverse array of countries with varying levels of development, unique structural challenges (such as landlockedness or small-island vulnerabilities), and distinct national priorities and political systems. Understanding this diversity is crucial for tailoring SSC initiatives that are truly responsive and effective, moving beyond one-size-fits-all approaches. The report underscores that while the term “Global South” serves as a functional analytical category rooted in shared post-colonial trajectories and a collective aspiration for a more equitable global order, specific contexts and capacities of individual countries and subregions must be carefully considered. This nuanced understanding moves beyond simplistic North-South binaries. It acknowledges the complex interplay of power dynamics, economic interdependencies and developmental pathways within the South itself, recognizing, for example, the role of emerging Southern economies as both contributors to and beneficiaries of development cooperation.

A critical theme emerging from the analysis is the profound impact of the ongoing polycrisis on the Global South. The convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the escalating climate crisis (with its devastating droughts, floods and sea-level rise), geopolitical instability leading to disrupted supply chains and increased refugee flows, and economic shocks such as high inflation and interest rates has not only reversed hard-won development gains in many Southern countries but has also exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. The report details how these compounding crises have strained public finances, increased debt burdens to unsustainable levels for many, disrupted supply chains critical for food and medicine, intensified food and energy insecurity, and disproportionately affected the most marginalized populations, including women, children, persons with disabilities and those in conflict-affected or climate-vulnerable States. This challenging global context, however, also serves to illuminate the heightened importance of SSC. The report notes that, in the face of these shared adversities, there is a growing recognition among Southern countries of the need for enhanced solidarity, collective self-reliance and innovative cooperative solutions. For example, South-South exchanges on pandemic response strategies, climate adaptation techniques and digital education platforms have demonstrated tangible benefits. South-South cooperation is increasingly viewed as a complementary modality and a vital lifeline for building resilience, fostering recovery and accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

The report also delves into the evolution of SSC itself, tracing its journey from the foundational principles articulated at Bandung and Buenos Aires to its current, more complex and diversified form. It acknowledges the significant expansion in the scope (from technical assistance to large-scale infrastructure projects), scale (billions of dollars in financial flows and countless knowledge exchanges), and sophistication of SSC initiatives. This expansion is driven by the emergence of new Southern development partners beyond the traditional BRICS, the proliferation of regional and interregional cooperation mechanisms (such as the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention or ASEAN-led initiatives), and the increasing engagement of non-State actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs) championing citizen-led monitoring, the private sector investing in cross-border ventures and academia fostering joint research.

However, the analysis also points to persistent challenges that hinder the full realization of the potential of SSC. These include data collection and measurement limitations, which obscure the accurate scale and impact of SSC flows, making it challenging to advocate for its value or learn systematically. Institutional and coordination gaps at national, regional and global levels lead to fragmentation and duplication of efforts. Constraints in resource mobilization, encompassing not just finance but also specialized human capital and appropriate technologies, remain significant. Furthermore, the need to navigate power asymmetries and ensure genuine inclusivity in SSC partnerships is paramount to uphold its core principles. Addressing these challenges is paramount for transforming SSC into a more strategic, practical and accountable instrument for development.

Furthermore, the report emphasizes the critical nexus between SSC and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It finds that SSC offers unique advantages in advancing the SDGs, particularly in areas such as poverty eradication (SDG 1) through shared agricultural technologies, health (SDG 3) via joint pharmaceutical production or pandemic preparedness, education (SDG 4) through teacher-training exchanges, climate action (SDG 13) by disseminating renewable energy solutions, and sustainable infrastructure (SDG 9) through collaborative projects. The shared experiences and context-specific knowledge of Southern countries make them particularly well-suited to develop and disseminate innovative solutions tailored to the realities of the Global South, often at a lower cost and with greater cultural sensitivity than traditional North-South aid. The report highlights numerous successful SSC initiatives that have contributed to SDG achievement. It also identifies opportunities for scaling up and replicating these successes, for instance by establishing thematic centres of excellence for SSC in specific SDG areas.

A key takeaway is that integrating SSC more systematically into national development strategies, voluntary national reviews (VNRs) and global SDG frameworks is essential for maximizing its impact. This requires increased financial investment and a concerted effort to strengthen the institutional capacities of SSC and foster a more enabling policy environment at all levels, ensuring that SSC is not an afterthought but a central component of development strategy.

Navigating challenges and seizing opportunities for revitalized SSC

The path towards more impactful and transformative South-South cooperation is not without its obstacles, yet it is simultaneously paved with unprecedented opportunities. This report has candidly examined the challenges that currently constrain the full potential of SSC, ranging from data and measurement limitations such as the lack of standardized methodologies for valuing in-kind contributions or tracking long-term impacts, to institutional weaknesses such as fragmented national coordination mechanisms or underresourced regional bodies, and resource mobilization gaps that extend beyond finance to include shortages of specialized technical expertise in critical sectors. Acknowledging these hurdles, including the political sensitivities that can sometimes arise in South-South partnerships or the risks of SSC inadvertently reinforcing existing inequalities if not carefully designed, is the first crucial step towards overcoming them. The lack of a universally accepted framework for measuring SSC flows and impacts, for instance, not only hinders an accurate assessment of its contribution to global development, potentially leading to its undervaluation in international discourse, but also severely limits the ability to learn systematically from past experiences, identify best practices and make evidence-based policy decisions for future engagements.

Similarly, institutional fragmentation and coordination deficits at various levels – national, regional and interagency – can lead to inefficiencies, duplication of effort, a failure to leverage potential synergies and a dilution of overall impact. The report underscores that addressing these systemic issues requires a concerted, patient and collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including national governments, regional organizations, multilateral institutions, civil society and the academic community, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and mutual accountability.

Alongside these challenges, however, the current global landscape presents a fertile ground for revitalizing and scaling up SSC, offering unique windows of opportunity. The very polycrisis that has amplified vulnerabilities has also catalysed a renewed sense of urgency and a greater appreciation for the value of Southern-led solutions and collective self-reliance. There is growing recognition, even among traditional donor countries, that the conventional North-South development paradigm, while still relevant, is insufficient to address the complex, interconnected and rapidly evolving challenges of the twenty-first century. South-South cooperation, emphasizing shared experiences, mutual learning, horizontal partnerships and contextually appropriate solutions, offers a powerful and increasingly indispensable complement.

The rise of digital technologies presents a particularly significant opportunity, a potential game changer for SSC. As detailed in the report, digitalization can revolutionize how SSC is conducted, facilitating nearly instantaneous knowledge-sharing across continents, enhancing access to vast repositories of information and expertise, enabling new forms of virtual collaboration and peer support, and significantly reducing the transaction costs associated with traditional cooperation modalities. Harnessing the potential of digital platforms for SSC – from e-learning modules for capacity-building to AI-powered matchmaking services for technical expertise, or blockchain for transparent aid tracking – can help to overcome some of the traditional barriers related to cost, distance and scale, making cooperation more agile, efficient and inclusive. For example, telemedicine initiatives connecting doctors in different Southern countries or online platforms for sharing climate-resilient agricultural practices demonstrate the transformative power of digital SSC.

Another key opportunity lies in the increasing dynamism, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit within the Global South itself. Many Southern countries, across all income levels, have developed remarkable expertise, indigenous knowledge systems and best practices in diverse areas, from renewable energy technologies (such as solar and wind power) and sustainable agriculture (including agroecology and drought-resistant crops) to public health delivery systems (such as community health worker programmes), innovative financial inclusion models (such as mobile money) and digital governance solutions (e.g., e-procurement systems or digital identity programmes). There is an immense, largely untapped reservoir of knowledge, technology and experiences that can be shared, adapted and scaled up to benefit other developing countries facing similar challenges. The emergence of new Southern development partners beyond the traditional large emerging economies, and the growing sophistication of SSC modalities, including an increased focus on policy coherence, results-based management and the strategic use of triangular cooperation, further expand the toolkit available for addressing development challenges.

Triangular cooperation, in particular, offers a promising avenue for leveraging the comparative advantages of different partners, combining, for example, the technical expertise and contextual understanding of one Southern country with the financial resources or specialized technology of a Northern partner or another Southern partner to support a third developing country. This flexible, pragmatic and often highly effective approach can mobilize additional resources, foster mutual learning among all partners, and enhance the overall impact and sustainability of development interventions. Successful triangular cooperation projects in areas such as vocational training, agricultural productivity or health-system strengthening offer valuable lessons for broader application.

The report also highlights the growing momentum towards strengthening the Global South voice, agency and collective influence in global governance structures. As Southern countries collectively account for an ever-larger share of the global economy, population and political influence, there is a corresponding and legitimate demand for a more inclusive, representative and equitable global decision-making architecture. South-South cooperation can be a powerful instrument for advancing this agenda by fostering policy coordination and collective action among Southern countries on issues of shared concern, such as climate justice, debt relief, reform of international financial institutions or fair-trade rules, and by enabling them to articulate their perspectives and priorities more effectively and cohesively in international forums. This includes advocating for reforms in the Security Council, the World Bank and the IMF; promoting fairer trade practices within the WTO; and ensuring that the development needs and unique vulnerabilities of the Global South are adequately addressed in global policy debates on issues ranging from intellectual property rights for essential medicines to the regulation of emerging technologies.

The pursuit of a more just and equitable global order is not only an end in itself but also a critical enabler for sustainable development in the South, creating a more supportive international environment for their development efforts. By building solidarity and shared platforms, SSC can amplify the collective bargaining power of the South and contribute to a more balanced and democratic multilateral system.

The imperative of building robust platforms: Knowledge, funding and experience-sharing

A central and actionable recommendation emerging from this report and a key focus for the future efficacy of South-South cooperation is the critical need to invest in and build robust, accessible, inclusive and sustainable platforms. These platforms are envisaged not as static repositories or bureaucratic structures but as dynamic, interconnected ecosystems that facilitate the systematic sharing of validated knowledge, the mobilization and strategic channelling of diverse funding streams, and the effective, demand-driven exchange of practical experiences and contextually relevant solutions across the entirety of the Global South. The absence of such integrated and well-resourced platforms or the fragmentation and underutilization of existing ones has been identified as a significant impediment to scaling up SSC, ensuring its quality and impact and moving beyond ad hoc, often isolated initiatives towards more strategic and systemic cooperation.

Therefore, a concerted, multi-stakeholder effort, involving Governments, international organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, to create, strengthen and interconnect these enabling infrastructures is not merely desirable but absolutely essential for unlocking the transformative potential of cooperation among Southern countries. This endeavour requires a paradigm shift from short-term, project-based approaches to a long-term commitment to building the institutional architecture that underpins enduring and impactful collaboration, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation.

Platforms for knowledge-sharing and co-creation. The report strongly advocates for developing comprehensive, next-generation knowledge platforms that go far beyond simple repositories of documents or passive websites. They should be interactive, intelligent and dynamic spaces that actively foster the co-creation of knowledge, facilitate joint research on pressing development issues and promote genuine mutual learning among diverse Southern actors. Such platforms would serve multiple, interconnected functions: systematically identifying, documenting, curating and cataloging successful SSC initiatives, policy innovations, Indigenous knowledge systems and replicable best practices from across the Global South, making them easily discoverable and accessible. Through expert rosters or virtual advisory services, they would facilitate timely access to specialized technical expertise, policy advice, and analytical tools tailored to specific needs and contexts of developing countries. Critically, they would promote collaborative research on emerging development challenges, such as the ethical implications of AI, strategies for a just energy transition and urban resilience in the face of climate change, fostering South-South research networks and joint publications.

To be genuinely effective and widely adopted, these knowledge platforms must be multilingual, supporting the linguistic diversity of the South; user-friendly, with intuitive interfaces and powerful search functionalities; and equipped with tools that enable easy customization, adaptation and application of shared knowledge. They should also actively promote the development and dissemination of Southern-led narratives, theories and analytical frameworks on development, thereby countering the historical dominance of Northern perspectives and enriching the global development discourse.

Furthermore, these platforms should serve as vibrant connectors, linking diverse actors, including academic institutions, research centres, think tanks, CSOs, grass-roots innovators and individual experts, to create dynamic communities of practice and thematic networks around specific SDG areas or cross-cutting issues such as gender equality or youth empowerment. The UNOSSC South-South Galaxy initiative is a commendable foundational step in this direction. Still, its reach, resources, interactive functionalities and integration with national and regional knowledge hubs need to be significantly expanded and sustained through long-term commitments and partnerships. This includes ensuring that such platforms are demand-driven, with content and features shaped by users' needs in the Global South and incorporating mechanisms for quality assurance and peer review of shared knowledge.

Platforms for mobilizing and blending funding. Addressing the significant and widening financing gap for sustainable development in the Global South, estimated in trillions of dollars annually, requires innovative and scaled-up approaches to resource mobilization that go far beyond traditional official development assistance (ODA) and the existing capacities of national budgets. South-South cooperation itself represents a growing and increasingly diverse source of development finance. Still, its full potential is often constrained by a lack of dedicated, transparent and efficient funding mechanisms and by difficulties in blending different types of financial flows (public, private, philanthropic, concessional and non-concessional) coherently. This report calls for establishing and strengthening dedicated financial platforms specifically designed to support

South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, moving beyond fragmented and often opaque bilateral arrangements. These platforms could take various forms, including: (a) dedicated South-South development funds at regional or global levels, capitalized by contributions from multiple Southern partners and potentially blended with resources from other sources; (b) mechanisms for pooling resources from various Southern partners for specific thematic windows (e.g., climate adaptation, pandemic preparedness or digital transformation); (c) innovative financing instruments such as South-South impact bonds, guarantee funds to de-risk private investment in SSC projects or debt-for-development swaps channelled through SSC modalities; and (d) platforms to facilitate South-South foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade finance that have clear developmental benefits. A key function of these platforms would be to promote the strategic blending of concessional and non-concessional finance and public and private capital to support larger-scale, more complex and more impactful development interventions, particularly in infrastructure and productive sectors. They should prioritize transparency, accountability and results-based management in allocating and disbursing funds, adhering to international best practices, and ensuring robust fiduciary standards and environmental and social safeguards.

Moreover, these platforms could play a crucial role in supporting capacity development in Southern countries for financial management, project appraisal, innovative financing and resource mobilization, thereby enhancing their ability to access and effectively use diverse funding sources. The New Development Bank (NDB), established by the BRICS countries, and various regional development banks offer valuable models and experiences for such Southern-led financial institutions, and their lessons should inform the development of broader and more inclusive SSC funding platforms that are accessible to a wider range of developing countries, including LDCs and SIDS. These platforms must also explore ways to tap into new sources of finance such as philanthropic capital from the South and institutional investors and to promote financial instruments aligned with Islamic finance principles or other culturally relevant financial traditions within the Global South.

Platforms for experience-sharing and capacity development. Beyond financial resources and codified knowledge, the sharing of practical, lived experiences and the continuous development of human and institutional capacities are at the heart of effective and sustainable South-South cooperation. The report emphasizes the urgent need for well-designed and adequately resourced platforms that systematically facilitate peer-to-peer learning, the exchange of technical know-how, and comprehensive capacity-building programmes tailored to the specific institutional contexts and human resource needs of Southern countries. This includes supporting and scaling up the exchange of experts, policymakers and practitioners across various sectors; organizing joint training workshops, seminars and study tours focused on practical problem-solving; and fostering long-term twinning arrangements and mentorship programmes between institutions (e.g., universities, government agencies, research centres) in different developing countries. Such platforms should prioritize demand-driven approaches, ensuring that capacity development initiatives are closely aligned with the identified needs and strategic priorities of partner countries rather than being supply-driven. They should also leverage the power of digital technologies to expand the reach, reduce the cost, and enhance the effectiveness of experience-sharing through, for example, interactive virtual mentoring programmes, online communities of practice moderated by Southern experts, curated e-learning modules in multiple languages and platforms for virtual technical assistance.

A critical aspect of these platforms is their role in fostering a culture of mutual respect, trust and understanding, recognizing that all participating countries, regardless of their size or level of development, possess valuable experiences, insights and innovations to share and from which others can learn. The focus should be on building enduring partnerships and professional networks that can sustain collaboration, knowledge exchange and mutual support well beyond the lifespan of individual projects or programmes. Initiatives that promote South-South volunteering, youth leadership programmes and academic exchanges can also play a vital role in building these crucial human connections, fostering a shared sense of Southern solidarity and nurturing the next generation of SSC champions. These platforms must also be agile and adaptive, capable of responding quickly to emerging needs and crises by facilitating rapid exchanges of expertise, for instance, in public health emergencies or disaster-response scenarios, thereby demonstrating the practical value of SSC in real time.

Actionable recommendations: Charting a course for more effective and inclusive SSC

Building on the comprehensive analysis and multifaceted insights presented throughout this report, the concluding chapter offers a set of targeted, actionable recommendations. These are designed to guide policymakers, development practitioners, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and all stakeholders in their collective efforts to significantly strengthen, strategically orient and sustainably resource South-South and triangular cooperation. These recommendations are rooted in an optimistic yet pragmatic vision of SSC as a transformative force for global good, and they are deliberately oriented towards concrete actions that can foster greater effectiveness, enhanced inclusivity, robust accountability and long-term sustainability. The overarching goal is to translate the renewed global commitment to SSC into tangible, measurable and impactful results that directly benefit the peoples of the Global South, contribute to achieving the SDGs and help to forge a more equitable and resilient global order. These recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive but represent key strategic priorities that, if implemented with diligence and political will, can catalyse a significant step change in the quality and impact of SSC worldwide.

Recommendation 1.
Strengthen national ecosystems for SSC and mainstream SSC into development planning.

Effective and coherent SSC begins at home, within each participating country. National governments in the Global South are primarily responsible for creating a robust and enabling domestic environment for SSC. This includes, first, developing clear, comprehensive national policies and strategies for SSC that are explicitly aligned with overall national development priorities, poverty reduction strategies and commitments to the SDGs. Such a strategy should articulate the country's vision for SSC, identify priority sectors and partners, and outline mechanisms for implementation and oversight. Second, it requires establishing dedicated institutional mechanisms or significantly strengthening existing ones (such as SSC focal points within ministries of foreign affairs or finance), with clear mandates, adequate human and financial resources, and the authority to effectively coordinate, implement, monitor and report on SSC initiatives across all relevant Government departments. These national focal points should work proactively to ensure policy coherence across different Government ministries and agencies involved in SSC (e.g., health, education, agriculture, trade, environment) and to facilitate the meaningful engagement of non-State actors, including CSOs, the private sector, academia and local authorities.

Furthermore, investing in national capacities for systematic data collection, rigorous analysis, transparent reporting, and robust monitoring and evaluation of SSC activities is crucial for enhancing transparency, demonstrating results, ensuring accountability to citizens and partners, and fostering evidence-based decision-making and continuous learning. This includes building statistical capacity to track SSC flows and impacts in line with emerging international frameworks and capturing the qualitative dimensions of SSC partnerships.

Recommendation 2.
Enhance regional and interregional cooperation frameworks and platforms for collective action.

Regional and interrregional platforms and organizations play a vital role in fostering collective action on shared challenges, promoting policy coherence among neighbouring countries, facilitating the pooling of resources and expertise, and enabling the systematic sharing of experiences and best practices within specific geographical or cultural contexts. This report strongly recommends a concerted and sustained effort to strengthen existing regional SSC frameworks (such as those in the African Union, ASEAN, CARICOM, the Central American Integration System (SICA), MERCOSUR and others) and, where significant gaps exist, to support the establishment of new ones, driven by the needs and leadership of the countries in those regions. This includes providing these frameworks with adequate political support from member States, sustainable financial resources and strengthened institutional capacities to fulfil their mandates effectively.

Regional organizations should be encouraged to develop specific, results-oriented action plans for SSC that address shared regional challenges and priorities, such as combating climate change, managing transboundary water resources, enhancing regional trade and connectivity, or strengthening regional health-security architectures. They can also promote regional public goods, such as cross-border infrastructure projects, shared natural resource management regimes, regional early warning systems for disasters, and regional

centres of excellence for research and innovation. Fostering greater and more strategic interregional cooperation – for example, through structured dialogues and joint programmes between African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries – can also unlock new opportunities for cross-continental learning, partnership and solidarity on issues of global significance. This includes facilitating South-South-North (triangular) cooperation at the regional level to leverage complementary strengths.

Recommendation 3.
Invest strategically in the development and interconnection of robust SSC platforms for sharing knowledge, funding and experiences.

The creation, strengthening and strategic interconnection of integrated, multi-stakeholder platforms for knowledge management, innovative financing and sharing of practical experiences is a cornerstone of a revitalized and impactful SSC. This requires significant and sustained investment from national governments, regional organizations, IFIs, philanthropic foundations and other development partners. For knowledge platforms, the focus should be on creating user-friendly, multilingual AI-enabled systems that facilitate not only easy access to curated information and evidence but also the dynamic co-creation of knowledge, fostering collaborative research and the development of Southern-led analytical frameworks and policy solutions. For funding platforms, the priority is to develop a diverse ecosystem of innovative and transparent mechanisms that can effectively mobilize a wide array of financial resources, including public, private, domestic and international capital, and channel them efficiently and effectively towards high-impact SSC and TrC initiatives, with clear accountability for results. Experience-sharing platforms should emphasize fostering deep and sustained peer-to-peer learning, targeted capacity development, and long-term institutional partnerships that are demand-driven, contextually relevant and focused on practical problem-solving.

The United Nations development system has a critical convening, coordinating and capacity-building role to play in supporting the development, interoperability and sustainability of these platforms, ensuring that they are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all developing countries, especially LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Recommendation 4.
Promote genuine inclusivity, equity and multi-stakeholder partnerships in all SSC endeavours.

To ensure that SSC truly benefits all segments of society, addresses the specific needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations and upholds the principle of leaving no one behind, it is essential to actively promote inclusivity, equity and the establishment of genuine multi-stakeholder partnerships. This means systematically engaging a broad and diverse range of actors in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SSC initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to, CSOs with their grass-roots connections and advocacy roles, women's groups and gender equality advocates, youth organizations bringing fresh perspectives and energy, Indigenous Peoples' representatives with their unique knowledge systems, local communities as primary stakeholders, academic and research institutions providing evidence and innovation, and the private sector with its resources and expertise in scaling solutions.

Creating dedicated and institutionalized spaces for regular dialogue, consultation and collaboration between Governments and non-State actors can help to ensure that SSC is responsive to local needs, priorities and contexts and leverages the diverse capacities available within society. It also involves paying specific and proactive attention to the empowerment of women and girls through SSC, ensuring that all initiatives are gender-responsive in their design and impact and that women participate equally in leadership and decision-making roles within SSC structures. Furthermore, triangular cooperation arrangements should be designed and implemented to respect Southern partners' ownership, leadership and priorities, fostering genuine partnership and mutual learning rather than perpetuating traditional donor-recipient dynamics. This requires a commitment to transparency, mutual accountability, and a willingness to challenge and transform unequal power relations.

Recommendation 5.
Enhance data collection, results-based monitoring, rigorous evaluation and learning for SSC.

The persistent lack of comprehensive, reliable and comparable data on the full scope and impact of SSC remains a significant challenge to its recognition, effectiveness and continuous improvement. This report strongly recommends that all stakeholders – Governments, international organizations, research institutions – redouble their efforts to significantly improve data collection, implement robust results-based monitoring systems, and invest in rigorous, independent evaluations for SSC. This includes supporting the ongoing development and broader adoption of common, yet flexible, frameworks and methodologies for measuring diverse

SSC flows (financial, in-kind, technological) and assessing their development impacts while fully respecting the diversity of SSC modalities and approaches and avoiding overly prescriptive or burdensome requirements.

National statistical offices and SSC focal points should be equipped with the necessary tools, training and capacities to systematically collect, analyse and report data on SSC activities, integrating this into national statistical systems. Investing in more rigorous, mixed-methods impact evaluations of a broader range of SSC initiatives is also crucial for generating credible evidence on what works, for whom, under what conditions and why. This evidence can inform policymaking, improve programme design, optimize resource allocation, and enhance SSC overall effectiveness and value for money. Sharing the results, findings and lessons learned from monitoring and evaluation efforts openly and transparently through accessible platforms and publications can also foster mutual accountability, promote cross-learning among SSC partners and build a stronger evidence base for the unique contributions of SSC to global development.

Recommendation 6.
Strategically leverage digital technologies to amplify SSC reach, efficiency and impact.

The ongoing digital revolution offers unprecedented and transformative opportunities to modernize, scale up and significantly enhance the effectiveness of SSC. This report calls for a strategic and holistic approach to leveraging digital technologies to enhance knowledge-sharing (e.g., through online expert networks and digital libraries of best practices), facilitate real-time virtual collaboration and co-creation across borders, improve access to specialized expertise and training, and reduce the transaction costs associated with traditional forms of cooperation. This includes investing in affordable and reliable digital infrastructure and connectivity in the Global South, promoting digital literacy and skills development for all citizens, and supporting the development and adoption of open-source digital platforms and tools specifically designed for or adapted to the needs of SSC (e.g., platforms for virtual exchanges, project management tools for SSC or databases of Southern technology solutions). It also involves proactively addressing the challenges related to the digital divide (both between and within countries), data-privacy and -security concerns, the ethical implications of AI and other emerging technologies, and the risks of digital dependency to ensure that the benefits of digitalization are shared equitably, responsibly and sustainably.

Digital SSC can be particularly impactful in online education and vocational training, telemedicine and public health surveillance, e-governance and digital public service delivery, precision agriculture, early warning systems for disasters, and facilitating South-South e-commerce and digital trade. A concerted effort is needed to build digital capabilities for SSC within Governments and partner institutions across the Global South.

Recommendation 7.
Champion SSC and the collective voice of the Global South in global governance and multilateral forums.

The Global South has a profound collective interest in advocating for and contributing to a more inclusive, democratic, equitable and development-oriented global governance system. South-South cooperation can be a uniquely powerful instrument for advancing this agenda by fostering solidarity, building common positions and enhancing the collective negotiating capacity of Southern countries. This report recommends that Southern countries work together more strategically and cohesively to champion SSC and the broader development priorities of the South in all relevant global governance forums, including the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, the G20, the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and various international climate and environmental negotiations. This involves articulating a clear and compelling vision for the role of SSC in the evolving global development architecture, proactively sharing successful SSC experiences and policy innovations with a wider international audience, and advocating for international policies, norms and reforms that are supportive of SSC and effectively address the specific development needs and structural vulnerabilities of the Global South. It also means actively participating in and seeking to shape global debates on critical issues such as climate finance and technology transfer, international tax cooperation, debt sustainability and relief mechanisms, reform of the global trading system, regulation of emerging technologies and the future of multilateralism itself, ensuring that the diverse perspectives and legitimate interests of Southern countries are fully taken into account and reflected in global outcomes. This requires strengthening South-South cooperation mechanisms for global policy advocacy, investing in Southern think tanks and research institutions to provide evidence-based policy advice, and building alliances with like-minded partners from both the North and the South to advance a shared agenda for a more just and sustainable world.

A vision for the future: SSC as a catalyst for a shared, prosperous and sustainable world

As we look towards the horizon, beyond the immediate challenges of a turbulent present, the future of SSC is not merely a linear continuation of past trends but an exciting opportunity to forge new, transformative pathways that can fundamentally redefine the landscape of global development and international relations. This report concludes with an optimistic and actionable vision, grounded in the tangible potential and demonstrated successes of SSC, to serve as a powerful and indispensable catalyst for building a more equitable, resilient, prosperous, environmentally sound and sustainable world for all. The journey ahead requires bold ambition, unwavering political commitment, sustained investment and a spirit of genuine, respectful partnership among the countries and peoples of the Global South, significantly supported by constructive and reoriented engagement from the international community, including Northern partners and multilateral institutions. The timeless principles of solidarity, mutual respect, national ownership, non-interference, equality and shared benefit, which have always been the ethical bedrock of SSC, will be more critical than ever as we collectively navigate the complexities and interdependencies of an increasingly interconnected global village.

In this envisioned future, SSC is no longer perceived or practised as a niche, marginal or secondary form of cooperation but is fully recognized, valued and integrated as a mainstream and indispensable pillar of the global development architecture and a vital component of a revitalized multilateralism. It is a dynamic, adaptive and continuously evolving ecosystem, characterized by a rich multiplicity of actors (including an empowered civil society, innovative private-sector entities and world-class academic institutions of the South), a diverse array of creative and context-specific modalities (ranging from technology co-creation to policy peer review and blended finance), and a relentless, evidence-driven focus on achieving tangible, scalable and sustainable development outcomes that transform lives and livelihoods.

As strongly advocated in this report, the platforms for knowledge-sharing, funding mobilization and experience exchange are not just abstract concepts or isolated pilot projects but vibrant, interconnected and digitally enabled realities. They function as bustling global and regional marketplaces of ideas, resources, technologies and solutions, where Southern countries can readily access the validated expertise that they need, proudly share their own successes and hard-won lessons learned, and seamlessly collaborate on ambitious joint initiatives that address shared transboundary challenges – from combating climate change and biodiversity loss and ensuring pandemic preparedness and response, to promoting digital transformation for inclusive development, achieving food and water security for all and fostering sustainable industrialization. These platforms are inherently inclusive, designed to empower even the smallest, least developed and most vulnerable countries to participate meaningfully, contribute their unique perspectives, and benefit equitably from the collective strength, wisdom and dynamism of the Global South. They champion open access to knowledge, promote the use of local languages, and ensure that Southern voices and priorities shape their governance and operations.

The revitalized SSC of the future is characterized by a deep and unwavering commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its overarching, transformative principle of leaving no one behind. It actively and demonstrably contributes to accelerating progress towards all 17 SDGs, with a particular focus on eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions (SDG 1), reducing inequalities within and among countries (SDG 10), promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (SDG 5), ensuring environmental sustainability and urgent climate action (SDGs 13, 14 and 15), and fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies (SDG 16). South-South cooperation initiatives are meticulously designed and implemented with a strong emphasis on national and local ownership, context-specificity, cultural sensitivity, and the active and meaningful participation of communities and rights-holders, ensuring that development solutions are not only technically sound and practical but also socially equitable, culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

The voices, needs and aspirations of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced persons, are systematically integrated into all stages of SSC processes, from planning and design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation, leading to more equitable, empowering and impactful outcomes that address the root causes of exclusion and discrimination. In such a world SSC becomes a powerful vehicle for promoting human rights-based approaches to development within the South, fostering mutual learning, equity, and locally driven solutions rooted in shared experiences and solidarity.

Furthermore, the SSC of the future plays a more assertive, confident and influential role in shaping global governance and contributing to a more democratic, representative and multipolar world order. Through

enhanced coordination, strategic alliances and collective action facilitated by SSC, Southern countries can articulate their common interests and priorities more effectively, cohesively and persuasively in all relevant international forums. They actively contribute to the ongoing reform and democratization of global institutions, advocate for fairer and more development-friendly international trade and financial systems, and champion the provision of global public goods, such as universal access to essential medicines and technologies or a stable climate. This increased agency of the Global South does not lead to global fragmentation or confrontation but rather to a more balanced, inclusive and representative global governance structure, where diverse perspectives are valued, dialogue is prioritized, and collaborative solutions to global challenges are forged through genuine partnership and mutual respect. Triangular cooperation also evolves significantly, becoming a more authentic and equitable partnership based on mutual respect, shared responsibility and co-creation of solutions, with Northern partners playing a supportive, catalytic and enabling role that complements and strengthens Southern-led initiatives rather than imposing external agendas. Triangular cooperation becomes an actual bridge, fostering understanding and collaboration between the Global North and the Global South for the benefit of the entire world community.

Innovation is a defining hallmark of the future SSC. Southern countries are at the forefront of developing, adapting, disseminating and scaling up cutting-edge, context-appropriate solutions to complex development challenges, leveraging both rich Indigenous knowledge systems and the transformative potential of modern science and technology. A flourishing and interconnected ecosystem of South-South innovation hubs, collaborative research networks, technology-transfer mechanisms and venture capital funds is dedicated to nurturing Southern ingenuity. Digital technologies, in particular, are harnessed to their full potential ethically and inclusively, transforming how SSC is conducted and dramatically expanding its reach, efficiency and impact. This includes the widespread use of AI for predictive analytics in disaster management or personalized learning, big data analytics to inform evidence-based policymaking, blockchain technology to enhance transparency and traceability in supply chains or aid flows, and the Internet of Things to optimize resource management in agriculture or urban services. A strong focus is placed on ensuring digital sovereignty and bridging the digital divide, so that all Southern countries can benefit from these technological advancements.

Ultimately, the vision presented in this report is one of profound hope, boundless opportunity and empowered agency. It is a vision where the countries of the Global South, through their collective efforts, shared wisdom and unwavering solidarity, not only overcome their own historical and contemporary development challenges but also make a profound, positive and indispensable contribution to the well-being of all humanity and the ecological health of our shared planet. The path towards this inspiring future requires sustained and dedicated effort, unwavering political will from leaders across the Global South, a willingness to embrace change and innovation, and a commitment to mutual accountability for results. The recommendations outlined in this chapter provide a strategic, yet adaptable, roadmap for this collective journey. By working together, by learning from one another with humility and respect, and by staying true to the foundational principles of SSC that have guided them thus far, the countries and peoples of the Global South can, indeed, bridge all horizons and forge truly transformative pathways towards a brighter, more just and more sustainable future for generations to come. The UNOSSC *Global Report* is presented as an introductory contribution to this collective endeavour — a resonant call to action and a lasting testament to the remarkable power of human collaboration in the pursuit of a better world for all.

The path forward for SSC is not without challenges. Addressing the complex and interconnected challenges of the Global South will require sustained political commitment, adequate resources, enhanced capacities and innovative approaches. However, the potential rewards are immense: a more equitable, sustainable and resilient global development architecture that reflects the diverse voices, experiences and aspirations of all countries.

As we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the G-77, the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference, and the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, this report calls for a renewed commitment to the principles and promises of SSC. By working together in a spirit of solidarity, mutual respect and shared responsibility, countries of the Global South can forge transformative pathways towards a more just, inclusive and sustainable future for all.

The time for action is now. The challenges are daunting but the opportunities are unprecedented. Through enhanced South-South and triangular cooperation, the Global South can accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and contribute to reshaping the global economic order in ways that reflect the changing realities of the twenty-first century. This report offers a roadmap for this transformative journey that requires the collective wisdom, resources and determination of all stakeholders committed to building a better world for current and future generations.

Introduction and Overview

This *Global Report* is the third edition in the series of South-South cooperation (SSC) reports published by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC). Since its inception in 2009, this series has become a vital resource for understanding the evolving dynamics of cooperation among countries of the Global South, offering critical insights into how these countries can collaborate to address shared challenges and leverage opportunities for sustainable development.

To ensure conceptual consistency, this report uses the term "Global South" to refer to countries with shared post-colonial development trajectories and comparable structural challenges. While heterogeneity exists, these countries are increasingly united through SSC, a modality rooted in solidarity, mutual benefit and national ownership. Triangular cooperation involves partnerships between traditional donor countries, emerging economies, multilateral organizations and developing countries, fostering a collaborative approach to development. South-South cooperation, alongside triangular cooperation, represents a dynamic shift in global development partnerships, reaffirmed in the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA) as a vital complement to North-South modalities.

The inaugural report, *South Report 2009: Perspectives on South-South Cooperation for Development*, was published during the height of the 2008 global financial crisis. It sought to highlight the synergies and mutual benefits of SSC, particularly in a context where traditional development assistance from the Global North was under strain. The report argued that the crisis presented a unique opportunity to strengthen and expand cooperative ties in the Global South. It posited that economies in the Global South could achieve greater resilience and contribute to a more diversified and balanced global economy by fostering closer economic, political and technical linkages among Southern countries, subregions and regions. It also emphasized the need for Southern countries to reduce their dependency on Northern aid and instead focus on mutual support and resource sharing.

A decade later, the second report, *Cooperation Beyond Convention: South-South and Triangular Cooperation in a Changing Global Landscape*, was published in 2019 to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). Adopted in 1978, BAPA remains a foundational framework for promoting technical cooperation among developing countries. The 2019 report reflected on the progress made in SSC since the adoption of BAPA and compared it to traditional development aid models. It explored how SSC had been operationalized in practice and examined whether a new era of SSC was emerging, characterized by shifting priorities and increased Southern engagement in the global economy. The report underscored that SSC was increasingly recognized as a vital pathway to sustainable development, with Southern countries playing a more active role in shaping global economic and political systems.

The 2025 report builds on the insights and conclusions of its predecessors, guided by three key premises:

a. **strengthening ties among Southern countries.** Enhanced cooperation within the Global South benefits participating economies and fosters a more diverse, equitable and resilient global economy;

b. **emergence of a new era of SSC.** Priorities and modalities of SSC are evolving, driven by changing global dynamics, technological advancements and the need to address emerging challenges such as climate change, digital transformation and geopolitical shifts; and

c. **sustainable development through Southern engagement.** Greater involvement of Southern countries in the global economy is essential for achieving sustainable development, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The present report on SSC is published at a pivotal moment in global history, characterized by profound and multifaceted shifts that are reshaping the geopolitical, economic and social landscapes, particularly for countries of the Global South. These transformations include the ongoing reconfiguration of global power dynamics, the rise of multipolarity, the lingering effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the accelerating climate crisis, the rapid advancement of digital technologies and the growing trade tensions leading to deglobalization. While these shifts are too vast and complex to be fully addressed within the scope of this report,

they serve as an essential backdrop against which the discussions on SSC must be framed. The challenges and opportunities presented by these global changes underscore the urgency of rethinking and reinvigorating SSC as a critical modality for fostering sustainable development, resilience and solidarity among countries of the Global South.

The timing of this report is particularly significant. The year 2024 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Group of 77 (G-77), the coalition of developing countries that has played a pivotal role in advocating for the interests of the Global South. Additionally, 2025 will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference, a historic event that laid the groundwork for the SSC and solidarity among African and Asian countries; it will also mark the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. These milestones provide an opportune moment to reflect on the future of SSC as a cornerstone of international economic cooperation and development.

Objectives of the report

The primary objective of this report is to strengthen and reimagine SSC taking into consideration the evolving global context. The report assumes a baseline familiarity with the principles, history and mechanisms of SSC and thus does not aim to provide a foundational understanding of the modality. By exploring innovative ideas and strategies, it seeks to reposition SSC as a dynamic and transformative framework that can better address the unique needs and aspirations of the Global South. It emphasizes the importance of moving beyond traditional paradigms of cooperation and embracing a more inclusive, adaptive and forward-looking approach. In doing so, the report highlights the need for greater collaboration, knowledge-sharing and capacity development among Southern countries. It calls for a renewed commitment to solidarity and mutual support, recognizing that the challenges faced by the Global South are interconnected and require collective solutions. By fostering a more robust and strategic SSC framework, the report envisions a future where Southern countries are not only participants in the global system but active shapers of a more equitable and sustainable world order. Ultimately, this report is a call to action for policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders to rethink, revitalize and reposition SSC as a cornerstone of global development in the twenty-first century.

The report seeks to fill critical gaps in knowledge by addressing how SSC can adapt to and leverage the evolving global landscape. It aims to craft an engaging, comprehensive and coherent narrative that reflects on the transformative potential of SSC. By emphasizing its role in fostering sustainability, equity and inclusivity, the report highlights the power of collaboration and shared progress among countries of the Global South. It seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how SSC can address global challenges, reshape development paradigms and contribute to a more equitable and sustainable world.

Previous reports have laid the groundwork for understanding SSC, so there is limited analysis of how its priorities and modalities are shifting in response to contemporary challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, geopolitical realignments, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and trade tensions. This report will, however, explore these dynamics, offering innovative strategies to align SSC with the current global context.

The report also aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on SSC and its integration into the emerging new global order, which was profoundly shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and other recent crises. It further aims to strengthen the role of SSC in achieving sustainable development by identifying innovative approaches rooted in SSC principles. These approaches will focus on mobilizing resources, facilitating technical and economic cooperation, and addressing shared development challenges that countries of the Global South face. The primary objective of this report is twofold:

a. **advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** The report explores how SSC can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs in the Global South. It identifies obstacles to progress and demonstrates how SSC can mobilize resources, facilitate technical and economic cooperation, and address shared development challenges. By contextualizing SSC within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the report proposes actionable recommendations to maximize its impact in the years leading up to 2030; and

b. **empowering the Global South in global governance.** The report examines how SSC can empower Southern countries to assume an active, equitable and influential role in reshaping the global economic order. It emphasizes the importance of ensuring the full participation of developing countries in global governance and decision-making processes, moving beyond mere representation to meaningful influence.

Aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the report contextualizes SSC within this framework. It identifies obstacles to achieving the SDGs in the Global South and demonstrates how SSC can accelerate their implementation.

Ultimately, the 2025 report aims to provide a forward-looking perspective on SSC, challenging conventional thinking and offering fresh insights to enhance its effectiveness as a vital and dynamic force for sustainable development in the twenty-first century. By focusing on innovation, inclusivity and adaptability, the report seeks to deepen understanding of how SSC can be reimagined and revitalized to address the challenges and opportunities of the modern world. It aspires to equip policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders with the tools needed to ensure that SSC remains a transformative framework for fostering resilience, equity and sustainable development across the Global South.

The report is a timely and essential contribution to the discourse on global development. By building on the legacy of its predecessors and addressing the challenges and opportunities of the current global landscape, it seeks to reimagine and revitalize SSC as a transformative force for sustainable development. Through innovative strategies and a renewed commitment to solidarity, the report envisions a future where Southern countries play a central role in shaping a more equitable and sustainable world order.

Methodological approach: Reconceptualizing South-South cooperation beyond descriptive analyses

South-South cooperation (SSC) has often been framed in largely descriptive terms, emphasizing operational modalities and institutional arrangements rather than its conceptual foundations. This report seeks to address that gap by proposing a methodological framework that situates SSC within established social science paradigms while recognizing its unique features. Moving beyond descriptive analysis enables a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping SSC in practice and a more rigorous evaluation of its transformative potential.

The report positions SSC as a dynamic, evolving model of cooperation among developing countries, grounded in shared historical experiences, mutual interests and collective aspirations for equitable development. While SSC continues to gain importance in global development discourse, its theoretical underpinnings, however, remain fragmented and underexplored. This report adopts a comprehensive methodological framework to analyse the multiple dimensions and complexities of SSC, aiming to clarify how SSC can be effectively leveraged to advance sustainable development, promote global solidarity and challenge asymmetries in global governance structures.

Integrating disciplinary perspectives

The analysis focuses on the impact of SSC in two interrelated areas:

a. **advancing progress towards the SDGs;** and

b. **enabling the Global South to assume a more active, equitable and influential role** in reshaping the global economic order and governance.

To explore these dimensions, the report adopts an interdisciplinary framework that synthesizes insights from development studies, international relations, economics and political science. This pluralistic approach recognizes that no single theoretical tradition can fully account for the multifaceted nature of SSC. While drawing on established paradigms, the framework also highlights their limitations in capturing the distinct dynamics of SSC as experienced and shaped by the Global South.

Importantly, the report calls for the development and amplification of Global South-centred approaches to studying SSC. It emphasizes the need for analytical frameworks that are more inclusive of the diverse realities, priorities and voices of the South.

Conceptual pluralism as a methodological choice

The framework adopts conceptual pluralism as a deliberate methodological stance. This enables a comprehensive understanding of SSC by integrating diverse paradigms that reflect the heterogeneity of Global South experiences.

The benefits of this pluralistic approach include:

- **illuminating complexity.** Different theoretical traditions highlight various facets of SSC: power dynamics, structural constraints, governance mechanisms, identity formation and emancipatory potential;
- **productive tensions.** Conceptual disagreements offer critical insights into contradictions within SSC itself rather than attempting to reconcile them; and
- **connecting empirical and normative analysis.** Integrating multiple perspectives supports both a factual understanding of SSC and a critical assessment of its principles and outcomes.

Evidence-based, multilateral orientation

The report draws extensively on critical knowledge and data produced by the United Nations development system, including specialized agencies, funds and programmes, which provide valuable technical expertise and grounded insights. The inclusion of the research of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on triangular cooperation further enriches the analysis, offering perspectives on how SSC interfaces with broader development strategies.

By synthesizing knowledge from UN intergovernmental processes, on-the-ground programmatic experience and OECD expertise, the report underscores the centrality of multilateralism and collective action in advancing SSC and addressing global challenges.

While grounded in historical analysis, empirical research and forward-looking perspectives, the research also acknowledges key challenges, including limited access to literature from the Global South and gaps in reliable data. These limitations are transparently discussed since they shape the depth and scope of the analysis.

Three-pillar methodological framework

The report employs a multi-dimensional methodology to capture the complexity of SSC. Its methodological approach rests on three core analytical pillars, each designed to examine different aspects of SSC evolution, operationalization and future direction:

(a) Historical contextualization (1955–2025)

To understand contemporary SSC, the report situates it within a broader historical arc, beginning with the 1955 Bandung Conference and continuing to the present. Key historical milestones, such as the formation of the Group of 77 (G-77) and the adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action, are examined to trace SSC ideological roots and institutional development.

This periodization reveals distinct phases:

- **1950s–1970s:** Bandung Conference and the rise of the Non-Aligned Movement and the G-77 emphasized political solidarity and collective bargaining;
- **1970s–1980s:** economic cooperation gained prominence through BAPA and regional integration;
- **Post-Cold War:** neoliberal globalization curtailed SSC but the 2000s witnessed a revival led by emerging powers (e.g., China, Brazil, India and South Africa); and
- **21st century:** SSC expanded into knowledge-sharing, policy coordination and multilateral engagement, enabled by evolving institutions and shared postcolonial identities.

The historical lens reveals both continuity and rupture. While contemporary SSC draws on enduring principles of solidarity and self-reliance, it has also adapted pragmatically to shifting geopolitical and economic conditions.

(b) Normative foundations and conceptual evolution

South-South cooperation is anchored in core principles – sovereignty, non-interference, mutual benefit and demand-driven cooperation – shaped by shared histories of colonialism and political marginalization. These principles, however, are dynamic and continually reinterpreted through practice and power relations.

Therefore, the report explores how:

- sovereignty is prioritized as a normative response to historical domination;
- demand-driven cooperation challenges donor-driven models, although power asymmetries among Southern actors persist; and
- institutions created by SSC reduce transaction costs, facilitate cooperation and enable collective action despite structural inequalities.

The normative evolution of SSC includes:

- **institutionalization:** increasing formalization and development of SSC standards;
- **hybridization:** mixing SSC and traditional aid principles; and
- **pragmatic adaptation:** shifting from ideological solidarity to commercially oriented cooperation.

These changes reflect both material constraints and the evolving strategic interests of Southern States.

(c) Future trajectories: A structured approach to anticipating change

South-South Cooperation originated as a future-oriented project to reshape the global order. To retain its transformative potential, it must anticipate change and co-create alternative development pathways.

The report adopts a forward-looking, scenario-based methodology that emphasizes:

- **plurality of futures:** recognizing divergent pathways (e.g., deeper integration vs. fragmentation);
- **temporal embeddedness:** linking past dependencies with emerging disruptions;
- **relational agency:** acknowledging uneven influence among State and non-State actors; and
- **enduring contradictions:** navigating solidarity vs. fragmentation, innovation vs. inertia, and autonomy vs. interdependence.

This framework moves away from deterministic planning and instead treats the future as a space for strategic agency and negotiation.

Analytical propositions

From this three-pronged methodology, the report advances five core propositions:

1. **historical path dependency:** SSC is shaped by colonial legacies, Cold War politics and globalization.
2. **dual character:** SSC both challenges and seeks to reshape existing development paradigms.
3. **structural embeddedness:** SSC is constrained by the world economy but offers pathways for transformation.
4. **normative-material nexus:** the evolution of SSC reflects a complex interplay of principles and interests.
5. **multi-scalar dynamics:** SSC functions across global, regional, national and subnational levels.

Research design and sources

The report employs a mixed-method approach, drawing on:

- **primary sources:** UN resolutions, government documents and SSC agreements;
- **secondary sources:** academic literature and institutional data, e.g., The World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations development system (UNDS) entities; and
- **stakeholder insights:** perspectives from Southern Governments, civil society and private-sector actors.

This methodological framework enables an analytically robust understanding of SSC as a development cooperation paradigm. It addresses conceptual gaps, highlights historical legacies and anticipates emerging challenges, offering a rigorous foundation for future research and policy engagement.

The methodology of the report is designed to provide a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of SSC. It combines historical analysis, empirical research and forward-looking perspectives to offer actionable insights. However, the research process is not without its challenges, particularly owing to constraints such as the limited availability of literature from the Global South and the dearth of reliable data. It is critical that these limitations be acknowledged since as they shape the scope and depth of the analysis.

This report was developed between January 2024 and June 2025. The data and information presented in the report reflect the most recent sources available during that period. Updates released after June 2025, such as the World Bank's revised monetary poverty estimates (June 2025) and income-based country classifications (July 2025), were not incorporated, as the report was already undergoing editing and layout finalization. Indicators included in the Statistical Annex specify the exact date of data retrieval for transparency.

Limitations and challenges in the research process

The research process is shaped by several constraints that impact the scope and depth of the analysis. These limitations are especially significant in the context of the Global South, where systemic inequities, resource shortages and infrastructural gaps often pose barriers to knowledge production and dissemination. These challenges highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of the contextual factors that influence research outcomes in underresourced settings:

a. **limited production of literature and emerging knowledge in the Global South.** A significant portion of the academic and policy literature on SSC is still produced in the Global North, reflecting the enduring dominance of Northern institutions in global knowledge production. This perpetuates a perspective gap, with Southern voices, contexts and epistemologies often underrepresented. However, in recent years, a growing number of think tanks, research institutions and independent scholars across the Global South have been actively contributing to an emerging Southern body of knowledge on SSC and broader development issues – from finance and climate resilience to digital transformation and governance. These efforts signal a vital shift towards a more pluralistic and representative global knowledge landscape, yet limitations in funding, access to global publishing platforms and cross-border research collaboration persist. Leveraging advances in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly large language models (LLMs), could significantly enhance knowledge exchange and co-creation among countries of the Global South, facilitating synthesis of multilingual research, peer learning and inclusive policy dialogue. To fully realize this potential, targeted investment in Southern research capacity and digital infrastructure is essential;

b. **dearth of reliable data.** Data availability is a major challenge in analysing SSC. Many Southern countries lack the infrastructure and resources to collect, process and disseminate high-quality data. When available data are often fragmented, inconsistent or outdated, conducting comparative analyses or tracking progress over time is difficult. The report addresses this limitation by triangulating data from multiple sources and using proxy indicators where necessary;

c. **bias in existing data and literature.** Much of the existing data and literature on SSC is influenced by the perspectives and priorities of Northern institutions. This can lead to a skewed understanding of SSC since Southern initiatives are often evaluated through a Northern lens. Thus, the report prioritizes Southern sources and perspectives to mitigate this bias while critically engaging with Northern literature;

d. **limited access to primary sources.** Access to primary sources, such as government documents and archival materials, is restricted owing to political sensitivities, bureaucratic hurdles and lack of digital availability. The report addresses this challenge by relying on publicly available documents and leveraging partnerships with Southern institutions to gain access to restricted materials; and

e. **resource constraints.** Conducting comprehensive research on SSC requires substantial resources – funding, time and specialized expertise – which are often limited in many institutions of the Global South. These constraints hinder their ability to systematically contribute to and shape the global knowledge base. However, the emergence of AI-powered large language models presents a significant opportunity to mitigate some of these limitations. By providing cost-effective access to advanced analytical tools, automated summarization, literature synthesis, multilingual translation and even data-driven scenario modelling, these models can serve as research-force multipliers for underresourced institutions. LLMs can also facilitate cross-country knowledge exchanges and collaborative drafting of joint research outputs, reducing reliance

on external consultancies or Northern intermediaries. To fully harness this potential, targeted investments are needed to improve digital infrastructure, build local capacities in AI literacy and develop regionally adapted AI interfaces. Strengthening research capacity through the integration of LLMs should be seen not only as a cost-saving measure but also as a strategic imperative for accelerating SSC from within the Global South.

To address these constraints, the report adopts the following strategies:

a. **inclusive research practices**. The report actively seeks out and incorporates perspectives from Southern scholars, policymakers and practitioners. This includes consulting Southern academic journals, policy papers and case studies and identifying resources produced by Southern stakeholders; and

b. **data triangulation.** To overcome data-availability limitations, the report employs data triangulation, combining multiple data sources to validate findings. This includes using alternative indicators and proxy measures where direct data are unavailable.

Key focus areas and structure of the report

The report addresses the following themes, each of which is critical to understanding and advancing SSC:

a. **actors of SSC:** defining the Global South and identifying which countries constitute it. This explores the diversity within the Global South and the varying roles played by different actors, including emerging economies, least developed countries (LDCs) and regional organizations;

b. **evolution of SSC:** tracing the emergence and development of SSC, identifying its distinctive components and examining triangular cooperation within the SSC framework. This highlights how SSC has adapted to changing global realities over time;

c. **path of the Global South to sustainable development:** analysing how Southern countries can achieve sustainable development through SSC. This explores the role of SSC in addressing key challenges such as poverty reduction, climate change and inequality in digital transformation; and

d. **new pathways for SSC:** identifying innovative approaches to enhance SSC in the context of emerging global challenges. This examines how digital technologies, green finance and other innovations can be leveraged to strengthen SSC.

By addressing these themes, the report aims to provide actionable insights and recommendations to strengthen SSC as a driver of sustainable development and global economic equity. It seeks to inspire Southern countries to deepen their collaborative efforts, embrace innovative solutions and play a more prominent role in shaping the future of international cooperation. As the world faces unprecedented challenges, the report underscores the importance of solidarity and mutual support among developing countries in building a more just, inclusive and sustainable global order.

The report comprises an introduction, four chapters and annexes, including a statistical annex:

- **chapter 1.** The Rise of the Global South: Emerging Dynamics and Shifting Landscapes;
- **chapter 2.** South-South cooperation: Foundations, Evolution and Contemporary Challenges;
- **chapter 3.** Integrating South-South Cooperation with the Sustainable Development Agenda: Challenges and Opportunities; and
- **chapter 4.** Envisioning the Future: Innovative Frameworks for Resilience, Equity, and Sustainability through South-South Cooperation.

Each of these chapters explores critical dimensions of South-South cooperation, its historical evolution, current dynamics and potential. By weaving together historical context, contemporary analysis and forward-looking recommendations, the report aims to inspire actionable insights and foster a deeper appreciation for the role of the Global South in shaping the future of international development.

Chapter 1

The Rise of the Global South: Emerging Dynamics and Shifting Landscapes

The twenty-first century has witnessed a significant shift in global economic and political power, with the Global South emerging as a pivotal force in shaping the international order.

This chapter presents a critical analysis of the "Global South" as a conceptual, historical and geopolitical construct, interrogating its origins, evolution and enduring significance in shaping discourses of global development, international relations and power dynamics. Employing a retrospective analytical lens, the chapter maps the historical trajectory of the Global South, tracing its efforts to amplify its collective voice and redefine its position within the hierarchical structures of the global economic order. Through this historical examination, the text illuminates the Global South ascendant influence in the twenty-first century, the reconfiguration of power within an increasingly multipolar international system, and the systemic challenges – from structural inequities to neocolonial dependencies – that continue to constrain its agency.

The chapter also addresses the challenges faced by the Global South, including economic inequality, political instability and environmental degradation. It underscores the need for a unified approach to address these issues and harness the potential of SSC to create a more equitable and sustainable global order.

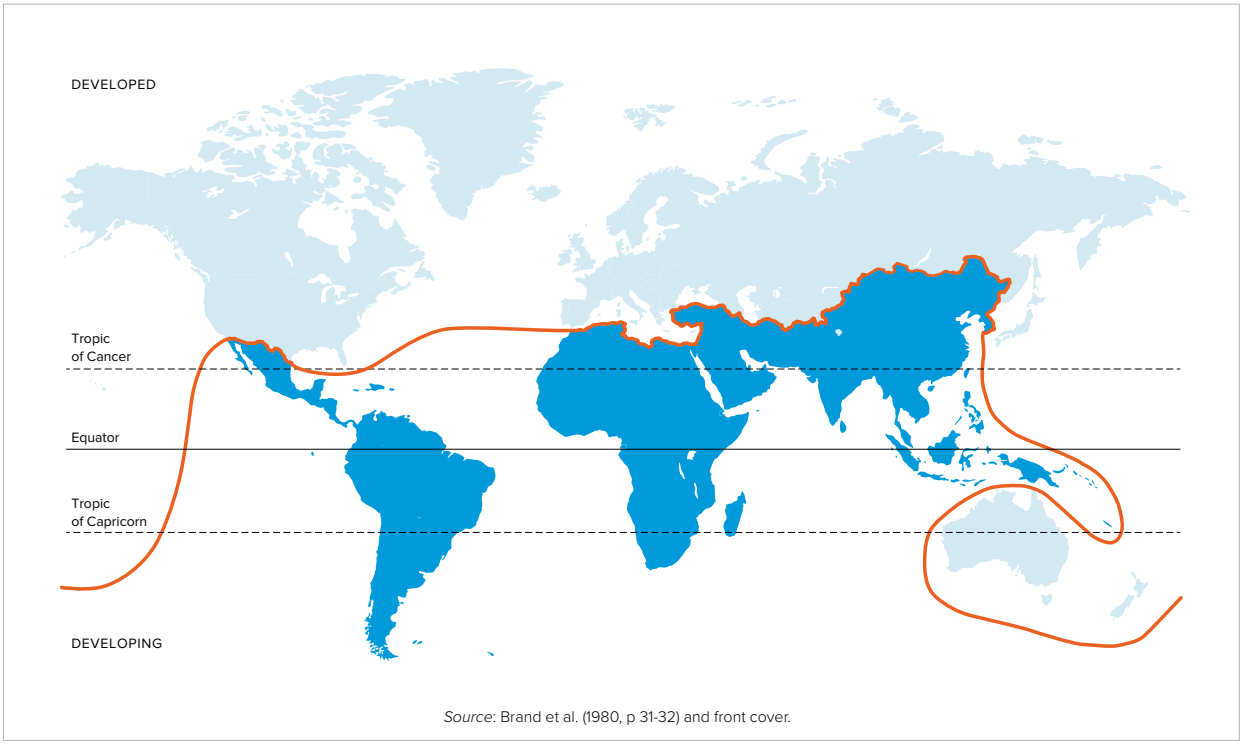
1.1 Introduction

Having a clear understanding of the different terminologies, particularly “Global South”, “South-South cooperation” and “triangular cooperation”, is of critical importance for ensuring conceptual clarity in development discourse, and designing policies and initiatives that are appropriately tailored to the diverse needs, contexts and aspirations of developing countries. References to the “Global South” have become increasingly prominent in both academic and policy debates. In particular, the practice and study of international development are infused with “South” language, from multilateral development agencies supporting “South-South” cooperation to academics framing their work as research in or on the “Global South”. At the same time, some scholars have raised questions about “the very existence”’ of the “Global South” and have pointed to the need for a more in-depth engagement with “South”-related terminology.

In today’s interconnected world, terms such as “Global North” and “Global South” are frequently used to describe the economic and geopolitical divisions between regions. These terms represent more than just geographical locations, however; they encompass complex socioeconomic, political and developmental disparities that shape our global landscape. In this section, the definition of the “Global South” will be examined to clarify what it entails, exploring the definitions, historical contexts and implications for global development.

Countries of the “Global South” used to be described as the “third world”, then identified as “developing countries”. These two terms did not emerge from countries of the South nor were they agreed upon collectively. Countries of the South identified themselves under the different groupings that were formed, namely, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries and the Group of 77 (G-77). The term “South” started to be used and gain more acceptance with the publishing of the report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues titled *North-South: A Programme for Survival*.[1] The Commission was chaired by the former Chancellor of West Germany Willy Brandt. In the report, widely called the Brandt Report, the late Chancellor Brandt mentioned that it “... deals with some of the world’s needs of the 1980s. It discusses North-South relations as the great social challenge of our time”.[2] The cover of the report is a map dividing the world into North and South (figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. The Brandt line



Source: Brand et al. (1980, p 31-32) and front cover.

[1] The Brandt Report | Share The World’s Resources (STWR) (sharing.org).

[2] North-South: A Program for Survival, Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the Chairmanship of Willy Brandt, p. 7.

The Commission broadly categorized developing countries as those that occupy the southern hemisphere and developed countries as those that occupy the northern hemisphere, while acknowledging exceptions to this generalization and emphasizing the common global economy within which all countries function. A distinction is drawn between the comparatively large human population that lives in relative poverty in the South compared to the smaller and more affluent population of the North.[3]

The word "South" gained more circulation as the eighth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, convened in Harare in 1986, endorsed the establishment of the South Commission chaired by the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania Julius Nyerere. The Commission published its report titled *The Challenge to the South*[4] in 1990. In the introduction of the report, the late President of the United Republic of Tanzania states that the South Commission *"... has its origins in a recognition within the South that developing countries have many problems and much experience in common to share."*[5] He mentions that *"... the South does not know the South–what goes on in its countries, what are the ideas of its peoples, what its potential is, and the manner in which South-South co-operation can widen development options for all countries."*[6]

In the first chapter entitled "The South and Its Tasks", the report of the South Commission identifies the coverage of the South. It mentions *"Three and half billion people, three quarters of all humanity, live in the developing countries...Together the developing countries – accounting for more than two thirds of the earth's land surface area – are often called the Third World. We refer to them as the South."*[7]

The report was introduced to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It triggered a process of adopting the term "South" increasingly. Since then, the term "South" has been used to define the developing countries. The term 'third world" has been retired for a long time, while the term "developing countries" is still in use in the process of categorizing countries.[8]

The countries that come under the term "Global South" are mainly developing economies, which includes subcategories, as shown in table 1.1. It is also worth noting that the World Bank country classification includes four categories, as shown in table 1.1. Most of the Global South countries fall into the categories of "low-income economies", "lower-middle-income economies" and "upper-middle-income economies". Few countries of the Global South are in the "high-income economies" category, and these are mainly oil-producing countries.[9]

It is worth noting that the classification of countries into income categories has evolved significantly over the period since the late 1980s. According to the World Bank, in 1987, 30 per cent of countries were classified as low income, while in 2023, only 12 per cent fell into this category. The extent of this decline is different between regions, with the proportion of low-income countries in the South Asia region falling from 100 per

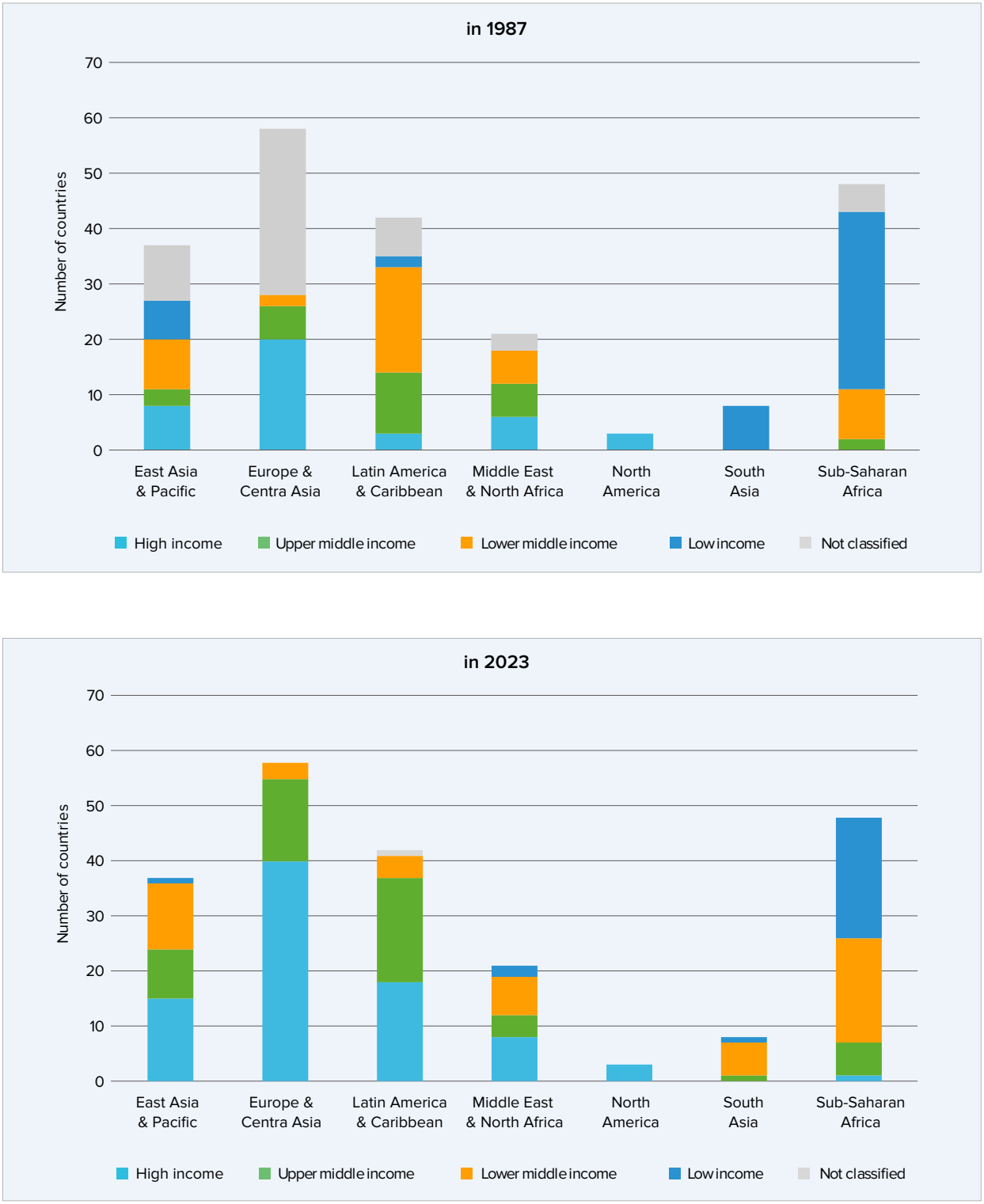
Table 1.1. Country Classification

United Nations country classification	World Bank country classification, by gross national income (GNI) per capita
▸ Developed economies ▸ Economies in transition ▸ Developing economies › Least developed countries › Heavily indebted poor countries › Small island developing states › Landlocked developing countries	World Bank country classification: › Low-income economies ($1,145 or less) › Lower-middle-income economies ($1,146 to $4,515) › Upper-middle-income economies ($4,516 to $14,005) › High-income economies (more than $14,005)
Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Development Policy and Analysis Division, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024*. Available at https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/WESP_2024_Web.pdf.	*Source*: The World Bank, "World Bank Country and Lending Groups". Available at https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups.

[3] Ibid.
[4] The-Challenge-to-the-South_HRes_EN.pdf (southcentre.int).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., p. v.
[7] Ibid., p. 1.
[8] World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025.
[9] https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups.

cent to 13 per cent in 2023. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of high-income countries rose from 9 per cent in 1987 to 44 per cent in 2023. Conversely, in the Middle East and North Africa, there was a higher share of low-income countries in 2023 (10 per cent) than in 1987, when no countries were classified in this category. This is depicted visually in figure 1.2, which shows the income patterns by region.[10]

Figure 1.2. World Bank country classification, by income level, 1987–2023



Looking at the United Nations classification, there are still 44 countries in the LDC category, most of which are in Africa (figure 1.3). Among these countries, 20 have been classified as LDCs since 1971 (table 1.2 and box 1.1).

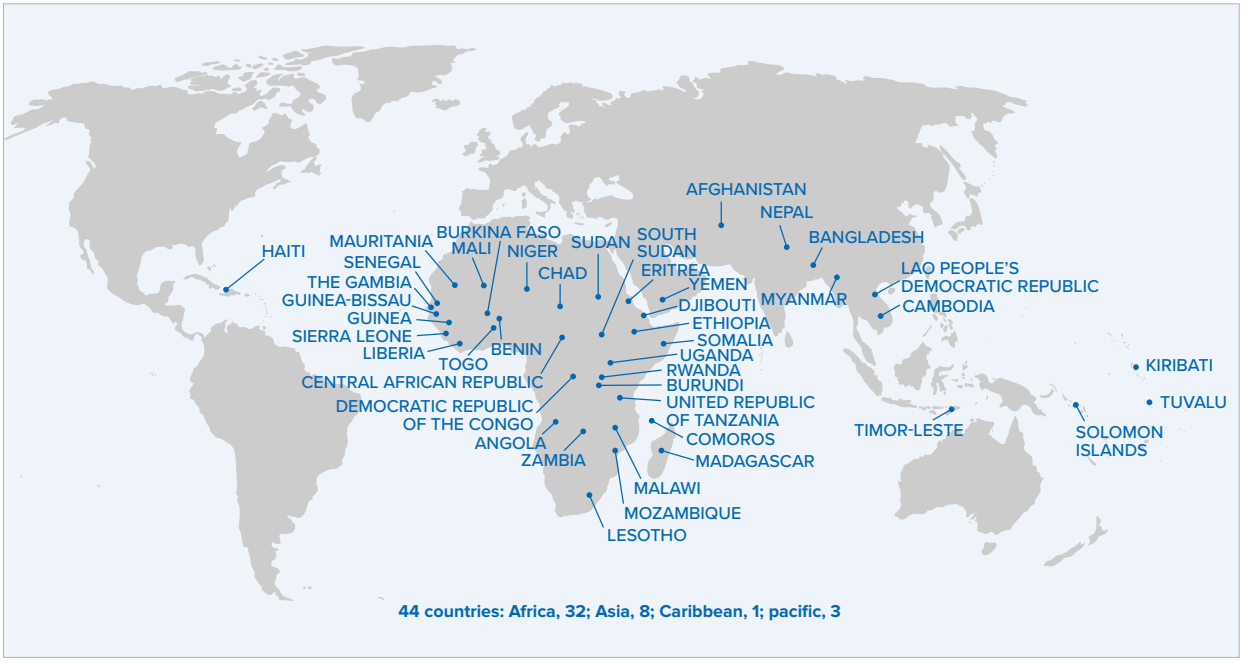
[10] https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/opendata/world-bank-country-classifications-by-income-level-for-2024-2025.

Table 1.2. List of least developed countries, as of 19 December 2024[11]

Country	Year of inclusion	Country	Year of inclusion
Afghanistan	1971	Madagascar	1991
Angola	1994	Malawi	1971
Bangladesh[1]	1975	Mali	1971
Benin	1971	Mauritania	1986
Burkina Faso	1971	Mozambique	1988
Burundi	1971	Myanmar	1987
Cambodia[3]	1991	Nepal[1]	1971
Central African Republic	1975	Niger	1971
Chad	1971	Rwanda	1971
Comoros	1977	Senegal[3]	2000
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1991	Sierra Leone	1982
Djibouti	1982	Solomon Islands[2]	1991
Eritrea	1994	Somalia	1971
Ethiopia	1971	South Sudan	2012
Gambia	1975	Sudan	1971
Guinea	1971	Timor-Leste	2003
Guinea-Bissau	1981	Togo	1982
Haiti	1971	Tuvalu	1986
Kiribati	1986	Uganda	1971
Lao People's Democratic Republic[1]	1971	United Republic of Tanzania	1971
Lesotho	1971	Yemen	1971
Liberia	1990	Zambia	1991

* The list will be updated when new decisions by the General Assembly become available.
[1] Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal are scheduled to graduate on 24 November 2026 in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/76/8 (https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/76/8).
[2] Solomon Islands is scheduled to graduate on 13 December 2027 in accordance with General Assembly resolutions A/RES/73/133 (https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/73/133) and A/RES/77/323 (https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/77/323).
[3] Cambodia and Senegal are scheduled to graduate on 19 December 2029 in accordance with General Assembly resolution A/RES/79/230 (https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/230).

Figure 1.3. Where are LDCs located? [12]



[11] United Nations, Committee for Policy Development. Available at ldc_list.pdf.
[12] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "UN list of least developed countries".

Box 1.1. The UN established the LDC category 54 years ago

The list of LDCs has expanded from an initial 25 countries in 1971, peaking at 52 in 1991 and standing at 44 today, with only eight countries having graduated – stopped being categorized as an LDC – to date. They are distributed among the following regions:

- **Africa (32):** Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- **Asia (8):** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Timor-Leste and Yemen.
- **Caribbean (1):** Haiti.
- **Pacific (3):** Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

To graduate from the LDC category, a country must meet the established graduation thresholds of at least two of the three criteria for two consecutive triennial reviews, namely: (i) income per capita, (ii) an index of human assets, and (iii) an index of economic and environmental vulnerability. Countries that are highly vulnerable, or have very low human assets, are eligible for graduation only if they meet the other two criteria by a sufficiently high margin. As an exception, a country whose per capita income is sustainably above the "income-only" graduation threshold, set at three times the graduation threshold, becomes eligible for graduation, even if it fails to meet the other two criteria. The eight countries that have graduated from LDC status since the creation of the category are:

1. Botswana in December 1994
2. Cabo Verde in December 2007
3. Maldives in January 2011
4. Samoa in January 2014
5. Equatorial Guinea in June 2017
6. Vanuatu in December 2020
7. Bhutan in December 2023
8. Sao Tome and Principe in December 2024

Source: https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list.

The decade of the 1960s was marked by rapid economic growth, vigorous expansion of world trade and relative price stability. The gross national product (GNP) of industrialized countries increased at an impressive annual average rate of 5 per cent. Notably, in only one year during the decade did the average growth rate fall below 4.5 per cent, underscoring the relative stability of their economic performance.

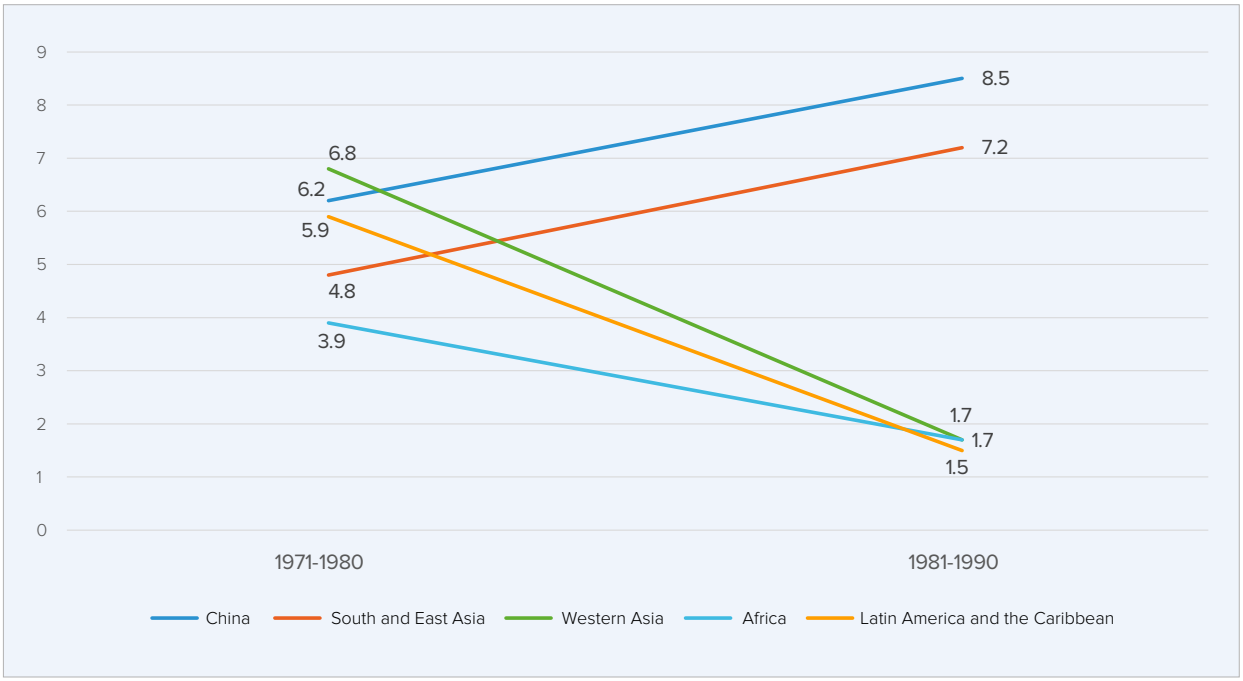
Even more remarkable was the growth recorded by developing countries. As a group, their GNP expanded at an average annual rate of 5.6 per cent during the 1960s, surpassing the pace of the industrialized economies. This represented the fastest growth period experienced by both developing and developed countries up to that time. However, the overall trend masked considerable disparities among individual countries and groups. [13]

The experience of the 1980s was marked by dramatic economic divergence as various developing regions adopted different development strategies and policies (figure 1.4). On the one hand, the deteriorating global economic situations adversely impacted countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia, which in the 1980s experienced a lost decade of development. On the other hand, most countries in South and East Asia were more resilient and were able to maintain economic dynamism. This contributed to a great divergence of economic performance among countries of the Global South. [14]

[13] Francis X. Colaco, The International Economic Environment and the Developing Countries 1960–90, Working Paper, No. 14 (Washington, D.C., The World Bank, July 1980).

[14] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Reflection on development policy in the 1970s and 1980s, UN-DESA Policy Brief No. 53 (July 2017). Available at WESS2017-PB53.pdf.

Figure 1.4. Annual average growth of GDP in developing countries, 1971–1990



Given that this patchwork of development paths is pointing to divergence, how useful is the term "Global South" as an analytical category for development cooperation? What binds the countries of the South together besides their juxtaposition to the Global North? The answers to these questions are not obvious. After all, the Global South is made up of an extremely diverse mix of older and younger States, of larger and smaller economies, of labour-abundant and labour-scarce areas. Moreover, all these societies have rather distinct "national" histories, including very different relations with the rest of the world, and despite the economic ascendance of Asia, within this vast region, there are also large differences.

Most Southern economies continue to operate at a significant distance from the global technological frontier, confronting the persistent challenge of integrating foreign knowledge and innovation to drive catch-up growth. While this challenge is widespread, the outcomes have varied considerably, underscoring the critical role of domestic economic policies, institutional choices and development strategies. The success of several East Asian economies illustrates how proactive industrial policies, investment in human capital and strategic integration into global markets can lead to sustained growth and technological advancement. These development trajectories demonstrate that the interplay between national policy frameworks and global economic dynamics can produce divergent results.

The broader ambition of achieving both economic prosperity and political autonomy central to the vision articulated by the Non-Aligned Movement at the Bandung Conference in 1955 must now be pursued within a global order where domestic markets are increasingly exposed to foreign competition. At the same time, structural vulnerabilities persist: resource depletion (such as soil erosion), ecological degradation (including biodiversity loss and deforestation) and climate-related hazards disproportionately affect the countries of the Global South, raising concerns about their long-term development trajectories.

Despite this, the concept of "Global South" retains analytical value. The shared experience of constrained state autonomy, externally imposed technologies and exposure to volatile global markets, combined with the tangible pressures of environmental degradation, creates a coherent basis for comparison. Yet this coherence does not suggest uniformity. Rather, it highlights the importance of examining hybrid and context-specific development pathways across a diverse set of countries, many of which confront overlapping challenges. Within this heterogeneity lies an opportunity to identify patterns, policy innovations and institutional reforms that have led to divergent, and at times highly successful, development outcomes.

1.2 Rethinking the Global South: Origins, implications and contemporary relevance

The use of the term "South" to refer to developing countries collectively has been part of the terminologies of international relations since the 1970s. It rests on the fact that all of the world's industrially developed countries (with the exception of Australia and New Zealand) lie to the north of developing countries. The term does not imply that all developing countries are similar and can be grouped together in one category. What it does highlight is that, although developing countries range across the spectrum of every economic, social and political attribute, they all share a set of vulnerabilities and challenges. Originating from the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War, the Global South comprises developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These countries have shared experiences as former colonies during their nation-building process. Meanwhile, they have diversified political systems and have chosen varied economic development paths.

The term "Global South" reflects the change of position of the developing countries in the international economic order as well as in international relations. One of the most transformative developments in recent years has been the broad progress of many countries of the Global South and their emergence as key active players in the global economic order. Their growing role reflects their growth in voice and power. The countries of the Global South adopted evolving positions vis-à-vis the global order. These positions transitioned through three stages: defying the global order, moving to be more responsive partners and then becoming active players. Through this historical evolution, the term "Global South" emerged and gained more acceptance in the developing countries and has been increasingly used in United Nations resolutions and reports.

The transformation of several developing countries into dynamic major economies is having a significant impact on global development. Since the late 1990s, several countries in the Global South have been active in shaping both the global development agenda and the development landscape. A prominent feature of our changing world is the increasing role that developing countries are playing in the global economy of the twenty-first century. They are reshaping North-South relationships towards greater balance and are creating new South-South linkages that open untapped opportunities for growth and development. Brazil, China and India are ubiquitous but other developing countries, too, are rapidly catching up.

For this reason, the definition of "the South" or what has been emerging and gaining traction as the phrase "the Global South" is contested in some quarters that refute the existence of a Global South, theoretically and geographically, emphasizing that the world is in a situation of flux and there are movements among countries exchanging their places in the global order and global economy.

The "Global South", however, has now become an acceptable term to refer to a group of countries in a relatively neutral way that still recognizes their geographical status as well as the general sense of facing common global problems and sharing certain aims and aspirations. The South, in this context, should not be perceived in purely geographical or economic terms.[15] The frontier of the definition combines a thematic perspective and a geographic aspect. The term "Global South" has almost never been a purely geographical concept; it intersects spatial, historical, political and economic dimensions and is often used as a metaphor for these sets of dimensions.

Recognizing a continuing commonality among the countries of the Global South is not to deny that differentiation among Southern countries exists and keeps extending. These countries have diversified in the last four decades, and they are less similar to one another in terms of the level of economic development than in the past. A clear indication is the proliferation of categories devised by international organizations, as mentioned and demonstrated in the previous section, to address the needs of specific groups of countries such as least developed countries (LDCs), middle-income countries (MICs), highly indebted poor countries (HIPCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

The "Global South" is a generic term that nevertheless encompasses diversity through a multitude of specificities. It is a generic term applicable to various continents within the Global South, including Africa, Asia and South America, each experiencing various types and forms of economies, politics, cultures and/or climates. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind this diversity within the term "Global South". The rise of countries of

[15] Geographically, the southern hemisphere is defined as the half sphere of the Earth that is south of the Equator. It is opposite the northern hemisphere. See Rogers, Alisdair, Noel Castree and Rob Kitchin, *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013).

the Global South has blurred the traditional boundaries that define the "South" not by location but by certain economic characteristics and quality of life.

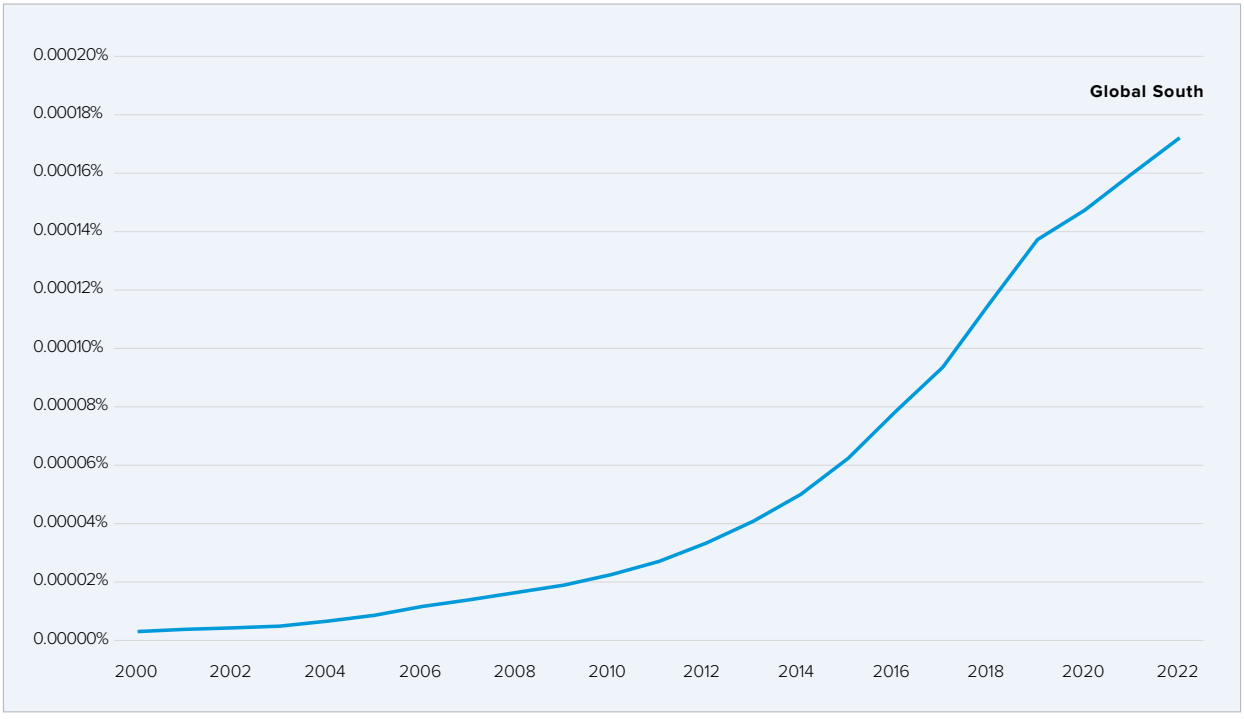
Despite these nuances, the term "Global South" is a useful concept for analysing a group of countries that continue to see their challenges and to construct their narrative quite differently from those of the industrialized/developed countries in Asia, Europe and North America.[16] It is important to underline that what brings these countries together is a shared sense of peripherality and dissatisfaction with the global economic order that emerged after the Second World War. This report is employing the term "Global South" to capture the intellectual space of development cooperation practices in those countries that share a particular set of conditions and aspirations regarding sustainable development.

The BAPA+40 outcome document presented this concept in a clear manner: *"...developing countries tend to share common views on national development strategies and priorities when faced with similar development challenges. The proximity of experience is therefore a key catalyst in promoting capacity development in developing countries and, in this regard, it accentuates the principles of South-South cooperation. It is important to enhance South-South cooperation in order to fulfill its full development potential"*.[17] In a nutshell, while the needs, interests and development strategies of the countries of the Global South may be diverse, these countries are nonetheless bound together by the common objective of accelerating their development.

In specific terms, the Global South includes the 134 member countries of the G-77 at the United Nations.[18] The members of the Group span the four categories of income defined by the United Nations (see table 1.1). Membership in the G-77 provides a valid criterion: it requires a State to identify itself as part of a group that has a shared position within the world economy. It was a central factor in prompting the emergence of the Global South as a political grouping. Hence, the Global South is not only distinguished by economic metrics but also by a shared identity rooted in its collective interests. The G-77 serves as a representative body for the Global South, aligning with the definition in this report.

Academic publications reflect the current prominence of the "Global South". According to the Scopus database, references to the "Global South" in English-language research have expanded exponentially over the last two decades. Figure 1.5 charts the percentage of all the bigrams contained in Google's sample of books written in English and published in the United States that are "Global South" from 2000 to 2022.

Figure 1.5. The term "Global South" in a corpus of books indexed by Google Books, 2000--2022



Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer. Accessed on 24 April 2025

[16] https://www.routledge.com/Institutions-of-the-Global-South/Braveboy-Wagner/p/book/9780415365918.
[17] N1911172.pdf (unsouthsouth.org), para. 13.
[18] Group of 77 Member States.

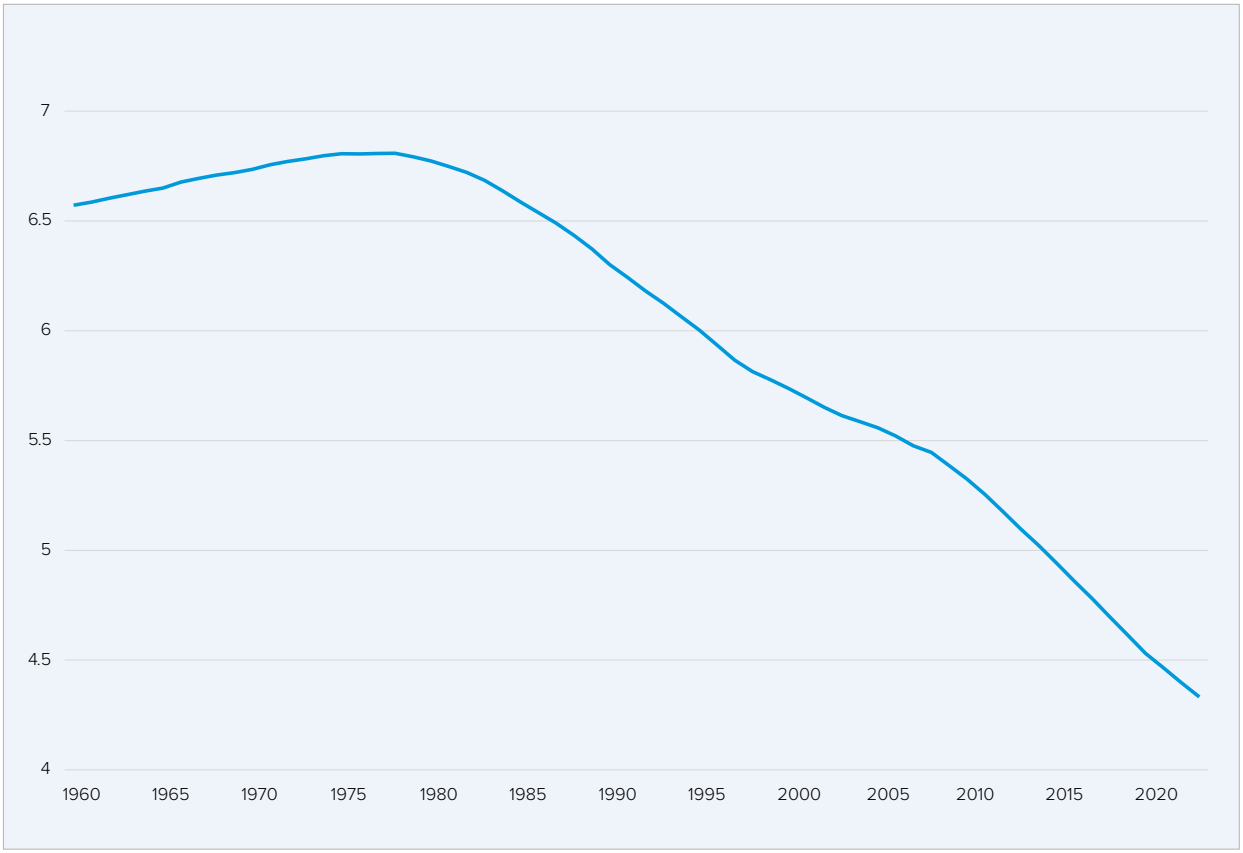
The economic power of the Global South has grown in the last few decades, particularly since the late 1990s. While this has been driven by the rise of China as a major actor in the world economy, there has also been a wider diffusion of the share of global output away from the North and towards the Global South. Despite the progress made to date, however, countries of the Global South still face enormous challenges in achieving the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.[19]

Demography is an important factor in stressing the weight of the countries of the Global South in our world. According to the United Nations, the world's population reached 8 billion on 15 November 2022. The latest projections suggest that the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030 and to 9.7 billion in 2050. Over the last 25 years, the world population has increased by 2.1 billion people. Almost all this growth has occurred in countries of the Global South. In 2022, five out of six people in the world lived in the Global South countries.[20] Population values for 2024 are presented in the statistical annex, table 2.

More than half of the projected increase in the global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries, all in the Global South (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania) and five of them in Africa. The 44 LDCs are among the world's fastest growing countries; many are projected to double in population between 2022 and 2050 (table 1.3 and figure 1.7).[21]

Depending on the region, there is also a gradual decrease in total fertility rate (TFR). For instance, sub-Saharan Africa, while historically exhibiting high fertility rates, has recently already seen such a decrease. In this region, the TFR declined from approximately 6.6 children per woman (1960) to 3.8 (2024), with projections indicating further possible decline to around 2.6 by 2050. Such analysis can support the idea of a time-bound/time-limited demographic dividend window.[22] Data from the World Bank up to 2022 show this trend (figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6. Fertility rate, total (births per woman), sub-Saharan Africa[23]



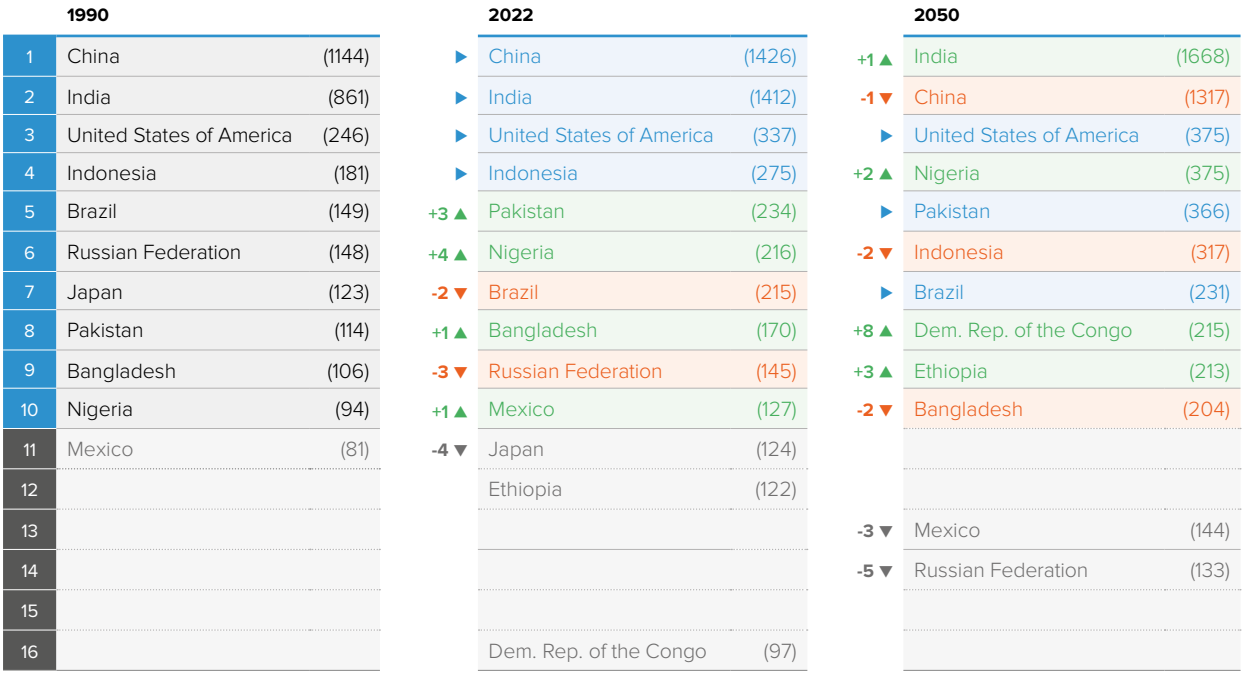
[19] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/.
[20] https://unctad.org/publication/handbook-statistics-2022.
[21] United Nations, Population Division, "World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results".
[22] https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=ZG.
[23] Fertility rate, total (births per woman) - Sub-Saharan Africa | Data.

Table 1.3. Population of the world, SDG regions and selected groups of countries, 2022, 2030 and 2050 according to medium scenario

Region	2022	2030	2050
	population in millions		
World	7,942	8,512	9,687
Sub-Saharan Africa	1,152	1,401	2,094
Northern Africa and Western Asia	549	617	771
Central and Southern Asia	2,075	2,248	2,575
Eastern and South-Eastern Asia	2,342	2,372	2,317
Latin America and the Caribbean	658	695	749
Australia/New Zealand	31	34	38
Oceania*	14	15	20
Europe and Northern America	1,120	1,129	1,125
Least developed countries	1,112	1,328	1,914
Landlocked developing countries	557	664	947
Small island developing States	74	79	87

*Excluding Australia and New Zealand

Figure 1.7. Rankings of the world's ten most populous countries, 1990 and 2022, and medium scenario, 2050 (numbers in parentheses refer to total population in millions)

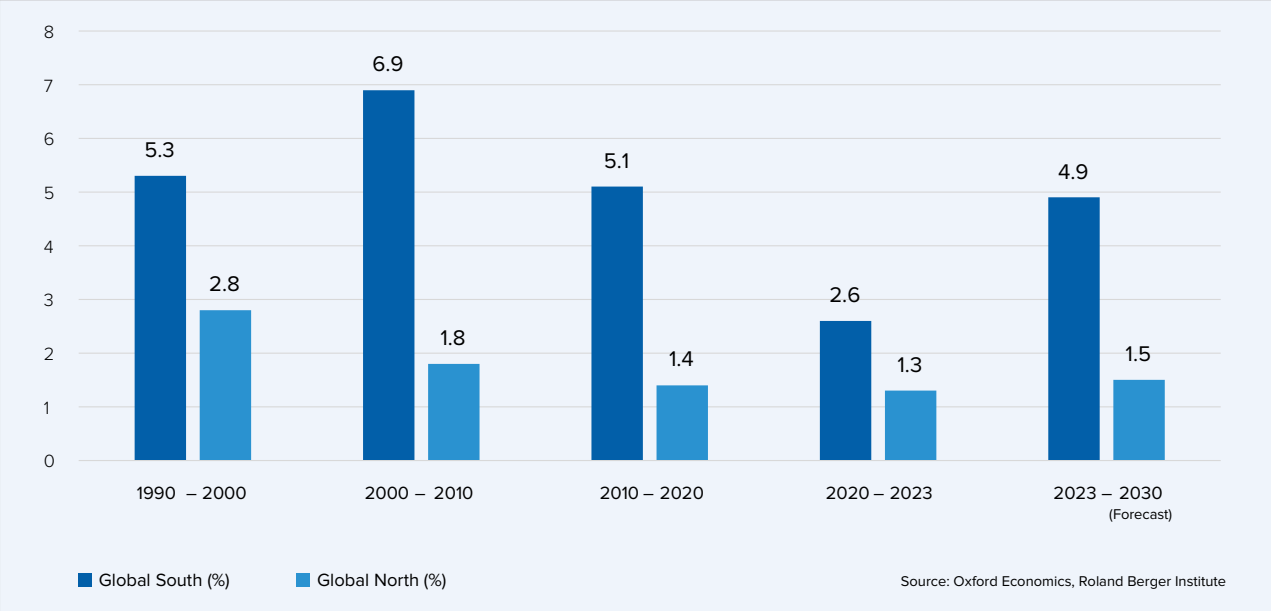


Note: The figure depicts only those countries which are among the ten most populous countries in 1990, 2022 or 2050. A blue arrow indicates that a country maintains the same rank, a green arrow indicates that a country increases in rank and an orange arrow indicates that a country's ranking is falling. The 10 highest ranking countries are shown in black or full color. Other countries are shown in grey.

Since the 1990s, the Global South has outpaced the industrialized countries in economic growth. Although the industrialized countries still dominate the world economy, the share of the economies of the Global South in global GDP quickly expanded from 19 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 2022. Figure 1.8 shows the average growth of real GDP in the global South and the Global North, by decade. A significant portion of this advancement stems from China, accounting for nearly half of total Global South GDP in 2022.[24] The statistical annex, table 1, presents GDP per capita values.

[24] Born, David, "Global South: Beyond BRICS", Roland Berger, 21 December 2023.

Figure 1.8. Average growth of real GDP in the Global South and the Global North, by decade



The story of a rising Global South reflects the major shifts in the international economy, particularly since the end of the 1990s. A clear witness of this transformation is the establishment of the Group of 20 (G20) in September 1999. Ten years later, the BRIC group[25] was established in June 2009 with four States as members. The BRIC summit declaration in 2009 stated that the members of the group "have agreed upon steps to promote dialogue and cooperation among our countries in an incremental, proactive, pragmatic, open and transparent way. The dialogue and cooperation of the BRIC countries is conducive not only to serving common interests of emerging market economies and developing countries, but also to building a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity."[26] South Africa joined the BRIC group in 2010, leading to the new name BRICS. BRICS membership was expanded to include four new members in 2024 and one member in 2025.[27]

1.3. Polycrisis unbound: The Global South in an era of compounding crises

A host of factors are creating a complex development landscape. Multiple crises at the national, regional and global levels have exerted profound socioeconomic impacts and are complicating the trajectory towards sustainable development for countries of the Global South. Sustainable development is undertaken within a context that has been transforming rapidly, particularly since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Achieving sustainable development goals is becoming increasingly more challenging in the face of multiple crises as the nature of the influence of crises has transformed significantly in recent years. Shocks have become more intense, widespread and interlinked, leaving lasting impacts on development, particularly in the Global South. The impact of shocks and crises has become more dangerous and widespread; owing to changes in climate and the size and distribution of human settlements as well as the ever-deepening interconnections of economies and societies, the landscape of crises has transformed significantly.

The world is experiencing an increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the globalization of economic, financial, social and health crises, and the growing prevalence of violent conflict in people's lives. Global crises are becoming more frequent and intense, affecting more people at longer distances. The probability of future crises is also rising. This underlines the importance of investing in resilience through the SDGs since the costs of inaction are far greater and climbing.

Countries of the Global South are at a crossroads. They are facing a confluence of the widespread effects of serious shocks, an uncertain domestic and external environment including many regions in flux, and a generally higher level of risk – often large scale – that threatens sustained and inclusive development progress. Managing the sustainable development policy agenda has therefore become more complex.

[25] The members were Brazil, the Russian Federation, India and China.

[26] See BRICS, "Previous Summits". Available at https://www.brics2018.org.za/previous-summits/.

[27] New members in 2024: Egypt, Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates; Indonesia joined in 2025.

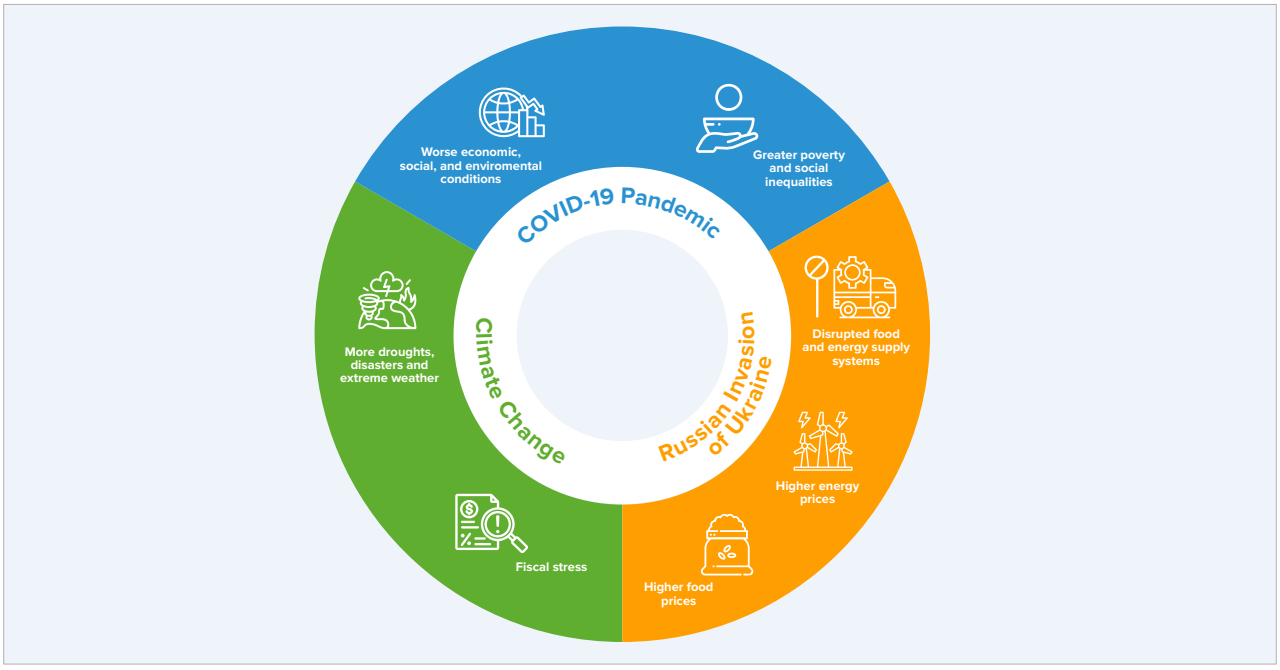
Since 2020, the world has witnessed the convergence of multiple global crises that has further derailed efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The war in Ukraine that started in February 2022 came at a time when the global economy was already under severe stress, struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and facing the strains of an increasingly severe climate crisis. These multiple, compounding crises have combined to create the neologism "polycrisis". It was coined to describe the interplay between the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the energy, food, cost-of-living and climate crises.[28] These crises, compounded by the most recent trade tensions, are causing enormous disruption to international trade and to the highly interlinked global energy, food and finance markets (figure 1.9 and box 1.2).

The impacts of these crises are felt across the world, especially among the developing countries. The worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation has plunged millions more people into poverty and extreme poverty, and reversed decades of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. The polycrisis has made the situation even more challenging. Many countries of the Global South – especially LDCs and SIDS – are greatly exposed and highly vulnerable to energy and food market disruptions, the impacts of climate change and wider global economic turmoil.

The consequences of the polycrisis have put further pressure on budgets and financial resources of the Global South to achieve the SDGs. The crisis has negatively impacted economies, with net importers of energy and food facing particularly acute challenges. Faced with higher borrowing, deteriorating current account balances, and the need to support vulnerable people struggling to meet their basic energy and food needs, countries of the Global South are grappling with shrinking fiscal space. While the needs are becoming greater than ever, public resources devoted to achieving the SDGs are increasingly becoming scarce. While fiscal deficits fell in many economies in the last two years, they generally remain above their pre-pandemic levels.[29] The multidimensional impacts of the polycrisis necessitate integrated solutions to achieve the SDGs in which South-South and triangular cooperation can contribute with innovative solutions drawn from similar contexts.

The term "polycrisis" refers to the current overarching global economic and social crisis. It is comprised of simultaneous multiple crises whose impacts compound one another at the societal and global levels. The current "polycrisis" encompasses the longstanding but increasingly severe climate change crisis, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impacts of the war in Ukraine and the most recent trade tensions, with the significant consequences on poverty associated with energy and food shortages. These crises converged in early 2022 to create a "perfect storm" that has further derailed the global economy, put at risk the livelihoods of people across the world and particularly in the Global South and stalled progress towards the SDGs.[30]

Figure 1.9. Defining "polycrisis" and its interconnected impact



[28] First coined in the 1970s, the word has been popularized by the historian Adam Tooze to describe the coming together of multiple crises. See We're in a "polycrisis" - a historian explains what that means | World Economic Forum (weforum.org).

[29] United Nations, Asian Development Bank and UNDP, *Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals through Solutions at the Energy, Food and Finance Nexus: 2023 Asia-Pacific SDG Partnership Report* (Bangkok, 2023).

[30] Ibid,

Box 1.2. The new nature of crises

The nature of crises has been transformed significantly in recent years. Shocks have become more intense, widespread and interlinked: extreme weather events happen with increasing frequency and ferocity; economic, financial, social and health shocks quickly spread around the world; and conflict and insecurity are a daily reality for millions. The combined effect of more numerous and more powerful shocks, denser interconnections and existing shortfalls creates a daunting challenge to social development in countries already struggling to make significant progress on the SDGs.

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Social Report 2024: Social Development in Times of Converging Crises – A Call for Global Action.

The multiple crises that the world has been witnessing since 2020 led to slowing down the progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the world is currently severely off track to achieve the SDGs by 2030. According to the United Nations *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024* (FSDR),[31] around half of the 140 SDG targets for which sufficient data are available deviate from the required path. The FSDR provides projections indicating that an estimated almost 600 million people, all living in the countries of the Global South, will continue to live in extreme poverty in 2030, more than half of them women.

The global pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger) has faced significant setbacks due to the compounded effects of climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts and economic disruptions, reversing decades of progress and leading to an alarming rise in extreme poverty and inequality.[32] According to the United Nations, in 2022, approximately 712 million people, 9 per cent of the global population, were living in extreme poverty, defined as surviving on less than $2.15 per day. This figure represents an increase of 23 million people compared to 2019, marking the first rise in extreme poverty in over two decades.[33]

The most severe impacts are observed in low-income and conflict-affected regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty rates remain high and progress has stalled (see statistical annex, table 2).[34]

Children are disproportionately affected by these crises. In 2022, one in six children globally lived in extreme poverty, with the economic fallout from the pandemic erasing three years of progress in reducing child poverty. Moreover, a report of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlighted that 27 per cent of children under five suffered from severe food poverty, especially in regions such as South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where conflict and climate shocks exacerbate food insecurity.[35]

The convergence of these global challenges underscores the urgent need for coordinated policy responses and substantial investments to reinvigorate efforts towards achieving SDGs 1 and 2. Without immediate action, the Goals of ending extreme poverty and hunger by 2030 remain increasingly unattainable.

In developing countries, and particularly the LDCs, extreme poverty continues to impact both men and women but with persistent gender disparities. In 2023, 1 in every 10 women was living in extreme poverty (10.3 per cent). If these trends continue, by 2030, an estimated 8 per cent of the world's female population – 342.4 million women and girls – will still be living on less than $2.15 a day (figure 1.10). Most (220.9 million) will reside in sub-Saharan Africa. In 30 per cent of countries, the extreme poverty rate among women and girls in 2030 is projected to exceed 11 per cent, equivalent to the global poverty rate in 2015 when the global goals were adopted.[36]

[31] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024* | DESA Publications (un.org).

[32] United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024.

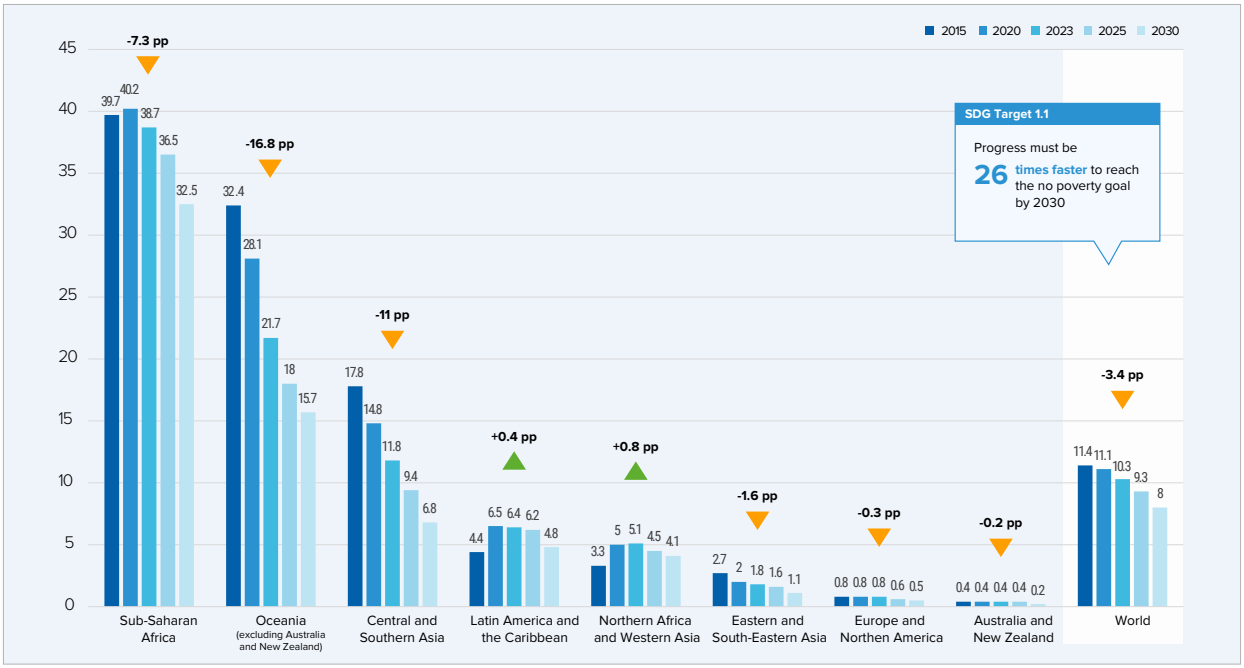
[33] United Nations, "Ending poverty". Available at https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty.

[34] The World Bank, Open Knowledge Repository, "Publication: Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024 – Pathways Out of the Polycrisis." Available at https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/entities/publication/e789cf0e-816c-41ef-ad3a-471948f374ce.

[35] UNICEF, Child Food Poverty: Nutritional Deprivation in Early Childhood – Child Nutrition Report, 2024 (New York, June 2024). Available at https://www.unicef.org/reports/child-food-poverty.

[36] UN-Women and United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023, p. 8. Available at progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2023-en.pdf.

Figure 1.10. Female extreme poverty rates based on the $2.15 international poverty line, 2015–2030 projections (percentage)



Note: "pp" refers to percentage points. *The term "gender-specific indicators" describes indicators that explicitly call for disaggregation by sex and/or refer to gender equality as an underlying objective. For a full list of gender-specific indicators by SDG, see pages 32-35.
Source: UN Women and Pardee Center for International Futures, using the International Futures modelling platform 2023.

Malnutrition continues to pose a significant public health challenge across the Global South, having a profound impact on child health, growth and cognitive development. According to UNICEF estimates, in 2022, 148.1 million children, or 22.3 per cent of children under age 5 worldwide, were stunted. Nearly all children affected lived in Asia (52 per cent of the global share) and Africa (43 per cent of the global share). Also in 2022, an estimated 45 million children under the age of 5 (6.8 per cent) were affected by wasting, of whom 13.7 million (2.1 per cent) were suffering from severe wasting. More than three quarters of all children with severe wasting live in Asia and another 22 per cent live in Africa.[37] These statistics reflect the complex and multifaceted nature of malnutrition, which includes both insufficient and excessive nutrient intake. The burden is especially acute in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where high rates of stunting and wasting persist. Tackling this crisis necessitates comprehensive, multisectoral strategies that address the root causes, ranging from food insecurity and poverty to inadequate healthcare and limited access to nutritious diets. Strengthening food systems, scaling up targeted nutrition interventions and reinforcing primary healthcare services are essential to safeguarding the health and potential of children in these vulnerable regions.[38]

The *Financing for Sustainable Development Report (FSDR) 2024* provides an estimate of the funding gap, particularly for countries of the Global South, ranging between $2.5 trillion and $4 trillion annually. As the report notes, such gaps were already large before 2020 but they have since widened significantly, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Global Outlook estimating an increase in the financing gap of developing countries of 56 per cent.

From a global perspective, financing gaps are largest in middle-income countries (MICs). However, relative to available resources and capacity to mobilize additional resources domestically, LDCs and low-income countries (LICs) face the most significant gaps, with estimates ranging between around 15 per cent and 30 per cent of their respective GDP. For example, a recent assessment by the IMF found the financing gap to achieve significant progress towards five SDGs – education, health, water and sanitation, electricity and roads –to amount to 16.1 per cent of the GDP of LDCs and other LICs by 2030.[39]

[37] UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Levels and trends in child malnutrition: UNICEF WHO/ World Bank Group Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates – Key findings of the 2023 edition. Available at UNICEF-WHO-The World Bank: Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates (JME) — Levels and Trends – 2023 edition.

[38] https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-of-worlds-children-2021.

[39] United Nations, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024* | DESA Publications (un.org).

The FSDR 2024 also indicated that risks continue to accumulate and become more complex and systemic at a rate faster than capacity to predict, reduce or prevent them and that we live in an age of uncertainty. These risks create a macroenvironment that has challenged, and in many cases overwhelmed, policymakers' ability to respond. The FSDR identified rising systemic risks.[40] For example, the climate crisis is omnipresent since it not only weighs on sustainable development, particularly in vulnerable countries such as LDCs and SIDS, but is also affecting financing, leading to increasing financing needs for investments in adaptation and mitigation and to growing risks to macroeconomic stability.

Climate change and environmental degradation are emphasized in the World Bank 2024 report *Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024: Pathways Out of the Polycrisis*[41] as significant drivers of poverty in the Global South, particularly in vulnerable regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

On the frontline of multiple world crises, including climate change and debt, the most vulnerable countries face chronic structural challenges that are becoming more interconnected and intense over time. They rely on external financing to help to prepare and recover from these crises. For some, response to disasters is more expensive. Debt is more expensive to service. Infrastructure is more expensive. Official development assistance from partner countries does not stretch as far.

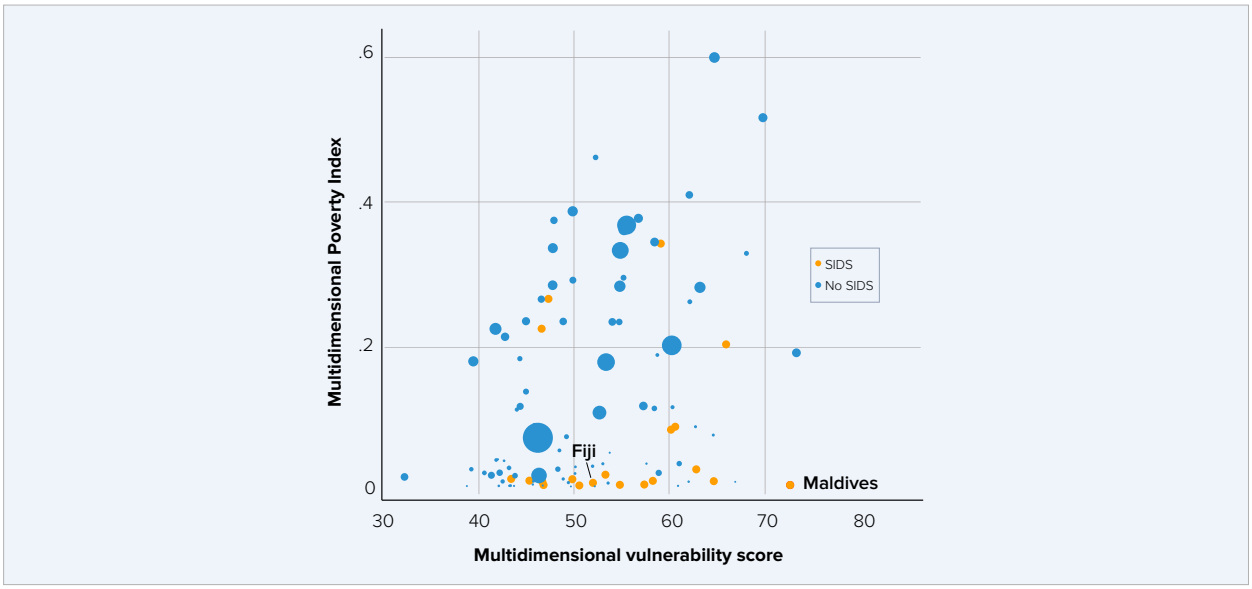
Most SIDS are not the poorest countries but their costs are so much greater and accessing financing is more difficult. Their relative income makes them ineligible for the cheaper finance, and these small island countries have repeatedly said that traditional measures of development insufficiently capture their vulnerabilities. For example, GNI per capita measures the income of a country but that does not indicate how much it costs to handle major threats such as catastrophic sudden weather events or the cost of servicing old debts.

SIDS have the smallest carbon footprint but face the biggest challenges: SIDS are responsible for only 0.2 per cent of the global carbon emissions and yet suffer the most from the impact of climate change.[42]

A high-level panel defined a conceptual framework for an index of multidimensional vulnerabilities (MVI) that captures two pillars or domains of vulnerability: (a) structural vulnerability, linked to a country's exposure to adverse external shocks and stressors, and (b) (lack of) structural resilience, which is associated with the (lack of) capacity of a country to withstand such shocks.[43]

Figure 1.11 presents a comparison of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) with the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) and illustrates that, while most SIDS are not classified as poor, they experience varying degrees of vulnerability. MVI and MPI values are presented in table 2 of the statistical annex.

Figure 1.11. Comparison of multidimensional poverty and multidimensional vulnerability



Note: Bubble size is proportional to the number of poor people in 2022. Source: UNOSSC using data from United Nations, High-level Panel on the Development of a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, Final Report, February 2024 and UNDP report Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2024: Poverty amid Conflict.

[40] Ibid.

[41] The World Bank, *Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024*.

[42] Values for carbon dioxide emissions per capita are presented in the statistical annex, table 3.

[43] United Nations, https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/Final_MVI_report.pdf.

This comparative approach underscores critical differences, such as variations in resilience among SIDS, providing valuable insights for crafting targeted policy recommendations to enhance their stability and adaptive capacities. For instance, while both Fiji and Maldives exhibit very low levels of multidimensional poverty, Maldives faces significantly higher vulnerabilities compared to Fiji, highlighting a potential area of collaboration between the two.

Disasters are becoming more frequent and intense, with losses, damage and recovery costs increasing. The FSDR 2024 estimates that the annual economic disaster damage was around $173 billion between 2020 and 2023, up from $108 billion during the first decade of the century. By 2030, it is projected, according to the report, that the world will face 560 medium- to large-scale disasters per year.

The COVID-19 pandemic further underscored the dramatic impacts that global non-economic systemic risks can have on social and economic progress. In addition to the loss of life, economic losses from the pandemic and subsequent global shocks have been staggeringly high, especially for vulnerable countries, translating into much larger SDG financing gaps. The FSDR 2024 also indicates that the cumulative output losses calculated as the sum of the annual difference between pre-pandemic projections of GDP and actual GDP amounted to around 40 per cent of the 2019 GDP in SIDS and about 30 per cent in LDCs.

After declining in the 2000s, debt levels in countries of the Global South increased rapidly in the last decade. According to the 2024 FSDR, 25 developing countries dedicate more than a fifth of their total revenue to servicing public external debt alone, and 3.3 billion people live in countries where Governments spend more on interest payments than on education or health. Debt burdens crowd out SDG financing, and they threaten debt crises for more than half of all LDCs and other low-income countries assessed as either high risk or already in debt distress.

The acute financing constraints and rising debt burdens significantly undermine the capacity of the countries of the Global South to invest in sustainable development. These structural financial challenges restrict public investment in critical sectors and force Governments to choose between immediate social needs and long-term development priorities. This constrained financing environment directly impacts the ability of these countries to pursue inclusive digital transformation. Without adequate and predictable investment flows, the expansion of digital infrastructure, such as broadband connectivity, data centres and digital public goods, remains uneven and largely inaccessible in rural and marginalized regions. Moreover, digital skilling, regulatory reform and technological innovation all require sustained policy and financial commitment, which is difficult to achieve under fiscal pressure and austerity conditions often linked to debt repayment obligations.

Similarly, access to affordable, reliable and clean energy, a prerequisite for digital and economic transformation, remains elusive for many in developing countries. Energy poverty, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia, limits opportunities for digital inclusion, industrial development and improved service delivery. The lack of investment in renewable energy systems and grid infrastructure further deepens dependency on fossil fuels, exposes economies to volatile energy prices and hinders climate resilience.

These challenges are mutually reinforcing. Inadequate access to energy hampers digital innovation, while digital exclusion reduces the efficiency and reach of energy systems, including smart grids and off-grid solutions. Together, they restrict productivity growth, innovation and the expansion of decent work, especially in the informal and small-enterprise sectors that dominate many Southern economies.

These multiple challenges regarding digital transformation and access to energy include:

a. **connectivity gaps.** Internet connectivity in developing countries lags far behind the developed world. Only about 35 per cent of people in developing countries have Internet access, compared to over 80 per cent in high-income countries. That leaves approximately 3 billion people offline, predominantly in the Global South.[44] See statistical annex, table 2;

b. **COVID-19 pandemic accelerated update in digital technology.** Global Internet use jumped 11 per cent in 2020 and 15 per cent in low- and middle-income countries as many services moved online. However, growth was uneven and is now slowing in some regions (with a marked slowdown in South Asia), leaving the poorest countries still far behind. Sub-Saharan Africa did not experience a post-pandemic slowdown; rather, it added about 30 million new mobile Internet users in 2022, similar to 2021, but it remains the most underserved region;[45]

[44] World Economic Forum, "These are the places in the world where Internet access is still an issue – and why", 5 September 2023. Available at Internet access still denied to many in the developing world | World Economic Forum.

[45] GSMA, Mike Shannahan, "Despite improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa has the widest usage and coverage gaps worldwide", 8 April 2024. Available at Despite improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa has the widest usage and coverage gaps worldwide | Mobile for Development.

c. **skills gaps.** A severe lack of digital literacy and skills is a major barrier to digital transformation. Many people in the Global South are unaware of how to use online tools or of the benefits of connectivity. In low- and middle-income countries, a lack of digital skills consistently ranks among the top barriers preventing people from adopting mobile Internet. Basic digital abilities are often limited, especially among populations with low general literacy. Underserved groups are most affected by the digital skills gap, particularly women, rural residents, the poor, the less educated and older populations, which perpetuates exclusion; [46]

d. **underdeveloped networks and inadequate telecommunications infrastructure in many parts of the Global South.** Extensive rural areas lack broadband coverage altogether or have only basic 2G/3G networks. An example is sub-Saharan Africa, where around 15 per cent of the total population still lives outside of any mobile broadband;

e. **affordability.** Internet-enabled devices and data plans are often too expensive relative to incomes of the households. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, an entry-level smartphone costs about 95 per cent of the average monthly income of a person in the poorest 20 per cent of the population.[47] Similarly, although mobile data prices have improved, a basic data package can consume a significant share of a low-income user's budget. These high costs of devices, connectivity and electricity mean that even where the Internet is available, the poorest may remain offline owing to financial constraints;

f. **persistent rural-urban divide.** Urban areas in the Global South often have far better connectivity than rural areas. In developing countries, approximately 72 per cent of urban residents use the Internet, compared to just 34 per cent of rural residents. In Africa, only about 24 per cent of women use the Internet, compared to 35 per cent of men. Similar gender gaps exist in South Asia and the Middle East. This means that millions of women and girls are missing out on all digital opportunities (access to education, finance and digital services), reinforcing other inequalities;[48]

g. **disparities in access to electricity access.** In 2022, an estimated 685 million people worldwide had no access to electricity. This access deficit is concentrated in the poorest regions, including sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for approximately 80 per cent of those without power. By contrast, developing Asia has made big strides: countries such as China, Indonesia and India have connected most of their populations in recent years, including those in rural areas;

h. **regional contrasts.** Most of the developing countries have already achieved high electrification rates, except those in sub-Saharan Africa. South Asia is above 90 per cent already owing to successful rural electrification in India and Bangladesh. Meanwhile large swathes of rural Africa remain off-grid. In contrast, many of the African countries have the highest potential to generate electricity from solar and other renewable energy sources. Without drastic and rapid improvements, the majority of the world's energy-poor (owing to access) will continue to be in Africa: it is projected that about 660 million people may still lack electricity by 2030;

i. **rural/urban divide.** Rural communities are far less likely to have electricity than cities. Around 80 per cent of people without electricity live in rural areas. See statistical annex, table 2;[49]

j. **reliability of supply.** In 2022, only about 43 per cent of the Africans with access to electricity reported having a reliable supply. Frequent power outages affect both households and businesses. The unreliability of service means heavier investments in backup options, which affects productivity;[50] and

k. **energy, poverty and income.** A common benchmark defines energy poverty as spending more than 10 per cent of household income on energy. By this definition, a large share of households in developing

[46] GSMA, "Advancing digital skills for greater digital inclusion in low- and middle-income countries", Digital Inclusion Policy Brief. Available at https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-for-development/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Policy-Brief-Advancing-digital-skills-for-greater-digital-inclusion-in-LMICs.pdf.

[47] GSMA, Mike Shannahan, "Despite improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa has the widest usage and coverage gaps worldwide", 8 April 2024. Available at Despite improvements, Sub-Saharan Africa has the widest usage and coverage gaps worldwide | Mobile for Development.

[48] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "2.9 billion people still offline". Available at 2.9 billion people still offline | Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD).

[49] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, SDG indicators, "7 Affordable and clean energy". Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/goal-07/#:~:text=Affordableandcleanenergy,onpollutingfuels.

[50] Energy for Growth Hub, "What is the true scale of unmet electricity demand in Sub-Saharan Africa?", 15 March 2023. Available at What is the true scale of unmet electricity demand in Sub-Saharan Africa? - Energy for Growth Hub.

countries fall into energy poverty, which means that they must either sacrifice other essentials to pay for power or limit their energy usage to bare minimum levels. Electricity tariffs and fuel prices tend to be high or very high relative to the incomes of households in the Global South. In the absence of subsidies, electricity can cost between $0.15 and $0.25 per kWh in some African countries, which is very expensive for many households earning only a few dollars per day.

Additionally, billions of people still use dirty fuels because cleaner alternatives are unavailable or too costly. Energy poverty is thus a multidimensional challenge: it involves lack of access, lack of reliability and reliance on unhealthy fuels. About 8 out of 10 people in energy poverty, lacking electricity, are rural and live in Africa. Pockets of urban poverty are also present in Asia and Latin America.[51]

1.4 Conclusions

The first chapter of this report provides a foundational examination of the contemporary realities reshaping the Global South. It traces the evolution of the Global South from a geopolitical construct rooted in postcolonial resistance into a dynamic, multifaceted space of development struggle, agency and ambition. Across a spectrum of historical legacies, structural disparities and emerging aspirations, the chapter unpacks the persistent divergence between the Global South and the Global North, highlighting imbalances in wealth, technology and institutional capacity.

Rather than a fixed category, the Global South is better understood as a fluid and evolving construct. Despite the diversity in geography, income levels and governance systems, its constituent countries share deep-rooted structural vulnerabilities and a collective pursuit of development justice. The historical imprints of colonization and Cold War alignments continue to shape these trajectories. Key actors such as the Non-Aligned Movement, the G-77 and the South Commission have played pivotal roles in articulating this collective identity, progressively embedding it into global development discourse and governance frameworks.

While some countries, particularly in Asia and Latin America, have emerged as influential actors in global trade, finance and diplomacy, others, especially LDCs and SIDS, remain marginalized. This internal heterogeneity underscores that the Global South is not defined by uniformity but by a shared history of exclusion and a common aspiration for structural transformation. It is precisely these shared conditions that sustain the analytical and political relevance of the Global South.

The chapter illustrates how global power is being reconfigured in the twenty-first century. The growing weight of some countries reflects a broader shift towards a multipolar world. These actors are reshaping global norms and institutions through platforms such as BRICS and the G20, challenging traditional hierarchies and advocating for more inclusive multilateralism.

Yet this rising influence is shadowed by deep and compounded vulnerabilities. The Global South bears the brunt of a cascading series of polycrises: climate disruption, economic volatility, pandemics and armed conflicts. These crises intersect and reinforce one another, disrupting development trajectories and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. The result has reversed hard-won gains, especially among women, youth and marginalized communities.

Persistent poverty and inequality remain central challenges. Despite areas of moderate growth, over a billion people in the Global South still experience multidimensional poverty. Gender disparities, rural-urban divides and malnutrition persist across regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, threatening the achievement of the SDGs.

The chapter also emphasizes stark divides in digital connectivity and energy infrastructure, which risk becoming structural obstacles to progress. Limited access to reliable electricity, affordable Internet and digital literacy compounds exclusion, especially in rural and underserved areas. Without decisive investment and reform, these divides will hinder equitable participation in the digital and energy transitions critical for sustainable development.

[51] WHO, “Progress on basic energy access reverses for the first time in a decade”, 12 June 2024. Available at Progress on basic energy access reverses for first time in a decade.

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Chapter 2

South-South Cooperation: Foundations, Evolution and Contemporary Challenges

This chapter delves into the historical roots and evolution of South-South cooperation (SSC), tracing its origins from the Bandung Conference of 1955 to its current role as a cornerstone of international development. It highlights key milestones, such as the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement and the rise of regional blocs such as the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group of countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which have shaped the trajectory of South-South collaboration.

The chapter also explores the current state of SSC, emphasizing its potential to address pressing global challenges such as climate change, inequality and technological disparities. It examines the interplay between SSC and multilateral institutions as well as the growing importance of triangular cooperation: a collaborative development model involving developed countries, developing countries and international organizations. By analysing these dynamics, the chapter underscores the potential of SSC to amplify impact and foster inclusive global partnerships.

Despite its successes, SSC faces several contemporary challenges. These include the lack of institutional frameworks, limited financial resources and the need for greater coordination among participating countries. The chapter also discusses the impact of global geopolitical tensions and the COVID-19 pandemic on SSC, highlighting the need for adaptive strategies to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Introduction

This chapter explores the evolution of South-South cooperation (SSC) and triangular cooperation (TrC) as connected frameworks that have reshaped global development partnerships. South-South cooperation, as the cornerstone of collaboration among countries of the Global South, emerged prominently in the post-1945 era, reflecting the aspirations of newly independent countries to foster mutual growth and reduce dependency on traditional Northern-led aid structures. Rooted in principles of solidarity, equality and mutual benefit, SSC has grown into a dynamic force, addressing shared challenges and promoting sustainable development across diverse regions.

While closely linked to SSC, the TrC modality introduces a unique dimension by incorporating the support of traditional donor countries or international organizations to facilitate partnerships between Global South countries. Triangular cooperation gained formal recognition in 1978 through the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), which underscored its potential to amplify the impact of SSC by leveraging additional resources, expertise and networks. South-South and triangular cooperation represents transformative approaches to international cooperation, challenging conventional paradigms and fostering innovative solutions to global development challenges. This section will look at their historical trajectories, operational frameworks and the evolving role that they play in shaping a more equitable and collaborative international system.

2.1 South-South cooperation: Evolution and development

In addressing the definition, scale and scope of SSC, the report starts with the assumption that it is a modality of development cooperation that emerged in the mid-1950s. It has been subject to changes and transformations since that date and has become multifaceted. It is comprised of several dimensions and modalities. It has a track with a particular focus on technical cooperation and a track that puts an emphasis on trade, investment and finance. Within technical cooperation, the agenda has been growing, reflecting the development priorities emerging over the decades, but it has been anchored to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since 2015. Cooperation among countries of the Global South is also multidimensional. It includes bilateral, regional and global interactions and exchanges. It has also expanded to involve partners for industrialized countries within the modality of triangular cooperation, although the principles governing triangular cooperation are different from those of SSC.

It is envisaged that SSC will continue to evolve depending on the socioeconomic transformations in the countries of the Global South and the mutations of the global order. Hence, SSC is a multifaceted and multidimensional set of relations and processes across the political, economic, cultural, social, environmental, legal and humanitarian domains.

South-South cooperation has been gaining momentum in the last two decades. Since the beginning of this millennium, SSC has enjoyed a resurgence of interest due to a significant increase in South-South trade and the formation of such initiatives as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the India-Africa Forum Summit and China's Belt and Road Initiative. It has become a prominent component of the complex architecture of the current landscape of development cooperation in which Governments, multilateral agencies, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sectors intersect, and it is set to assume a greater role in the future. SSC offers itself as a modality that attempts to leverage a kind of development cooperation that is linked with people's demands, values and lived realities.[52] Despite the potential of SSC to address the development needs of the Global South, it also faces several factors such as the lack of clear conceptual definitions, accurate analyses and measurement of SSC projects and different transactions as well as the engagement of stakeholders beyond Governments, particularly the private sector and civil society.

There are several definitions that capture different aspects associated with "South-South cooperation". This presents challenges to further develop and evaluate the concept in its several dimensions. Efforts have been made in that regard; however, there is still a gap in developing a comprehensive concept and definition of SSC, and in the differentiation between SSC and the regular technical cooperation programmes and exchanges that are mainly classified under trade, investment and finance.

[52] The Reality of Aid Network, "On South-South cooperation: Assessing its political relevance and envisioning a future beyond technical cooperation", 26 October 2023. Available at On South-South Cooperation: Assessing its political relevance and envisioning a future beyond technical cooperation | Reality of Aid.

The Bandung Principles of 1955 (box 2.1) and the G-77 principles for South-South cooperation (box 2.2) formulated in 2008 in the Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation form the foundational pillars of solidarity, mutual respect and collective advancement among countries of the Global South. Emerging in the aftermath of colonialism, the Bandung Conference laid the groundwork for a shared vision of sovereignty, non-alignment and cooperation based on equality and non-interference. Building on this legacy, the G-77 principles articulated a structured framework for South-South cooperation, emphasizing mutual benefit, demand-driven partnerships, and respect for national ownership and development priorities. Together these principles continue to guide and inspire a distinctive model of cooperation that champions inclusivity, self-reliance and sustainable development in a multipolar world.

Box 2.1. Bandung principles

BANDUNG PRINCIPLES known also as the DASA SILA BANDUNG (TEN PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE) are the last part of the Final Communiqué of the 1955 Bandung Conference under the title of 'DECLARATION ON THE PROMOTION OF WORLD PEACE AND COOPERATION'. After a short introduction, the DASA SILA was presented as follows:

TEN PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

1. Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations.
3. Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations large and small.
4. Abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country.
5. Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
6. (a) Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers.
(b) Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries.
7. Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country.
8. Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.
9. Promotion of mutual interests and co-operation.
10. Respect for justice and international obligations.

Source: Bandung Spirit, "Bandung Principles", 2007. Available at BANDUNG PRINCIPLES - BANDUNG SPIRIT.

The G-77 principles for South-South cooperation serve as a foundational guide for fostering solidarity, mutual benefit and collective self-reliance among countries of the Global South. Rooted in the Yamoussoukro Consensus and articulated through key declarations such as the 2009 Ministerial Declaration, these principles emphasize the unique context and aspirations of developing countries in shaping their own development paths. They underscore that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for North-South engagement but a distinct and complementary process driven by the South itself. At its core, this cooperation is grounded in equality, mutual respect, shared sovereignty and the pursuit of common development objectives, enabling developing countries to strengthen their voice in international decision-making and accelerate sustainable development through homegrown solutions, shared knowledge and multilateral collaboration.

Box 2.2. G-77 principles for South-South cooperation

According to the September 2009 Ministerial Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the G-77 and China, "the Ministers welcomed the conceptual framework and the set of principles for South-South cooperation contained in the 'Yamoussoukro Consensus' and in this regard stressed the following elements that should guide the Group during the preparatory process for the High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation [to be held in Nairobi in December 2009]:

a. South-South cooperation is a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South and must be pursued as an expression of South-South solidarity and a strategy for economic independence and self-reliance of the South based on their common objectives and solidarity;
b. South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South;
c. South-South cooperation must not be seen as a replacement for North-South cooperation. Strengthening South-South cooperation must not be a measure of coping with the receding interest of the developed world in assisting developing countries;
d. Cooperation between countries of the South must not be analyzed and evaluated using the same standards as those used for North-South relations;
e. Financial contributions from other developing countries should not be seen as Official Development Assistance from these countries to other countries of the South. These are merely expressions of solidarity and cooperation borne out of shared experiences and sympathies;
f. South-South cooperation is a development agenda based on premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations. South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion;
g. South-South cooperation is based on a strong, genuine, broad-based partnership and solidarity;
h. South-South cooperation is based on complete equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit;
i. South-South cooperation respects national sovereignty in the context of shared responsibility;
j. South-South cooperation strives for strengthened multilateralism in the promotion of an action-oriented approach to development challenges;
k. South-South cooperation promotes the exchange of best practices and support among developing countries in the common pursuit of their broad development objectives (encompassing all aspects of international relations and not just in the traditional economic and technical areas);
l. South-South cooperation is based on the collective self-reliance of developing countries;
m. South-South cooperation seeks to enable developing countries to play a more active role in international policy and decision-making processes, in support of their efforts to achieve sustainable development;
n. The modalities and mechanisms for promoting South-South cooperation are based on bilateral, sub-regional, regional and interregional cooperation and integration as well as multilateral cooperation.

Source: Yamoussoukro Consensus on South-South Cooperation, and 2009 Ministerial Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China in which "the Ministers reiterated the principles on which South-South cooperation is based, which were adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 and China, at their annual meeting in New York on 26 September 2008", para. 70. Available at https://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm.

The Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), adopted by United Nations Member States in 1978, marked the first formal effort to define "South-South cooperation" (SSC) as "an instrument capable of promoting the exchange of successful experiences among countries that share the same historical realities and similar challenges" (box 2.3 and table 2.1). Since then, SSC has evolved significantly in its modalities, scale and volume over recent decades.

Box 2.3. Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries

Objectives

a. to "foster the self-reliance of developing countries through the enhancement of their creative capacity to find solutions to other development problems in keeping with their own aspirations, values and special needs;
b. to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among developing countries through exchanges of experience, the pooling, sharing and utilization of their technical resources, and the development of their complementary capacities;
c. to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to identify and analyse together the main issues of their development and to formulate the requisite strategies in the conduct of their international economic relations, through pooling of knowledge available in those countries through joint studies by their existing institutions, with a view to establishing the new international economic order;
d. to increase the quantum and enhance the quality of international co-operation as well as to improve the effectiveness of the resources devoted to over-all technical co- operation through the pooling of capacities;
e. to strengthen existing technological capacities in the developing countries, including the traditional sector, to improve the effectiveness with which such capacities are used and to create new capacities and capabilities and in this context to promote the transfer of technology and skills appropriate to their resource endowments and the development potential of the developing countries so as to strengthen their individual and collective self-reliance;
f. to increase and improve communications among developing countries, leading to a greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge and experience as well as the creation of new knowledge in tackling problems of development;
g. to improve the capacity of developing countries for the absorption and adaptation of technology and skill to meeting their specific developmental needs;
h. to recognize and respond to the problems and requirements of the least developed, land-locked, island developing and most seriously affected countries;
i. to enable developing countries to attain a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international co-operation."

Source: "Buenos Aires Plan of Action", 1978, pp. 9–10.

Since 1978, SSC has evolved into a broad and complex concept with multiple definitions (table 2.2). It transformed into a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains, emerging out of the strong conviction that countries of the Global South could benefit from collaboration with one another; collective self-reliance captured the spirit of collaboration and independence of developing countries at that time. To comprehend the scale and scope of South-South cooperation, it is essential to follow how the concept has been defined, particularly through multiple deliberations within the United Nations intergovernmental process during the last three decades.

Table 2.1. Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries: Actions to be taken

Action at the national level	Action at the subregional, regional and interregional levels	Action at the global level
Recommendations	Recommendations	Recommendations
1. National programming for technical co- operation among developing countries 2. Adoption of policies and regulations favourable to technical co-operation among developing countries [TCDC] 3. National mechanisms for promoting technical co-operation among developing countries 4. The strengthening of national information systems for technical co-operation among developing countries 5. The improvement of existing institutions 6. Promotion of national research and training centres with multinational scope 7. The promotion of greater technological self-reliance 8. The formulation, orientation and sharing of policy experiences with respect to science and technology 9. The promotion of greater self-reliance in the economic and social spheres 10. Technical co-operation among developing countries in the cultural spheres 11. The encouragement of technical co-operation among developing countries through professional and technical organizations 12. The expansion of TCDC through national public and private enterprises and institutions 13. Information and education programmes in support of technical co-operation among developing countries 14. The expansion of bilateral technical links	15. The strengthening of subregional and regional institutions and organizations 16. The identification, development and implementation of initiatives for technical co-operation among developing countries 17. The enhancement of contributions by professional and technical organizations 18. The creation of new links for technical co-operation among developing countries in important substantive areas 19. Promotion of complementary industrial and agricultural projects at the subregional and regional levels 20. The improvement of regional information for technical co-operation among developing countries 21. Support to national research and training centres with multinational scope 22. The development and strengthening of interregional co-operation	23. The enhancement of national and collective self-reliance 24. The exchange of development experience 25. The fostering of global technical collaboration 26. The improvement of information flows 27. Control of the “brain drain” from developing countries 28. Measures in favour of economically or geographically disadvantaged developing countries 29. Measures in favour of newly independent countries 30. The strengthening of transport and communications among developing countries 31. Maximization of the use of developing countries’ capacities 32. Activities for technical co-operation among developing countries by the organizations of the United Nations development system in their respective fields 33. Internal arrangements for technical co-operation among developing countries in the organizations of the United Nations development system 34. Strengthening the capacity of the UNDP for the promotion and support of TCDC

* All recommendation topics cited verbatim from the source.
Source: Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, pp. 10–24. Available at Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978) – UNOSSC.

Table 2.2. Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries: Actions to be taken

Year	Event
1955	Bandung Conference; brought together representatives of African and Asian countries in Bandung, Indonesia
1959	Establishment of Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
1961	First Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, Belgrade, Yugoslavia (currently Serbia)
1962	Conference on the Problems of Developing Countries, which led to a Cairo Declaration of Developing Countries
1963	Establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), superseded in 2002 by the African Union (AU)
1964	Founding of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, Switzerland, with the G-77 as part of it.
1964	Establishment of the African Development Bank (AfDB)
1966	Establishment of the Asian Development Bank (ADB)
1967	First Ministerial Meeting of G-77, Algiers, Algeria. Adopted the Charter of Algiers, which serves as a guideline for the G-77.
1973	Establishment of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
1974	United Nations Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order
1974	29th session of the UN General Assembly which, in its resolution 3251 (XXIX), "endorses the establishment of a special unit within the United Nations Development Programme to promote technical co-operation among developing countries" (TCDC)
1978	United Nations Conference on Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (BAPA), Buenos Aires, Argentina
1980	UN General Assembly changes the name of the High-level Meeting on the Review of Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries to High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC)
1981	High-level Conference on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC), Caracas, Venezuela. The Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries is adopted.
1990	The Challenge of the South: Report of the South Commission
1991	Establishment of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR, an acronym of the name in Spanish)
1991	The Central American Integration System
2000	Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the G-77 (First South Summit), Havana, Cuba
2003	Changing of the name of the High-level Committee on TCDC to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation by the General Assembly
2004	Renaming of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) as the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation
2005	Second South Summit, Doha, Qatar
2006	1st Summit of IBSA Heads of State (India, Brazil, South Africa), Brasilia, Brazil
2009	High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (31st anniversary of BAPA), Nairobi, Kenya
2013	Renaming of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation as the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
2015	Launch of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2019	Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)
2024	Third South Summit, Kampala, Uganda

Source: Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation, Chronology and History of South-South Cooperation, Working document no. 5, 2014. Available at Chrono-South-South2014.pdf, and author compilation.

The 2009 Nairobi outcome document (A/RES/64/222)[53] sets out the rationale, principles and key actors of South-South cooperation as follows:

> "South-South cooperation is a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South, born out of shared experiences and sympathies, based on their common objectives and solidarity, and guided by, inter alia, the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, free from any conditionalities. South-South cooperation should not be seen as official development assistance. It is a partnership among equals based on solidarity…South-South cooperation embraces a multi-stakeholder approach, including non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and other actors that contribute to meeting development challenges and objectives in line with national development strategies and plans" (paras. 18–19).

The outcome document also reiterates the principles and strategies that guide South-South and triangular cooperation and identifies the following five priority objectives of United Nations support:

a. support national and regional development efforts;
b. strengthen institutional and technical capacities;
c. improve the exchange of experience and know-how among developing countries;
d. respond to the specific development challenges of developing countries; and
e. increase the impact of international cooperation (para. 20).

In response to calls for an operational definition that could be shared within the United Nations system,[54] a note by the United Nations Secretary-General entitled Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation (SSC/19/3)[55] was presented in 2016 to the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Based on the Nairobi outcome document and other sources, the note presented an operational definition of "South-South cooperation" in an attempt to provide a cohesive meaning of the term within the United Nations system (table 2.3):

> "a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit within and across regions. South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation" (para. 10).[56]

The note also provided a definition for "triangular cooperation" as follows:

> "Triangular cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects."[57]

The BAPA+40 outcome document (A/RES/73/291) provided a definition for "South-South cooperation" that was adopted in 2019[58]:

> "We recognize that South-South cooperation is conducted among countries of the South, including but not limited to the economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains, that can take place in a bilateral, regional or interregional context, for developing countries to meet their development goals through concerted efforts, taking into account the principles of South-South cooperation (para. 7).
>
> We recognize the importance and different history and particularities of South-South cooperation, and we reaffirm our view of South-South cooperation as a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, according to national priorities and plans. South-South cooperation and its agenda have to be set by countries of the South and should continue to be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit" (para. 8).

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[53] https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Nairobi-Outcome-Document-of-the-UN-High-level-Conference-on-SSC-2010.pdf.

[54] Recommendation 1 of the Joint Inspection Unit report (JIU/REP/2011/3) calls on the United Nations system to develop and agree on operational definitions of South-South and triangular cooperation and "ensure their dissemination and application, including through workshops and training sessions at Headquarters and at the field level system-wide."

[55] https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Framework-of-Operational-Guidelines-on-UN-Support-to-SSTC-2016.pdf.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., para. 11.

[58] https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/N1911172.pdf.

> We acknowledge the voluntary, participative, and demand driven nature of South-South Cooperation, born out of shared experiences and sympathies, based on their common objectives and solidarity. We further recognize that South-South cooperation leads to more diverse opportunities for development. South-South Cooperation should not be seen as Official Development Assistance" (para. 9).[59]

Table 2.3. Guiding principles of South-South cooperation

Normative	Operational
Solidarity	Mutual accountability and transparency
National ownership and leadership	Development effectiveness
Mutual benefit	Coordination of evidence- and result-based initiatives
Partnership among equals	Multi-stakeholder approach
Non-conditionality	
Complementarity	
Respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs	

Triangular cooperation has existed as a cooperation mechanism for more than 40 years. The first implicit reference was made to it in 1978 in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), which, as far back as 1978, recommended that traditional donors should act as catalysts for cooperation between developing countries. Two years later, the first use of the term "triangular cooperation" (TrC) was included in the 1980 report *North-South: A Programme for Survival – Report of the Independent Commission for International Development Issues*.[60] The term "triangular cooperation" was recognized 15 years later, in 1995, in a United Nations document entitled New directions strategy on technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC/9/3) in which "triangular cooperation" was defined as the arrangements "under which donors would agree to fund exchanges among developing countries" (p. 2).[61]

There are diverging perspectives in defining what constitutes TrC. The working definitions used by the United Nations and OECD differ (table 2.4).

Table 2.4. Definitions of "triangular cooperation"

United Nations[62]	OECD[63]
"Triangular cooperation involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies)/or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programmes and projects." (para. 11)	"TrC is a modality of multi-country partnership that has gained traction in recent years. Although there is no internationally agreed definition of TrC, an understanding is emerging on the three roles that actors engaged in TrC need to take (and which may evolve throughout implementation): i. The beneficiary partner that requests support to tackle a specific development challenge. ii. The pivotal partner that has relevant domestic experience of addressing the issue in a context similar to that of the beneficiary country and that shares its financial resources, knowledge and expertise. iii. The facilitating partner that helps connect the partners, supporting the collaboration financially and technically. Partners may include countries and international organisations but also actors from civil society, private philanthropy, private sector and academia as well as partners at the sub-national level. Pivotal partners are usually other developing countries or institutions, or countries from the same region as the beneficiary country." (paras. 6–7).

[59] https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/N1920949.pdf.

[60] See Share the World's Resources, "The Brandt Report: A Summary", 31 January 2006. Available at The Brandt Report: A Summary | Share The World's Resources (STWR) (sharing.org).

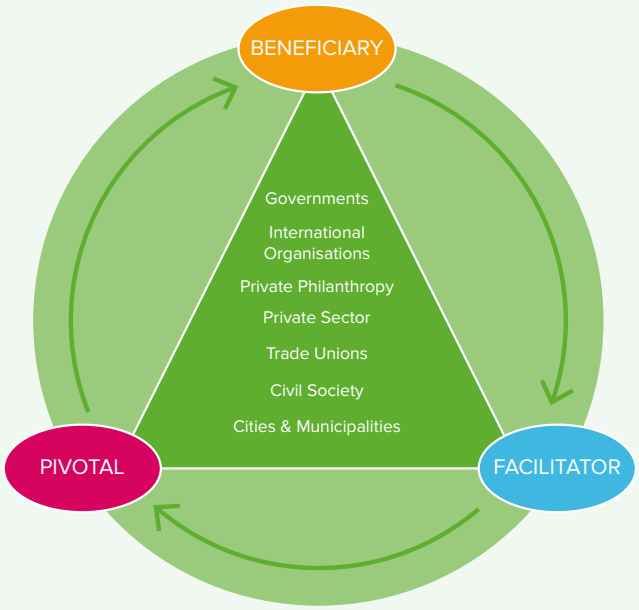
[61] TCDC/9/3. Available at https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/New-Directions-for-Technical-Cooperation-among-Developing-Countries-1995.pdf.

[62] SSC/19/3.

[63] Development Co-operation Directorate, Development Assistance Committee, Secretariat's Proposal to Clarify the Reporting Directives on Triangular Co-Operation (DCD/DAC/STAT (2019)13), 18 June 2019. Available at pdf (oecd.org).

Traditionally, triangular cooperation has involved three development actors: a traditional provider, an emerging economy and a partner country. A contemporary approach to triangular cooperation reflects new development actors and changing working methods. As such, effective triangular cooperation is multi-stakeholder and includes Governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia, private philanthropy and subnational actors, such as cities and municipalities (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Three roles in triangular cooperation



Source: Visualization based on discussions in the GPI.

In 2019, the outcome document of BAPA+40 broadly covered TrC, highlighting its value added to the efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. BAPA+40 adopted the following definition for triangular cooperation:

> "We further recognize that triangular cooperation complements and adds value to South-South cooperation by enabling requesting developing countries to source and access more, and a broader range of, resources, expertise, and capacities, that they identify as needed in order to achieve their national development goals and internationally agreed sustainable development goals" (para. 12).[64]

Following BAPA+40 and as a result of its work, the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation (GPI) advanced the following set of Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Cooperation in 2019:

> "1. Country ownership and demand-driven cooperation: Triangular cooperation should be undertaken with the ownership of partner countries and aligned with their national priorities, as well as those of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
>
> 2. Shared commitment: Partners agree to participate and share responsibility with regard to identification, design, implementation, contribution, monitoring, and evaluation;
>
> 3. Focus on results-oriented approaches and solutions: All partners commit to achieving agreed upon results, as well as to demonstrating and systematizing results;
>
> 4. Inclusive partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues: Responding to the needs and objectives of all parties, partners aim to involve multiple actors with a view to foster knowledge-sharing; and to find sustainable development solutions;

[64] Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, para. 12. Available at https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/N1920949.pdf.

> 5. Transparency and mutual accountability: All partners are accountable for commitments made and agreed. They agree to share information on their triangular cooperation activities in accordance to the standard to enable monitoring, evaluation and accountability;
>
> 6. Innovation and co-creation: Through new and existing partnerships, intelligent risk taking, evidence-based policy and programming, technology, and flexible approaches to locally-driven innovative solutions, with a view to improving development results;
>
> 7. Joint-learning and knowledge-sharing for sustainable development: Through horizontal exchanges and co-creation of development solutions, all partners mutually benefit from sharing their knowledge, capabilities and strengths;
>
> 8. Advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Triangular cooperation should contribute to gender equality in its multiple dimensions as a way to accelerate sustainable development progress;
>
> 9. Leaving no one behind: Triangular cooperation furthers inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships, including those that provide support to the most vulnerable."[65]

In practice, the past three decades witnessed a dramatic growth in the volume and geographic reach of SSC and TrC. That was demonstrated through a variety of approaches, modalities and instruments used by countries of the Global South. The BAPA+40 outcome document[66] noted the development of the scaling up and expansion of the scope of South-South cooperation in the last few decades and identified some of those aspects as follows:

a. facilitation of regional, subregional and interregional integration and providing innovative approaches for collective actions;
b. incremental institutionalization in South-South cooperation and its incorporation into policymaking by some countries and regions;
c. expansion of the number of relevant actors in development, including multiple stakeholders, subnational entities and parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, volunteer groups, faith-based organizations, philanthropic organizations, scientific and technological communities, foundations and think-tanks, and academia; and
d. provision of financial support by multilateral institutions, international and regional banks and funds, including those newly established by developing countries, to South-South cooperation initiatives.

2.2 South-South cooperation: Contemporary challenges

While SSC has demonstrated significant potential for building resilience, promoting equity and advancing sustainability, it also faces various challenges that limit its effectiveness and impact. It also remains underutilized owing to a range of structural and systemic barriers. At the same time, emerging trends and developments present new opportunities to enhance and expand SSC. To fully harness the power of SSC, it is imperative to identify and address these challenges, transforming SSC into a more strategic, inclusive and effective mechanism for sustainable development.

2.2.1 Data and measurement limitations

One of the most significant challenges facing SSC is the limited availability of comprehensive, comparable data on cooperation flows, modalities and impacts. Unlike North-South development assistance, which is systematically tracked through the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), SSC lacks a universally accepted measurement framework. This data gap has several implications for SSC effectiveness and recognition.

[65] Voluntary Guidelines - GPI on Effective Triangular Cooperation (triangular-cooperation.org).
[66] https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/N1920949.pdf.

Quantifying SSC flows remains challenging owing to diverse definitions, valuation methodologies and reporting practices. Some countries include only financial transfers in their reporting, while others incorporate technical cooperation, capacity-building and preferential trade arrangements. The monetary valuation of in-kind contributions, such as expert time or technology transfer, varies widely across reporting countries. These inconsistencies make it difficult to aggregate SSC flows at regional or global levels, potentially understating their scale and significance in the global development landscape.

Assessing the development impact of SSC faces similar measurement challenges. While many South-South initiatives report outputs (such as training sessions conducted or infrastructure built), fewer systematically track outcomes (such as improved service delivery or enhanced productive capacity) or long-term impacts (such as poverty reduction or environmental sustainability). The limited availability of impact evaluations for South-South initiatives constrains learning about what works, why and in what contexts, potentially reducing the effectiveness of future cooperation.

Efforts to address these measurement challenges have emerged in recent years. UNCTAD supported the first voluntary conceptual Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation that was developed and agreed upon for further testing and validation by additional countries. *The Manual for the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation: Technical and Procedural Aspects for Pilot Testing*[67] is intended to support pilot testing of and data collection for the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation.

The Manual focuses on Government-led activities that are aimed at development or humanitarian purposes. These elements are the most feasible to track and measure as a starting point. Activities driven by commercial interests, such as trade, as well as exchanges between private parties are excluded from the Framework and the Manual.

The Ibero-American General Secretariat has developed a methodology for valuing technical cooperation that has been adopted by many Latin American and Caribbean countries.[68] The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has created a framework for assessing the development effectiveness of SSC.[69] UNOSSC has established a South-South Global Thinkers network to advance research and analysis on SSC. These and other such initiatives represent important steps towards more systematic data collection and analysis but a globally accepted measurement framework remains elusive.

2.2.2 Lack of robust impact evaluation of SSC initiatives

Most initiatives are not rigorously assessed beyond activity-level outputs, which significantly limits the ability to determine whether perceived outcomes can be directly attributed to the intervention itself. This absence of credible evidence on effectiveness not only hampers learning and adaptive management but also constrains the ability to replicate and scale successful solutions across different contexts. Furthermore, without standardized methodologies and indicators to assess results, it becomes difficult to communicate the true value and comparative advantages of South-South and triangular cooperation to stakeholders and policymakers. Strengthening the culture and practice of impact evaluation is therefore essential to ensure that South-South and triangular cooperation deliver measurable and transformative results, inform strategic decision-making and contribute meaningfully to global development goals.

2.2.3 Institutional and coordination challenges

The institutional architecture for SSC has evolved significantly but continues to face coordination challenges at national, regional and global levels. These institutional constraints can limit the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of South-South initiatives.

At the national level, many developing countries lack dedicated institutional mechanisms for coordinating SSC. Responsibilities for South-South initiatives are often dispersed across multiple ministries and agencies, leading to fragmentation, duplication and missed opportunities for synergy. The absence of national SSC policies or strategies in many countries further complicates coordination since different institutions may pursue

[67] Manual for the framework to measure South–South cooperation | UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
[68] South-South Report — Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2022.
[69] IsDB, Development Effectiveness Report 2021. Available at IsDB_DER-2021-28April2022_Web-Version (002).pdf.

divergent approaches or priorities. These institutional gaps are particularly pronounced in LDCs, which may have limited capacity to engage strategically in SSC despite potentially significant benefits.

Regional coordination mechanisms for SSC vary widely in their effectiveness and institutionalization. While some regions have established robust frameworks for cooperation, such as the Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation in Latin America, others lack dedicated mechanisms for coordinating regional South-South initiatives. This uneven regional architecture creates disparities in the ability of countries to engage in and benefit from SSC, potentially reinforcing existing inequalities among developing countries.

At the global level, there is a proliferation of South-South platforms, networks and initiatives, including across the UN system, that creates coordination challenges, with limited mechanisms for ensuring coherence and complementarity. The absence of a global governance framework for SSC comparable to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation for traditional aid further complicates coordination at the international level.

Efforts to address these institutional challenges include the establishment of dedicated SSC agencies or departments in countries such as Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. Regional organizations including the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) have developed strategies and action plans for SSC. The United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation, adopted in 2020, aims to enhance coordination across UN entities. These initiatives represent important steps towards more coherent institutional arrangements but significant coordination challenges persist.

2.2.4 Resource mobilization constraints

Despite its growth and diversification, SSC continues to face resource constraints that limit its scale and sustainability. These resource challenges affect both contributing and partnering countries, potentially restricting the transformative potential of South-South initiatives.

Financial resource limitations affect many SSC providers, particularly in the context of domestic economic challenges and competing priorities. Economic slowdowns in major emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa have led to reductions in their SSC budgets in recent years. The COVID-19 pandemic has further strained public finances in many developing countries, potentially limiting their ability to maintain or expand SSC commitments. These financial constraints may lead to the scaling back or discontinuation of promising South-South initiatives before they achieve sustainable impact.

Human resource constraints represent another challenge for SSC. Many developing countries face shortages of technical experts who can participate in South-South exchanges while maintaining their domestic responsibilities. Language barriers, visa restrictions and limited international experience may further limit the mobility of experts from developing countries. These human resource limitations can affect the quality and sustainability of technical cooperation, particularly in specialized fields that require specific expertise.

Technological resource gaps persist among developing countries despite progress in digital connectivity. Limited access to digital infrastructure, platforms and tools in some developing countries constrains their ability to participate in virtual South-South exchanges, which became important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital divides within countries may further limit the inclusivity of South-South knowledge-sharing, with rural areas, small enterprises, and marginalized communities often having less access to digital resources.

Efforts to address these resource challenges include the establishment of dedicated SSC funds (box 2.4) by countries as well as by regional and multilateral organizations. Triangular cooperation arrangements that combine South-South knowledge exchange with Northern financing represent another approach to addressing resource constraints. Digital platforms that reduce the costs of knowledge-sharing and collaboration, such as the UNOSSC South-South Galaxy, help to maximize the impact of limited resources. These initiatives demonstrate creative approaches to resource mobilization but sustainable financing for SSC remains a significant challenge.

Box 2.4. UNOSSC-managed South-South trust funds: A model for solidarity-driven financing for development

The trust funds managed by UNOSSC exemplify a distinct model of South-South financing for development, anchored in solidarity, mutual respect and shared priorities of the Global South. Unlike traditional aid frameworks, these funds are demand-driven, country-owned and non-conditional, embodying the core principles of South-South cooperation.

United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSSC)

Established in 1996, UNFSSC serves as a strategic platform for mobilizing Southern resources and expertise in support of transformative, cross-regional initiatives. With contributions from 29 partners, it facilitates joint implementation of development solutions tailored to shared challenges.

Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF)

Created in 1983 by the UN General Assembly for G-77 countries, PGTF has, over four decades, supported innovative and locally led projects in economic and technical cooperation. It remains a testament to long-standing South-South solidarity in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (IBSA Fund)

Operational since 2006, the IBSA Fund pioneers trilateral cooperation by financing scalable, replicable projects that tackle poverty, hunger and inequality. It operates through inclusive partnerships with local governments and UN entities, ensuring relevance and sustainability.

India-UN Development Partnership Fund

Launched in 2017, this flagship initiative reflects India's commitment to development cooperation grounded in mutual benefit and respect. With a $150 million pledge, the Fund supports transformational projects in LDCs and SIDS, addressing climate resilience, health, gender equality and more.

These trust funds not only provide financial mechanisms tailored to the development realities of the South but also institutionalize a new development paradigm – one that empowers countries to define their own priorities, leverage shared capacities and build collective resilience. They offer a scalable model of solidarity financing, advancing inclusive development through Southern leadership and ownership.

Source: UNOSSC, "South-South trust fund management". Available at South-South Trust Fund Management – UNOSSC.

The landscape of international development finance has undergone a profound transformation with the emergence and growing influence of Southern-led multilateral development banks (MDBs). Institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the New Development Bank (NDB), IsDB, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) have become critical actors in advancing development across the Global South. While each of these institutions has distinct origins and mandates, they share a common mission: to respond more effectively to the development priorities of Southern countries through financial instruments that are contextually relevant and more accessible than those of traditional MDBs. These institutions are helping to close the financing gap in the Global South by fostering SSC, supporting regional integration and innovating new models of blended finance, thereby addressing structural barriers to resource mobilization and enabling countries to better finance their development ambitions.

This institutional shift reflects a broader aspiration among developing countries for increased ownership of their development trajectories. It also highlights their dissatisfaction with the limited voice and influence that they have historically held within the governance structures of traditional international financial institutions. Southern MDBs thus represent not only new channels of development finance but also instruments of political and economic agency for countries seeking greater autonomy in global economic governance.

Crucially, the rise of these institutions must be understood in the context of persistent resource mobilization constraints faced by countries of the Global South. Despite increasing development needs exacerbated by climate change, pandemics, debt burdens and widening infrastructure gaps, access to affordable, timely and flexible finance remains uneven. Many developing countries continue to struggle with restrictive lending conditions, inadequate concessional flows and procyclical capital markets. In this environment, Southern MDBs have stepped in as vital complements and, in some cases, alternatives to traditional sources of development finance.

2.2.5 Power asymmetries and inclusivity concerns

While SSC is founded on principles of horizontality, solidarity and mutual benefit, power asymmetries among developing countries can affect the inclusivity and equity of cooperation arrangements. These asymmetries may reproduce some of the challenges associated with traditional North-South cooperation if not explicitly addressed. It can lead to unequal partnerships, where more powerful countries dominate SSC initiatives, undermining the principle of mutual benefit.

Economic disparities among developing countries create uneven capacities to engage in and benefit from SSC. Larger emerging economies with substantial resources and institutional capacity can more easily initiate and sustain cooperation programmes, while smaller or less developed countries may struggle to participate actively. These disparities can lead to the concentration of South-South benefits among a relatively small group of more advanced developing countries, potentially reinforcing rather than reducing inequalities within the Global South.

Knowledge and technology gaps among developing countries affect the reciprocity of South-South exchanges. Countries with more advanced technological capabilities or specialized expertise may serve primarily as providers rather than recipients in SSC, creating de facto hierarchies despite the rhetorical emphasis on horizontality. These knowledge asymmetries can limit the mutual learning potential of SSC if not explicitly recognized and addressed through inclusive knowledge-exchange mechanisms.

Political disparities among developing countries may affect the agenda-setting and priority-setting processes in SSC. Larger or more influential countries may have greater ability to shape cooperation frameworks according to their interests and priorities, potentially marginalizing the concerns of smaller or less powerful countries. These political asymmetries can undermine the principle of demand-driven cooperation if recipient countries have limited voice in determining cooperation priorities and modalities.

Efforts to address these power asymmetries include the establishment of inclusive governance mechanisms for South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, such as the equal voting rights structure of the New Development Bank. Dedicated support for LDC participation in South-South exchanges helps to enhance inclusivity. Multi-stakeholder approaches that engage civil society, academia and the private sector alongside Governments can also broaden participation in SSC beyond State actors. These initiatives represent important steps towards more inclusive SSC but power asymmetries remain a persistent challenge.

SIDS have emerged as some of the most compelling and authoritative voices in global climate-change negotiations. Despite their small size, limited economic power and minimal contributions to global emissions, SIDS face existential threats from rising sea levels, intensified storms and ecosystem collapse. Their vulnerability has made them both symbols of climate injustice and critical actors in shaping the global climate agenda.

In a global governance system marked by stark asymmetries of power and representation, SIDS have demonstrated that solidarity and coalition-building are vital tools for smaller countries in the Global South with which to assert influence. Through the creation of strategic alliances such as the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), SIDS have collectively amplified their voices, framing climate change as a matter of survival and human rights. Their unified stance was instrumental in securing key provisions of the Paris Agreement, including the recognition of the 1.5°C warming threshold.

However, the experience of SIDS also reveals the persistent structural inequalities that hinder meaningful inclusivity in global decision-making. Constraints related to technical capacity, negotiating presence and access to finance continue to limit their ability to fully participate and shape outcomes. Their reliance on coalition-building underscores a broader dynamic faced by many small and vulnerable countries of the Global South: when acting alone, their influence is minimal but through solidarity, shared diplomacy and moral leadership, they can shift the narrative and forge transformative outcomes.

The case of SIDS illustrates that addressing power asymmetries in global climate governance requires not only institutional reforms but also the recognition and support of collective platforms that elevate the voices of those most affected.

2.2.6 Lack of a coherent body of knowledge

One of the most significant challenges facing SSC is the absence of a unified, comprehensive and systematic body of knowledge. While many countries of the Global South have developed innovative and context-specific solutions to development challenges, these experiences are often fragmented and poorly documented, while robust impact evaluation is rarely conducted. Successful models in one region or country are rarely analysed, synthesized or adapted for broader application. This lack of coherence limits the ability of countries to learn from one another and replicate effective practices. To overcome this, there is a need for a centralized repository of knowledge that captures best practices, lessons learned and adaptable frameworks and that is organized around specific and usually complex development challenges. Such a resource would enable SSC to transition from being ad hoc and reactive to strategic and proactive.

The linguistic diversity of the Global South is a testament to its rich cultural heritage but it also poses a significant challenge to effective communication and knowledge exchange. While English often serves as a lingua franca in international development, not all practitioners and stakeholders are proficient in it. This language barrier can exclude key actors from participating in SSC initiatives, limit access to valuable knowledge and create power asymmetries. To address this, SSC must prioritize multilingualism by investing in translation services, promoting the use of regional languages and fostering inclusive platforms that accommodate linguistic diversity.

The Global South is not a monolithic entity; it encompasses a wide array of cultures, historical and development trajectories. What works in one context may not be directly applicable in another. South-South cooperation initiatives often fail to account for these differences, leading to outcomes that are misaligned with local needs and realities. To enhance the effectiveness of SSC, it is crucial to adopt a context-sensitive approach that emphasizes local ownership, cultural relevance and adaptive implementation. This requires deeper engagement with local communities and stakeholders to ensure that initiatives are tailored to specific contexts.

The dominance of English in global discourse marginalizes non-English-speaking countries and practitioners, creating a dependency that undermines the autonomy and authenticity of SSC. This over-reliance on English excludes valuable perspectives and experiences, limiting the richness and diversity of knowledge exchange. To counteract this, efforts must promote the use of multiple languages in documentation, communication and capacity-building initiatives. Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly large language models with multilingual capabilities, can play a transformative role in overcoming this linguistic barrier and can support real-time translation, generate multilingual content, and facilitate cross-lingual dialogue and collaboration, thereby amplifying the voices of non-English-speaking stakeholders. By leveraging these tools, SSC can democratize knowledge- sharing, reduce epistemic dependency and enrich the collective wisdom of the Global South with a more inclusive and representative array of contributions.

By addressing these challenges, SSC can evolve into a more functional and impactful instrument for sustainable development. The potential of SSC lies in its ability to unite the diverse countries of the Global South around shared goals and collective action. To unlock this potential, it is essential to build a coherent body of knowledge, overcome language and cultural barriers, reduce power asymmetries and strengthen institutional frameworks. Through these efforts, SSC can empower countries of the Global South to leverage their collective strengths, share innovative solutions and achieve shared prosperity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Table 2.5. Structural barriers and external challenges to SSC[70]

Category	Structural Barriers (Internal to Global South)	External Challenges/Actors
Institutional gaps	▸ Weak institutional frameworks for coordinating SSC. ▸ Lack of dedicated SSC agencies or regional hubs.	▸ External actors may exploit weak institutions to impose their agendas. ▸ Undermine SSC through conditional aid.
Resource limitations	▸ Limited financial resources for SSC initiatives. ▸ Uneven distribution of resources among Global South countries.	▸ Economic sanctions or pressure to limit funding for SSC. ▸ Competition for resources from Global North actors.
Knowledge and capacity	▸ Lack of a coherent body of knowledge on SSC. ▸ Limited technical expertise and capacity for SSC projects.	▸ Restrictive intellectual property laws hinder technology transfer. ▸ Negative narratives are used to cast doubt on the effectiveness and intentions of SSC.
Language and culture	▸ Linguistic diversity creates communication barriers. ▸ Cultural differences hinder collaboration.	▸ Promote English or other dominant languages to marginalize non-English-speaking countries.
Political will	▸ Lack of political commitment to SSC in some countries. ▸ Divisions and rivalries within the Global South.	▸ Exploit political divisions to weaken solidarity. ▸ Pressure Governments to prioritize Global North alliances.
Infrastructure	▸ Poor infrastructure limits connectivity and collaboration. Digital divide hampers technology-driven SSC.	▸ Impose regulatory barriers to infrastructure development. ▸ Exercise control over critical technologies (e.g., 5G, AI).
Economic disparities	▸ Wide economic disparities among Global South countries. ▸ Limited intra-Global South trade and investment.	▸ Promote economic dependency on Global North markets. ▸ Block regional trade agreements or financial mechanisms.
Geopolitical tensions	▸ Historical rivalries and territorial disputes. ▸ Competing regional blocs within the Global South.	▸ Fuel existing tensions to disrupt cooperation. ▸ Use divide-and-rule tactics to fragment the Global South.
Sustainability	▸ Environmental challenges and climate vulnerabilities. ▸ Limited focus on green technologies in SSC.	▸ Impose environmental standards that hinder development. ▸ Control access to green technologies and financing.
Global governance	▸ Limited representation of Global South in global institutions. ▸ Unfair rules in trade, finance and with regard to climate.	▸ Resist reforms to global governance structures. ▸ Maintain dominance in financial institutions.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

[70] This matrix highlights the dual challenges facing SSC: internal structural barriers and external interference.

Key insights from the matrix

Internal barriers are primarily related to the structural, economic and political limitations within the Global South (table 2.5). These include weak institutions, resource constraints and lack of political will, which hinder the effective implementation of SSC.

External challenges stem from the actions of Global North actors or other external forces that seek to maintain their dominance or disrupt SSC. These include economic pressure, misinformation and geopolitical interference.

Interconnectedness plays a role. Many internal barriers are exacerbated by external challenges. For example, weak institutions in the Global South make it easier for external actors to impose their agendas, while economic disparities are exploited to create dependencies.

This matrix highlights the dual challenges facing SSC – internal structural barriers and external interference – and provides a roadmap for addressing them. By strengthening internal capacities and building resilience against external pressures, the Global South can unlock the full potential of SSC as a transformative force for development. The key lies in fostering unity, self-reliance and strategic collaboration among countries of the Global South while actively countering attempts to derail or undermine their cooperation.

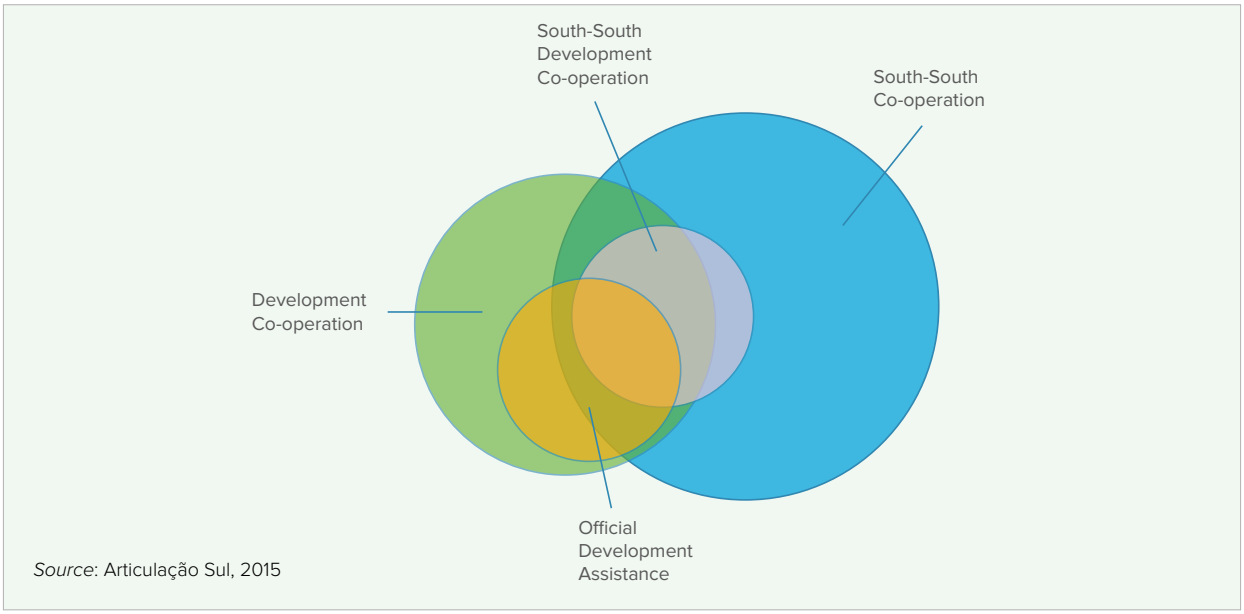
2.3 South-South cooperation modalities

In 2020, the United Nations Working Group on Measurement of Development Support, set up by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), established a subgroup dedicated to SSC in October 2020. The subgroup prepared a note that reflects on how to measure SSC for further discussion in the Working Group, with the aim of reporting on target 17.3. It includes three modalities (See annex 4):

a. financial SSC modalities (reported directly through monetization);
b. non-financial SSC modalities (that may be monetized); and
c. non-financial modalities of SSC (non-monetized measurement).

The subgroup also produced a South-South measurement glossary[71] that included 19 terms. These terms demonstrate the current scope and scale of SSC that encompass activities that could be categorized under the traditional definition of "international development cooperation". In addition, there is a significant number of exchanges that go beyond that. Figure 2.2, prepared in 2015 by the Brazilian think tank Articulacao Sul,[72] illustrates the expanded scope of SSC.

Figure 2.2. Expanded scope of SSC



Source: Articulação Sul, 2015

[71] Outcome document of the sub-group on South-South cooperation (unctad.org).

[72] Articulação Sul | Organização de referência na consolidação do campo da Cooperação Internacional para o Desenvolvimento no Brasil (articulacaosul.org).

A summary of the key South-South cooperation modalities is reflected in box 2.5. South-South cooperation definitions agreed upon at the United Nations and their evolution as a modality in global development demonstrate that the concept is broader than what is classified as "international development cooperation". Accordingly, when SSC countries and actors in the Global South assume that SSC includes not only grants and technical cooperation but also other exchanges that encompass regional economic integration, trade, investment, remittances, export credit lines and other instruments and modalities of cooperation not included in official development assistance (ODA), this leads to the conclusion that SSC should not be restricted to flows (technical and financial), as ODA is. South-South cooperation includes exchanges that could be monetized as well as non-monetized. South-South cooperation modalities cover a broad range of economic, social, political and other engagements. As an example, the BRICS countries break down SSC into three categories: economic cooperation, people-to-people exchange, and political and security cooperation. At the national level, India has identified five action pillars for SSC: capacity-building and skills transfer, concessional finance (further divided into grants and lines of credit), preferential trade, investment and technical cooperation.[73]

Box 2.5. Types of South-South cooperation modalities

Bilateral South-South cooperation: government-to-government cooperation among developing countries.

Regional South-South cooperation: produced by a regional organization formed by developing countries.

Triangular multilateral South-South cooperation: cooperation between a multilateral organization that serves as financial supporter and two developing countries (a Southern second donor and a recipient country).

Triangular South-South-South cooperation: three developing countries (a Southern financial supporter, a Southern second donor and a recipient country).

Triangular North-South-South cooperation: cooperation between a developed country that serves as financial supporter and two developing countries (a second donor and a recipient country).

Source: Miguel Lengyel and Bernabé Malacaza, "What do we talk when we talk about South-South cooperation? The construction of a concept from empirical basis", Whatever Happened to North-South?, IPSA-ECPR Joint Conference, 2011.

At the regional level, the evolution of South-South and triangular cooperation amplified the opportunities for countries to engage in ways that best suit their realities. In **Africa**, South-South and triangular cooperation has focused on bilateral, regional and interregional economic and technical cooperation on peace and security, good governance, integration and agriculture, among other long-term development priorities articulated in national development plans and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Training, transfer of technology and project financing are the main modalities used, showcasing the importance of knowledge-sharing in African South-South and triangular cooperation.[74] Activities are generally led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Finance and implemented by a multitude of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Institutionalization of South-South and triangular cooperation has advanced in the past five years, with a growing number of countries in the process of structuring stand-alone development cooperation agencies or South-South and triangular cooperation units within their Ministries of Planning and Foreign Affairs (i.e., Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Lesotho, Nigeria and South Africa) or already have a central authority responsible for engaging in South-South and triangular cooperation (i.e., Botswana, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Rwanda, Tunisia and Uganda). Other countries such as Madagascar have located South-South and triangular cooperation within their aid-effectiveness structures.

Regional cooperation has been the steppingstone for broader South-South and triangular cooperation in regional and subregional forums such as the African Union and the African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD) as well as African economic communities such as the Economic Community of West African States. In 2018, South-South and triangular cooperation gained new impetus with the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area. Interregional mechanisms include the India-Africa Forum Summit, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and the Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference. Countries such as Brazil have provided support through South-South and triangular cooperation projects in sub-Saharan Africa and have teamed up with the Commonwealth to promote trilateral cooperation. The Commonwealth has also supported South-South

[73] South–South Cooperation in Southeast Asia: From Bandung and Solidarity to Norms and Rivalry (sagepub.com).

[74] UNDP (2019), First African South-South Cooperation Report.

and triangular cooperation initiatives, including through the dedicated Commonwealth Window of the India-UN Development Partnership Fund. Interregional cooperation is also reflected in the growth of international financial institutions and funds for South-South and triangular cooperation, including the African Renaissance Fund, the Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa, the New Development Bank, IsDB, the African Development Bank and the African Export-Import Bank.

Another hallmark of South-South and triangular cooperation in Africa is the cooperation among LDCs and countries in crisis. Different from South-South and triangular cooperation involving emerging or geographically distant developing countries, which often have a clear expectation of immediate and/or future economic reward while steering away from politics and core Government reform in the partner country, South-South and triangular cooperation among LDCs and fragile States is driven by regional linkages and interdependency. Issues such as stabilization, reform of core Government institutions and basic State-building are central to South-South and triangular cooperation since neighbours to a fragile State have a clear interest in stability and improved performance of Government institutions in the fragile State, which will eventually lead to improved economic performance, enhanced trade with neighbouring countries and regional political stability.[75]

In **Arab States**, South-South and triangular cooperation has been the hallmark of development cooperation for the past 40 years, with Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates featuring among the top contributors in the region and in the world. Other countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Qatar, and even LDCs such as Sudan and Yemen have also been actively contributing to South-South and triangular cooperation in the region and beyond. For many Arab States, South-South and triangular cooperation has become potent instruments for promoting multilayered foreign policymaking and commercial interests and has come mostly in the form of soft loans, investments, debt relief, infrastructure development and technical cooperation. Overall, more Arab development finance has been allocated to poor countries, with 40 per cent of resources directed to countries in the World Bank International Development Assistance programme, and 20 per cent of resources directed to heavily indebted poor countries. More recently, South-South and triangular cooperation has taken the form of exchange of solutions and experts, technology transfer, dialogue on options for policy reform, foreign direct investment and trade.[76]

National development banks and funds have played a key role in promoting South-South and triangular cooperation in Arab States. The Saudi Fund for Development, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development finance projects and contribute to debt relief in the Arab region itself. Since its establishment, more than half of the nearly 800 loans and 230 technical assistance grants by the Kuwait Fund have been directed for Arab economic development across 16 Arab States. Regional and multilateral channels include regional groupings and organizations such as the African Union regional economic communities, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, the Greater Arab Free Trade Area and IsDB. Yet the potential for South-South and triangular cooperation in Arab States remains largely untapped since knowledge about institutions and financing modalities remains low.[77]

Although Arab States are relatively well-placed in terms of resources, there remain challenges in the implementation of South-South and triangular cooperation projects. This is largely because many countries in the region still have limited capacity to articulate and assess needs, build links with other countries, and develop South-South and triangular cooperation programmes and projects on their own. There is scope for improving normative frameworks, coordination structures, and mechanisms for South-South and triangular cooperation. Ensuring adequate monitoring and evaluation, complemented by accessible and comprehensive data on South-South and triangular cooperation, could also be further developed.[78]

Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) have been championing East-East cooperation as a dimension of South-South and triangular cooperation that focuses on knowledge exchange among Eastern European, Western Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asian countries that share similar transition experiences and sociocultural, religious and linguistic characteristics as well as common development challenges in areas such as social inclusion, youth employment and disaster risk reduction. Like Arab States, countries of Europe and the CIS also share the South-South and triangular cooperation discourse of equal partnership and demand-driven

[75] Lassen, M., Haldrup, S. and Tarp, K., "South-South Cooperation, Inter-State Relations and Regional Integration: Regionally Based South-South Cooperation in the Context of Changing Political Dynamics" (Concord Consulting ApS, 2017).

[76] Omar, S. A. M., "South-South Cooperation in the Arab Region". In: Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), Global Issues and Local Actions in South-South Cooperation: Reflections from Participants, Learning South-South Cooperation, 11–22 November 2019, New Delhi.

[77] Speech by Mr. Malek Al-Breazat, Head, Department of Cooperation with Arab and OIC Institutions, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan, Virtual Arab Regional Workshop: Investing in the SDGs through SSC & TrC beyond COVID-19, 30 November–2 December 2020.

[78] UNDP (2014). Mapping South-South Cooperation Mechanisms and Solutions in the Arab States. Available at http://www.arabstates.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/South_South_Cooperation/mapping-south-south-cooperation-mechanisms-in-the-arab-states.html.

support. Unlike other regions, however, South-South and triangular cooperation has an uneven foothold in policy circles, with many countries of Europe and the CIS not recognizing themselves as part of the Global South but rather as members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD and providers of ODA. Given the overall lack of awareness and attention to South-South and triangular cooperation in key national documents and related policy frameworks, most countries have not yet established coordination mechanisms and information remains fragmented.[79]

Several regional cooperation frameworks such as the Regional Cooperation Council and the South-East European Cooperation Process support regional integration efforts, integration with the European Union, good governance and economic growth in the Balkans. New organizations and groupings such as the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking States have also appeared, indicating new and/or revived alliances in the region. Some of these organizations and groupings have even established dedicated development banks and funding facilities for promoting cooperation among the partner countries. Overall, these regional organizations and groupings provide platforms for countries to discuss common challenges and identify common interests. They establish strong coordination mechanisms by area of cooperation and can pool resources for implementing regional projects. Occasionally, however, they tend to have overlapping objectives and areas of cooperation, indicating that mechanisms to encourage synergy and to strengthen capacities could lead to more effective interaction and allocation of funds.[80]

Strategies for facilitating South-South investment in the context of multiple funding actors and regional relationships are also being developed or explored. Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to countries of Europe and the CIS almost doubled to $63 billion [in 2016], while in South-East Europe, inflows retreated slightly to $4.6 billion.[81] Several countries of Europe and the CIS located along the major economic corridors have started to attract a significant amount of Chinese FDI, mostly in the form of construction projects that are targeted towards upgrading infrastructure along the Belt and Road Initiative.[82]

In **Asia and the Pacific**, South-South and triangular cooperation has been heavily promoted by countries such as China and India. Other countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand are also actively engaging in South-South and triangular cooperation within and outside the region. South-South and triangular cooperation in Asia and the Pacific combines infrastructure development and finance with more soft-oriented initiatives in areas such as social development, governance, expert training and volunteering. This combination of ODA-like aid (i.e., grants, zero interest loans and concessional loans) and commercial forms of economic engagement (i.e., export buyers' credits, non-concessional loans, strategic lines of credit, and other resource flows such as remittances) allows countries to respond to their development challenges more flexibly. It is also refocusing the global debate towards the importance of combining aid, trade and investment under economically feasible and environmentally sustainable frameworks to catalyse structural transformation.[83]

Since the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century, commercial financial institutions from Asia – especially China – have become important sources of development finance. Prominent among them are the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China (China Exim Bank), which have significantly expanded their international lending portfolios, financing infrastructure, energy and industrial projects across the Global South. The increase in the number of private creditors signals a new trend whereby public-private partnerships are being used to supplement State-led aid programmes, helping to alleviate political and financial risks while expanding sources of development finance. Another notable trend is the growing use of earmarked contributions to the UN development system and the creation of new multilateral development banks. Institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB) reflect this shift, providing alternative platforms for South-led multilateral cooperation with a strong focus on sustainable infrastructure and inclusive development. More recently, several bilateral, regional and interregional development finance institutions, credit programmes and special funds – such as the China-LAC Cooperation Fund (CLAC), the China-LAC Industrial Cooperation Investment Fund (CLAI), the Fund for Cooperation and Development between China and Portuguese-Speaking Countries, and the Silk Road Fund – have been established with both portfolio diversification and development finance objectives, reinforcing China's expanding role in shaping the global development finance landscape.[84]

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[79] UNOSSC, COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Public Policy Leadership and Institutional Arrangements – 2021 Inter-regional Dialogue and Stocktaking for Advancing South-South Cooperation in the Arab States, Europe and the CIS, Summary Report, 6-8 April (New York, 2021).

[80] Ibid.

[81] UNCTAD, World Investment Report 2017: Investment and the Digital Economy (Geneva, 2017).

[82] UNOSSC, COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Public Policy Leadership and Institutional Arrangements – Interregional Dialogue and Stocktaking for Advancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Arab States, Europe and the CIS, 6-8 April (New York, 2021).

[83] Vazquez, K. and Y. Zheng (forthcoming), "The New Asian Development Finance" In: Li, X., Gu, J., Zhang, D. China and International Development: Knowledge, Governance and Practice. IDS Bulletin. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.

[84] Ibid.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China in 2013, has emerged as a major vehicle for financing development projects across Africa, Asia, Latin America and parts of Europe (box 2.6 and figure 2.3). By mobilizing a wide range of financial instruments, including concessional loans, equity investments and public-private partnerships, through institutions such as the China Development Bank, the Export-Import Bank of China, the Silk Road Fund, and cooperation with multilateral platforms such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the BRI has significantly expanded infrastructure and connectivity financing in the Global South. While fostering trade integration and regional cooperation, the initiative has also attracted scrutiny over debt sustainability, transparency and environmental impacts. Nonetheless, the BRI remains a key example of South-South development finance in practice, offering an alternative model to traditional assistance.

Box 2.6. China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

"The BRI comprises a Silk Road Economic Belt -- a trans-continental passage that links China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia and Europe by land -- and a 21st century Maritime Silk Road, a sea route connecting China's coastal regions with Southeast and South Asia, the South Pacific, the Middle East and Eastern Africa, all the way to Europe.

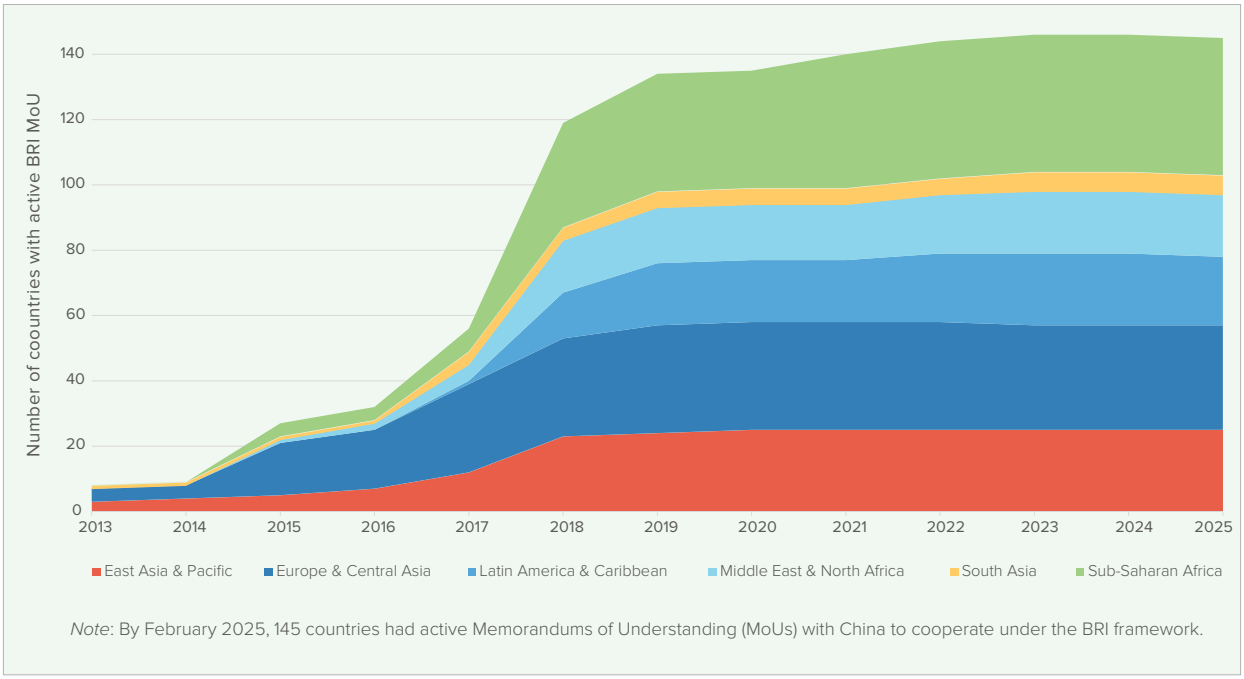
BRI is an inspiration from the concept of the Silk Road established during the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago -- an ancient network of trade routes that connected China to the Mediterranean via Eurasia for centuries. The aim of BRI is to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks along six corridors. The Belt and Road Initiative defines five major priorities: Policy coordination; Facilities connectivity; Unimpeded trade; Financial integration; People-to-people bond." Source: Belt and Road Portal, "What is the BRI?" Hu Pingchao, ed., 26 June 2023. Available at yidaiyilu.gov.cn.

The countries of the BRI are spread across Africa (53 countries), Central Asia (6 countries), East Asia (3 countries), Europe (29 countries), Latin America and the Caribbean (21 countries), the Middle East (9 countries), the Pacific (12 countries), South Asia (6 countries) and Southeast Asia (10 countries).

The BRI countries also include 17 countries of the European Union and 8 countries of the G20. Two countries have left the BRI: Italy in December 2023 and Panama in February 2025.

Source: Green Finance and Development Centre, "Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative. Available at greenfdc.org.

Figure 2.3. Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative



Note: By February 2025, 145 countries had active Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with China to cooperate under the BRI framework.

Other innovative sources of development finance include the use of endowment funds for South-South and triangular cooperation, as in the case of Indonesia, whereby the yields are used to finance development cooperation programmes and grant assistance. As a result, countries become less dependent on annual

State budgets for South-South and triangular cooperation, which can be reallocated and even cut, especially during a crisis. South-South and triangular cooperation have also been featured in regional and subregional forums such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In August 2020, a Plan of Action on Mitigating the Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic was jointly issued by ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Latin America and the Caribbean has been one of the most active regions in South-South and triangular cooperation, with technical cooperation and experience-sharing aimed at both strengthening the economy and promoting social development at its core. In 2019, Latin American and Caribbean countries participated in 1,083 South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, of which approximately 50 per cent were between two countries in the region. Despite the strong bilateral and intraregional nature of South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region has also engaged with countries in other regions, mainly in Africa (27.1 per cent) and Asia (15.6 per cent) on a bilateral (20 per cent), regional (3.5 per cent) and triangular (2.7 per cent) basis. There has been particular interest in triangular cooperation, as seen in the progressive shift in this type of cooperation from specific and isolated initiatives to projects and programmes larger in scope.[85]

Looking at a broader time span, it is possible to see the widening and diversification of the partners with which each country of the region engages in exchange, as providers and as recipients. The area in which most efforts continue to be concentrated is related to social issues, with more than one third of the total number of initiatives. Likewise, cooperation aimed at preserving the environment continues to gain ground, consolidating as the sector with the third-highest relative importance in overall bilateral initiatives in 2019, closely following agriculture and livestock.[86] The region has had a relatively high level of institutionalization, including coordination and reporting structures. Latin American countries are usually among the leading countries in global South-South and triangular cooperation mapping exercises, thus creating opportunities for interregional knowledge-sharing.

Similar to Europe and the CIS, the Latin America and the Caribbean region also has several regional cooperation frameworks such as MERCOSUR, the Caribbean Community, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Union of South American Nations to support regional integration processes and policy coordination. Over time, many of these regional cooperation frameworks have become active, depending on the political orientation of the Governments of the region. This volatility has added uncertainty and, to a certain extent, has compromised high-level political support to South-South and triangular cooperation in the region.[87] There is an opportunity to strengthen awareness and dialogue on both practical and ideological aspects of South-South and triangular cooperation by strengthening major regional coordination mechanisms and linking them with the global level. One proposal is to give greater autonomy to regional South-South and triangular cooperation structures such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Committee on South-South Cooperation. This process could inspire similar structures in other regions on how best to coordinate and connect South-South and triangular cooperation policy and practice.

2.4 Advancing global development: Expansion and institutionalization of South-South and triangular cooperation in the UN system

Over the past decade, South-South and triangular cooperation have emerged as pivotal frameworks for fostering international development within the UN system. This period has been marked by significant institutional advancements, strategic integration and a surge in collaborative initiatives aimed at leveraging the collective strengths of developing countries. The UN system has played a central role in facilitating and institutionalizing South-South and triangular cooperation, ensuring their alignment with global development agendas and the SDGs. A detailed exploration of the key developments and mechanisms that have shaped this evolution are described in the following sections.

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[85] Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020* (Madrid, SEGIB).

[86] Ibid.

[87] Interviews and surveys with UNOSSC staff members, members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism for SSC, and representatives from United Nations Member States and intergovernmental mechanisms conducted between April and May 2021.

2.4.1 Institutionalization of South-South and triangular cooperation

Creation of the United Nations Inter-Agency Mechanism for South-South and triangular cooperation
The establishment of a dedicated inter-agency mechanism for South-South and triangular cooperation represents a milestone in the efforts of the UN system to coordinate and streamline South-South initiatives. This mechanism, coordinated by UNOSSC, serves as a platform for UN entities to align their strategies, share best practices and avoid duplication of effort. It has enhanced the coherence and effectiveness of South-South and triangular cooperation across the UN system, ensuring that resources are utilized efficiently and that initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of partner countries.

Approval of the first UN system-wide strategy for South-South and triangular cooperation
The adoption of the first UN system-wide strategy for South-South and triangular cooperation, 2020-2024, underscores the commitment of the Organization to mainstreaming these modalities of cooperation. The strategy provides a comprehensive framework for UN entities to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into their policies, programmes and operations. It emphasizes the importance of capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and innovation in driving sustainable development outcomes.

Inclusion of South-South and triangular cooperation in the mandates and corporate strategies of UN entities
Many UN entities have formally incorporated South-South and triangular cooperation into their mandates, corporate strategies and service offerings. This integration reflects a recognition of the value of South-South partnerships in addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change. By embedding South-South and triangular cooperation into their core operations, UN entities have ensured that they remain a priority in their engagement with Member States and other stakeholders.

2.4.2 Strategic elevation of SSC and TrC

Elevation of South-South and triangular cooperation as key modalities of engagement

In several UN entities, South-South and triangular cooperation has been elevated to strategic priorities within their corporate plans. This shift highlights the growing recognition of South-South partnerships as a viable and impactful approach to development. By positioning South-South and triangular cooperation as key modes of engagement, these entities have amplified their visibility and relevance within the global development landscape.

Creation of dedicated budget lines for South-South and triangular cooperation
The allocation of dedicated budget lines for South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives has provided much-needed financial support for these efforts. This funding has enabled UN entities to design and implement innovative programmes, scale up successful initiatives and respond to emerging challenges. The availability of resources has also enhanced the sustainability of South-South and triangular cooperation activities, ensuring their long-term impact.

2.4.3 Operationalization and brokering of partnerships

Development of platforms for brokering demand and supply
The UN system has developed platforms to facilitate the matching of demand and supply among South-South and triangular cooperation partners. These platforms serve as hubs for knowledge exchange, technical assistance and resource mobilization. By connecting countries with complementary needs and capacities, the UN has fostered mutually beneficial partnerships that drive development progress.

Assignment of South-South and triangular cooperation focal points in UN entities
The appointment of South-South and triangular cooperation focal points across UN entities has strengthened institutional capacity and coordination. These focal points play a critical role in advocating for South-South and triangular cooperation, facilitating collaboration and ensuring that initiatives are aligned with national and regional priorities. Their presence has enhanced the responsiveness and adaptability of UN entities to the evolving needs of partner countries.

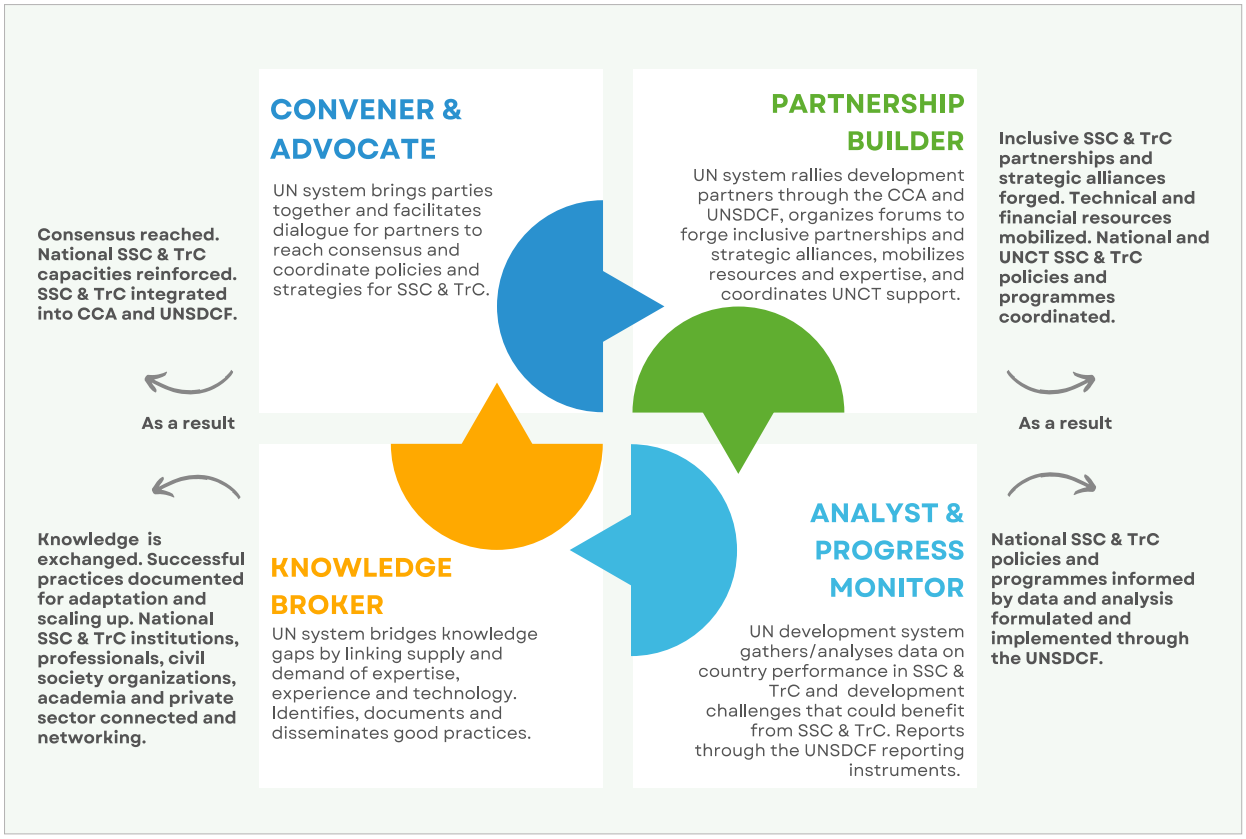
2.4.4 Monitoring, reporting and scaling up

Compilation of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives
The UN system has systematically documented how its entities have facilitated South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives in collaboration with countries. This compilation provides valuable insights into the scope, impact and lessons learned from these efforts. It also serves as a repository of best practices, enabling UN entities to replicate successful models and address gaps in implementation.

Upsurge in facilitated South-South and triangular cooperation activities
The past decade witnessed a significant increase in the number of South-South and triangular cooperation activities reported across the UN system. This growth reflects the expanding role of South-South partnerships in addressing global development challenges. From technical cooperation and capacity-building to joint research and innovation, these activities have contributed to tangible outcomes in areas such as health, education, infrastructure and environmental sustainability.

The institutionalization and expansion of South-South and triangular cooperation within the UN system represent a transformative shift in the global development paradigm. By fostering collaboration among developing countries, the UN has unlocked new opportunities for innovation, resilience and inclusive growth (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4. UN support for South-South cooperation at the country level



Source: https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Guidelines-for-the-Integration-of-South-South-and-Triangular-Cooperation-into-the-Country-and-Regional-level-Work-of-the-UN-Development-System.pdf (page 16).

2.5 Conclusions

South-South Cooperation has evolved from its origins in post-colonial solidarity into a multifaceted development framework with global resonance. Anchored in the historical aspirations of the Bandung Conference, SSC now spans a broad spectrum of modalities including trade, finance, infrastructure, technical cooperation, knowledge exchange and cultural collaboration. Alongside its complementary modality, triangular cooperation, SSC offers a distinct, demand-driven model for development that aligns with the priorities of the Global South and the imperatives of the 2030 Agenda.

Over the decades, SSC has been progressively institutionalized across multiple levels. Within the United Nations system, it has become a recognized pillar of development engagement, supported by strategic frameworks, dedicated focal points and financial instruments. At the regional and national levels, countries have established agencies, action plans and partnerships that reflect the growing maturity and relevance of SSC as a tool for development transformation. Initiatives such as BRICS, IBSA, FOCAC and BAPA+40 embody this evolution, signaling that SSC has moved from the periphery to the centre of the global development architecture.

Yet this progress remains constrained by persistent internal and external challenges. Internally, SSC continues to suffer from conceptual fragmentation, overlapping mandates, limited coordination and a lack of unified governance frameworks. These gaps are compounded by capacity disparities among Global South countries, which often result in uneven participation and benefits. Externally, SSC faces pressures from global governance systems that remain dominated by Northern actors. These systemic imbalances can marginalize the role of SSC and undermine its core principles of mutual respect, sovereignty and non-conditionality.

To fully realize its transformative potential, SSC must undergo a strategic shift that consolidates its normative foundation while addressing its operational constraints. It needs to complete its transition from a historically reactive modality to a forward-looking, knowledge-rich and institutionally robust system. Its foundational principles – mutual benefit, equality, non-conditionality and solidarity – must be safeguarded not only in rhetoric but through clear mechanisms that ensure equitable governance and inclusive participation.

The fragmentation that hampers SSC coherence must be addressed through the development of unified methodologies for measurement, monitoring and evaluation. The lack of a globally accepted framework for tracking SSC flows and assessing impact has weakened its visibility and credibility. Standardizing approaches while allowing for local adaptation would enhance the comparability, scalability and replicability of SSC initiatives.

Building a more inclusive and accessible body of knowledge is equally crucial. Many successful SSC practices remain undocumented or linguistically siloed, reducing their potential for adaptation and scaling up. Multilingual knowledge platforms, regional hubs and transitional peer learning networks can bridge these gaps and enhance the collective learning capacity of the Global South.

Institutional capacity remains a bottleneck, particularly in least developed and fragile States. National strategies must move beyond fragmented project approaches to whole-of-government frameworks that integrate development, diplomacy and economic cooperation. Regional organizations and multilateral institutions should expand their support for technical assistance, institutional strengthening and policy coherence to enable sustained engagement in South-South and triangular cooperation.

Financing remains a persistent challenge. South-South cooperation initiatives are often vulnerable to fiscal pressures, particularly in middle-income countries navigating economic volatility. To address this, countries should explore innovative financing mechanisms, including regional funds, blended finance instruments and endowment-based platforms that ensure long-term sustainability. Triangular cooperation can serve as a catalytic complement to SSC, provided that it remains firmly grounded in Southern ownership and aligned with the priorities of partnering countries.

The value of SSC extends far beyond bilateral exchanges; it is a strategic asset for realizing global development agendas. The ability of SSC to translate international commitments into context-specific, locally owned solutions makes it a critical enabler of the SGDs, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and regional visions such as Agenda 2063 in Africa. Adopting a challenge-based approach – focusing cooperation on concrete global issues such as climate resilience, digital inclusion, urban equity and health preparedness – would increase the responsiveness and strategic impact of SSC.

Ultimately, SSC represents more than a modality; it is a political and ethical project to democratize development, decolonize knowledge and restore agency to the Global South. Its success depends on the collective will of Southern countries to strengthen solidarity, invest in institutional and financial innovation, and assert their shared priorities in the global arena. As the world enters an era defined by uncertainty, fragmentation and transformation, SSC offers a pathway to inclusive, resilient and sovereign development. The task ahead is to transform this potential into practice through sustained commitment, strategic coherence and united purpose.

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Chapter 3

Integrating South-South Cooperation with the Sustainable Development Agenda: Challenges and Opportunities

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality and climate change. This chapter explores the potential of South-South cooperation (SSC) to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, emphasizing the importance of aligning SSC initiatives with the broader development agenda.

This chapter situates SSC within the framework of the SDGs, analysing its potential to accelerate progress towards global sustainability targets. It explores how this modality can address implementation gaps, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction, education, healthcare and climate action.

The chapter also examines the challenges faced by SSC in aligning with the SDGs, including issues of resource mobilization, capacity-building and policy coherence. At the same time, it highlights opportunities for innovation, knowledge-sharing and technology transfer that can enhance the effectiveness of South-South cooperation. By providing a critical analysis of these challenges and opportunities, the chapter offers insights into how SSC can contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Introduction

The first two chapters of this report provide an overview of the progressive evolution of the Global South as an active actor in the global order, representing the voice and agency of the newly independent countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America after the Second World War. These countries had joined their forces to position themselves collectively in a world dominated by global powers in an environment of the Cold War that remained for almost five decades. In such a context, the countries of the Global South strived to maintain a level of neutrality to shield their quest for economic development. The Cold-War environment affected their endeavour to close the widening gap in economic development that separates former colonies from industrialized countries. South-South cooperation emerged as an instrument to enhance development, affirm sovereignty, and expand opportunities for trade and technical cooperation among countries of the Global South. Chapter two also indicates that SSC had gained momentum in the 1990s, particularly with the development progress in East Asia ushering in the emergence of a new pole of economic power beyond the traditional actors.

The focus of this chapter is to shed light on how SSC can contribute to enhancing the progress of countries in the Global South towards sustainable development as formulated in the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It seeks to increase the understanding of the new context of South-South and triangular cooperation and reflects on avenues for fulfilling the potential of these modalities for cooperation to achieve sustainable development, factoring in the emergence of new actors, new threats and technological progress powered by digital transformation and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI).

The chapter addresses the following: SSC in the 2030 Agenda; the 2030 Agenda as a paradigm shift redefining development; the context of the Global South in the current global landscape, focusing on factors influencing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda post-COVID-19; and identifying priorities for South-South and triangular cooperation with a view to framing the future.

The objective of examining these aspects is to contribute to the ongoing debate on framing the future of South-South and triangular cooperation within the context of sustainable development.

3.1 South-South Cooperation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with other pivotal global frameworks such as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, has significantly elevated the role of South-South and triangular cooperation in the international development landscape. These frameworks have provided renewed momentum and recognition of SSC as a vital complement to traditional official development assistance (ODA). Today, it is widely acknowledged as an essential component of international development cooperation and a key modality for advancing the implementation of the SDGs.

South-South cooperation has been explicitly integrated into the 2030 Agenda under SDG 17 (see table 3.1), which aims to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”. Under this goal, SSC is highlighted as a critical mechanism for achieving specific targets, including financial resource mobilization (target 17.3), technology transfer (target 17.6), and capacity-building for development (target 17.9). These targets underscore the importance of leveraging the unique strengths, resources and expertise of countries of the Global South to address shared development challenges. For instance, target 17.3 emphasizes the mobilization of financial resources from diverse sources, including South-South flows, to support sustainable development initiatives. This reflects the growing role of emerging economies in providing development finance and fostering economic partnerships that are tailored to the specific needs of developing countries.

Similarly, target 17.6 highlights the importance of technology transfer and innovation-sharing among Southern countries, recognizing that homegrown technologies and solutions are often more adaptable and cost-effective for addressing local challenges. Furthermore, target 17.9 focuses on capacity-building, acknowledging that Southern-led initiatives can play a transformative role in enhancing institutional, technical and human capacities to achieve the SDGs. See the statistical annex, tables 1 and 3.

The recognition of SSC within the 2030 Agenda reflects a broader shift in the global development paradigm (table 3.1). It acknowledges that countries of the Global South possess valuable knowledge, expertise and resources that can be harnessed to drive sustainable development. This approach not only fosters mutual learning and solidarity but also promotes a more inclusive and equitable model of development cooperation. By prioritizing Southern-led solutions, SSC empowers countries to take ownership of their development trajectories and address challenges in ways that are context-specific and culturally relevant.

In addition to its integration into SDG 17, SSC has also gained traction as a means of addressing cross-cutting issues such as climate change, disaster risk reduction and public health. For example, the Paris Agreement emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts to combat climate change, with Southern countries sharing innovative approaches to renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and climate resilience. Similarly, the Sendai Framework highlights the role of SSC in building disaster-resilient communities through the exchange of best practices and technical expertise.

Table 3.1. South-South cooperation in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	
Goals and targets (from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)	**Indicators**
FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION	
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	▸ **17.3.1** Additional financial resources mobilized for developing countries from multiple sources ▸ **17.3.2** Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP
TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER	
17.6 Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge-sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism	▸ **17.6.1** Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed
CAPACITY-BUILDING	
17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation	▸ **17.9.1** Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries

Note: Country-level values for these indicators are presented in the statistical annex.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (AAAA) reaffirmed the enduring principles and unique characteristics of SSC, recognizing its vital role in advancing global development. Alongside the 2030 Agenda, the AAAA celebrated the growing contributions of SSC to poverty eradication and sustainable development. It highlighted the potential of SSC to enhance capacity-building, knowledge-sharing, resource mobilization and development effectiveness. Additionally, it emphasized its role in fostering international tax cooperation, promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns, and advancing science, research, technology and innovation. These elements underscore the transformative potential of SSC as a complementary approach to traditional North-South development assistance.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (UN General Assembly Resolution 69/283, Annex II) further reinforced the importance of SSC as a critical partnership modality. Member States called for its strengthening to support national capacities in disaster risk management and to improve the social,

health and economic well-being of individuals, communities and countries. This framework recognized that South-South partnerships are particularly valuable in addressing shared vulnerabilities and building resilience against disasters, which disproportionately affect developing countries.

In the post-COVID-19 era and amid the emergence of multiple violent conflicts worldwide and the most recent trade tensions, it has become evident that achieving the SDGs by 2030 will require robust and accelerated partnerships. The global economic recovery lost momentum in 2022 owing to a series of severe and interconnected shocks, including the lingering effects of the pandemic, geopolitical tensions, rising inflation and supply chain disruptions. These challenges have exacerbated existing inequalities and placed immense pressure on the Global South, where many Governments lack the resources and capacity to address the vast requirements of the SDGs independently.

The convergence of these crises has threatened to reverse progress on the SDGs, particularly in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. The LDCs and SIDS have been disproportionately affected, facing compounded risks from climate change, economic instability and unsustainable debt burdens. Many of these countries are also on the frontlines of climate-related disasters, experiencing increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events. Without urgent and coordinated action, there is a risk that these countries will fall into a vicious cycle of weak economic growth, austerity measures and deepening poverty.[88]

In this context, stronger international cooperation is essential to mitigate the long-term impacts of these crises and to promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery. South-South cooperation, in particular, must be strengthened to provide mutual support, share innovative solutions and foster solidarity among developing countries. By enabling the horizontal exchange of knowledge, technologies and resources, SSC can help countries to address shared challenges and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda, with its comprehensive goals, targets and indicators, provides an ideal framework to guide and shape these efforts in the coming years.

Encouragingly, there is growing momentum for expanding South-South and triangular cooperation within the context of the 2030 Agenda. In 2019, over two-thirds (69 per cent) of programme-country Governments reported providing development cooperation to other countries through SSC or peer-to-peer exchange platforms. Additionally, 63 per cent indicated that they exchange information and best practices with Southern partners on science, technology and innovation. These trends reflect a deepening commitment to mutual learning and collaboration among developing countries.

Moreover, nearly all countries of the Global South have prepared voluntary national reviews (VNRs) on their progress towards implementing the SDGs. Many countries have submitted multiple reports, creating a rich repository of knowledge, experiences and lessons learned. This wealth of information can be harnessed through SSC to facilitate the exchange of best practices, scale up successful initiatives and address common challenges. For instance, countries can learn from one another's experiences in areas such as poverty reduction, climate adaptation, digital transformation and social protection.

3.2 2030 Agenda: A paradigm shift redefining development

The dominant conceptual framework of development during the twentieth century was focused on the transformation of the economic capacity of low-income and mostly post-colonial States to ensure improvements in the living standards of their populations. This framework was reflected in the successive development agendas adopted by the United Nations General Assembly that started in the 1960s. With the adoption of the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in the year 2000, ending poverty became the main purpose of development. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 goals was a major shift from earlier development paradigms. The SDGs defined the end of development as sustainability of societies, incorporating protecting the environment, respecting planetary limits, ending poverty and achieving greater social equity. They provided a broad framework that included the poverty agenda of the MDGs but also reconceptualizes development to address the limitations of the narrow MDG framework in addressing the core challenges of the twenty-first century.[89]

[88] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2023: Financing Sustainable Transformations.*

[89] United Nations Economic and Social Council Committee for Development Policy, Policy Review no. 11.

The sustainable development framework defines development not as a series of linear economic and social changes but as a more complex, multidimensional process that integrates environmental, social and economic dimensions. A key feature of the 2030 Agenda is its adoption of an integrated framework that addresses both the trade-offs between economic and environmental objectives and their complementarities. Consequently, the 17 goals are considered as "interdependent and indivisible". This constitutes a major shift in development thinking since it breaks the silo between development and environment, viewing them as conceptual frameworks and policy agendas. Essential aspects of social sustainability are inclusion and equity as well as ending poverty. Hence the core commitment of the 2030 Agenda is to "leave no one behind". For example, addressing poverty requires both environmental and economic resources; sustainable development requires both environmentally sustainable and inclusive growth. The paradigm shift of the 2030 Agenda is embedded in the transformative vision of the SDGs, which requires abandoning sectoral and conventional policies (box 3.1).[90]

Box 3.1. Transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The concept of "sustainable development" requires a new strategy, considering that it is a transformational agenda that links the three aspects of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. The SDGs require an eco-social turn: policies to address structural causes of poverty, inequality and environmental destruction. Transformations can be most effectively achieved through building on synergies between different targets by adopting a strategy that would focus on addressing the "underlying systems", since focusing on individual Goals and targets would imperil progress across multiple elements of the 2030 Agenda.

Annual overview assessments of the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) by the United Nations Committee on Development Policy (CDP) have found a disconnect between the transformative vision of the SDGs and national implementation strategies. It concluded that interventions relying on conventional policies are generally short on reflecting on medium-to-long-term strategies to achieve structural changes. These assessments also find that most reports cherry pick themes, goals and targets to report on, consistently focusing on the MDG legacy poverty goals and underreporting on inequality, partnership, environmental and governance goals. These reports mostly lack substantive discussion of challenges and lessons learned and rarely discuss the need for policy change that requires difficult addressing political obstacles, such as environmental regulation and incentives to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, long-term strategies, and technologies for shifting production patterns or redistributive fiscal policies to reduce income inequalities.

Transformative change involves changes in all three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: economic, environmental and social. It requires changes in the economy to promote employment-intensive growth patterns that ensure macroeconomic stability and policy space. To make this economic change environmentally sustainable, profound changes are required in production and consumption patterns and energy use through legislation, regulation and public policies. But most importantly, it requires changes in social structures and relations, including addressing inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, religion or location that can lock people (including future generations) into disadvantage and constrain their choices.

Transformative change involves the following:

- Breaking the vicious circle that produces poverty, inequality and environmental destruction requires transformative change that directly attacks the root causes of these problems instead of the symptoms.
- Transformative change can be driven by innovative policies that overcome palliative and "silo" approaches and promote an "eco-social" turn in development thinking and practice.

Sources: United Nations, United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development, *Policy Innovations for Transformative Change: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Geneva: 2019; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future Is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development. New York: 2019. United Nations, Economic and Social Council, Committee for Development Policy, Policy Review no. 11.

[90] Ibid.

It is worth noting that adoption of sustainable development goals is the work of development thinkers and policymakers, many of whom are from the Global South. They contributed to reaching a global consensus on the radical action needed to save the future of humanity. It is a significant normative advance in global governance of development. Pathbreaking for its scope and ambition, it is the first development agenda that aims at sustainability and inclusion as key development objectives and is universal, recognizing that all countries, not just developing countries, face urgent challenges of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

SDGs are evolving in an increasingly complex global environment. Many countries are turning their attention to prioritization of the SDGs and adaptation of target values and indicators of national circumstances. This is a critical implementation stage, and there is a considerable risk that countries will adopt arbitrary or politically salient approaches to prioritization and/or pursue the same "siloed" approaches that have met with limited success in the past. This would undermine the transformative potential of the SDGs. A key challenge remains the comprehensiveness and complexity of the goals and targets. There is a need for effective approaches that assist countries in reducing complexity by refining and prioritizing a more manageable set of national targets. Without a coordinated approach, there is a risk that countries will also select those targets and values that are easy to achieve and fail to deliver on the full potential of the SDGs.

The prospects for advancing the 2030 Agenda are worrying. A multitude of crises caused setbacks. As we are beyond the midway point of the 2030 implementation timeline, the world faces a polycrisis, which refers to the simultaneous occurrence of multiple interconnected crises. It is marked by the convergence and interaction of combined events, such as geopolitical tensions, economic instability, environmental degradation, public health emergencies and social disturbance. Even prior to that, the progress towards achieving the SDGs was losing momentum. Hence in 2019, the United Nations Member States reached a consensus on the imperative of acceleration of achievement of the SDGs (box 3.2). The multiple crises intensified the call for acceleration. The *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition* considered that the current economic, social and environmental trajectory, on the global scale and within most regions of the world, follows an unsustainable development path. The report cautioned that failure to redouble global efforts to achieve the SDGs may fuel greater political instability, upend economies and lead to irreversible damage to the natural environment.

Box 3.2. Definition of acceleration actions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

"Acceleration" refers to targeting national resources at priority areas identified by national stakeholders, paying special attention to synergies and trade-offs across sectors (reflecting the integrated nature of the Agenda), bottlenecks, financing and partnerships, and measurement.

The SDG Acceleration Actions "should meet the below criteria at a minimum:

- "Facilitate and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, reflect interlinkages among goals and contribute to policy coherence;
- Respect principles of the UN Charter and the 2030 Agenda;
- Build on existing successful efforts/initiatives (scaling up, new phase, etc.) or introduce new ones;
- Include reasonable means of implementation such as finance, technology or capacity-building as an element to help ensure longevity and sustainability of the initiative; and
- Commitment or initiative defined is "evaluable", based on an adequate SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based and time-based) set of objectives with specified performance indicators, baselines, targets and data sources as needed".

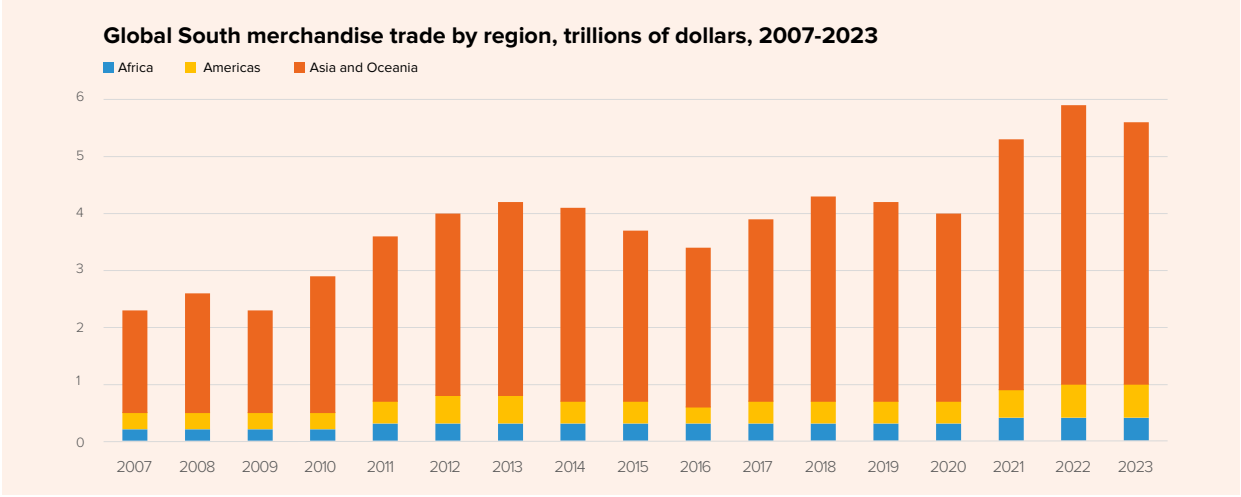
Sources: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, «SDG Accelerations». Available at https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/action-networks/acceleration-actions.

3.3. The Global South in the current global landscape – Factors influencing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda post COVID-19

Today, countries of the Global South make up roughly 40 per cent of gross world product and have around 85 per cent of the world's population. The largest bilateral trade corridor today runs between China and the United States. UNCTAD data show that South-South merchandise trade (figure 3.1) accounts for around 23 per cent of global trade; the North-North share is 39 per cent. The Global South now hosts more than 65 per cent of total inward FDI, up from 16 per cent in 1990. In terms of outward FDI, it accounts for 32 per cent of the total, rising from just 5 per cent in 1990. Between 2007 and 2023, South-South trade more than doubled from $2.3 trillion to $5.6 trillion, signaling new opportunities for developing economies. This can mean lowering dependence on their traditional trade partners, fostering regional economic integration, and negotiating favourable trade and financing agreements.[91]

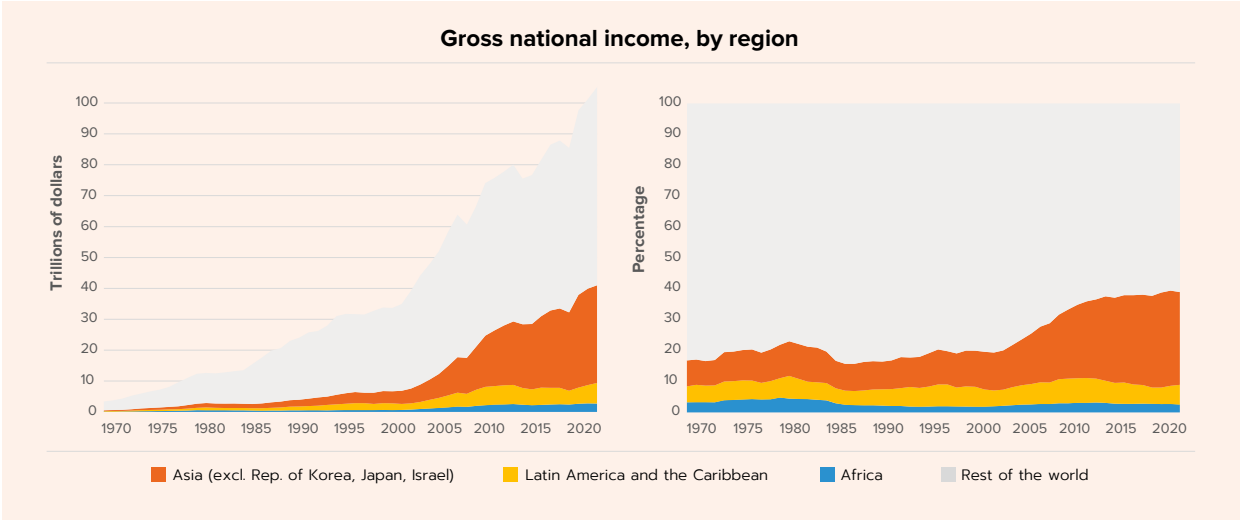
However, escalating trade tensions, especially between major economies, can disrupt global supply chains, increase uncertainty and lead to protectionist measures that disproportionately affect exporters in the Global South. These countries often rely on access to larger markets and integrated production networks; thus, shifts in tariffs, sanctions or regulatory barriers can erode their competitiveness, reduce export volumes and stall economic diversification efforts.[92]

Figure 3.1. South-South trade, 2007–2023



Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNCTADstat database.
Note: Merchandise trade is presented as the average of export and import for the region.

Figure 3.2. Rise of the Global South



Source: UNCTAD based on National Accounts Main Aggregates database, United Nations Statistics Division.

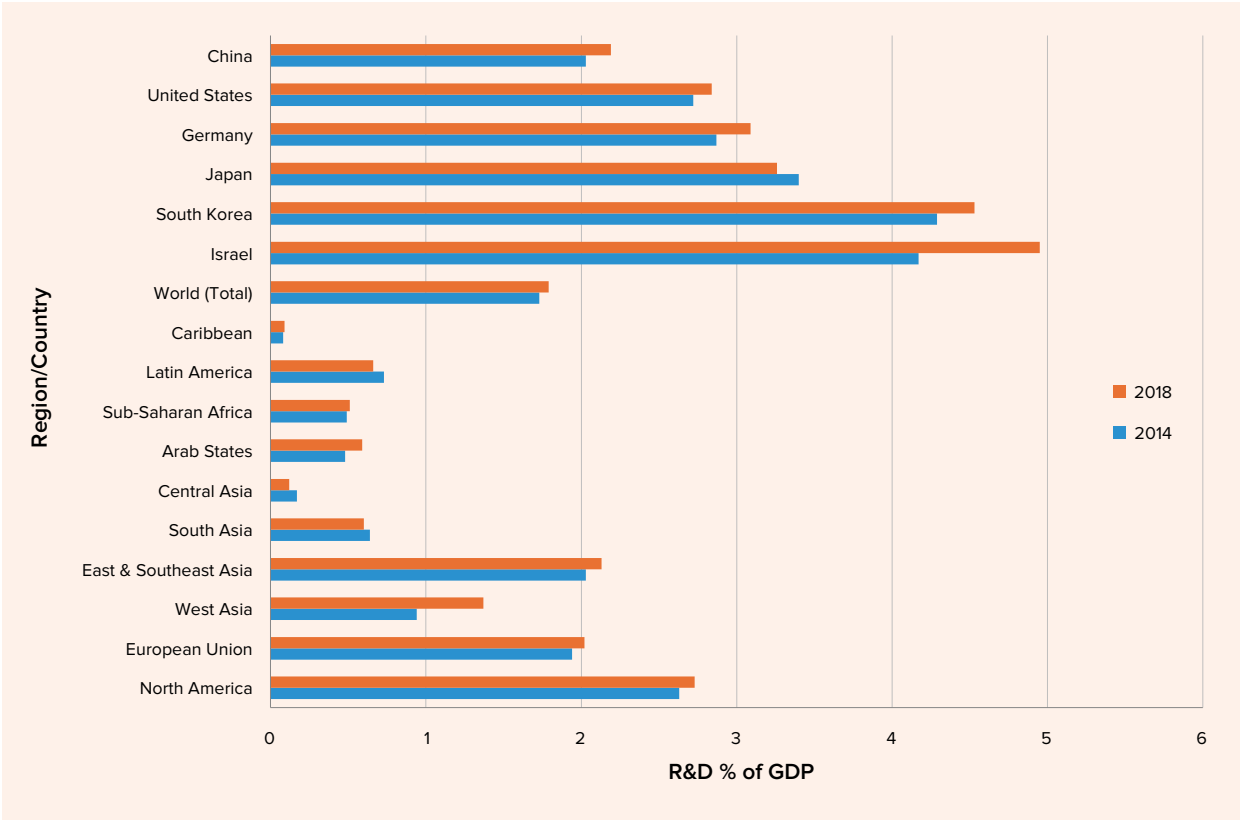
[91] https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/datviewer/US.IntraTrade.

[92] United Nations, World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2025 | DESA Publications.

While all developing regions enjoyed relative robust growth in the 1970s, the experience of the 1980s was marked by dramatic economic divergence as various developing regions adopted different development strategies and policies (figure 3.2). On the one hand, the deteriorating global economic situations adversely impacted countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia, which in the 1980s experienced a lost decade of development. On the other hand, most countries in South and East Asia were more resilient and were able to maintain economic dynamism. This contributed to a great divergence of economic performance among countries of the Global South.

Most of the economies of the Global South operate at a considerable distance from the global technology frontier and thus face a particular challenge of incorporating foreign knowledge and technologies to realize catch-up growth (box 3.3). Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have the lowest levels of research and development (R&D) investment as share of GDP, which affects the overall capability to generate knowledge and local technologies (figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. Investment in research and development as a share of GDP, by region and selected country, 2014 and 2018 (%)



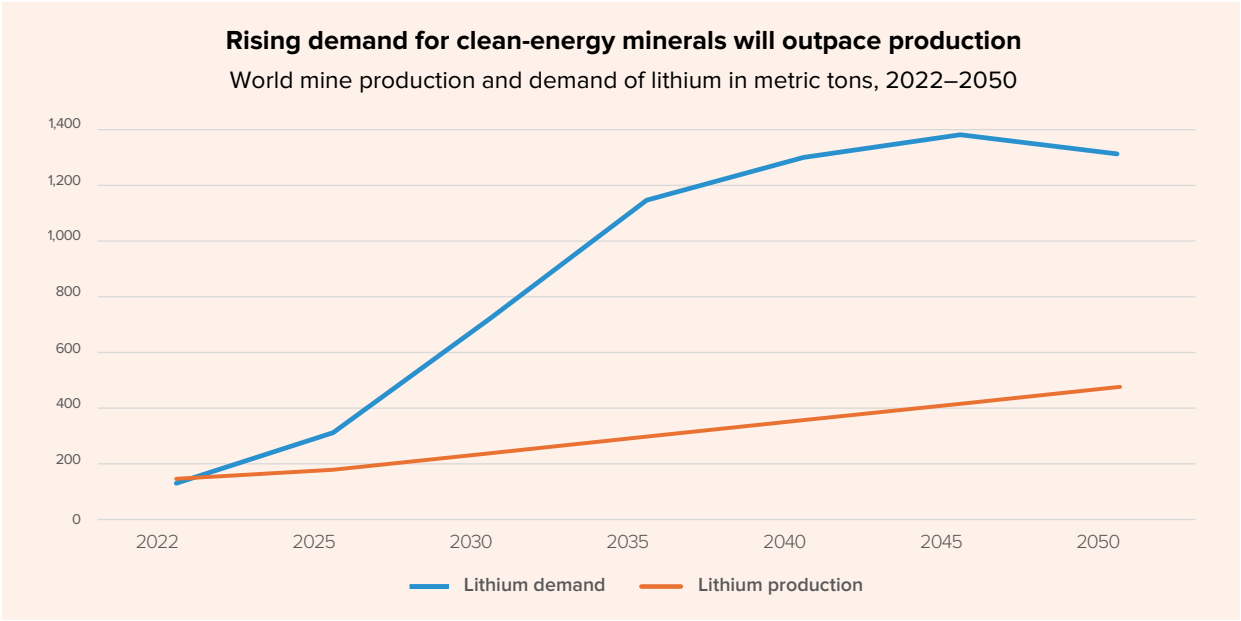
Source: Global and regional estimates based on country-level data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, August 2020, without extrapolation.

The intertwined objectives of economic prosperity and political autonomy, as for instance articulated by the Non-Aligned Movement during the Bandung Conference in 1955, are to be realized in a globalizing world order in which domestic markets and producers are not shielded from foreign competition. There are also strong indications that resource depletion (e.g., soil erosion), natural hazards (e.g., climate shocks) and ecological degradation (e.g., biodiversity loss, deforestation) hit the Global South harder than the Global North but the extent to which the global distribution of long-run growth-impeding effects of climate change, biodiversity loss and other forms of environmental degradation compound the South-South divergence remains an open question.

Many developing economies have historically relied on a few commodities, such as oil, copper, cacao and wheat, hindering their growth. A country is classified as “dependent” when commodities make up more than 60 per cent of its total merchandise export. From 1998 to 2021, the number of commodity-dependent countries increased from 92 to 101. In 2021, about 85 per cent of the world’s LDCs were commodity-dependent, compared to only 12 per cent of advanced economies. Overreliance on commodities makes countries vulnerable to price volatility and global shocks, such as drops in oil prices or climate-change impacts. The boom in critical energy transition minerals carries opportunities and risks for many developing countries.

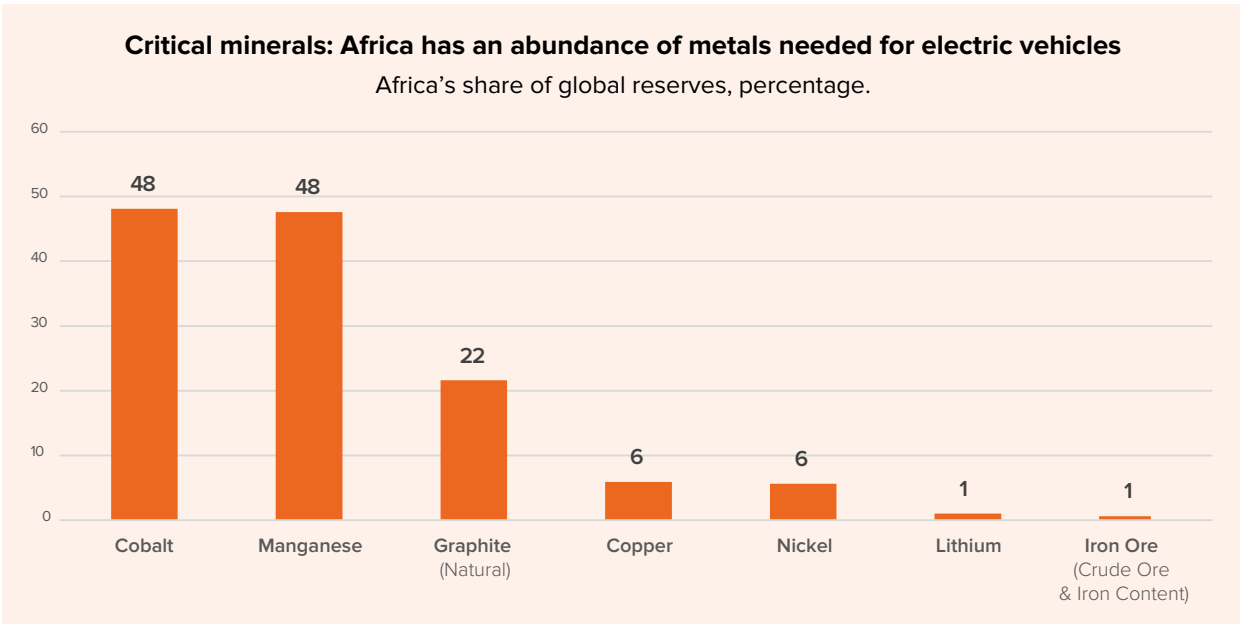
The climate emergency has led to a surge in demand for minerals critical to renewable energy technologies (figure 3.4). UNCTAD projections based on data from the International Energy Agency indicate that by 2050, demand for lithium could rise by over 1,500 per cent. Significant increases are also expected for nickel, cobalt and copper.[93] This demand presents opportunities for developing countries rich in these minerals, particularly in Africa, which holds large reserves (figure 3.5). However, to benefit fully and avoid deepening commodity dependence, these countries must move up the value chain rather than merely supplying raw minerals.

Figure 3.4. Projection of rising demand for clean-energy minerals, 2025–2050



Note: Iron ore includes crude ore and iron content.
Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) calculations.

Figure 3.5. Critical minerals in Africa

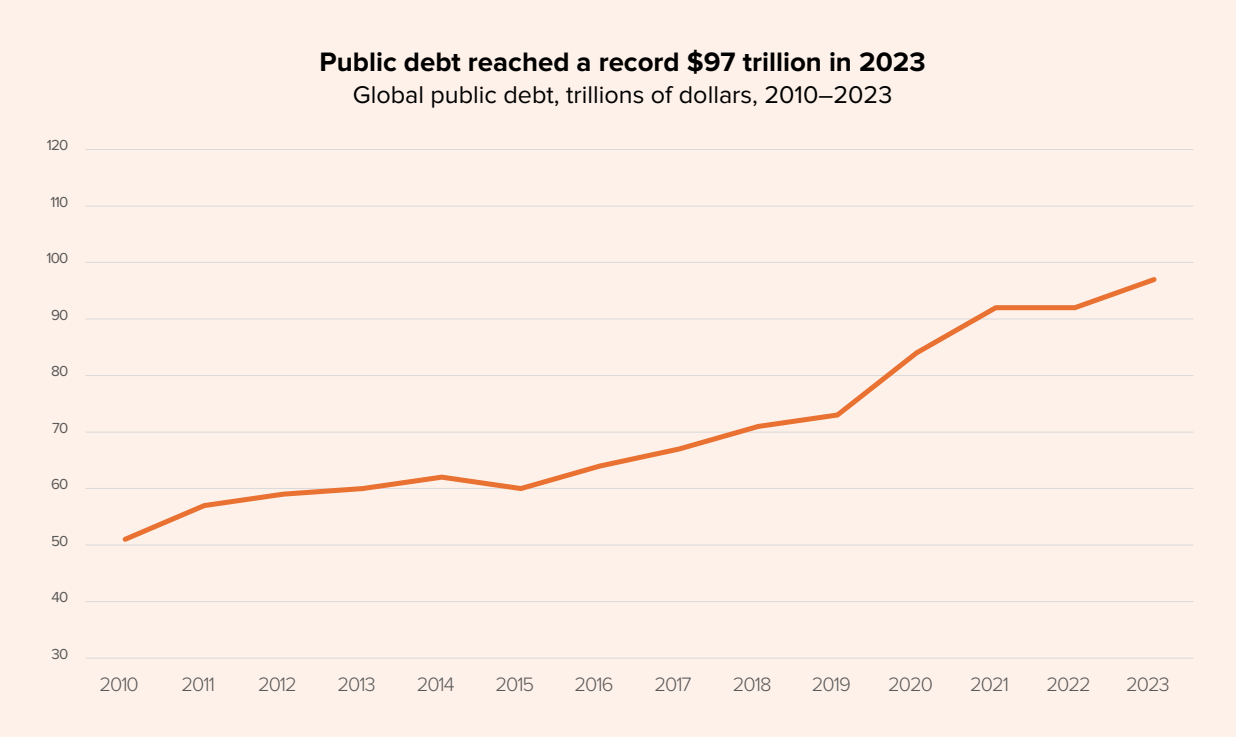


Source: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development calculations, based on data from the Knoema database, 2023.

Global public debt surged to a historic peak of $97 trillion in 2023 (figure 3.6), growing by 90 per cent since 2010. Currently, about 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt interest payments than on education or health. This growth is marked by regional disparities, with public debt in developing countries rising twice as fast as in developed countries (figure 3.7). In 2023, public debt of developing countries reached $29 trillion. Their share of the global total climbed from 16 per cent in 2010 to 30 per cent in 2023, highlighting the need for urgent action.

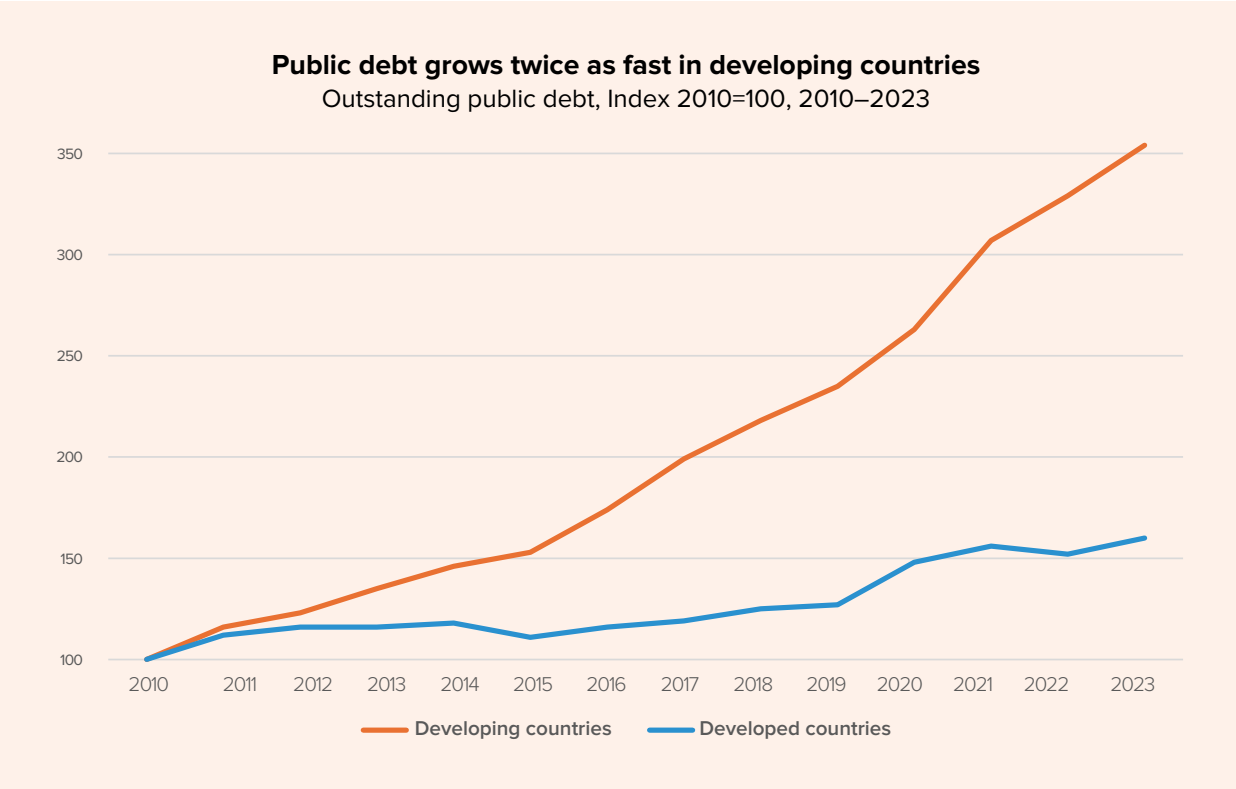
[93] https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/US.IntraTrade.

Figure 3.6. Global public debt, 2023



Note: Figures represent nominal values in current United States dollars. Public debt refers to general government domestic and external debt throughout the document. General government consists of central, state and local governments and the social security funds controlled by these units.
Source: UN Global Crisis Response Group - technical team calculations based on International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook (April 2024).

Figure 3.7. Growth of public debt in developing countries



Source: UN Global Crisis Response Group - technical team calculations based on International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook (April 2024).

Box 3.3. State of science, technology and innovation in the Global South

Science, technology and innovation (STI) are essential for countries of the Global South to overcome systemic challenges, including acute climate impacts, persistent poverty and resource scarcity. With some of the fastest-growing populations, Global South countries require innovative solutions such as renewable energy for climate resilience, digital platforms to improve education and biotechnology for healthcare advancement.

The **key insight** from the analysis of the trends for the last five to 10 years is that, while innovation capabilities in the Global South are improving, challenges such as uneven progress, limited patent activity and gaps in commercialization of research remain significant. Countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan have consistently outperformed relative to their economic development, demonstrating strategic prioritization of innovation. India leads the lower-middle-income group, showcasing its robust innovation ecosystem, followed by Viet Nam and the Philippines. Countries such as Madagascar, Rwanda and Togo have shown consistent improvement in the Global Innovation Index (GII) rankings. Rwanda, in particular, has been an innovation overperformer for 12 consecutive years. Collaborative efforts, more coherent and potentially convergent policy frameworks, and enhanced funding for R&D are essential to bridging these gaps.

The following are key **insights** on STI in the Global South:

(a) The Global South is struggling with persistent infrastructure, investment and skills gaps. According to OECD, only 1 in 5 developing countries invests more than 1 per cent of GDP in research and development, creating systemic barriers to innovation. According to a UNESCO Science Report, Internet penetration rates in some regions remain below 40 per cent, limiting digital access and hindering participation in the global economy.

(b) Multiple recent South-South cooperation initiatives proved key to the development and deployment of scalable solutions, particularly as it regards renewable energy and public health. Countries such as Brazil and India have emerged as innovation leaders in the Global South, demonstrating the potential of targeted STI policies. Such countries are also actively sharing knowledge in the respective area of strength with other countries in the Global South. Renewable energy consumption values are presented in the statistical annex, table 3.

(c) Emerging technologies and inclusion are being more widely adopted in the Global South. Technologies such as AI and biotechnology are being adopted to address localized challenges, such as improving agricultural resilience and access to healthcare. However, only 30 per cent of women in these regions engage in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields, highlighting a need for greater gender inclusion. AI is projected to contribute up to $15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030, with emerging markets in the Global South playing a crucial role in this growth. McKinsey research estimates that AI applications can potentially unlock an economic value of $11 trillion to $18 trillion annually. Countries such as India are emerging as key players in the AI landscape, with tech giants such as Microsoft and Amazon investing billions in computing infrastructure to support AI development.

Sources: UNOSSC background paper.

As the world, for the first time, was reaching a consensus that defines the core of development progress and how to achieve it, a confluence of emerging crises dominated the scene, stalling progress and diverting attention from global solidarity to narrow national agendas. The field of cooperation started to shrink and be captured by military and security paradigms. A major concern in most of the countries of the Global South is the sustained, wide developmental gap when compared with the industrialized countries. These countries struggle with ongoing socioeconomic issues that impede their development and keep them from realizing their full potential despite having abundant natural resources and substantial human capital.

The global scenario has changed dramatically since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The overall progress in the achievement of SDGs has fallen short of expectations. Progress at the halfway point of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is slow or fragile. Obstacles to progress include limited support to developing countries, especially regarding financing for development, transfer of technology and capacity-building.[94]

These trends indicate the need for joint and coordinated action-oriented efforts to better harness and utilize the growing potential of SSC, pursuing sustainable development in its three dimensions in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and for placing the Global South on a more influential and equal footing in the international arena and in mutually beneficial cooperation with all partners.[95] It is imperative to recognize the complexity of national conditions of Global South countries. Their development must consider geopolitical changes and various other factors.

To accelerate progress, the Global South must overcome three challenges:

a. The growth prospects of the countries of the Global South are becoming more problematic because of an increasingly fragmented global economy, rapidly changing demographic trends, multiple crises, populist pressures, rising government debt and climate-change pressures;

b. Many countries of the Global South are severely indebted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and monetary tightening in high-income countries risks compounding the burden of high debt; and

c. Countries of the Global South will need significant resources to scale up reliable low-carbon energy but many face the rising cost of borrowing, high up-front infrastructure requirements and high capital costs, all of which could increase the cost of low-carbon technologies and delay the diffusion of low-carbon energy.

3.4 Identifying priorities for South-South and triangular cooperation: Framing the future

Six decades have passed since the establishment of the G-77 (1964) and more than four decades since the adoption of the first document on SSC (BAPA) in 1978. The accumulation of decades of experience provides several insights into the strengths and weaknesses of SSC as it has evolved since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in I978. In recognition of their primary responsibility for promoting SSC, the developing countries have engaged in a wide range of exchanges among themselves at the regional and interregional levels. SSC began more than 40 years ago with the belief that the global order required changing. Currently, we witness that significant progress has been made and SSC plays an important role in the global cooperation architecture for sustainable development. Despite this crucial progress, SSC still has not fulfilled its development potential.

Exploring avenues for strengthening SSC necessitates understanding the current context of the multiple crises that the world is facing and the status of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda since a large number of countries of the Global South face enormous challenges in achieving the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda.

[94] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition (New York, 2023).

[95] Third South Summit of the G-77 and China, 2024.

In the last few years, particularly since 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has entered a period of successive crises that affected all the countries, though with different levels of intensity. The new dominant feature of this era is what has been termed a "polycrisis". Where progress has been halted or slowed down, it is partly a consequence of a confluence of crises: the ongoing pandemic, rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, and planetary environmental and economic distress, along with conflicts and natural disasters. These overlapping crises are not independent events; they are entwined through various physical, economic and social strands, each fueling intensities of the other.[96] This situation implies complexity and intensity, a matter that deeply affects the most vulnerable and fragile countries, countries that constitute a major number of countries of the Global South. Three decades of steady progress in poverty reduction was reversed for the first time and hunger is increasing. For the first time on record, the global Human Development Index (HDI) declined in 2020 and 2021, and the recovery is projected to be highly unequal.[97] HDI values at the country level are presented in the statistical annex, table 2.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains the guiding framework to overcome the crises, address the lingering impacts of the pandemic, and achieve the transformations needed to realize an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.[98] Today, halfway to 2030, collective action towards sustainable development becomes one of the most important levers, if not the most important, to actively embrace and meaningfully engage with transformations.[99] Many of the solutions to the current challenges exist within the Global South – solutions that are home grown, sustainable, replicable and scalable. Developing countries have much to learn from exchanging their experiences and development solutions. Progress requires considerable efforts and innovative strategies to move SSC forward to fulfil its development potential.

In this context, the main issue is to examine the avenues to enhancing SSC so as to address the multiple challenges facing the Global South within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. How can SSC offer opportunities to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs through promoting and facilitating knowledge sharing, development aid and assistance, technical cooperation, technology transfer and investment?

The present report is adopting the approach of enhancing SSC through contextualizing its role within the 2030 Agenda to demonstrate its current and potential contribution to implementing the SDGs. It proposes actions to maximize the impact of SSC in the next few years up to 2030. Delivering on the 2030 Agenda amid tremendous distress and uncertainty will require countries of the Global South to engage in deeper and more meaningful collaboration. It is worth noting that the fundamental element that drives cooperation among countries of the Global South is the proximity of experience.

The 17 SDGs with their targets constitute a comprehensive Global Agenda that provided a solid framework for South-South and triangular cooperation. However, since its launch in 2015, several events, threats and challenges have emerged that have contributed to further slowing down the implementation of the SDGs.

3.4.1 Towards building a new SSC agenda based on sustainable development

In the last few years, several global meetings have contributed to narrowing the focus on priorities as imperatives to accelerate progress in implementing the SDGs and hence identifying key priority areas for South-South and triangular cooperation to build a coherent agenda anchored in sustainable development. Cooperation should contribute to the transformative change embedded in the 2030 Agenda. This approach can contribute to guiding and focusing on the flow of international development cooperation.

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[96] United Nations, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023: Times of Crisis, Times of Change – Science for Accelerating Transformations to Sustainable Development* (New York: United Nations, 2023). Available at Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

[97] UNDP, 2024. *Human Development Report 2023/2024: Breaking the Gridlock – Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World.* New York.

[98] High-level Political Forum, "Overcoming the crises, driving transformation for the SDGs, and leaving no one behind" (Townhall meeting, 10–19 July 2023, New York. Available at High-Level Political Forum 2023 (un.org).

[99] *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023*. Available at Department of Economic and Social Affairs (un.org).

The key element that drives cooperation among countries of the Global South is the proximity of experience. It is a key catalyst for promoting SSC. Countries of the Global South tend to share common views on national development strategies and priorities when faced with similar development challenges. Owing to comparable levels of development and the specific country situations of developing countries, SSC has a comparative advantage over North-South cooperation. Hence, experience-sharing among Southern countries is practical, and their outcomes very often are more easily applicable than those from industrialized countries.

South-South cooperation favours ownership by Southern countries since contexts and social difficulties and challenges are, in most cases, similar and shared among South-South partners. Connected by similar settings and challenges, the countries of the Global South are open to cooperating with one another on knowledge-sharing and technology-exchange activities, on common technical training programmes and in taking collective action. Consequently, SSC aims to promote national and collective self-reliance and independence and to reinforce political and cooperative relationships.

In the last few years, the scale, scope, volume and number of stakeholders of South-South and triangular cooperation continue to witness exponential growth at all levels, although, from a structural standpoint, SSC remains relatively ad hoc.

In the past few decades, developing countries have transformed their economies, increased trade and investment, and played a new role in the global arena. Most importantly, they have turned to more renewable and climate-resilient solutions to fuel their development, and to SSC as a mechanism for sharing their new knowledge and technology in sustainable development. Going forward, countries continue to increase this momentum towards sustainable-development solutions.

Developing countries have a wealth of experience with a range of effective policies to address poverty and sustainable development issues that could be extremely valuable to LDCs. The sharing of experiences, best practices and success stories could contribute to alleviating economic constraints in LDCs and in capacity-building.

South-South and triangular cooperation contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the overarching goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as they embody the comprehensive vision of development outlined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The focus of this section is to propose building an agenda for SSC based on the vision of the Global South for international development. Four major conferences have recently contributed to identifying thematic areas that could be considered as priorities for South-South and triangular cooperation, namely: (a) the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40), held in Buenos Aires in March 2019; (b) the Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Group of 77 and China on “Current development challenges: The role of science and technology”, held in Havana in September 2023; (c) the Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, held in Kampala in January 2024; and (d) the Summit of the Future, held in New York in September 2024 (tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3.2. Priority thematic areas

Third South Summit of the G-77 and China	Summit of the Future 2024: Commitment by Heads of State and Government to Actions in Key Areas
▸ "Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development." ▸ "Science, technology and innovation" are key "catalysts" and "enablers" for sustainable development. ▸ "Achieving the SDGs requires new, additional, quality, adequate, sustainable and predictable financing as well as a bold approach to development finance." It is important that developed countries provide "resources that are distinct from ODA in order to address the special needs of developing countries in the context of addressing the adverse impacts of climate change." ▸ "The importance of facilitating the accession of developing countries to the World Trade Organization (WTO), promotion of preferential trade access for developing countries, and strengthening and operationalizing the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries." ▸ "Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time and its widespread, unprecedented impacts disproportionately burden all developing countries and in particular the poorest and most vulnerable among them. Extreme weather events and slow onset events have affected the environment, the economy and society and reversed hard-earned developmental gains, increasing the adverse impact on people and local communities." ▸ "The need for a broader, systemic and more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk. Disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multi-sectoral, inclusive and accessible to be efficient and effective." ▸ "The critical importance of industrialization for developing countries as a critical source of economic growth, economic diversification and value addition." ▸ "Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women's full and equal participation and leadership in the economy and as partners for development are vital for achieving sustainable development." *Source*: Third South Summit, outcome document. Available at https://www.g77.org/doc/3southsummit_outcome.htm.	**Pact for the Future** Sustainable development and financing for development: ▸ Eradication of poverty is at the centre of our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. ▸ End hunger and eliminate food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. ▸ Close the Sustainable Development Goal financing gap in developing countries. ▸ Ensure that the multilateral trading system continues to be an engine for sustainable development. ▸ Achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets. ▸ Strengthen actions to address climate change. ▸ Accelerate efforts to restore, protect, conserve and sustainably use the environment. ▸ Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation ▸ Youth and future generations ▸ Transforming global governance **Global Digital Compact** ▸ "Close all digital divides and accelerate progress across the Sustainable Development Goals; ▸ Expand inclusion in and benefits from the digital economy for all; ▸ Foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space that respects, protects and promotes human rights; ▸ Advance responsible, equitable and interoperable data governance approaches; ▸ Enhance international governance of artificial intelligence for the benefit of humanity." *Source*: United Nations, Summit of the Future Outcome Documents, September 2024. Available at https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-pact_for_the_future_adopted.pdf.

Table 3.3. Special needs identified in the outcome document of the Third South Summit of the G-77 and China

Africa	"...the special needs of Africa and recognize that, while economic growth has improved, there is a need to sustain the recovery, which is fragile and uneven, to face the ongoing adverse impacts of multiple crises on development and the serious challenges that these impacts pose to the eradication of poverty and achievement of zero hunger, which further undermine the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals in Africa, including Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030" (para. 113). The special needs of Africa are recognized, noting that while economic growth has improved, sustaining this recovery remains a challenge due to its fragile and uneven nature. The continent continues to face the adverse impacts of multiple, overlapping crises that threaten development progress and pose serious challenges to the eradication of poverty and the achievement of zero hunger. These compounded impacts undermine efforts to meet internationally agreed development goals, including Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. In this context, there is a pressing need for stronger international support to reinforce Africa's development efforts, particularly in addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting durable peace, which are essential foundations for sustainable development across the continent.
Least developed countries (LDCs)	"...the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action for the decade 2022-2031 (DPoA), constitutes an opportunity to place the LDCs at the centre of international cooperation and foster the prosperity and wellbeing of their population...[A]s it coincides with the remaining years of action to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, its implementation will require a robust international cooperation and partnership on the basis of mutual trust and benefit, focusing on the needs of least developed countries" (para. 119). "The Doha Programme of Action will have six key focus areas for action, as follows: a. Investing in people in least developed countries: eradicating poverty and building capacity to leave no one behind; b. Leveraging the power of science, technology, and innovation to fight against multidimensional vulnerabilities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; c. Supporting structural transformation as a driver of prosperity; d. Enhancing international trade of least developed countries and regional integration; e. Addressing climate change, environmental degradation, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and building resilience against future shocks for risk-informed sustainable development; f. Mobilizing international solidarity, reinvigorated global partnerships and innovative tools and instruments: a march towards sustainable graduation." (DPoA, para. 31).

Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs)	"...the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) arising from their landlockedness, remoteness from world markets and geographical constraints that impose serious impediments for export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization, adversely affecting their overall sustainable development. We express our concern on how these countries' efforts towards the achievement of sustainable development are affected by the frequent falling of commodity prices and their high exposure to climate change, which produces disproportionately adverse effects in those countries" (para. 120).
Small island developing States (SIDS)	"...small island developing states (SIDS) remain a 'special case' for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, including their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, external economic shocks, and exposure to global environmental challenges, including to a large range of impacts from climate change and more frequent and intense natural disasters. Climate change and its adverse impacts continue to pose a significant risk to SIDS and their efforts to achieve sustainable development and, represent the gravest threat to their survival and viability, including through the loss of territory" (para. 122).
Middle-income countries (MICs)	"...the importance of addressing the specific challenges facing middle-income countries (MICs)...efforts to address ongoing challenges should be strengthened through the exchange of experiences, improved coordination and better and focused support, aligned with MICs' specific needs and priorities, from the UNDS, the international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders. We also acknowledge that ODA and other concessional finance are still important for a number of these countries and have a role to play for targeted results, taking into account the specific needs of these countries" (para. 124). Several priorities are pertinent for MICs within the broader context of developing countries. These priorities include: ▸ inclusive and effective international tax cooperation, in the context of mobilization of domestic resources; ▸ advocating for a fair and equitable global trade system that fosters development, facilitates MICs integration into the WTO, and upholds special and differential treatment principles; ▸ opposition to unilateral and protectionist measures – and the related concerns over the rise of protectionism, which in principle undermines the multilateral trading system and affects the access of MICs to global and regional markets; ▸ enhanced support from the UNDS – the need to continue developing support that addresses the diverse requirements of MICs, focusing on policy advice, further institutional strengthening, and capacity development; and ▸ addressing existing and growing digital divides: acknowledge and address the substantial digital divides and data inequalities, as well as soliciting accelerated efforts to leverage existing and emerging digital technologies, specifically for education, health, and business continuity in MICs.

3.5 The Imperative for new modalities in South-South cooperation

The emphasis on SSC among developing countries, which emerged during the 1970s, was based on a recognition of the need to increase horizontal exchanges among the developing countries to complement the predominantly vertical North-South exchanges that had historically characterized international relations.

The gap between developed and developing countries has continued to widen, and the major challenges generated by the current international economic order for developing countries have reached their most acute expression in current times. In view of the lack of a roadmap to address global problems, joint and coordinated action-oriented efforts to strengthen multilateralism better harness and use the growing potential of South-South cooperation, putting development front and centre of countries of the Global South, pursuing sustainable development in its three dimensions in accordance with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs and to place the Global South on a more influential and equal footing in the international arena and in mutually beneficial cooperation with all partners.

Several critical preconditions must also exist if SSC is to be optimally implemented. First, it is important for beneficiary countries to articulate a clear national policy on SSC. In addition, it is crucial for the countries to be cognizant of their capacities and needs and put in place suitable mechanisms to manage the transfer and/or absorption of skills from other countries. For SSC to be utilized as a major instrument of development in any country, it is essential to have a well-established and clearly mandated entity, properly located within the structure of Government, with responsibility for managing the SSC process, including monitoring the implementation of agreements concluded with other countries.

Based on the fundamental and inexorable shifts that have occurred in the dynamics of global development cooperation, it is important to reorient SSC in terms of its substantive policy and operational thrust to ensure that it continues to serve as a dynamic instrument of technical and economic cooperation at the disposal of the countries of the Global South and the international community. Given the changed realities and current challenges, SSC will need to focus increasingly on strategic initiatives that are likely to have a major and measurable development impact on developing countries or that are likely to enable them to address important problems of common interest. This does not mean that specific interventions aimed, for example, at replicating proven and effective technologies, the functioning of effective networks or the matching of clearly identified capacities and needs would be excluded, since it is important for SSC to maintain its flexibility to respond creatively to specific needs. The new focus suggests, however, that in terms of its primary programme orientation, greater emphasis will be placed in the future on core sustainable development issues of special interest to many countries of the Global South.

The proposed shift to strategic interventions focusing on critical sustainable development issues will demand longer-term involvement. This may require a change in the present practice of supporting one-time catalytic interventions and, instead, involve the provision of inputs on a longer-term basis, albeit in a selective manner. The effectiveness of the impact of SSC interventions should also be closely monitored, evaluated and supported. This, in turn, will require suitable follow-up operational activities. What is required is a new approach to SSC that is explicitly anchored in the longer-term objectives of sustainable development. Thus, the new directions for SSC require changes in current procedures and practices in interventions of a sustained nature. It will therefore be necessary to encompass within this framework both bilateral and regional or group-specific programmes of cooperation.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its goals required a measurable framework to monitor progress towards SDGs, including development support. In this sense, data serve as an indispensable instrument for making SSC flows visible. They empower stakeholders to gauge the attainment of envisaged objectives and ascertain whether those initiatives have contributed to enduring development outcomes. To date, policymakers in developing economies have not been able to implement evidence-based policies on SSC owing to a lack of data at the global level.

However, many economic studies argue that SSC is more conducive to inclusive and sustainable economic growth than private-capital flows. It is increasingly important to support the efforts of the countries participating in SSC to quantify the value of their mutual solidarity for development. One of the measurement challenges arises from the diversity of actors involved in SSC, where national public entities, territorial entities, private-sector organizations, academic institutions and social actors, among others, participate in SSC within their sectors and mandates. This great diversity calls for tracking different actors who participate in SSC and

standardizing the information to be collected from them. The complexity is exacerbated by the lack of mandatory legal frameworks to report SSC data in most economies of the Global South, not to mention that without a shared understanding of what qualifies as SSC, it becomes difficult to develop uniform indicators or metrics for measurement. Finally, one of the biggest challenges in the context of SSC practices is the development of monitoring and evaluation systems, making it difficult to assess the progress of projects over time or even to have an overview of all SSC projects carried out.

Effective measurement of SSC requires the establishment of a robust institutional ecosystem able to ensure precision in data collection, meticulous analysis and reliable reporting. The composition of national ecosystems for SSC will vary according to the institutional set-up of the Governments of developing countries. Agencies in charge of international development cooperation in developing countries are in a good position to lead the institutional ecosystem of agencies with mandates and data relevant to SSC. National statistical offices can play a central role with their strong mandate for data collection and coordination of agencies' work in the collection, systematization and reporting of data on SSC flows.

The BAPA+40 outcome document highlights the need for Member States to strengthen national capacities through mechanisms, legislative arrangements and institutions, fostering a comprehensive SSC ecosystem (box 3.4). This involves leveraging existing systems to foster an environment conducive to effective national SSC initiatives.

Box 3.4. BAPA+40: Modalities for South-South and triangular cooperation

- "Building human and institutional capacity needed to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes for South-South and triangular cooperation" (para. 27 (c)).
- Strengthening national policies to advance South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation and to enhance the capacity of national and subnational coordination mechanisms (para. 24 (g)).
- Promoting capacity-building, regional integration, interregional linkages, infrastructure interconnectivity and the development of national productive capacities" (para. 27 (e)).
- Regional mechanisms to share and strengthen successful science, technology and innovation policies and strategies, to explore new opportunities and to promote cross-border and interregional coordination and collaboration between various science, technology and innovation initiatives as well as research in scientific areas (para. 30 (c)).
- Building multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-border collaborative frameworks and programmes to scale up best practices with the potential to benefit many developing countries (para. 24 (i)).
- Contribution of think tanks, communities of practice, networks and expert groups to the improvement of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation practices (para. 24 (j)).
- Enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation through peer-learning, sharing knowledge and experiences as well as best practices on a voluntary basis" (para. 24 (l)).

Sources: A/RES/73/291.

3.6 Conclusions

South-South cooperation has entered a new era of strategic relevance as the world confronts overlapping crises and transitions into an increasingly complex development landscape. This chapter underscores that SSC is no longer a peripheral component of global cooperation; rather, it is a vital modality that aligns with the transformative vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Rooted in shared experiences, mutual respect and solidarity, SSC offers an avenue for developing countries to co-develop solutions tailored to their contexts, enhancing agency, sustainability and resilience.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda signaled a fundamental redefinition of development – beyond economic growth alone – towards an integrated framework that embraces environmental sustainability, social inclusion and long-term economic transformation. Within this paradigm shift, SSC has demonstrated its potential to

foster knowledge exchange, catalyse innovation and support the scaling of localized, cost-effective technologies. By emphasizing mutual learning and the co-creation of solutions, SSC aligns seamlessly with the emphasis of the SDGs on equity, integration and leaving no one behind.

South-South cooperation contributes directly to the achievement of SDG 17, particularly through the strengthening of implementation mechanisms, the mobilization of financial resources, the facilitation of technology transfer and the enhancement of institutional capacity. This contribution is especially vital for countries of the Global South that face similar structural challenges and development trajectories. The proximity of experience among Southern partners remains one of the strongest comparative advantages of SSC, enabling cooperation that is practical, adaptable and grounded in shared realities.

Despite this potential, the current practice of SSC is often fragmented and underinstitutionalized, limiting its capacity to serve as a strategic vehicle for sustainable development. Many national strategies continue to be based on conventional, siloed approaches that are insufficient for addressing the multidimensional nature of today's development challenges. Moreover, the lack of robust monitoring and evaluation systems, limited data transparency and weak institutional coordination inhibit the translation of SSC efforts into measurable, lasting results.

These challenges are compounded by the emergence of a global polycrisis. The cascading effects of geopolitical tensions, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate emergencies, debt burdens and technological divides have exposed vulnerabilities and widened development gaps across the Global South. Particularly for LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs and many MICs, the path towards achieving the SDGs has become more precarious, making SSC all the more indispensable as a platform for resilience, recovery and shared growth.

Addressing these systemic constraints requires a new approach to SSC – one that is explicitly anchored in the transformative ambition of the 2030 Agenda. This entails institutional innovation at the national level, including the establishment of clearly mandated coordination agencies, enabling legislative frameworks, and data ecosystems capable of tracking SSC flows and assessing their development impact. A shift towards long-term, strategic partnerships is necessary to move beyond ad hoc, project-based cooperation. Countries must be supported to build national capacities not only to engage in SSC but to lead it in a manner that reflects their evolving development priorities.

Science, technology, and innovation must also become a strategic axis of SSC. With the Fourth Industrial Revolution reshaping economies and societies, the Global South must invest in inclusive innovation ecosystems that integrate digital technologies, renewable energy solutions and AI. While progress in these areas is evident in countries such as Brazil, India, Rwanda and Viet Nam, innovation gaps remain significant, particularly in infrastructure, research and development, and gender equity in STEM. SSC can serve as a powerful mechanism for narrowing these gaps by sharing proven models, co-developing technological solutions and amplifying regional innovation hubs.

High-level summits such as BAPA+40, the G-77 Summits in Havana and Kampala, and the UN Summit of the Future have laid the groundwork for a renewed SSC agenda. These global forums have identified critical thematic priorities, including poverty eradication, climate resilience, gender equality, inclusive digitalization and financing for development. They have also reaffirmed the importance of SSC as a platform to empower countries of the Global South to reclaim agency over their development pathways and actively shape global governance frameworks.

As the international community approaches the 2030 milestone, the imperative to accelerate SDG implementation has become urgent. South-South cooperation must be repositioned as a central pillar of global development architecture, capable of advancing not just recovery from recent crises but long-term, transformative change. To achieve this, SSC must be oriented towards systemic impact: fostering policy coherence, scaling innovation, bridging development financing gaps and deepening institutional learning.

In sum, the future of SSC hinges on its ability to operationalize solidarity into results, translate shared experiences into scalable innovations and turn global interdependence into mutually reinforcing progress. By embracing a results-oriented, integrated and equity-driven approach, SSC can fulfil its potential as a cornerstone of a more just, sustainable and resilient world order. The collective strength of the Global South – its demographic weight, natural wealth, technological potential and shared vision for inclusive development – must now be fully leveraged to transform SSC from a promising mechanism into a leading force for global transformation.

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Chapter 4

Envisioning the Future: Innovative Frameworks for Resilience, Equity and Sustainability through South-South Cooperation

As the world faces unprecedented challenges such as climate change, pandemics and economic instability, the need for innovative and transformative approaches to global cooperation has never been greater. This chapter envisions the future of South-South cooperation (SSC), proposing new frameworks and strategies to enhance resilience, equity and sustainability.

Forward-looking frameworks are combined with a visionary roadmap for SSC, emphasizing its role in building resilient economies, promoting social equity and advancing environmental sustainability. This chapter proposes innovative approaches, partnerships and mechanisms to enhance collaboration and address shared challenges while outlining a compelling vision for the future.

The chapter explores emerging trends such as digital cooperation, green finance and South-South trade agreements, which have the potential to unlock new opportunities for sustainable development. It emphasizes the importance of fostering inclusive partnerships that engage Governments, private-sector actors, civil society and international organizations. By advocating for action-oriented frameworks that prioritize measurable outcomes, accountability and mutual learning, the chapter aims to inspire transformative action and strengthen the impact of SSC.

A new strategic pathway is needed for SSC to address global challenges such as demographic transition, the Anthropocene and geo-economic fragmentation. The chapter emphasizes the importance of understanding the diverse visions of the future in the Global South, shaped by historical struggles, aspirations for self-determined progress, and themes such as resilience, sustainability and collective well-being. Key areas of focus include economic transformation, technological independence, social equity, environmental sustainability and political sovereignty.

Introduction

The final chapter of the report outlines a framework for shaping a renewed and impactful South-South cooperation (SSC) agenda. The proposed new agenda considers that triangular cooperation is an integral part of SSC. It is based on the assumption that the new SSC agenda cannot be disconnected from conceptualizing the present and future role of the Global South in the currently changing world system of the early twenty-first century.

As we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference (1955), we witness that SSC has gained importance and relevance in the international economy and international development cooperation. It has long been heralded as a transformative approach to global development, emphasizing mutual support, shared experiences and economic collaboration among countries of the Global South. South-South cooperation challenges the traditional development cooperation model and promotes self-reliance through trade, investment and technology transfer. The upward trend in SSC is a factor of the transformative changes that a significant number of countries of the Global South have been experiencing.

With its expanding economic power and political prominence, the Global South is emerging as a significant voice in international politics, challenging the longstanding global order. The rise of the Global South has already shifted the global power balance, with the Global South playing a pivotal role. Members have also become vocal and influential actors in international relations, advocating for issues that benefit their interests rather than following the lead of other countries. The establishment of BRICS has significantly strengthened the Global South by enhancing economic cooperation, financial independence and trade as it became a catalyst for South-South cooperation.[100]

This chapter offers a forward-looking framework for SSC that is adapted to the contemporary global context. It will address two main points to achieve this goal. First, it will focus on building a comprehensive understanding of the current global context by analysing key demographic trends and the transformative forces shaping the world today. This includes examining the effects of geo-fragmentation, such as shifting geopolitical alliances and economic decoupling, as well as the profound implications of the Anthropocene, particularly climate change and environmental degradation.

Second, building on this analysis, the chapter will then explore how to advance a more impactful and adaptive SSC modality. This modality must navigate the complexities of the global landscape while addressing the diverse and evolving needs of countries within the Global South. Recognizing the varying levels of development among these countries, the framework will emphasize tailored approaches that account for disparities in economic capacity, technological advancement and institutional readiness. By doing so, it seeks to foster a more inclusive and effective SSC agenda that not only responds to immediate challenges but also anticipates future opportunities for collaboration and mutual growth.

4.1 Understanding the global context

To frame a new agenda for SSC, it is essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing countries of the Global South. Two critical factors must be central to our reflection on the future of SSC:

a. the demographic ascendancy of the Global South, that is, numbers that define the future; and

b. navigation of dual crises, namely, the intersection of the Anthropocene and the geo-economic fragmentation in the Global South.

These factors provide a foundational lens through which to analyse the evolving global landscape and its impact on SSC. By addressing these dimensions, the agenda can better respond to the unique needs and aspirations of the Global South in an increasingly interconnected yet fragmented world.

[100] https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/gia/article/what-does-the-rise-of-the-global-south-mean-for-the-world#:~:text=A%20Growing%20Global%20Impact,between%20the%20USA%20and%20China.

4.1.1 Demographic ascendancy of the Global South: Numbers that define the future

The twenty-first century has witnessed a profound shift in global demographics, with the Global South emerging as the epicenter of population growth and youth vitality. Today, the Global South is home to the majority of the world's population, accounting for over 80 per cent of humanity. This demographic dominance is not merely a statistical phenomenon but a transformative force reshaping global economic, political and cultural dynamics. Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America are driving this shift, with rapidly growing populations, increasingly urbanized societies and a youthful demographic profile.

The sheer scale of the population of the Global South, coupled with its rising economic potential, is redefining global labour markets, consumer bases and innovation hubs. For instance, by 2050, it is projected that more than half of global economic growth will originate from the Global South, with countries such as India, Indonesia and Nigeria leading the way.

Moreover, the youth bulge in the Global South presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, it offers a dynamic workforce capable of driving innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth. On the other hand, it demands significant investments in education, healthcare and job creation to harness this potential fully. Failure to address these needs could exacerbate inequalities and social tensions, undermining stability and progress.

As the Global South continues to grow in numbers and influence, it is poised to redefine the future of globalization, development and international relations. Its demographic weight is already translating into greater political clout, as seen in the increasing representation of countries of the Global South in international forums such as the United Nations, the G20 and the BRICS grouping. This shift is also fostering new forms of South-South cooperation as countries of the Global South collaborate to address shared challenges, from climate change to technological advancement.

In this context, the demographic dominance of the Global South is not just a feature of the twenty-first century but a cornerstone of a new global paradigm. It underscores the need for a more inclusive and equitable international system that recognizes the aspirations and contributions of the Global South. By leveraging its demographic strengths, the Global South has the potential to drive sustainable development, foster global solidarity, and shape a more balanced and multipolar world order.

The demographic dominance of the Global South is most evident in its population statistics. According to the United Nations, the world's population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, with most of this growth concentrated in the Global South. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Nigeria and Pakistan are expected to drive a significant share of this increase. In stark contrast, many countries of the Global North are grappling with aging populations and declining birth rates. This demographic divergence highlights a fundamental shift in global dynamics, with the Global South emerging as the primary engine of global population growth.

Africa stands out as a demographic powerhouse. With a median age of just 19 years, it is the youngest continent in the world (table 4.1 and figure 4.1). By 2100, Africa's population is projected to triple, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of the global population (figure 4.2). Similarly, South Asia, led by India, is experiencing rapid population growth, further solidifying the demographic significance of the Global South. These trends underscore the growing weight of the Global South in shaping global economic, political and cultural agendas in the coming decades.[101]

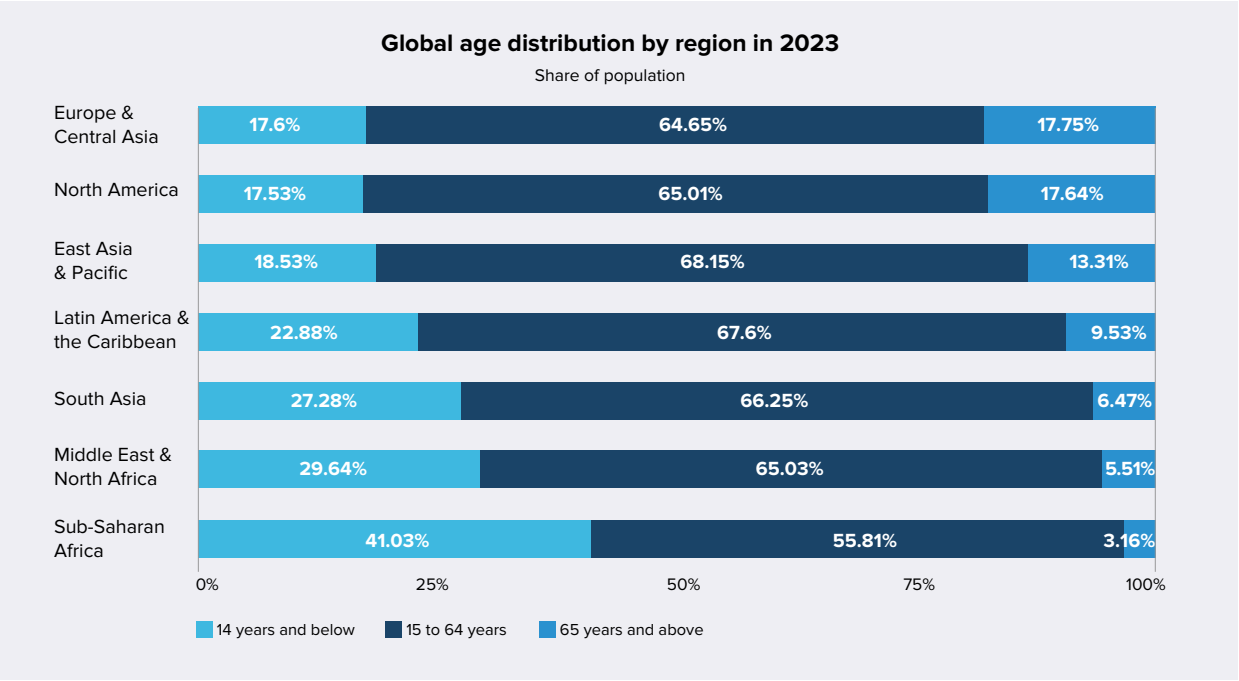
[101] https://population.un.org/wpp/assets/Files/WPP2024_Summary-of-Results.pdf.

Table 4.1. Estimated mid-year population by major area and region, 2022 and 2023

Region	Population (in thousands)	
	2022	2023
WORLD	**8,021,407**	**8,091,735**
AFRICA	**1,446,884**	**1,480,771**
Eastern Africa	475,300	487,857
Middle Africa	199,714	206,130
Northern Africa	264,720	268,541
Southern Africa	71,213	72,198
Western Africa	435,937	446,044
ASIA	**4,747,661**	**4,778,004**
Eastern Asia	1,663,265	1,660,029
Central and Southern Asia	2,101,809	2,123,893
South-eastern Asia	684,898	690,117
Western Asia	297,689	303,965
EUROPE	**746,965**	**745,603**
Eastern Europe	289,051	286,047
Northern Europe	107,439	108,297
Southern Europe	151,976	151,721
Western Europe	198,498	199,537
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	**654,367**	**658,892**
Caribbean	44,053	44,249
Central America	179,821	181,618
South America	430,493	433,024
NORTHERN AMERICA	**380,482**	**382,903**
OCEANIA	**45,049**	**45,563**
Australia/New Zealand	31,333	31,624
Melanesia	12,504	12,724
Micronesia	523	525
Polynesia	689	690

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects 2024:* Release note about major differences in total population estimates for mid-2023 between 2022 and 2024 revisions. Available at https://population.un.org/wpp/assets/Files/WPP2024_Release-Note.pdf.

Figure 4.1. Global age distribution by region, 2023



Source: WorldBank, ©Statista

Figure 4.2. Ranking of the world's ten most populous countries and total population (in parentheses), 2024, 2054 and 2100 (in millions)

	2024			2054			2100	
1	India	1451	▶	India	1692	▶	India	1505
2	China	1419	▶	China	1215	▶	China	633
3	United States of America	345	+2 ▲	Pakistan	389	▶	Pakistan	511
4	Indonesia	283	-1 ▼	United States of America	384	+1 ▲	Nigeria	477
5	Pakistan	251	+1 ▲	Nigeria	376	+3 ▲	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	431
6	Nigeria	233	-2 ▼	Indonesia	322	-2 ▼	United States of America	421
7	Brazil	212	+3 ▲	Ethiopia	240	▶	Ethiopia	367
8	Bangladesh	174		Dem. Rep. of the Congo	238	-2 ▼	Indonesia	296
9	Russian Federation	145	-1 ▼	Bangladesh	219	+4 ▲	Unit. Rep. of Tanzania	263
10	Ethiopia	132	-3 ▼	Brazil	215	-1 ▼	Bangladesh	209
11								
12						-2 ▼	Brazil	163
13				Unit. Rep. of Tanzania	140			

Source: https://population.un.org/wpp/assets/Files/WPP2024_Summary-of-Results.pdf.

Economic implications of the demographic growth and rapid urbanization of the Global South

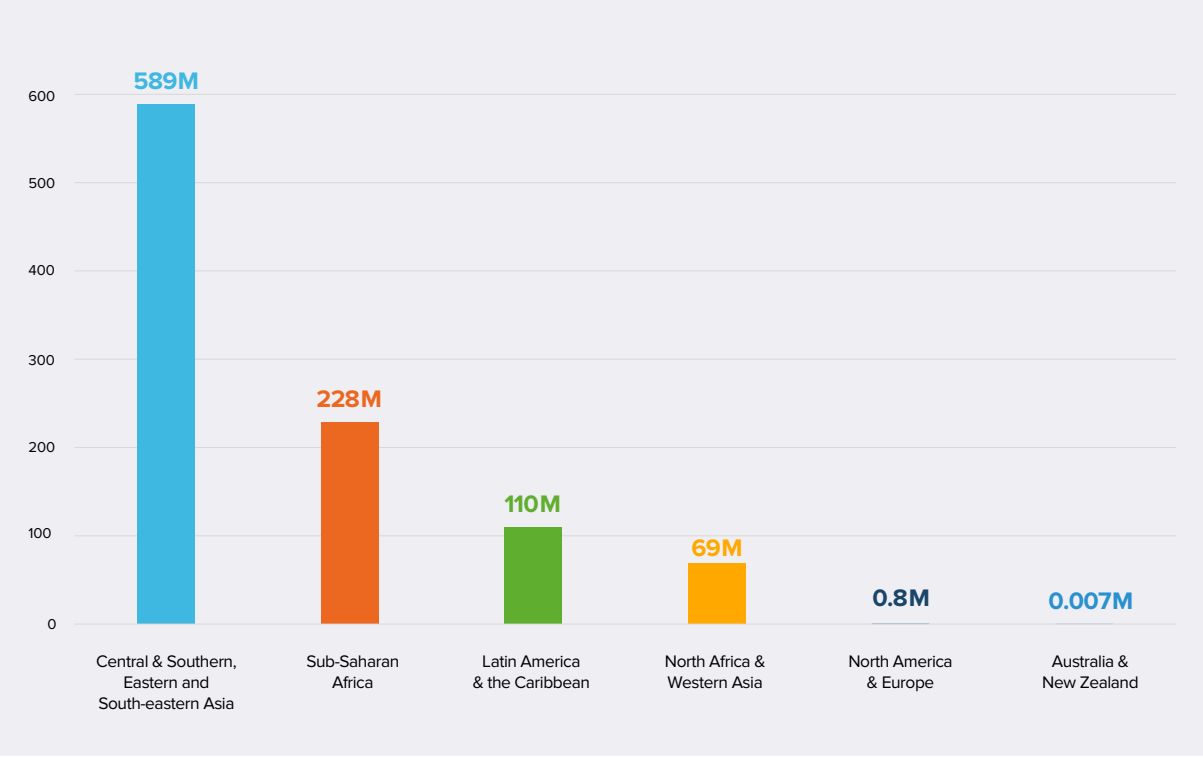
The demographic growth of the Global South carries profound economic implications. A young and rapidly growing population has the potential to become a powerful engine of economic growth, but only if supported by the right policies and investments. The youthful workforce of the Global South offers the opportunity to unlock a "demographic dividend", where a large working-age population drives productivity, innovation and consumption. Countries such as Bangladesh, India and Viet Nam have already begun to capitalize on this potential, positioning themselves as key players in global manufacturing, services and technology sectors.

World Bank data/projections suggest that the Global South is experiencing unprecedented urban growth, with projections indicating that by 2050, nearly 7 in 10 people will reside in urban areas. This rapid urbanization, driven primarily by the natural population increases but also internal migration (rural-urban), presents significant challenges and opportunities that will reshape the social and economic structures.[102]

Major challenges include:

- **inadequate infrastructure and services.** Multiple examples reveal the fact that the swift pace of the urbanization process outstrips the development of basic infrastructure. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, only 37 per cent of all urban residents had access to piped water (2010). Other aspects include overcrowded transportation, insufficient waste management and limited access to safely managed water and sanitation (see statistical annex, table 2), all of which exacerbate urban poverty and health issues; and
- **slums and informal settlements.** Between 1990 and 2014, the proportion of the global urban population living in slums decreased from 46 per cent to 23 per cent; however, with many developing countries experiencing rapid urbanization, the absolute numbers of people living in slums were bound to increase. The bulk of those who continue to live in slum-like conditions are in three major regions (figure 4.3): Latin America and the Caribbean (110 million), sub-Saharan Africa (228 million) and East and Southeastern Asia (589 million).[103]

Figure 4.3. Population living in slums and informal settlements, by region



- **environmental degradation and vulnerability.** World Bank data suggest that unplanned urban expansion contributes to additional environmental challenges, including through deforestation, loss of green spaces, an increase in artificial build-ups and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Based on World Bank data, cities consume two-thirds of global energy as well as producing over 70 per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions. At same time, in the Global South, many urban settlements are situated in regions prone to natural disasters.

[102] The World Bank, *Demographic Trends and Urbanization* (Washington, D.C., 2020). Available at https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/260581617988607640/pdf/Demographic-Trends-and-Urbanization.pdf.

[103] UN-Habitat, "Monitoring SDG indicator 11.1.1", The Urban SDG Monitoring Series, 1 February 2019. Available at https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/06/the_urban_sdg_monitoring_series_monitoring_sdg_indicator_11.1.1.pdf.

The major opportunities of the demographic dividend and rapid urbanization are:

- **economic growth and innovation hubs.** Urban centres generate on average around 80 per cent of the global GDP. Such centres concentrate young talents and innovation capacity. Positioning cities as major engines of economic progress is an important policy option that requires significant investments; and
- **improved access to services and opportunities.** These are a main attraction for youth and a significant reason for internal migration.

This demographic dividend is not without significant challenges, however. To fully harness the potential of their growing populations, countries of the Global South must address critical issues such as access to basic infrastructure and services, including quality education and healthcare as well as job creation. Without adequate investment in these areas, the risks of high unemployment, social unrest and mass migration could undermine economic progress.

At the same time, the expanding middle class in the Global South is poised to reshape global markets. Rising incomes and consumption patterns are driving demand for goods, services, new technologies and resources, creating new opportunities for trade and investment. This shift not only benefits the Global South but also presents a transformative opportunity for the global economy as emerging markets become increasingly central to global growth, expansion and innovation.

As markets in the Global North reach saturation for many products, services and technologies, developing countries – particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America – are emerging as dynamic growth frontiers. With expanding populations, rising consumer demand, and a pressing need for infrastructure and digital inclusion, these regions offer fertile ground for investment and technology transfer, but also for local technology development. For example, sub-Saharan Africa had over 515 million mobile subscribers in 2021, a figure expected to rise to more than 613 million by the end of 2025, contributing an estimated $140 billion to the total GDP of the region. This example illustrates how developing markets not only absorb technologies but also adapt them and scale them to meet local needs. Shifting investments to these markets offers a dual advantage: alleviating overcapacity in saturated Northern markets while accelerating inclusive growth across the Global South.[104]

Redefining global influence: Political and cultural shifts driven by the Global South

The demographic dominance of the Global South is not only reshaping global economics but also profoundly influencing global politics and culture. As the population and economic power of the Global South continue to grow, so, too, does its influence in international institutions and decision-making processes. Countries such as Brazil, India and South Africa are increasingly asserting themselves on the global stage, advocating for reforms in international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the IMF. These countries are demanding a more inclusive and equitable global order that reflects the realities of the twenty-first century, challenging the traditional dominance of the Global North.

Culturally, the Global South is emerging as a vibrant exporter of ideas, art and traditions. From the global popularity of K-pop and Bollywood to the widespread influence of African music, literature and fashion, the cultural products of the Global South are gaining unprecedented recognition and appeal. This cultural exchange enriches the global landscape, fostering greater understanding and appreciation between regions. However, it also raises important questions about the preservation of cultural diversity in an increasingly interconnected world. As globalization accelerates, there is a risk that dominant cultural narratives could overshadow local traditions and identities, necessitating efforts to protect and promote cultural heritage.

Moreover, the political and cultural shifts driven by the Global South are redefining notions of soft power and global leadership. The rise of regional blocs such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the African Union exemplifies the growing collective influence of the Global South. These groups are not only advocating for economic and political reforms but also promoting alternative models of development and governance that reflect the unique experiences and priorities of their member States.

In this context, the demographic dominance of the Global South is not just a statistical trend but a transformative force reshaping the global order. It underscores the need for a more inclusive approach to global governance and cultural exchange, one that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of the Global South while addressing the challenges of preserving diversity in an interconnected world.

[104] GSMA, "The Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2024". Available at https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-economy/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/GSMA_ME_SSA_2024_Web.pdf.

Navigating the dual realities: Challenges and opportunities in the demographic rise of the Global South

The demographic dominance of the Global South introduces a dynamic interplay of opportunities and challenges, each poised to define the course of the twenty-first century. On the one hand, a young and growing population offers immense potential for economic growth, innovation and global influence. On the other hand, rapid population growth places immense pressure on resources, infrastructure and ecosystems, exacerbating existing challenges such as climate change, water scarcity and food insecurity.

The Global South is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which threaten to undermine development gains and deepen inequalities. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events and environmental degradation disproportionately affect communities in the Southern countries, jeopardizing livelihoods and exacerbating poverty. Addressing these challenges requires urgent action, including investments in sustainable infrastructure, climate resilience and renewable energy. At the same time, the Global South must take the lead in shaping its own future, leveraging its demographic strength to drive innovation, foster collaboration and champion sustainable development.

The demographic dominance of the Global South marks a historic turning point as the world's population becomes increasingly concentrated in the developing countries. This shift positions the Global South as a central player in shaping global economic, political and cultural systems. However, realizing this potential requires a reimagining of traditional frameworks to ensure that they are inclusive, equitable and sustainable. By harnessing its demographic potential – through education, job creation and technological advancement - the Global South can transform challenges into opportunities, setting an example for the rest of the world.

The rise of the Global South is not confined to certain regions; it is a global transformation that will define the trajectory of humanity for generations to come. It calls for a collective effort to build systems that prioritize sustainability, equity and shared prosperity. By addressing its challenges head-on and seizing its opportunities, the Global South can lead the way towards a future that benefits not only its own populations but the entire world.

4.1.2 Navigating dual crises: The intersection of the Anthropocene[105] and geo-economic fragmentation[106] in the Global South

The Anthropocene and geo-economic fragmentation represent a decisive shift in global dynamics, with profound implications for the Global South. The intersection of these forces presents daunting challenges, exacerbating environmental vulnerabilities, deepening economic dependencies and widening social inequities. As the Global South grapples with the dual pressures of ecological degradation and fractured global economic systems, it faces an urgent need to adapt and innovate in order to build resilience and secure a sustainable future.

The Anthropocene era: Human-driven challenges and their disproportionate impact on the Global South

The Anthropocene represents a new geological epoch, distinct from previous eras in that it is defined by anthropogenic (human-caused) changes to the planet. These changes are reshaping ecosystems, economies and societies on an unprecedented scale. Key drivers of the Anthropocene include:

- **climate change.** Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events and shifting ecological patterns are disrupting food security, water availability and economic stability (box 4.1);
- **biodiversity loss.** Human activities such as deforestation, pollution and habitat destruction have accelerated the sixth mass extinction, threatening ecosystems and the services that they provide;

[105] "Anthropocene" is an unofficial but widely used term in Earth system science and geology, referring to the period when human activities became the dominant influence on climate and the environment. While not yet formally recognized as a geological epoch by the International Commission on Stratigraphy, the term is used to describe a distinct shift from the Holocene epoch due to significant changes in the biogeochemical cycles of the Earth. "The Anthropocene" is a term used to describe the current geological age, in which human activity has become the dominant force shaping the ecosystems, climate and geological structures of the Earth.

[106] "Geo-economic fragmentation" refers to the increasing breakdown of global integration, with rising nationalism, regionalism and geopolitical tensions disrupting multilateralism. See https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Staff-Discussion-Notes/Issues/2023/01/11/Geo-Economic-Fragmentation-and-the-Future-of-Multilateralism-527266.

- **resource depletion.** Overexploitation of natural resources – from fossil fuels to fresh water – is pushing planetary systems beyond their sustainable limits, jeopardizing future generations;
- **urbanization and industrialization.** The rapid expansion of cities, infrastructure and industries has transformed land use, altered ecosystems and contributed to atmospheric changes; and
- **technological acceleration.** Advances in AI, biotechnology and digital technologies are reshaping human-environment interactions, offering innovative solutions while introducing new ethical and environmental challenges.

Box 4.1. Climate-crisis severity in the Global South: Key insights from recent reports

1. Record temperatures and climate impacts: 2023 was the warmest year on record, with global temperatures 1.45°C above pre-industrial levels, nearing the 1.5°C Paris Agreement threshold. Greenhouse gas concentrations, ocean heat and sea levels also reached record highs, exacerbating risks for ecosystems and vulnerable communities.
2. Disasters in Asia and Africa: Asia experienced the highest number of weather-related disasters in 2023, with floods and storms causing significant casualties and economic losses. Africa faces severe climate adaptation costs, with countries losing 2 per cent to 5 per cent of GDP annually and up to 118 million people at risk of extreme poverty by 2030 owing to climate impacts.
3. Food insecurity and displacement: Climate shocks, conflicts and El Niño-induced droughts worsened food crises in 18 countries by mid-2024, with Africa having the highest prevalence of undernourishment. Climate-related displacement affected millions globally, undermining progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. Sea-level rise and ocean warming: The rate of sea-level rise has doubled since the 1990s, posing risks to coastal communities, low-lying islands and economic activities. Ocean warming is irreversible on centennial timescales, with 2023 marking the highest sea-surface temperatures and ocean-heat content on record.
5. Renewable energy and critical minerals: At the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), Governments agreed to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030. Demand for critical energy transition minerals is expected to triple by 2030, offering opportunities for developing countries to participate in value chains and foster economic diversification.
6. Adaptation and mitigation finance: The adaptation finance gap for developing countries is estimated to be from $215 billion to $387 billion annually by 2030, far exceeding current international public finance. A six-fold increase in mitigation investments is needed, particularly for emerging economies, to align with global climate goals.
7. Health and air pollution: Small island developing States (SIDS) face severe health impacts from climate change, with heat-related deaths rising significantly. Air pollution remains a critical health crisis in South Asia and Africa, where over 47 per cent of the population relies on solid fuels for cooking.

Sources: 1. WMO 2023 State of the Global Climate; 2. *State of the Climate in Asia 2023*; 3. *State of the Climate in Africa 2023*; 4. *ESA - Ice loss from Greenland and Antarctica hits new record* and slr_technical_brief_26_aug_2024.pdf; 5. Which countries have the critical minerals needed for the energy transition? Our World in Data; 6. Adaptation Gap Report 2024 | UNEP - UN Environment Programme; 7. *The 2024 small island developing states report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change - The Lancet Global Health.*

Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns and extreme weather events have already led to decreased agricultural productivity, heightened food insecurity and the displacement of vulnerable populations.

Moreover, the Global South faces systemic challenges in responding to these crises, including limited access to technology, financial resources and institutional capacity. Despite contributing the least to global emissions, these countries are often the most affected by the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation. This inequity underscores the urgent need for global cooperation and targeted support to help the Global South to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of the Anthropocene.

Geo-economic fragmentation: The fracturing of global cooperation and its impact on the Global South

"Geo-economic fragmentation" refers to the accelerating breakdown of global integration, marked by rising nationalism, regionalism and geopolitical tensions that undermine multilateralism. This trend represents a retreat from globalization, driven by deepening economic, political and technological divides. As divisions grow, the international order is being reshaped, raising critical questions about the ability of existing global structures to address the collective challenges facing humanity. Levels of cooperation in areas such as geopolitics, humanitarian issues, economic relations, and environmental and technological challenges are likely to reach new lows in the coming years. Many key countries are turning inward, prioritizing domestic economic and societal concerns at a time when strengthened multilateral ties are urgently needed to tackle shared global crises.

Historically, globalization facilitated economic integration and provided developing countries with access to international markets, enabling them to benefit from trade, foreign investment and technology transfer. However, the recent surge in protectionism, economic nationalism and geopolitical rivalries has led to a restructuring of global supply chains, often sidelining or marginalizing the interests of developing countries. This shift exacerbates existing inequalities as the Global South finds itself increasingly excluded from the benefits of global economic systems (box 4.2).

Geo-economic fragmentation poses significant challenges to global development, particularly for SSC. By reducing global trade flows and limiting access to financing, it threatens to constrain opportunities for SSC-driven infrastructure projects and economic development. Additionally, the fragmentation of digital ecosystems could further hinder trade, investment and technology exchange, which are critical for the growth and resilience of developing economies.

Box 4.2. Financing development in the Global South: Key challenges, insights and statistics

1. According to the *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2022*, a financing divide is sharply curtailing the ability of many developing countries to respond to shocks and invest in recovery.
2. The poverty rate fell from 38 per cent in 1990 to 8.5 per cent in 2024; it has stalled more recently amid lower economic growth and multiple shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation, and increased conflict and fragility. Using the poverty line of $3.65 per person a day, about 1.7 billion people were living in poverty in 2024.
3. Around half of the measurable SDG targets are significantly off-track from their intended trajectory.
4. Global growth is projected at 3.3 per cent both in 2025 and 2026, below the historical (2000–2019) average of 3.7 per cent.
5. The annual SDG financing gap in developing countries is estimated at $4.2 trillion.
6. The increase in total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 1.3 per cent from 2022 levels is above the average rate in the decade preceding the COVID-19 pandemic (2010–2019), when GHG emissions growth averaged 0.8 per cent per year.
7. In 2023, total ODA reached a record high of $223.7 billion, amounting to a real-term annual increase of 1.8 per cent. Despite this being the fifth consecutive year for ODA to surpass its previous record levels, the share of ODA in GNI still lags significantly behind the 0.70 per cent committed by developed economies since it reached only 0.37 per cent in 2023. As such, it remains at a level insufficient to support recipient countries in their efforts to recover from the long-term challenges planted by the pandemic and other compounding crises.
8. Developing countries paid a record $443.5 billion on public debt in 2022. A significant portion of countries of the Global South are facing a "debt sustainability crisis" where a large number, exceeding 60 per cent, of low-income countries are either already in debt distress or at a high risk of entering it, which severely restricts their capacity to access new funding and invest in crucial development initiatives.

9. Limited domestic resource mobilization can make it difficult for Governments to generate revenue for development financing. This can happen when Governments have weak tax systems and large informal economies. The average tax-to-GDP ratio in LDCs was just 13 per cent in 2021, compared to the global average of 15 per cent and 34 per cent in OECD countries. Moreover, in many LDCs, more than 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the labour force operates in the informal sector, where income often goes untaxed. Informal businesses typically lack proper accounting systems and are not registered with tax authorities, making it challenging to assess and collect taxes.

Sources: 1. The World Bank, *Poverty, Prosperity and Planet Report 2024*; 2. UN, *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024*; 3. *World Economic Outlook Update, January 2025: Global Growth – Divergent and Uncertain*, January 2025; 4. *UNCTAD Trade and Development Report 2024*; 5. *UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2024*; 6. UNCTAD; 7. The World Bank, *International Debt Report 2023*.

The implications of geo-economic fragmentation extend beyond economics. Geo-economic fragmentation risks creating a more polarized world, where the Global South is left to navigate a fractured international landscape with limited support (table 4.2). This underscores the urgent need for innovative approaches to multilateralism that prioritize inclusivity and equity, ensuring that the voices and needs of the Global South are not overlooked in the face of global fragmentation.

Table 4.2. Intersection of the Anthropocene and geo-economic fragmentation

Dimension	Anthropocene	Geo-economic fragmentation	Intersection: Combined impact on the Global South
Environmental	Climate change, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, and ecological degradation.	Reduced global cooperation on environmental issues, weakening of multilateral agreements (e.g., Paris Agreement).	Increased vulnerability to climate change owing to lack of global support; heightened risks of food insecurity, water scarcity and displacement.
Economic	Strain on natural resources, rising costs of adaptation and economic instability.	Restructuring of global supply chains, protectionism and exclusion of developing countries from trade and investment opportunities.	Limited access to financing and technology for sustainable development; reduced capacity to address resource depletion and economic inequality.
Political	Growing need for global governance to address planetary boundaries.	Rise of nationalism, regionalism and geopolitical tensions undermining multilateralism.	Weakened political influence of the Global South in international forums; fragmented efforts to address global environmental challenges.
Technological	Technological advancements as both a driver of and solution to environmental issues.	Fragmentation of digital ecosystems, unequal access to technology and barriers to technology transfer.	Limited access to green technologies and innovation; widening digital divide hindering climate adaptation and sustainable development.
Social	Displacement, migration and social inequities exacerbated by environmental crises.	Reduced global solidarity, increased focus on domestic issues and weakened humanitarian cooperation.	Increased social unrest and inequality; lack of global support for climate refugees and vulnerable populations in the Global South.
Development	Pressure on development gains due to climate change and resource constraints.	Reduced global trade and financing, limiting opportunities for infrastructure and economic development in the Global South.	Stalled progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); heightened challenges for South-South cooperation and regional integration.

Source: Author's own elaboration

The following are key insights from the matrix:

a. **environmental.** The Anthropocene exacerbates environmental crises, while geo-economic fragmentation weakens global efforts to address them, leaving the Global South disproportionately vulnerable.

b. **economic.** Geo-economic fragmentation restricts access to trade and investment, compounding the economic challenges posed by resource depletion and climate change in the Anthropocene.

c. **political.** The retreat from multilateralism undermines the ability of the Global South to advocate for its interests in global governance, particularly on environmental issues.

d. **technological.** Fragmented digital ecosystems and unequal technology transfer hinder the capacity of the Global South to leverage innovation for climate adaptation and sustainable development.

e. **social.** Combined pressures from environmental degradation and reduced global cooperation increase social inequities and displacement, particularly in the Global South.

f. **development.** The intersection of these forces threatens to stall development progress, making it harder for the Global South to achieve the SDGs and leverage SSC for growth (table 4.3).

Table 4.3. Interconnected challenges of the Global South[107]

Challenge	Key issues	Intersections with other challenges
Geo-economic fragmentation	▸ Trade disruptions ▸ Supply chain vulnerabilities ▸ Debt crises ▸ Economic dependence	▸ Multipolarity: competing blocs increase pressure to align with one power. ▸ Climate change: fragmentation reduces access to climate financing and green technologies. ▸ Digital transformations: unequal access to digital infrastructure and AI technologies.
Technology transfer	▸ Lack of absorption capacity ▸ Inadequate legal and regulatory frameworks ▸ Limited access to finance ▸ Donor-driven or one-sided transfer models	▸ Risks of technological exclusion ▸ Growing digital divide ▸ Skill gaps
Multipolarity	▸ Geopolitical balancing acts ▸ Reduced aid and investment ▸ Regional instability ▸ Sovereignty concerns	▸ Geo-economic fragmentation: rival blocs create fragmented trade and investment flows. ▸ Climate change: competing powers may prioritize their interests over global climate action. ▸ Digital transformation: tech rivalry limits access to equitable digital partnerships.
Climate change	▸ Disproportionate impact ▸ Resource scarcity ▸ Extreme weather events ▸ Climate-financing gaps ▸ Energy transitions	▸ Geo-economic fragmentation: disruptions to global trade worsen food and energy insecurity. ▸ Multipolarity: climate action is hindered by geopolitical rivalries. ▸ Digital transformations: digital tools can aid climate adaptation but are often inaccessible.
Digital transformations & AI	▸ Lack of basic infrastructure (connectivity, etc.) ▸ Low digital literacy and skills digital divide ▸ AI inequality ▸ Job displacement ▸ Data sovereignty ▸ Cybersecurity threats ▸ Insufficient engagement with the local private sector in information and communication technologies (ICT) and related sectors.	▸ Geo-economic fragmentation: dependence on foreign technology increases vulnerabilities. ▸ Multipolarity: technology dominance by global powers limits local innovation. ▸ Climate change: digital tools can support climate solutions but require significant investment.

[107] This matrix format provides a structured overview of the challenges and their interdependencies to identify priority areas for action.

4.2 Towards more impactful and effective South-South cooperation

Reaping the benefits of demographic transition and navigating the Anthropocene and geo-economic fragmentation require a new strategic pathway for SSC. In this context, it is critical to grasp the visions for the future in countries of the Global South since that vision will be shaping the path towards a strengthened SSC.

The future is imagined differently across the world, shaped by historical experiences, economic realities, cultural traditions and geopolitical positioning. In the Global South, the perception of the future is shaped by both historical struggles and aspirations for self-determined progress. Any societies in the Global South envision the future in terms of resilience, sustainability and collective well-being.[108] From the standpoint of the Global South, sustainable development will be achieved by focusing on key themes such as economic transformation, technological aspirations, social equity, environmental sustainability and political sovereignty.

Many countries of the Global South envision a future beyond extractive economies, one marked by industrialization, digital innovation and diversified markets. They also seek greater control over data, the development of locally driven digital platforms and the prevention of external technological dominance. This vision includes building digital infrastructure that responds to local needs, rather than functioning as an extension of Western corporate interests.

The Global South is on the frontlines of climate change, and the future is often envisioned as one where climate justice is achieved. This includes fair financial support from industrialized countries, sustainable energy transitions and a rejection of imposed solutions that ignore local realities.

In the Global South, the future is frequently imagined as a shift towards a more balanced global order. Regional blocs such as the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are increasingly shaping a vision of a world where the Global South is not merely a passive participant but also a co-architect of international relations.

The perception of the future from the Global South is neither homogenous nor static. However, common themes emerge: a push for economic self-reliance, technological independence, social and cultural reclamation, environmental justice and political sovereignty. While challenges remain, the overarching narrative is one of resilience, adaptability and a determination to shape a future that aligns with the aspirations and lived realities of people in the Global South.

Understanding youth perceptions of South-South and triangular cooperation is crucial. A recent UNOSSC survey offers fascinating insights into these views (box 4.3). When young people were asked about how more sustainable South-South and triangular cooperation might influence their quality of life and the future of global collaboration, their responses pinpointed several key areas of impact, including education, environment, health, among others (figure 4.4)

Box 4.3. UNOSSC survey among youth

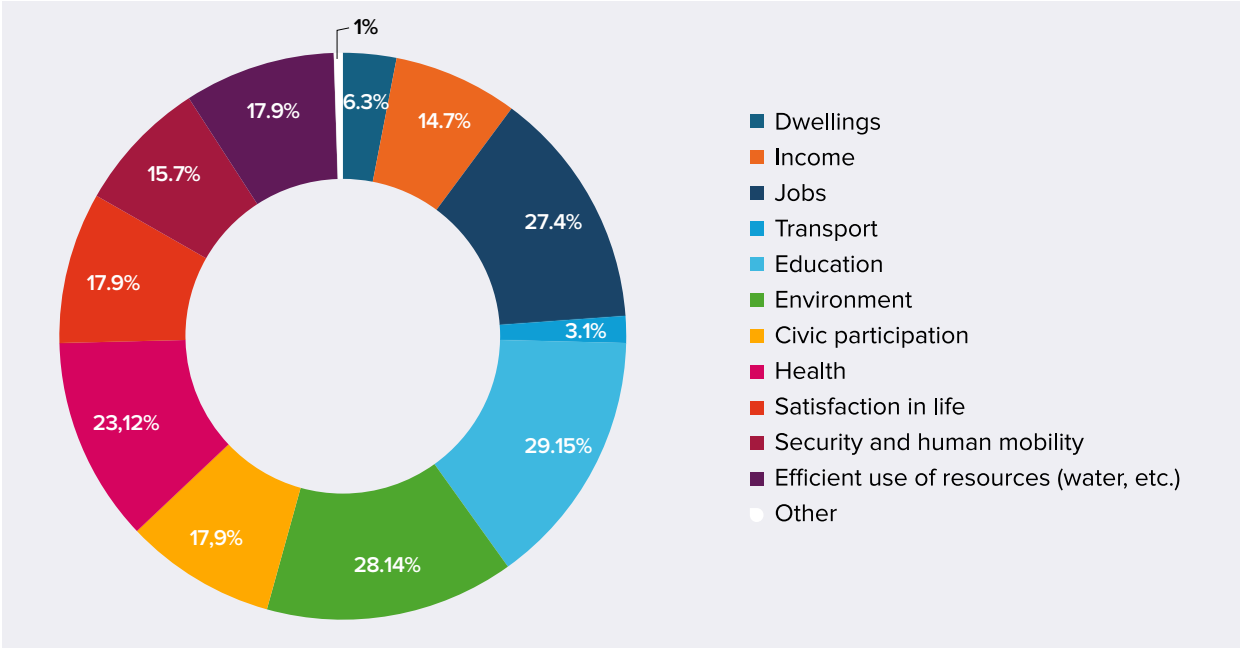
Youth perceive social change – particularly in education, healthcare and community development – as the most significant outcome of South-South and triangular cooperation. Their primary contribution to these modalities of cooperation comes in the form of knowledge-sharing and network-building rather than financial support. While they are self-motivated to participate, many feel that institutional barriers limit their engagement in decision-making processes. The narratives highlight a fast-changing environment that makes long-term youth involvement in SSC initiatives challenging. Interestingly, regional and global challenges dominate youth perspectives, with less than 10 per cent of the narratives focusing on purely local concerns. Moreover, most stories focus on past and present experiences, with limited discussion on the future of South-South and triangular cooperation, pointing to potential gaps in strategic foresight and forward-looking engagement.

[108] https://www.globalpolicywatch.org/futureofglobalgovernance/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Future-of-Global-Governance-Perspectives-from-global-south.pdf.

Thinking about the potential implications of more sustainable South-South and triangular cooperation and the future impacts of such cooperation on the quality of life, the key thematic areas highlighted by youth are education (15 per cent), environment (14 per cent), jobs (13 per cent), healthcare (12 per cent) and other areas.

The dominant themes in the narratives centre on healthcare, education, jobs, environment and broader global cooperation for sustainable development. These areas reflect youth priorities and concerns for the future, reinforcing the need for stronger multi-stakeholder engagement to enhance the impact on these crucial sectors.

Figure 4.4. Thinking about the potential implications of more sustainable South-South and triangular cooperation and the future impacts of such cooperation on the quality of life, what are the specific dimensions you think will be positively or negatively impacted?



While SSC presents a promising alternative to traditional development models, its limitations cannot be ignored. The successes of SSC are undeniably leading to increased regional trade, infrastructure development and diplomatic solidarity; however, the approach is not without its limitations. The first step towards framing the new agenda is to understand the structural challenges that limit SSC from reaching its full potential.

Focusing on the "empty half of the glass" of SSC is crucial to identifying its structural weaknesses, political challenges and economic risks that often hinder its effectiveness.[109] Structural weaknesses, political instability, economic inequalities and environmental concerns hinder the realization of the full potential of SSC. Only by acknowledging and addressing the "empty half of the glass" can SSC fulfil its promise of creating a more just and self-reliant Global South.

One of the main weaknesses of SSC lies in the lack of strong institutional frameworks. South-South cooperation continues to lack a unified governance mechanism to ensure effective implementation, accountability and addressing of disputes. Many SSC agreements rely on informal arrangements or bilateral negotiations, which may lead to inconsistencies in policy implementation and sustainability. Moreover, SSC initiatives often suffer from inadequate funding and financial volatility as many developing countries struggle with limited financial resources. As a result, SSC projects frequently face budget constraints. The absence of long-term,

[109] https://realityofaid.org/reality-check/blogs/challenges-for-the-construction-of-south-south-cooperation-by-and-for-the-people.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316311373_The_Challenges_Faced_Across_South-south_Cooperation.
https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11259588.
https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Review-of-South-South-Cooperation-in-the-implementation-of-the-Vienna-Programme-of-Action-for-LDCs-in-the-decade-2014-2024.pdf.
https://www.policycenter.ma/publications/institutions-policy-coordination-global-south.

predictable funding weakens the impact of SSC initiatives and makes it difficult for partner countries to plan their development strategies effectively.

Another critical challenge facing SSC is the issue of political instability in many participating countries. Several countries of the Global South often grapple with governance issues and weak institutions that undermine cooperation. South-South cooperation partnerships are highly susceptible to unexpected changes, conflicts and shifting national priorities. Additionally, power imbalances among countries of the Global South affect SSC.

Economically, while some countries have the capacity to engage in high-value trade and investment, others lack the industrial and technological capabilities to fully leverage SSC opportunities. This creates a disparity where larger economies dominate key sectors, while smaller economies remain dependent on exports of raw materials or low-value manufacturing. Another economic challenge is the risk of debt accumulation. Furthermore, SSC has not always translated into significant technology transfer. While partnerships promote knowledge exchange, the actual transfer of advanced technologies remains limited. Many developing countries lack the technical capacity, regulatory frameworks and skilled workforce needed to absorb and adapt these technologies, limiting the long-term developmental benefits of SSC initiatives.

South-South cooperation projects, particularly in infrastructure and extractive industries, have raised concerns regarding environmental sustainability. Large-scale projects such as roads, dams and mining ventures often prioritize economic growth over ecological preservation. Weak environmental regulations in many developing countries mean that SSC-driven investments may lead to deforestation, pollution and displacement of communities. Without stringent environmental safeguards, SSC risks replicating unsustainable development practices.

Similarly, SSC has not always addressed social inequalities in and among participating countries. Gender inequality, labour rights and social protections are often overlooked in SSC agreements, particularly when economic growth is prioritized over social development. Without comprehensive policies that address social justice, SSC risks perpetuating rather than alleviating structural inequalities.

Despite these challenges, SSC remains a valuable mechanism for fostering development and solidarity among countries of the Global South. A renewed framework for SSC must align with contemporary global challenges and opportunities, ensuring that collaboration among countries leads to sustainable, inclusive and resilient development. Sustainable development in the Global South requires context-specific solutions that address the unique social, economic, environmental and cultural challenges of those countries.

Energizing SSC requires improving efficiency through establishing stronger institutional frameworks, building consensus on prioritizing certain areas or goals within the sustainable development agenda, and improving financial sustainability by securing funding for SSC programmes, exchanges and activities. These three elements constitute pillars for a strategic pathway to strengthen the role of SSC in development cooperation. Greater emphasis should be placed on equitable participation, ensuring that smaller economies have a stronger voice in shaping cooperation frameworks.

By adopting a new strategic pathway, countries of the Global South can strengthen their collective voice, share resources more effectively, and build a more equitable and sustainable future. The success of SSC hinges on strong political will, innovative approaches, and a steadfast commitment to mutual benefit and solidarity among participating countries. While SSC alone cannot fully resolve the complex challenges facing the Global South, it has the potential to be a transformative force if it evolves into a sustainable, equitable and well-coordinated development model.

To achieve the overarching goals of SSC, it is imperative to design and implement new strategic pathways that are not only innovative but also adaptable to the rapidly changing global landscape. These pathways must embrace cutting-edge programmatic modalities that enhance the dynamism, inclusivity and impact of SSC initiatives. By doing so, they can better respond to the multifaceted challenges faced by developing countries, including but not limited to climate change, economic inequality and technological disparities. At the same time, these pathways should actively create opportunities for sustainable growth, knowledge-sharing and collaborative problem-solving among countries of the Global South.

A robust strategic framework is essential to guide policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders in their efforts to advance SSC. This framework should serve as a comprehensive roadmap, aligning with the priorities identified during major conferences convened by countries of the Global South, as outlined in chapter 3. It must also integrate the unique needs and vulnerabilities of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. These groups often face

distinct challenges, such as geographic isolation, limited resources and heightened exposure to climate-related risks, which require tailored solutions and targeted support.

To ensure the effectiveness of SSC, the following key actions must be prioritized:

1. Establish effective modalities for long-term collaboration.

Embed platforms and mechanisms that sustain cooperation over time, ensuring continuity, coordination, scalability and resilience in SSC initiatives. This includes creating institutional frameworks that facilitate ongoing dialogue, joint projects and shared accountability.

- **Create dedicated SSC institutions.** Establish and/or strengthen national and regional SSC units to coordinate initiatives, share knowledge and monitor progress. These institutions can serve as hubs for policy coherence, alignment, resource mobilization and capacity-building.
- **Leverage and link digital platforms.** Develop online platforms for knowledge-sharing, matchmaking and collaboration. Initiatives such as the UNOSSC South-South Galaxy platform can serve as models, enabling real-time communication and pooling of resources among participating countries.
- **Foster regional integration.** Strengthen regional organizations (e.g., African Union, ASEAN, MERCOSUR) to promote intraregional collaboration, harmonize policies, and address shared challenges such as infrastructure development and climate adaptation and digital transformation.
- **Enhance triangular cooperation.** Promote partnerships between countries of the Global South and developed countries or international organizations to combine resources, expertise and funding. Triangular cooperation can amplify the impact of SSC initiatives, particularly in areas such as technology transfer and capacity-building.
- **Foster long-term private-sector collaboration.** Engage the private sector in the Global South in long-term cooperation through public-private partnerships, local capacity-building, digital/financial inclusion, sustainable business models, cross-border alliances, trust-building mechanisms, adaptive financing, policy advocacy and resilient networks, ensuring alignment with local needs and mutual value creation.

2. Build an inclusive and sustainable SSC agenda.

Develop a development agenda that balances economic growth with environmental sustainability, ensuring that the benefits of SSC reach smaller countries and vulnerable populations. This requires prioritizing projects that address inequality, promote green technologies and safeguard natural resources.

- **Prioritize equity and inclusion.** Design SSC initiatives to address the needs of marginalized groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities and indigenous communities, specifically when it comes to access to quality education and health, for example. This ensures that development opportunities and final benefits are distributed fairly and no one is left behind.
- **Integrate climate and urban resilience.** Align SSC projects with global climate goals, promoting renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable urbanization and disaster risk reduction. This helps countries to adapt to climate change while contributing to global mitigation efforts.
- **Focus on capacity development.** Provide training, technical assistance and institutional support to smaller and less developed countries, enabling them to actively participate in and benefit from SSC initiatives.
- **Promote local ownership.** Ensure that SSC initiatives are demand-driven and aligned with the priorities of partner countries. Local ownership fosters sustainability and ensures that projects are context-specific and culturally appropriate.
- **Prioritize an evidence-based approach in SSC.** Strategies and decision-making should be underpinned by robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to ensure accountability, learning and impact.

3. Establish a framework for SSC funding and financing.

Develop innovative and sustainable funding and financing mechanisms to support SSC initiatives. This could include blended finance models, public-private partnerships, and dedicated SSC funds to ensure adequate resources for collaborative projects. Innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms are essential to support SSC initiatives and ensure their long-term viability.

- **Create South-South development funds.** Establish dedicated funds, such as India's India-UN Development Partnership Fund or China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, to finance SSC projects. These funds can prioritize high-impact initiatives in areas such as health, education and infrastructure.
- **Leverage blended finance.** Combine public and private-sector resources to de-risk investments and attract funding for large-scale infrastructure and development projects. Blended finance models can unlock new sources of capital for SSC initiatives.
- **Enhance South-South and triangular financing.** Mobilize resources from developed and developing countries and international organizations to support SSC initiatives in areas such as health, education and climate action. Triangular financing can bridge funding gaps and enhance the scale of SSC projects.
- **Promote philanthropic and private-sector engagement.** Encourage corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and private-sector investments in SSC projects that align with sustainable development goals. Encourage the private sector to look beyond CSR into the new and more inclusive business models. Encourage the private sector also to explore the opportunities at the intersections of different sectors and emerging technologies (ICT and health, ICT and education, etc.). Engaging the private sector can bring new jobs, innovation, efficiency and additional resources to SSC.

4. Strengthen knowledge-sharing and innovation.

Facilitate the exchange of expertise, technologies and best practices among countries of the Global South. This is critical for driving innovation and scaling successful initiatives. Establishing regional innovation hubs and digital platforms can enhance collaboration and accelerate the adoption of cutting-edge solutions.

- **Develop knowledge repositories and support brokerage.** Create global databases of SSC case studies, tools and methodologies to enable replication and scaling of successful initiatives. These repositories can serve as a resource hub for policymakers and practitioners. Support the linking of the "supply" and "demand" in good practices by utilizing all digital and other tools to connect the solution owners and seekers.
- **Promote joint research and development.** Encourage collaborative research projects between countries of the Global South to address shared challenges, such as food security, public health and digital transformation. Joint R&D can foster innovation and build local expertise.
- **Support technology transfer and investments in R&D.** Facilitate the sharing of technologies, particularly in areas such as renewable energy, digital transformation and healthcare. Technology transfer can help to bridge development gaps and accelerate progress towards sustainable development goals. Support/encourage investments in research and development in the Global South.
- **Improve the monitoring and evaluation of SSC**, including the data collection, analysis, interpretation, impact evaluation and use of data for decision-making purposes.

5. Advocate for inclusive global governance.

Advocate for reforms in global institutions to ensure that the voices and priorities of the Global South are adequately represented. This includes advocating for fairer trade policies, climate finance and decision-making processes in international forums. Reforming global institutions to reflect the voices and priorities of the Global South is essential for achieving a more equitable international order.

- **Amplify Global-South voices.** Advocate for greater representation of developing countries in international decision-making bodies, such as the UN, WTO and IMF. This ensures that their interests are adequately represented in global policies.
- **Promote SSC in global agendas.** Integrate SSC principles into global development frameworks, such as the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. This aligns SSC initiatives with global priorities and enhances their impact.
- **Foster multilateral partnerships.** Strengthen collaboration between countries of the Global South and international organizations to address transnational challenges, such as climate change, pandemics and economic inequality. Multilateral partnerships can amplify the impact of SSC initiatives.

6. Promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Build trust and solidarity through cultural, educational and professional exchanges. Strengthening interpersonal connections fosters mutual understanding and lays the foundation for deeper and long-term collaboration.

- **Support educational programmes.** Establish scholarships, exchange programmes and vocational training initiatives to build a skilled workforce and foster mutual understanding. Educational exchanges can also promote innovation and knowledge-sharing.
- **Encourage cultural diplomacy.** Promote cultural exchanges and art and media collaborations to strengthen ties between countries of the Global South. Cultural diplomacy can enhance soft power and build a sense of shared identity.
- **Facilitate grass-roots engagement.** Empower local communities to participate in SSC initiatives, ensuring that projects are context-specific and inclusive and focused on the areas that can bring tangible benefits specifically through SSC. Grass-roots engagement fosters ownership and ensures that development benefits reach the most vulnerable populations.

By implementing these strategic actions, SSC can evolve into a powerful force for sustainable development, resilience and global equity (table 4.4). It can help the Global South to navigate the challenges of the twenty-first century while unlocking new opportunities for collective progress.

Table 4.4. Integration of the six key areas of action, ensuring that SSC initiatives are cohesive, impactful and sustainable

Key area	Components	Interconnections with other areas
1. Establish effective modalities	▸ Create dedicated SSC institutions ▸ Leverage digital platforms ▸ Foster regional integration ▸ Promote triangular cooperation	Supports **funding** (institutions mobilize resources), **knowledge-sharing** (digital platforms facilitate exchange) and **global governance** (regional integration amplifies voices).
2. Build an inclusive SSC agenda	▸ Prioritize equity and inclusion ▸ Integrate climate resilience ▸ Focus on capacity-building ▸ Promote local ownership	Aligns with **funding** (equity ensures fair resource allocation), **knowledge-sharing** (capacity-building enhances expertise) and **cultural exchanges** (local ownership fosters trust).
3. Establish a framework for funding	▸ Create South-South development funds ▸ Leverage blended finance ▸ Encourage triangular financing ▸ Promote philanthropic and private-sector engagement	Enables **effective modalities** (funding sustains platforms), **inclusive agenda** (equitable resource distribution) and **knowledge-sharing** (funds support innovation).
4. Strengthen knowledge-sharing	▸ Develop knowledge repositories ▸ Promote joint research and development ▸ Support technology transfer	Reinforces **effective modalities** (digital platforms for sharing), **inclusive agenda** (R&D addresses local needs), and **global governance** (knowledge informs advocacy).
5. Advocate for inclusive governance	▸ Amplify Global-South voices ▸ Promote SSC in global agendas ▸ Foster multilateral partnerships	Connects with **effective modalities** (regional integration strengthens advocacy), **funding** (partnerships attract resources) and **cultural exchanges** (solidarity builds political will).
6. Promote cultural exchanges	▸ Support educational programmes ▸ Encourage cultural diplomacy ▸ Facilitate grass-roots engagement	Enhances **inclusive agenda** (grass-roots engagement ensures equity), **knowledge-sharing** (educational programmes build expertise) and **global governance** (cultural diplomacy fosters solidarity).

4.3 Harnessing diversity in South-South cooperation: A framework for common guidelines

The new strategic pathways for SSC must recognize that its strength lies in the participation of a wide range of actors, each contributing unique strengths, resources and perspectives (table 4.5). This diversity is one of the greatest assets of SSC, enabling it to address complex and interconnected challenges through multifaceted and context-specific approaches. From national governments and regional organizations to civil society, private-sector actors and academic institutions, the involvement of diverse stakeholders ensures that SSC initiatives are inclusive, innovative and adaptable to local needs.

Table 4.5. Active actors in South-South cooperation

Key area	Components
1. National governments	▸ Shape SSC policies and provide funding. ▸ Facilitate cross-border partnerships. ▸ Align SSC initiatives with national development priorities. ▸ Ensure political support.
2. Regional organizations	▸ Provide platforms for regional collaboration. ▸ Enable pooling of resources and coordination on shared challenges such as infrastructure, trade and climate adaptation.
3. Civil society organizations (CSOs)	▸ Bring grass-roots perspectives to SSC. ▸ Ensure inclusivity and address the needs of marginalized populations. ▸ Monitor and advocate for equitable outcomes.
4. Private-sector actors	▸ Contribute new collaborative business models, innovation, investment and technical expertise. ▸ Engage in public-private partnerships (PPPs) for infrastructure, technology transfer and renewable energy.
5. Academic and research institutions	▸ Provide evidence-based insights and conduct research. ▸ Develop innovative solutions to development challenges. ▸ Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building through training and collaborative research.
6. International organizations	▸ Provide funding, technical assistance and platforms for dialogue. ▸ Align SSC initiatives with global development goals such as the SDGs.
7. Philanthropic foundations	▸ Contribute funding and expertise to SSC projects. ▸ Focus on areas such as health, education and technology.
8. Citizens in the Global South	▸ Contribute to people-to-people exchanges and more active participation in SSC.

Given this diversity, SSC must adopt flexible modalities that accommodate the unique contributions of each actor. A one-size-fits-all approach risks stifling creativity, excluding smaller or less-resourced participants, and undermining the very principles of mutual benefit and solidarity that underpin SSC. Instead of aiming for standardization, which can lead to rigidity and inefficiency, SSC should focus on establishing common guidelines for implementation, reporting and evaluation. These guidelines would provide a shared framework to enhance coherence, accountability and effectiveness while still allowing for customization based on local contexts and priorities.

For example, common guidelines could include standardized metrics for measuring progress, transparent reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability, and participatory evaluation processes to capture diverse perspectives. Such an approach would enable SSC to maintain its adaptability and inclusivity while fostering greater alignment and collaboration among stakeholders.

Moreover, the adoption of common guidelines would help to address some of the systemic challenges facing SSC, such as fragmented efforts, duplication of initiatives and difficulties in scaling successful projects. By providing a clear framework for action, these guidelines can enhance the impact of SSC, ensuring that it remains a powerful tool for sustainable development in the Global South.

In essence, the new strategic pathways for SSC must strike a balance between flexibility and structure. By embracing the diversity of its actors and adopting common guidelines, SSC can leverage its unique strengths to address the complex challenges of the twenty-first century while fostering innovation, inclusivity and accountability.

4.3.1 Adopting common guidelines for implementation, reporting and evaluation

While SSC benefits from its diversity, the lack of standardized processes can lead to inefficiencies, duplication of efforts and difficulties in measuring impact. Common guidelines provide a shared framework that ensures consistency and comparability across initiatives without imposing rigid uniformity. These guidelines should focus on the following areas:

1. implementation

- **flexible frameworks.** Develop adaptable frameworks that allow for customization based on local contexts while maintaining alignment with overarching SSC goals.
- **stakeholder engagement.** Establish protocols for inclusive participation, ensuring that all actors – especially marginalized groups – have a voice in decision-making.
- **resource allocation.** Create transparent criteria for resource distribution, prioritizing projects with high impact and scalability.

2. reporting

- **standardized metrics.** Define key performance indicators (KPIs) for measuring progress, such as economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability.
- **transparency and accountability.** Require regular reporting on project outcomes, financial expenditures and lessons learned to build trust among stakeholders.
- **knowledge-sharing.** Encourage the documentation and dissemination of best practices, challenges and success stories to inform future initiatives.

3. evaluation

- **impact assessment.** Use tools such as environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) to evaluate the long-term effects of SSC projects.
- **participatory approaches.** Involve local communities and stakeholders in the evaluation process to ensure that their perspectives are reflected.
- **continuous improvement.** Establish feedback loops to identify areas for improvement and adapt strategies based on lessons learned.

By adopting common guidelines, SSC can enhance its effectiveness while preserving the flexibility and diversity that make it unique. These guidelines provide a shared language and framework for collaboration, enabling actors to work together more efficiently and achieve greater impact.

In conclusion, the operationalization of SSC demands a deliberate and inclusive approach that accounts for the diversity of actors involved. From national governments and regional organizations to civil society,

private-sector entities and academic institutions, each stakeholder brings unique strengths, resources and perspectives to the table. To bridge the gap between vision and reality, specific mechanisms and actionable steps are indispensable. Without well-defined structures and processes, even the most ambitious strategies risk remaining theoretical or fragmented, failing to deliver tangible and sustainable results.

The Global South faces a unique set of interconnected challenges – climate change, economic inequality, technological gaps and geopolitical marginalization – alongside unprecedented opportunities for growth and collaboration. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated and systematic approach, supported by mechanisms such as institutional frameworks, digital platforms and innovative funding models. These tools enable the pooling of resources, sharing of knowledge and alignment of efforts, ensuring that SSC initiatives are scalable, sustainable and impactful.

Furthermore, operational setups such as monitoring and evaluation systems, capacity-building programmes and participatory decision-making processes are critical to ensuring accountability, transparency and responsiveness to local needs. By embedding these structures into the SSC framework, the Global South can leverage its collective strengths to address shared challenges and seize new opportunities.

Ultimately, the success of SSC hinges on striking a balance between flexibility and structure. While the diversity of actors and contexts demands adaptable approaches, the complexity of global challenges necessitates well-defined mechanisms to ensure coherence and impact. By adopting these strategies, SSC can evolve from a conceptual framework into a powerful force for sustainable development, resilience and global equity. The path forward is clear: through collaboration, innovation and shared commitment, the Global South can redefine its role in the twenty-first century, driving transformative change for generations to come.

4.4 Conclusions

The fourth chapter of this report presents a comprehensive and forward-looking vision for the future of SSC, anchored in resilience, equity and sustainability. It offers a strategic response to a global context marked by deep systemic transformations – from demographic transitions and climate disruptions to geopolitical fragmentation and technological acceleration. In doing so, the chapter articulates a roadmap that moves SSC from a reactive modality to a proactive and strategic force in shaping a more just and multipolar world order.

At its core, the chapter affirms that the Global South is no longer a peripheral actor but an emerging centre of gravity in global affairs. Its demographic ascendancy, expanding markets, cultural influence and growing assertiveness in multilateral forums collectively underscore the need for a reimagined SSC that aligns with contemporary realities and future aspirations. As the chapter makes clear, the Global South youthful population and urban growth offer a generational opportunity to transform economic structures, reduce inequalities and advance sustainability – provided that they are met with adequate investments in education, infrastructure, health, innovation and governance.

The framing of the Anthropocene and geo-economic fragmentation as intersecting crises deepens the strategic urgency of SSC. These dual challenges expose the vulnerability of developing countries while simultaneously creating space for solidarity-based cooperation models that reject extractive paradigms and promote mutual benefit. It is in this context that SSC must transcend its historical limitations – formality, weak institutional structures, uneven capacities and limited financing – and evolve into a robust, structured and impact-driven modality.

A defining contribution of this chapter is the articulation of strategic pathways for SSC that are both aspirational and actionable. These pathways propose a reconfiguration of SSC across six interconnected dimensions:

1. **institutionalization and modalities.** The establishment of long-term platforms, regional networks and dedicated SSC institutions is seen as central to ensuring continuity, policy coherence and joint action. Triangular cooperation and digital platforms emerge as catalytic tools for scaling collaboration.

2. **inclusive and sustainable agendas.** Emphasizing the need for equitable participation and the centrality of local ownership, the chapter advocates for SSC that is responsive to marginalized populations, environmentally sound and aligned with national priorities.

3. **innovative financing.** Recognizing the global financing divide, the chapter promotes the creation of South-South development funds, the adoption of blended finance mechanisms and mobilization of private capital in a manner that is inclusive and impact-oriented.

4. **sharing of knowledge and technology.** SSC must accelerate innovation through knowledge repositories, joint R&D and technology transfer frameworks that build endogenous capacities rather than perpetuate dependencies.

5. **reforming global governance.** The chapter positions SSC as a platform for the Global South to amplify its voice in reshaping global governance structures to reflect equity, fairness and solidarity.

6. **cultural and people-to-people exchange.** Interpersonal connectivity, cultural diplomacy and grass-roots engagement are underscored as vital components of a cooperative framework rooted in mutual understanding and shared identity.

The chapter offers a critical lens on the current shortcomings of SSC – fragmented efforts, environmental oversights, political volatility and insufficient accountability mechanisms – and makes the case for adopting common guidelines for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Such guidelines, while preserving the flexibility that makes SSC unique, would provide much-needed structure to ensure that efforts are impactful, scalable and transparent.

The inclusion of youth perspectives adds further depth, revealing both enthusiasm and a sense of exclusion from strategic decision-making. This highlights the necessity of mainstreaming youth engagement in SSC not just as beneficiaries but as co-creators of future development trajectories.

In conclusion, chapter 4 positions SSC not simply as an alternative to traditional cooperation models but as a transformative approach capable of driving systemic change. By integrating innovative frameworks, reinforcing institutional capacities and embracing a shared vision for the future, SSC can rise to the demands of the twenty-first century. Its success will depend on the political will of its champions, the inclusivity of its processes and the agility of its strategies in responding to an increasingly volatile global landscape.

The chapter closes on a compelling note: **South-South cooperation must be more than a diplomatic instrument or development modality; it must become a cornerstone of a new internationalism led by the Global South. This future is not automatic; it must be designed, financed, governed and implemented with resolve. In doing so, the Global South can not only reshape its own destiny but also contribute to a more balanced, cooperative and humane global order.**

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Annexes

Annex I.
Participants at the Bandung Conference, 1955

Organizers	Participants from Asian countries	Participants from African countries
› Indonesia › India › Pakistan › Burma (Myanmar) › Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	› Afghanistan › Cambodia › China › Cyprus › Iran › Iraq › Lebanon › Japan › Jordan › Laos › Nepal › Philippines › Saudi Arabia › Syria › Thailand › Turkey › North and South Vietnam › Yemen	› Egypt › Ethiopia › Ghana › Liberia › Libya › Sudan

Annex II.
South-South cooperation: Guiding principles and objectives

South-South cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The South-South cooperation agenda and South-South cooperation initiatives must be determined by the countries of the South, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.

The basic objectives of South-South cooperation, according to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries endorsed by the General Assembly in 1978 (A/RES/33/134), are to:

- foster the self-reliance of developing countries by enhancing their creative capacity to find solutions to their development problems in keeping with their own aspirations, values and specific needs;
- promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among developing countries through the exchange of experiences; the pooling, sharing and use of their technical and other resources; and the development of their complementary capacities;
- strengthen the capacity of developing countries to identify and analyze together their main development issues and formulate the requisite strategies to address them;
- increase the quantity and enhance the quality of international development cooperation through the pooling of capacities to improve the effectiveness of the resources devoted to such cooperation;
- create and strengthen existing technological capacities in the developing countries in order to improve the effectiveness with which such capacities are used and to improve the capacity of developing countries to absorb and adapt technology and skills to meet their specific developmental needs;
- increase and improve communications among developing countries, leading to a greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge and experience as well as the creation of new knowledge in tackling development problems;
- recognize and respond to the problems and requirements of the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States and the countries most seriously affected by, for example, natural disasters and other crises; and
- enable developing countries to achieve a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international cooperation for development.

Source: UNOSSC, "About South-South and triangular cooperation". Available at https://unsouthsouth.org/about/about-sstc/.

Annex III.
South-South cooperation principles

South-South Cooperation Principles*

a. South-South cooperation is a common endeavour of peoples and countries of the South and must be pursued as an expression of South-South solidarity and a strategy for economic independence and self-reliance of the South based on their common objectives and solidarity;

b. South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South;

c. South-South cooperation must not be seen as a replacement for North-South cooperation. Strengthening South-South cooperation must not be a measure of coping with the receding interest of the developed world in assisting developing countries;

d. Cooperation between countries of the South must not be analyzed and evaluated using the same standards as those used for North-South relations;

e. Financial contributions from other developing countries should not be seen as Official Development Assistance from these countries to other countries of the South. These are merely expressions of solidarity and cooperation borne out of shared experiences and sympathies;

f. South-South cooperation is a development agenda based on premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations. South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion;

g. South-South cooperation is based on a strong, genuine, broad-based partnership and solidarity;

h. South-South cooperation is based on complete equality, mutual respect and mutual benefit;

i. South-South cooperation respects national sovereignty in the context of shared responsibility;

j. South-South cooperation strives for strengthened multilateralism in the promotion of an action- oriented approach to development challenges;

k. South-South cooperation promotes the exchange of best practices and support among developing countries in the common pursuit of their broad development objectives (encompassing all aspects of international relations and not just in the traditional economic and technical areas);

l. South-South cooperation is based on the collective self-reliance of developing countries;

m. South-South cooperation seeks to enable developing countries to play a more active role in international policy and decision-making processes, in support of their efforts to achieve sustainable development;

n. The modalities and mechanisms for promoting South-South cooperation are based on bilateral, sub-regional, regional and interregional cooperation and integration as well as multilateral cooperation.

*As reaffirmed in the Ministerial Declaration of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, 25 September 2009, New York, USA (see http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2009.htm, para. 70), based on the South-South cooperation principles recommended by the Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-XII), 10-13 June 2008, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, and adopted in the Ministerial Declaration of the 32 Annual Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, 26 September 2008, New York, USA (see http://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2008.htm, para. 65).

Annex IV.
Quantification of South-South Cooperation in the Context of Target 17.3 from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[110]

Group A comprises financial SSC modalities that may be directly reported through monetization (table 1).

Table 1. Financial SSC modalities (reported directly through monetization)

GROUP A: Financial modalities of South-South cooperation (to be reported directly through monetization):	
A.1 - Loans	
A.2 - Concessionality (grant element) in credit operations between developing countries	
A.3 - Interest-free loans	
A.4 - Non-refundable grants	A.4.1 - Non-refundable grants: developmental purposes
	A.4.2 - Non-refundable grants: humanitarian purposes
A.5 - Contributions to international organizations, development Banks and funds	A.5.1 - Regular contributions to international organizations
	A.5.2 - Voluntary contributions (excluding self-benefit)
	A.5.3 - Capital paid-in to IFI and Regional/Multilateral Funds
A.6 - Direct cash transfers under social development public programmes in partner countries (approved by the partner country)	

Group B consists of non-financial SSC modalities suitable for monetization, such as training, scholarships, medical supplies, scientific-related infrastructure such as equipment, etc. (table 2).

Table 2. Non-financial SSC modalities that may be reported through monetization

GROUP B: Non-financial modalities of South-South cooperation (suitable for monetization):	
B.1 - Infrastructure projects	
B.2 - Goods and materials	
B.3 - Scholarships	
B.4 - Humanitarian assistance (between developing countries)	B.4.1 - Donations of food, medicine, medical supplies and/or other materials
	B.4.2 - Assistance to refugees
	B.4.3 - Dispatch of humanitarian missions: health professionals; first-aid workers; teacher
B.5 - Training	
B.6 - Participation in peacekeeping operations	
B.7 - Technical cooperation	B.7.1 - Experts - technical hours/opportunity costs
	B.7.2 - Per Diems, daily allowances and airfare
	B.7.3 - Services; materials; equipment; supplies
B.8 - Volunteers	
B.9 - Joint research	B.9.1 - Scientific-related infrastructure (labs, equipment, supplies)
	B.9.2 - Research personnel - working hours/opportunity costs
B.10 - Administrative/Operational/Management/Coordination associated with the provision of SSC	

[110] Outcome document of the sub-group on South-South cooperation, Annex II.

Group C comprises the same non-financial SSC modalities as Group B but that may be quantified through non-monetary units of measurement such as number of hours worked, number of documents published, volume/quantity of supplies donated, etc. (table 3).

Table 3. Non-financial modalities of SSC quantifiable through non-monetized methodologies

GROUP C: Non-financial modalities of South-South cooperation (suitable for monetization):	
C.1 - Infrastructure projects	
C.2 - Goods and materials	
C.3 - Scholarships	
C.4 - Humanitarian assistance (between developing countries)	C.4.1 - Donation of food, medicine, medical supplies and or other needed materials in case of humanitarian distress situations
	C.4.2 - Assistance to refugees
	C.4.3 - Dispatch of humanitarian missions: health professionals; first-aid workers; teacher
C.5 - Training	
C.6 - Participation in peacekeeping operations	
C.7 - Technical cooperation	C.7.1 - Experts - technical hours
	C.7.2 - Services; materials; equipment; supplies
C.8 - Volunteers	
C.9 - Joint research	C.9.1 - Scientific-related infrastructure (labs, equipment, supplies)
	C.9.2 - Research personnel - working hours/opportunity costs
C.10 - Administrative/Operational/Management/Coordination associated with the provision of SSC	

Annex V.
South-South Measurement Glossary[111]

"**1. Loans (only concessional amount)** – Loans are transfers in cash or in kind for which the recipient partner incurs legal debt (and the resulting claim is not intended to be traded). Only the concessionality portion of the loan will be reported, in accordance with the definition of the IMF (International Monetary Fund).

2. Interest-free loans – Interest-free loans are loans to a partner without interest charges.

3. Grants - Grants are transfers in cash or in kind for which no legal debt is incurred by the recipient.

4. Non-refundable grants – Non-refundable grants consist of contributions provided to a partner institution without the expectation of reflows.

5. Contributions to international organizations, development banks and funds

5.1. Regular contributions – Regular contributions to development banks, development funds, international development and humanitarian organizations. Only the coefficient for development activities for developing countries may be reported. Each multilateral institution must report annually the percentage of direct expenditures on projects for developing countries.

5.2. Voluntary contributions – Occasional voluntary contributions for development projects of development banks, development funds and multilateral development organizations, excluding self-benefit activities.

5.3. Capital paid in to IFI and regional/multilateral funds – Report, in the year of payment, of the capital paid to IFI and regional/multilateral funds where only developing countries are eligible for finance, and the final destination may be associated with the SDG.

6. Direct cash transfers under social development public programmes in partner countries - Direct cash transfers expenditure benefiting individuals, in the context of public programmes of sustainable development in partner countries (with the consent and support of the partner country).

7. Expenditures in the provider country not included elsewhere - Includes domestic cooperation expenses that can be reported to support global and regional sustainable development challenges for the benefit of developing countries, for which it is not possible to identify a specific partner country.

8. South-South trade (Indicator 17.11) - Credits to finance exports originating from developing countries.

9. South-to-South remittances (Indicator 17.3.2) - Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP, among Global South countries.

10. Debt relief among Southern countries (Indicator for 17.4) - All actions relating to debt restructuring (forgiveness, conversions, swaps, buy-backs, rescheduling, refinancing), among Global South countries. (SDG 17.4.1 is included in statistical annex, table 1 (total debt service).

11. South-South grants and other research subsidies (and capital investment in joint research projects) (Indicator 17.6) - Research grants awarded to foreign researchers from Global South countries and capital investment in joint research projects for sustainable development, supported by bilateral, triangular or multilateral agreements.

12. Scholarships - Includes financial awards for individual students from Global South countries, contributions to trainees and indirect ("imputed") costs of tuition in provider partner countries to nationals of South[ern] countries.

13. Humanitarian assistance (between developing countries) - Humanitarian cooperation conducted by the provider partner country or through multilateral channels for the benefit of Southern countries. Includes contributions, donations of food, medicine, medical supplies and other needed materials in case of humanitarian distress.

13.1. Voluntary contributions - Occasional voluntary contributions for humanitarian assistance to international development and humanitarian organizations, excluding self-benefit activities.

[111] Outcome document of the sub-group on South-South cooperation (unctad.org), Annex III.

13.2. Type: donations of food, medicine, medical supplies and or other needed materials in case of humanitarian distress - Covers expenses with donations of food, medicine, medical supplies and/or other needed materials in case of humanitarian distress.

13.3. Type: assistance to refugees - Covers expenses on the temporary sustenance of refugees and protected persons in refugee-like situations in the provider country as well as financial, material or technical support to refugees in other host countries. Also includes support to refugees returning voluntarily to their countries of origin.

13.4. Type: dispatch of humanitarian missions: health professionals, first-aid workers, teachers - Covers operational expenses, salaries and all non-salary costs of experts (including those of public officials of the reporting country) such as flights, per-diem, accommodation and other transportation costs.

14. Training - Includes the provision of training using internationally or locally recruited experts. All non-salary costs of experts (including those of public officials of the reporting country) such as flights, per diem, accommodation, internal transportation within the recipient country and training, are also included. This category also covers training and research as well as various capacity-building activities such as conferences, seminars, workshops, exchange visits.

15. Participation in peacekeeping operations - Spends related to UN peacekeeping operations and other peacekeeping operations mandated or authorized by a UNSC resolution. Operations should support the creation of conditions for lasting peace and not have an explicitly belligerent role and approach. Moreover, they should comply with the three basic principles of UN peacekeeping operations: consent of the parties[112]; impartiality[113]; and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate[114].

16. Technical cooperation - Projects with a set of interrelated activities to be carried out in order to achieve a specific sustainable development objective, within a previously established period of time, under an official legal framework between Southern countries.

16.1. Experts - technical hours/opportunity costs - Expenses related to hiring specialists, technical hours of government officials and opportunity costs, directly associated with the technical cooperation activity between the partner countries.

16.2. Per diems, daily allowances and airfares - Expenses related to per diems, daily allowances and airfares, directly associated with the technical cooperation activity between the partner countries.

16.3. Services, materials, equipment [and] supplies - Expenses for the acquisition of services, materials, equipment and supplies necessary to carry out the technical cooperation activity between the partner countries.

17. Volunteers - Non-salary costs of experts such as flights, per diem, accommodation and other transportation costs.

18. Joint research - Disbursements with joint research projects between two or more developing countries, covering the working time of scientists/specialists from the reporting country, opportunity costs and expenses with services, materials, equipment and supplies mobilized to develop them. This consists of scientific-related infrastructure (labs, equipment, supplies) and research personnel, including working hours and opportunity costs.

19. Administrative/Operational/Management/Coordination - In-kind expenses (human and physical inputs) with administrative, operational, coordination activities directly associated with SSC [and TrC] but not to a specific bilateral activity. Includes human and physical inputs associated with technical cooperation projects, scholarships, volunteer's management, training, humanitarian assistance and any other South-South cooperation modalities" (Ibid.).

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[112] "Consent of the parties: United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed with the consent of the main parties to the conflict. This requires a commitment by the parties to a political process and their acceptance of a peacekeeping operation mandated to support that process." (Ibid.)

[113] "Impartiality: United Nations peacekeeping operations must implement their mandate without favor or prejudice to any party. Impartiality is crucial to maintaining the consent and co-operation of the main parties. Impartiality may be seen as playing a fundamental function in drawing the limits to the use of force and its purpose. Impartiality does not prohibit peacekeepers from using military force, but links and limits the use of force to a political process and the search for a political solution. The logic differs for counterterrorism, which requires the identification of an enemy." (Ibid.)

[114] "Non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate: A United Nations peacekeeping operation only uses force as a measure of last resort, when other methods of persuasion have been exhausted, and an operation must always exercise restraint when doing so. The ultimate aim of the use of force is to influence and deter spoilers working against the peace process or seeking to harm civilians; and not to seek their military defeat." (Ibid.)

Annex VI.
LDC, SIDS and LLDC Member States of the Group of 77

LDC	SIDS	LLDC
› Afghanistan (LLDCs) › Angola › Bangladesh › Benin › Burkina Faso (LLDCs) › Burundi › Cambodia › Central African Republic (LLDCs) › Chad (LLDCs) › Comoros (SIDS) › Democratic Republic of Congo › Djibouti › Eritrea › Ethiopia (LLDCs) › Gambia › Guinea › Guinea-Bissau (SIDS) › Haiti › Kiribati (SIDS) › Lao People's Democratic Republic (LLDCs) › Lesotho (LLDCs) › Liberia › Madagascar › Malawi (LLDCs) › Mali (LLDCs) › Mauritania › Mozambique › Myanmar › Nepal (LLDCs) › Niger (LLDC) › Rwanda (LLDCs) › Senegal › Sierra Leone › Solomon Islands › Somalia › South Sudan (LLDCs) › Sudan › Timor-Leste (SIDS) › Togo › Uganda (LLDCs) › United Republic of Tanzania › Yemen › Zambia (LLDCs)	› Antigua and Barbuda › Bahamas › Barbados › Belize › Cabo Verde › Comoros › Cuba › Dominica › Dominican Republic › Fiji › Grenada › Guinea-Bissau › Guyana › Haiti › Jamaica › Kiribati › Maldives › Marshall Islands › Micronesia (Federated States of) › Mauritius › Nauru › Papua New Guinea › Samoa › Sao Tome and Principe › Singapore › St. Kitts and Nevis › St. Lucia › St. Vincent and the Grenadines › Seychelles › Solomon Islands › Suriname › Timor-Leste › Tonga › Trinidad and Tobago › Vanuatu	› Afghanistan › Azerbaijan › Bhutan › Botswana › Burkina Faso › Burundi › Central African Republic › Chad › Eswatini › Ethiopia › Lao People's Democratic Republic › Lesotho › Malawi › Mali › Mongolia › Nepal › Niger › Paraguay › Plurinational State of Bolivia › Rwanda › South Sudan › Tajikistan › Turkmenistan › Uganda › Zambia › Zimbabwe

Annex VII. Statistical Annex

Table 1. Economic indicators

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
SA	Afghanistan	1,992.4	0.0	0.0			2.2
ECA	Albania	17,975.8	0.0	0.1	1,630.2	8.5	9.2
AS	Algeria	15,159.3	0.2	0.1	1,216.3	0.8	0.9
	Andorra	64,631.3	0.0				0.0
SSA	Angola	7,244.9	0.2	0.0	-2,085.6	33.4	0.0
LAC	Antigua and Barbuda	28,967.3	0.0	0.0	326.7		1.9
LAC	Argentina	27,105.0	0.3	0.2	22,911.0	51.4	0.2
ECA	Armenia	19,230.2	0.0	0.1	442.6	18.3	10.4
	Australia	60,409.0	1.6	0.7	29,874.0		0.1
	Austria	64,336.0	0.9	1.1	4,465.6		0.6
ECA	Azerbaijan	21,262.3	0.1	0.1	252.8	4.9	5.0
LAC	Bahamas	33,105.6	0.0	0.1	1,459.0		0.4
AS	Bahrain	57,213.1	0.1	0.2	6,839.6		0.0
SA	Bangladesh	8,242.4	0.2	0.1	3,004.4	12.6	4.7
LAC	Barbados	19,224.5	0.0	0.0	224.9		1.5
ECA	Belarus	27,718.3	0.2	0.1	2,060.2	16.2	2.0
	Belgium	62,876.2	2.4	2.0	23,019.1		2.3
LAC	Belize	12,455.3	0.0	0.0	49.7	7.3	5.0
SSA	Benin	3,721.2	0.0	0.0	433.9	21.2	1.3
SA	Bhutan	14,061.3	0.0	0.0	18.3	16.3	2.7
LAC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	9,844.0	0.0	0.0	293.7	14.3	3.3
ECA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	19,829.3	0.0	0.0	946.0	12.7	10.5
SSA	Botswana	18,846.3	0.0	0.0	198.5	3.8	0.3
LAC	Brazil	19,018.2	1.4	0.6	65,897.2	53.8	0.3
EAP	Brunei Darussalam	76,828.4	0.0	0.0	-51.1		0.0
	Bulgaria	33,111.7	0.2	0.2	3,913.2		2.3
SSA	Burkina Faso	2,482.1	0.0	0.0	85.4	13.8	3.0
SSA	Burundi	828.9	0.0	0.0	28.5	10.9	1.4
SSA	Cabo Verde	9,288.4	0.0	0.0	118.3	16.1	14.1
EAP	Cambodia	6,690.6	0.1	0.0	3,958.8	8.7	8.9
SSA	Cameroon	4,870.6	0.0	0.0	799.2	19.9	1.3
	Canada	56,686.9	2.4	1.7	50,324.1		0.0

continues ›

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
SSA	Central African Republic	1,135.1	0.0	0.0	38.7	9.7	0.0
SSA	Chad	1,679.5	0.0	0.0	913.3	7.9	0.0
LAC	Chile	29,490.8	0.4	0.1	21,026.9		0.0
EAP	China	22,137.6	14.2	5.9	163,253.5	10.3	0.1
LAC	Colombia	18,324.9	0.2	0.2	17,446.2	37.0	2.8
SSA	Comoros	3,498.8	0.0	0.0	5.0	11.6	22.7
SSA	Congo	6,172.3	0.0	0.0	626.5	8.0	0.0
SSA	Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	1,455.8	0.1	0.0	1,634.6	1.6	2.1
LAC	Costa Rica	25,989.9	0.1	0.2	3,921.4	14.6	0.9
	Croatia	41,100.3	0.1	0.3	2,749.1		7.6
LAC	Cuba		0.0	0.1			
	Cyprus	52,148.0	0.0	0.3	3,447.0		1.8
	Czechia	47,452.4	1.1	0.5	7,785.5		1.4
SSA	Côte d'Ivoire	6,485.3	0.1	0.0	1,752.6	19.7	1.5
	Denmark	71,390.0	0.6	1.8	8,760.5		0.3
AS	Djibouti	6,400.6	0.0	0.0	137.0	1.6	1.6
LAC	Dominica	17,420.3	0.0	0.0	14.0	24.4	6.2
LAC	Dominican Republic	23,087.9	0.1	0.2	4,390.2	18.8	9.1
LAC	Ecuador	14,472.3	0.1	0.0	372.3	18.4	4.1
AS	Egypt	16,691.1	0.2	0.4	9,840.6	30.4	5.9
LAC	El Salvador	11,404.3	0.0	0.1	759.7	83.0	23.7
SSA	Equatorial Guinea	15,688.2	0.0	0.0	141.8		
SSA	Eritrea		0.0		2.1		
	Estonia	41,668.8	0.1	0.2	4,577.3		1.2
SSA	Eswatini (Kingdom of)	10,132.2	0.0	0.0	29.3	7.3	2.6
SSA	Ethiopia	2,755.5	0.0	0.1	3,263.0	14.3	0.4
EAP	Fiji	13,652.5	0.0	0.0	91.0	6.9	9.2
	Finland	56,454.9	0.3	0.5	-1,676.0		0.2
	France	53,969.0	2.7	4.7	42,031.6		1.2
SSA	Gabon	18,702.7	0.0	0.0	1,150.7		0.1
SSA	Gambia	2,932.3	0.0	0.0	208.4	8.3	22.9
ECA	Georgia	22,590.5	0.0	0.1	1,594.7	20.8	15.6
	Germany	63,097.7	7.1	5.8	36,697.7		0.5
SSA	Ghana	6,796.5	0.1	0.1	1,354.4	5.0	6.3
	Greece	36,821.3	0.2	0.7	5,430.1		0.3
LAC	Grenada	16,946.5	0.0	0.0	181.0	6.5	5.8
LAC	Guatemala	12,389.4	0.1	0.1	1,552.3	9.1	19.2
SSA	Guinea	3,949.3	0.0	0.0	893.2	2.5	2.5
SSA	Guinea-Bissau	2,578.8	0.0	0.0	23.8	20.8	12.6

continues ›

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
LAC	Guyana	49,315.2	0.1	0.0	7,197.9	2.7	3.6
LAC	Haiti	2,956.5	0.0	0.0	32.0	5.6	18.8
LAC	Honduras	6,468.3	0.0	0.0	1,076.4	17.2	26.8
	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	64,467.6	2.4	1.2	112,675.6		0.1
	Hungary	40,168.0	0.7	0.4	6,016.4		2.2
	Iceland	66,880.1	0.0	0.1	977.1		0.7
SA	India	9,160.1	1.8	4.3	28,163.3	10.1	3.3
EAP	Indonesia	13,889.9	1.1	0.3	21,627.7	19.5	1.0
SA	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	15,912.0	0.4	0.1	1,422.3	0.3	
AS	Iraq	12,711.1	0.5	0.1	-5,273.3	4.0	0.4
	Ireland	115,401.1	0.9	5.0	-9,164.8		0.1
	Israel	48,356.1	0.3	1.3	16,422.4		0.2
	Italy	52,588.7	2.8	1.7	18,219.4		0.5
LAC	Jamaica	10,291.3	0.0	0.1	430.9	31.0	21.6
	Japan	45,948.7	3.0	2.3	21,433.4		0.1
AS	Jordan	9,362.6	0.1	0.1	842.8	16.1	10.1
ECA	Kazakhstan	34,703.2	0.3	0.1	3,223.3	47.1	0.2
SSA	Kenya	5,683.0	0.0	0.1	1,504.3	30.2	3.6
EAP	Kiribati	3,195.9	0.0	0.0	2.2		12.7
	Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of)		0.0		13.3		
	Korea (Republic of)	49,995.5	2.7	1.9	15,178.4		0.5
	Kosovo (under UNSC res. 1244)	13,642.7			912.9	5.5	17.1
AS	Kuwait	46,458.2	0.4	0.1	2,112.7		0.0
ECA	Kyrgyzstan	6,403.1	0.0	0.0	490.4	27.3	27.9
EAP	Lao People's Democratic Republic	8,372.2	0.0	0.0	1,668.2	12.5	1.5
	Latvia	38,333.2	0.1	0.1	1,212.1		3.2
AS	Lebanon	11,474.8	0.0	0.1	655.4	34.5	27.5
SSA	Lesotho	2,595.8	0.0	0.0	-25.6	8.9	23.8
SSA	Liberia	1,616.9	0.0	0.0	744.6	10.7	17.2
AS	Libya	12,478.1	0.1	0.0			
	Liechtenstein						
	Lithuania	46,118.1	0.2	0.3	1,867.8		1.0
	Luxembourg	130,373.5	0.1	1.9	-62,807.6		2.7
SSA	Madagascar	1,643.3	0.0	0.0	414.5	6.1	2.5
SSA	Malawi	1,648.4	0.0	0.0	208.3	9.7	2.0
EAP	Malaysia	32,812.3	1.3	0.4	8,652.7		0.4
SA	Maldives	22,287.0	0.0	0.1	761.5	10.1	0.1
SSA	Mali	2,394.7	0.0	0.0	698.0	5.7	5.6
	Malta	59,548.1	0.0	0.3	20,899.8		1.2

continues ›

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
EAP	Marshall Islands	6,786.7	0.0	0.0	2.0		3.2
SSA	Mauritania	6,258.7	0.0	0.0	873.4	9.4	1.1
SSA	Mauritius	26,590.4	0.0	0.0	759.8	14.0	2.1
LAC	Mexico	21,874.0	2.5	0.5	36,058.0	8.1	4.2
EAP	Micronesia (Federated States of)	3,886.7	0.0				5.5
ECA	Moldova (Republic of)	15,855.3	0.0	0.0	428.4	19.0	14.0
	Monaco						
EAP	Mongolia	16,222.9	0.1	0.0	2,247.6	30.4	2.3
ECA	Montenegro	27,342.8	0.0	0.0	526.2	18.5	13.3
AS	Morocco	8,868.7	0.2	0.3	1,094.6	9.2	8.5
SSA	Mozambique	1,511.6	0.0	0.0	2,509.4	45.1	1.6
EAP	Myanmar	5,364.1	0.1	0.0	1,520.2	7.0	2.0
SSA	Namibia	10,105.5	0.0	0.0	2,345.0		0.4
EAP	Nauru	12,462.8	0.0	0.0			
SA	Nepal	4,859.8	0.0	0.0	73.9	12.2	22.8
	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	70,610.2	3.9	3.8	-168,449.7		0.2
	New Zealand	48,580.2	0.2	0.2	3,567.8		0.2
LAC	Nicaragua	7,486.9	0.0	0.0	1,230.1	27.4	20.6
SSA	Niger	1,703.4	0.0	0.0	966.0	14.1	4.7
SSA	Nigeria	5,593.1	0.2	0.1	1,872.5	14.7	4.3
ECA	North Macedonia	23,323.9	0.0	0.0	666.8	15.9	3.4
	Norway	90,160.2	0.7	0.7	7,960.0		0.1
AS	Oman	38,311.4	0.3	0.0	4,745.4		0.0
SA	Pakistan	5,439.2	0.1	0.1	1,818.0	43.3	8.1
EAP	Palau	15,796.5	0.0	0.0	47.8		0.8
AS	Palestine, State of	5,313.1	0.0	0.0	35.3		21.2
LAC	Panama	35,863.9	0.1	0.2	2,014.6		0.7
EAP	Papua New Guinea	4,174.4	0.1	0.0	-424.8	42.9	0.0
LAC	Paraguay	15,783.1	0.0	0.0	240.7	9.6	1.4
LAC	Peru	15,294.3	0.3	0.1	3,330.6	17.6	1.5
EAP	Philippines	9,901.1	0.3	0.6	6,209.7	10.8	9.4
	Poland	43,585.1	1.6	1.3	28,685.3		0.9
	Portugal	41,498.4	0.4	0.7	7,220.4		0.4
AS	Qatar	116,159.1	0.4	0.4	-474.2		0.4
	Romania	40,267.3	0.4	0.5	7,130.1		2.9
	Russian Federation	39,753.5	1.8	0.7	8,363.5		0.1
SSA	Rwanda	3,060.0	0.0	0.0	523.3	15.3	3.6
LAC	Saint Kitts and Nevis	30,409.4	0.0	0.0	36.4		3.9
LAC	Saint Lucia	23,403.5	0.0	0.0	185.9	4.7	2.6

continues ›

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
LAC	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	18,335.2	0.0	0.0	78.6	10.7	9.3
EAP	Samoa	6,304.3	0.0	0.0	-3.0	10.4	33.6
	San Marino	70,887.6					1.1
SSA	Sao Tome and Principe	5,541.3	0.0	0.0	18.4	5.1	1.9
AS	Saudi Arabia	55,055.4	1.4	0.4	12,319.0		0.0
SSA	Senegal	4,317.2	0.0	0.0	2,641.3	36.6	10.9
ECA	Serbia	25,718.4	0.1	0.2	4,870.1	13.3	9.0
SSA	Seychelles	29,469.0	0.0	0.0	238.5		0.6
SSA	Sierra Leone	3,034.2	0.0	0.0	263.0	11.9	7.9
EAP	Singapore	127,543.6	2.0	4.1	159,669.6		0.0
	Slovakia	39,171.8	0.5	0.2	180.3		2.0
	Slovenia	47,825.2	0.3	0.2	1,102.9		1.3
EAP	Solomon Islands	2,534.0	0.0	0.0	25.5	4.9	5.1
AS	Somalia	1,402.5	0.0	0.0	676.5	16.9	16.7
SSA	South Africa	13,690.4	0.5	0.2	5,232.8	16.8	0.2
SSA	South Sudan		0.0	0.0	-6.3		
	Spain	47,298.4	1.8	2.4	35,914.3		0.3
SA	Sri Lanka	13,029.5	0.1	0.0	711.8	15.9	5.1
AS	Sudan	2,469.2	0.0	0.0	548.2	3.0	2.9
LAC	Suriname	19,043.7	0.0	0.0	-64.8	25.1	4.1
	Sweden	62,665.2	0.8	1.3	29,417.8		0.6
	Switzerland	81,683.9	1.8	2.1	13,506.8		0.4
AS	Syrian Arab Republic	4,454.9	0.0				
ECA	Tajikistan	4,472.3	0.0	0.0	140.6	10.6	50.9
SSA	Tanzania (United Republic of)	3,620.8	0.0	0.1	1,338.8	15.8	0.9
EAP	Thailand	21,142.7	1.2	0.6	4,547.8	11.8	1.8
EAP	Timor-Leste	4,328.5	0.0	0.0	13.3	2.1	5.8
SSA	Togo	2,767.5	0.0	0.0	33.6	11.3	6.7
EAP	Tonga	6,901.7	0.0	0.0	24.3	11.0	46.9
LAC	Trinidad and Tobago	31,705.8	0.0	0.0	-1,105.0		0.7
AS	Tunisia	12,553.0	0.1	0.1	768.0	24.1	6.1
ECA	Turkmenistan	17,866.4	0.0		1,378.3		
EAP	Tuvalu	5,812.4	0.0	0.0	0.2		4.2
ECA	Türkiye	34,251.6	1.1	1.3	10,439.0	20.7	0.1
SSA	Uganda	2,791.1	0.0	0.0	2,886.0	25.8	2.7
ECA	Ukraine	15,885.2	0.2	0.2	4,247.0	12.3	10.5
AS	United Arab Emirates	68,577.5	2.1	2.2	30,687.5		
	United Kingdom	52,589.0	2.2	6.9	-89,247.4		0.1
	United States of America	74,577.5	8.5	13.0	310,947.0		0.0

continues ›

			SDG 17.11.1		SDG 17.3.1	SDG 17.4.1	SDG 17.3.2
		GDP per capita	Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries	Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries	Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows	Total debt service	Volume of remittances (in US$)
		PPP (constant 2021 international $)	% of global exports of goods	% of global exports of services	millions of US$	% of exports of goods, services and primary income	% of total GDP
Region	Country	2022-2023[a]	2023	2020-2022[a]	2023	2022-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]
LAC	Uruguay	31,019.3	0.0	0.1	3,429.2		0.2
ECA	Uzbekistan	10,007.7	0.1	0.1	2,187.2	28.1	20.8
EAP	Vanuatu	3,118.4	0.0	0.0	9.3	5.5	18.7
LAC	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		0.0		688.0		
EAP	Viet Nam	13,491.9	1.5	0.2	18,500.0	7.5	3.2
AS	Yemen		0.0				17.2
SSA	Zambia	3,673.5	0.0	0.0	108.0	8.2	0.8
SSA	Zimbabwe	3,442.3	0.0	0.0	588.4	15.3	11.3

Developing regions

AS	Arab States	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific	SA	South Asia
ECA	Europe and Central Asia	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

Footnotes

a - Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

Definitions

GDP per capita: GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP). PPP GDP is gross domestic product converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity rates. An international dollar has the same purchasing power over GDP as the U.S. dollar has in the United States. GDP at purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the country plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in constant 2021 international dollars.

Exports of goods by developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs): Exports of goods by developing countries and LDCs as a share of global exports of goods.

Exports of services by developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs): Exports of services by developing countries and LDCs as a share of global exports of services.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows: Foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a resident enterprise in one economy (direct investor or parent enterprise) with the objective of establishing a lasting interest in an enterprise that is resident in another economy (direct investment enterprise or foreign affiliate). The lasting interest implies the existence of a long-term relationship between the direct investor and the direct investment enterprise and a significant degree of influence over the management of the enterprise. Ownership of 10 per cent or more of the voting power of a direct investment enterprise by a direct investor is evidence of such a relationship.

Total debt service: Total debt service to exports of goods, services and primary income. Total debt service is the sum of principal repayments and interest actually paid in currency, goods or services on long-term debt, interest paid on short-term debt, and repayments (repurchases and charges) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Volume of remittances (in US$): Personal remittances received as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) is the inflow of personal remittances expressed as a percentage of GDP. Personal remittances are comprised of personal transfers and compensation of employees. Personal transfers consist of all current transfers in cash or in kind made or received by resident households to or from non-resident households. Personal transfers thus include all current transfers between resident and non-resident individuals. Compensation of employees refers to the income of border, seasonal and other short-term workers who are employed in an economy where they are not resident and of residents employed by non-resident entities. Data are the sum of two items defined in the sixth edition of the IMF Balance of Payments Manual: personal transfers and compensation of employees.

Sources

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Table 2. Human and social development indicators

Region	Country	Population, total	Human Development Index (HDI)	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)	Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15 a day (2017 PPP)	Gini coefficient	Current health expenditure	Graduates from science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes in tertiary education, both sexes	Share of female graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	Share of male graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	People using safely managed drinking water services	People using safely managed sanitation services	Access to electricity, rural	Individuals using the Internet
		millions	value	value	value	% of population		% of GDP	% of graduates	% of female tertiary graduates	% of male tertiary graduates	% of population	% of population	% of rural population	% of population
		2024	2022	2012 - 2023[a]	2024[b]	2010 - 2023[a]	2010 - 2023[a]	2022	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2022	2022	2022	2020 - 2024[a]
SA	Afghanistan	42.6	0.462	64.883	54.940			23.1	11.2	5.2	13.5	30.0		81.7	17.7
ECA	Albania	2.8	0.789	0.704		0.0	29.4	6.2	22.5	15.3	36.0	70.7	56.3	100	83.1
AS	Algeria	46.8	0.745	1.381	53.286	0.0	27.6	3.6	31.1	26.6	38.5	70.6	62.4	99.3	76.9
	Andorra	0.1	0.884					7.5	12.1	3.8	21.7	90.6	100.0	100	95.4
SSA	Angola	37.9	0.591	51.104	47.520	31.1	51.3	2.9							44.8
LAC	Antigua and Barbuda	0.1	0.826		61.694			5.7	4.7	1.8	25.8			100	77.6
LAC	Argentina	45.7	0.849	0.432	41.921	0.6	40.7	9.9	14.8	10.6	23.7			100	89.2
ECA	Armenia	3.0	0.786	0.191	49.418	0.8	27.9	10.0	20.1	10.7	31.6	82.4	10.8	100	80.0
	Australia	26.7	0.946			0.5	34.3	9.9	19.1	10.7	30.8		95.8	100	97.1
	Austria	9.1	0.926			0.5	30.7	11.2	31.1	15.8	49.9	98.9	99.7	100	94.9
ECA	Azerbaijan	10.3	0.760		46.883			4.0	26.5	17.1	37.4	71.6		100	89.0
LAC	Bahamas	0.4	0.820		59.862			7.2						100	94.8
AS	Bahrain	1.6	0.888		60.449			3.8	18.0	13.1	26.1	98.9	92.2	100	100.0
SA	Bangladesh	173.6	0.670	24.641	52.389	5.0	33.4	2.4	11.1	8.1	12.3	59.1	31.0	99.3	44.5
LAC	Barbados	0.3	0.809	2.491	57.936			6.3						100	80.0
ECA	Belarus	9.1	0.801			0.0	24.4	6.7	36.8	17.0	58.9	93.1	75.0	100	91.5
	Belgium	11.7	0.942			0.0	26.6	10.8	18.8	8.7	33.9	99.7	94.9	100	94.6
LAC	Belize	0.4	0.700	4.304	53.009			4.2	20.2	13.5	32.2			97.1	72.4
SSA	Benin	14.5	0.504	55.923	49.625	12.7	34.4	2.7	21.8	16.7	25.0		2.7	45.5	32.2
SA	Bhutan	0.8	0.681	9.793	41.821	0.0	28.5	4.4				73.3	50.5	100	88.4
LAC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	12.4	0.698	9.060	41.646	2.0	40.9	8.4						95.6	70.2
ECA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.2	0.779	2.190		0.1	33.0	8.7	24.2	17.9	34.5	87.0		100	83.4
SSA	Botswana	2.5	0.708	17.219	64.224	15.4	53.3	5.7	18.1	11.2	31.5			25	81.4
LAC	Brazil	212.0	0.760	3.842	41.149	3.5	52.0	9.1	16.3	8.6	28.1	87.3	49.6	97.3	84.2
EAP	Brunei Darussalam	0.5	0.823		52.903			1.8	35.9	28.2	45.8			100	99.0
	Bulgaria	6.8	0.799			0.7	39.0	7.7	20.4	12.2	33.4	95.7	73.5	99.6	80.4
SSA	Burkina Faso	23.5	0.438	64.475	58.123	25.3	37.4	6.8	25.3	13.1	33.7		9.7	3.4	17.0
SSA	Burundi	14.0	0.420	75.097	61.733	62.1	37.5	8.4	19.7	14.0	23.0			1.7	11.1
SSA	Cabo Verde	0.5	0.661		60.478	4.6	42.4	6.7	16.1	10.6	26.1			96.9	73.5
EAP	Cambodia	17.6	0.600	16.645	48.958			4.7	23.2	12.8	33.7	29.1	36.7	88	60.7
SSA	Cameroon	29.1	0.587	43.592	44.750	23.0	42.2	4.5	31.0	15.5	46.0			25	41.9
	Canada	39.7	0.935			0.2	31.7	11.2	25.9	16.0	39.4	99.0	83.9	100	94.0
SSA	Central African Republic	5.3	0.387	80.414	51.990	65.7	43.0	10.0				6.1	13.3	1.6	
SSA	Chad	20.3	0.394	84.175	69.387	30.8	37.4	4.5	14.3	7.9	17.3	6.2	10.9	1.3	13.2
LAC	Chile	19.8	0.860		48.428	0.4	43.0	10.1	21.4	7.8	39.7	98.8	95.3	100	94.5
EAP	China	1419.3	0.788	3.885	46.103	0.0	35.7	5.4					67.2	100	77.5
LAC	Colombia	52.9	0.758	4.846	40.424	6.0	54.8	7.6	23.9	15.1	35.4	73.9	18.4	100	77.3
SSA	Comoros	0.9	0.586	19.219	60.266	18.6	45.3	8.4						82.9	35.7
SSA	Congo	6.3	0.593	24.267	59.986	35.4	48.9	2.2	15.1	7.5	20.6			12.4	38.4

continues ›

Region	Country	Population, total	Human Development Index (HDI)	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)	Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15 a day (2017 PPP)	Gini coefficient	Current health expenditure	Graduates from science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes in tertiary education, both sexes	Share of female graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	Share of male graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	People using safely managed drinking water services	People using safely managed sanitation services	Access to electricity, rural	Individuals using the Internet
		millions	value	value	value	% of population		% of GDP	% of graduates	% of female tertiary graduates	% of male tertiary graduates	% of population	% of population	% of rural population	% of population
		2024	2022	2012 - 2023[a]	2024[b]	2010 - 2023[a]	2010 - 2023[a]	2022	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2022	2022	2022	2020 - 2024[a]
SSA	Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	109.3	0.481	64.518	54.551	78.9	44.7	3.8	15.5	11.0	17.9	11.6	13.0	1	30.5
LAC	Costa Rica	5.1	0.806	0.540	46.490	0.9	46.7	7.2	15.8	9.4	25.2	80.5	25.4	100	85.4
	Croatia	3.9	0.878			0.3	28.9	7.2	28.7	18.2	45.0			100	83.2
LAC	Cuba	11.0	0.764	0.706	46.575			11.8	9.6	6.3	15.5		41.3	100	71.3
	Cyprus	1.4	0.907			0.0	31.3	8.9	10.2	5.0	20.5	99.8	76.8	100	91.2
	Czechia	10.7	0.895			0.1	26.2	8.8	24.9	14.9	40.3	97.9	89.7	100	86.0
SSA	Côte d'Ivoire	31.9	0.534	42.773	42.571	9.7	35.3	3.6				43.9	17.2	45.3	40.7
	Denmark	6.0	0.952			0.2	28.3	9.5	25.4	15.8	37.8	99.9	98.8	100	99.8
AS	Djibouti	1.2	0.515		70.768	19.1	41.6	2.5					39.6	36.6	65.0
LAC	Dominica	0.1	0.740		55.366			6.3						100	83.8
LAC	Dominican Republic	11.4	0.766	2.267	45.101	0.8	37.0	4.6	12.4	5.4	28.3	44.9	43.1	95	84.6
LAC	Ecuador	18.1	0.765	2.091	45.526	3.8	44.6	7.5	19.7	10.4	31.4	67.1	41.6	100	77.2
AS	Egypt	116.5	0.728	5.239	58.548	1.5	31.9	4.7	11.9	8.0	16.6		67.2	100	72.7
LAC	El Salvador	6.3	0.674	7.861	52.742	3.4	38.8	9.8	22.4	16.7	29.0			100	67.7
SSA	Equatorial Guinea	1.9	0.650		52.186			2.9	16.4	43.0	3.5			1.4	60.4
SSA	Eritrea	3.5	0.493		63.239			3.9	29.0	21.8	33.3			36	20.0
	Estonia	1.4	0.899			0.3	31.8	7.0	27.5	17.5	44.9	97.0	90.4	100	93.2
SSA	Eswatini (Kingdom of)	1.2	0.610	7.899	57.276	36.1	54.6	7.2	0.0	0.0	0.0			81.6	57.6
SSA	Ethiopia	132.1	0.492	68.737	55.212	27.0	35.0	2.9				13.2	7.2	43	16.7
EAP	Fiji	0.9	0.729	1.511	51.711	1.3	30.7	6.5	17.1	13.7	22.3	41.9	48.8	86.8	79.3
	Finland	5.6	0.942			0.0	27.7	9.7	29.4	15.5	51.3	99.6	90.0	100	93.5
	France	66.5	0.910			0.1	31.5	11.9	30.5	23.0	40.3	99.7	89.7	100	86.8
SSA	Gabon	2.5	0.693	8.647	42.469	2.5	38.0	2.9						29	71.9
SSA	Gambia	2.8	0.495	41.709	59.099	17.2	38.8	3.6	54.1	53.1	55.2	47.7	28.0	31.2	45.9
ECA	Georgia	3.8	0.814	0.340	38.603	4.3	33.5	7.3	20.1	15.1	27.4	69.1	24.1	100	81.9
	Germany	84.6	0.950			0.2	32.4	12.6	35.9	19.6	52.8	99.9	96.9	100	93.5
SSA	Ghana	34.4	0.602	24.799	44.143	25.2	43.5	3.7	16.6	7.5	25.2	44.5	15.8	71.6	69.9
	Greece	10.0	0.893			0.6	32.9	8.5	26.2	17.8	38.7	98.9	92.2	100	85.0
LAC	Grenada	0.1	0.793		61.701	0.3	43.8	5.0	15.7	11.6	20.8				74.1
LAC	Guatemala	18.4	0.629	28.882	44.750	9.5	48.3	7.4	9.8	5.4	17.0	56.3		98.2	56.1
SSA	Guinea	14.8	0.471	66.211	47.655	13.8	29.6	4.0						21.3	26.5
SSA	Guinea-Bissau	2.2	0.483	64.396	58.764	26.0	33.4	8.1				23.9	15.4	15.8	32.5
LAC	Guyana	0.8	0.742	1.824	46.449			3.0	14.2	5.2	41.1		44.2	91.6	81.7
LAC	Haiti	11.8	0.552	41.269	65.555	29.2	41.1	3.2							
LAC	Honduras	10.8	0.624	11.975	48.223	12.7	48.2	8.3	15.7	9.4	26.1	65.2	52.6	86.8	58.3
	Hong Kong, China (SAR)	7.4	0.956									100.0	96.5	100	96.0
	Hungary	9.7	0.851			0.4	29.2	6.7	24.1	11.8	41.4	100.0	87.8	100	91.5
	Iceland	0.4	0.959			0.0	26.1	9.3	16.9	10.1	31.2	100.0		100	99.8
SA	India	1450.9	0.644	16.393	45.984	12.9	32.8	3.3	27.1	23.1	31.4		52.1	99.3	55.9
EAP	Indonesia	283.5	0.713	3.619	32.115	1.8	36.1	2.7	19.4	12.4	29.4	30.3		98.2	69.2
SA	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	91.6	0.780		55.692	0.5	34.8	5.4	35.0	25.0	43.8	94.2		100	79.6

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Region	Country	Population, total	Human Development Index (HDI)	Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI)	Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15 a day (2017 PPP)	Gini coefficient	Current health expenditure	Graduates from science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes in tertiary education, both sexes	Share of female graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	Share of male graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level	People using safely managed drinking water services	People using safely managed sanitation services	Access to electricity, rural	Individuals using the Internet
		millions	value	value	value	% of population		% of GDP	% of graduates	% of female tertiary graduates	% of male tertiary graduates	% of population	% of population	% of rural population	% of population
		2024	2022	2012 - 2023[a]	2024[b]	2010 - 2023[a]	2010 - 2023[a]	2022	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2022	2022	2022	2020 - 2024[a]
AS	Iraq	46.0	0.673	8.635	60.682	0.1	29.5	4.3				59.7	52.8	100	81.7
	Ireland	5.3	0.950			0.1	30.1	6.1	25.8	16.4	38.1	96.0	79.8	100	96.5
	Israel	9.4	0.915			0.2	37.9	7.3	27.5	15.2	46.6	99.5	96.3	100	87.0
	Italy	59.3	0.906			0.8	34.8	9.0	23.4	15.8	33.8	92.7	79.0	100	87.0
LAC	Jamaica	2.8	0.706	2.776	49.568	0.3	40.2	7.8						100	83.4
	Japan	123.8	0.920			0.7	32.9	11.4				98.7	99.1	100	87.0
AS	Jordan	11.6	0.736	0.431	60.558	0.0	33.7	6.8	23.2	17.1	32.4	85.7	82.3	98.9	92.5
ECA	Kazakhstan	20.6	0.802	0.453	43.011	0.0	29.2	3.7	24.1	14.0	36.1			100	92.9
SSA	Kenya	56.4	0.601	25.352	56.953	36.1	38.7	4.3					31.5	65.6	35.0
EAP	Kiribati	0.1	0.628	19.803	59.826	1.7	27.8	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.4	24.8		88.0
EAP	Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of)	26.5			41.011				41.8	22.2	53.0	66.5			
	Korea (Republic of)	51.7	0.929			0.0	32.9	9.4	30.4	16.1	45.9	99.3	99.4	100	97.4
	Kosovo (under UNSC res. 1244)	1.7				0.4	29.0								
AS	Kuwait	4.9	0.847		64.028			4.3				100.0	100.0	100	99.7
ECA	Kyrgyzstan	7.2	0.701	0.393	43.507	0.3	26.4	4.9	17.6	10.7	26.5	76.5	92.6	99.6	88.5
EAP	Lao People's Democratic Republic	7.8	0.620	23.072	43.794	7.1	38.8	2.0	23.1	13.0	34.1	17.9	61.1	100	63.6
	Latvia	1.9	0.879			0.4	34.3	7.6	19.7	9.9	38.5	97.1		100	92.2
AS	Lebanon	5.8	0.723		62.580	0.0	31.8	5.7	30.6	18.0	30.3	47.7	25.7	100	83.5
SSA	Lesotho	2.3	0.521	19.605	62.376	32.4	44.9	12.7	15.4	6.4	28.3	28.2	47.5	37.7	48.0
SSA	Liberia	5.6	0.487	52.323	61.783	27.6	35.3	13.5						14.9	23.5
AS	Libya	7.4	0.746	1.999	61.661			4.7					23.8		88.5
	Liechtenstein	0.0	0.942						29.0	44.6	20.7	100.0	96.2	100	97.3
	Lithuania	2.9	0.879			0.3	36.7	7.2	23.8	11.9	44.1	95.0	95.3	100	88.5
	Luxembourg	0.7	0.927			0.1	32.7	5.6	22.9	13.6	33.1	99.5	95.8	100	98.8
SSA	Madagascar	32.0	0.487	68.419	49.603	80.7	42.6	3.3	24.2	16.6	32.2	22.2	12.3	10.9	20.4
SSA	Malawi	21.7	0.508	49.883	53.725	70.1	38.5	6.5				17.8	46.2	5.6	18.0
EAP	Malaysia	35.6	0.807		39.379	0.0	40.7	3.9	41.1	27.3	57.3	93.9	86.0	100	97.7
SA	Maldives	0.5	0.762	0.772	72.213	0.0	29.3	9.7	3.6	2.0	6.9			100	84.7
SSA	Mali	24.5	0.410	68.332	56.439	20.8	35.7	3.7					15.9	18.3	35.1
	Malta	0.5	0.915			0.3	31.4	9.5	15.4	8.1	24.6	99.8	88.2	100	92.1
EAP	Marshall Islands	0.0	0.731		58.893	0.9	35.5	11.7	1.3	0.8	2.0			100	65.7
SSA	Mauritania	5.2	0.540	58.448	67.672	5.4	32.0	4.5	34.6	36.7	33.6				37.4
SSA	Mauritius	1.3	0.796		52.165	0.1	36.8	5.8	19.2	11.8	29.9			100	79.5
LAC	Mexico	130.9	0.781	5.002	42.013	1.2	43.5	5.7	23.7	14.3	35.9	43.0	62.5	100	81.2
EAP	Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.1	0.634		63.999	16.0	40.1	10.3						79.4	39.4
ECA	Moldova (Republic of)	3.0	0.763	0.944		0.0	25.7	7.0	23.4	12.0	39.9	75.2		100	80.2
	Monaco	0.0						3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100	99.1
EAP	Mongolia	3.5	0.741	7.258	49.887	0.2	31.4	8.9	17.8	9.4	32.9	39.3	66.0	100	83.0

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		millions	value	value	value	% of population		% of GDP	% of graduates	% of female tertiary graduates	% of male tertiary graduates	% of population	% of population	% of rural population	% of population
		2024	2022	2012 - 2023[a]	2024[b]	2010 - 2023[a]	2010 - 2023[a]	2022	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2022	2022	2022	2020 - 2024[a]
ECA	Montenegro	0.6	0.844	1.236		2.0	34.3	10.9	20.5	15.8	26.9	85.1	57.4	100	89.8
AS	Morocco	38.1	0.698	6.360	42.986	1.4	39.5	5.7	24.6	19.3	31.2	74.8	61.0	100	91.0
SSA	Mozambique	34.6	0.461	60.671	47.542	74.5	50.3	8.8	9.6	5.6	13.5			5	19.8
EAP	Myanmar	54.5	0.608	38.316	39.270	2.0	30.7	5.2	33.7	31.0	38.8	57.4	60.6	62.8	58.5
SSA	Namibia	3.0	0.610	40.881	58.407	15.6	59.1	9.3	10.3	5.8	20.1			33.2	64.4
EAP	Nauru	0.0	0.696		68.655	1.7	32.4	18.2						100	81.7
SA	Nepal	29.7	0.601	20.066	45.661	0.4	30.0	6.7				16.1	50.6	93.7	55.8
	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	18.2	0.946			0.1	25.7	10.1	20.1	11.7	31.2	100.0	97.5	100	97.0
	New Zealand	5.2	0.939					10.0	23.0	15.7	35.6	100.0	88.7	100	96.2
LAC	Nicaragua	6.9	0.669	16.460	45.869	3.9	46.2	9.0	19.5	12.9	29.0			66.3	58.2
SSA	Niger	27.0	0.394	90.971	64.342	50.6	32.9	4.4	12.3	6.2	15.3		8.1	7.7	23.2
SSA	Nigeria	232.7	0.548	33.044	53.075	30.9	35.1	4.3				29.0	32.0	27	39.2
ECA	North Macedonia	1.8	0.765	0.372		2.7	33.5	7.6	22.8	19.0	27.8	80.4	12.2	100	87.2
	Norway	5.6	0.966			0.2	27.7	8.0	21.6	11.4	35.8	98.8	78.1	100	99.0
AS	Oman	5.3	0.819		59.808			2.9	33.3	29.9	39.0	90.9		100	95.3
SA	Pakistan	251.3	0.540	38.332	59.908	4.9	29.6	2.9				50.6		93	27.4
EAP	Palau	0.0	0.797		57.026			14.3				90.4		100	
AS	Palestine, State of	5.5	0.716	0.566		0.5	33.7	9.7	18.2	13.7	26.1	80.3	70.1	100	86.6
LAC	Panama	4.5	0.820		40.227	1.3	48.9	8.5	13.0	8.2	22.6			100	78.0
EAP	Papua New Guinea	10.6	0.568	56.629	47.083			2.6						14.2	24.1
LAC	Paraguay	6.9	0.731	4.501	49.850	1.3	45.1	7.7				64.2	55.2	100	78.1
LAC	Peru	34.2	0.762	6.380	39.064	2.7	40.3	6.1	29.6	24.4	36.8	52.0	57.7	85.1	79.5
EAP	Philippines	115.8	0.710	3.887	43.608	3.0	40.7	5.2	22.6	14.5	35.0	47.9	62.7	91.1	83.8
	Poland	38.5	0.881			0.1	28.5	6.4	19.4	12.2	32.9	88.9	97.9	100	86.4
	Portugal	10.4	0.874			0.2	34.6	10.5	27.9	17.5	42.2	95.2	92.8	100	85.8
AS	Qatar	3.0	0.875		58.090	0.0	35.1	2.2	20.1	15.2	31.3	96.7	99.9	100	99.7
	Romania	19.0	0.827			1.8	33.9	5.8	28.4	20.3	40.4	82.1	87.6	100	89.2
	Russian Federation	144.8	0.821			0.2	35.1	6.9	31.4			76.2	61.2	100	92.2
SSA	Rwanda	14.3	0.548	48.822	54.447	52.0	43.7	7.9	28.8	20.4	35.6			38.2	34.2
LAC	Saint Kitts and Nevis	0.0	0.838		54.978			5.6						100	76.4
LAC	Saint Lucia	0.2	0.725	1.921	66.509	0.1	43.7	5.0	14.4	5.6	32.2			100	70.1
LAC	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.1	0.772		61.782			4.7						100	76.0
EAP	Samoa	0.2	0.702	6.288	62.452	1.2	38.7	6.3	6.4	7.9	4.6	62.2	42.9	97.9	58.1
	San Marino	0.0	0.867					7.4	21.5	11.7	33.6	100.0	90.2	100	87.0
SSA	Sao Tome and Principe	0.2	0.613	11.712	53.454	15.7	40.7	7.5				36.3	34.0	73.7	61.5
AS	Saudi Arabia	34.0	0.875		55.249			4.6	28.1	20.9	35.9		79.9	100	100.0
SSA	Senegal	18.5	0.517	50.832	46.343	9.9	36.2	4.1				26.7	14.1	43.4	60.6
ECA	Serbia	6.7	0.805	0.114		1.2	33.1	9.7	33.7	25.5	46.4	75.1	25.4	100	85.4
SSA	Seychelles	0.1	0.802	0.866	54.511	0.5	32.1	4.2	27.2	15.6	49.4			100	87.4

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		millions	value	value	value	% of population		% of GDP	% of graduates	% of female tertiary graduates	% of male tertiary graduates	% of population	% of population	% of rural population	% of population
		2024	2022	2012 - 2023[a]	2024[b]	2010 - 2023[a]	2010 - 2023[a]	2022	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2011 - 2024[a]	2022	2022	2022	2020 - 2024[a]
SSA	Sierra Leone	8.6	0.458	59.222	54.889	26.1	35.7	8.0				10.3	15.4	5	20.6
EAP	Singapore	5.8	0.949		52.394			4.9	35.9	22.3	50.7	100.0	100.0	100	94.3
	Slovakia	5.5	0.855			0.1	24.1	7.7	21.4	11.6	37.0	99.2	82.5	100	89.8
	Slovenia	2.1	0.926			0.0	24.3	9.6	29.5	16.1	49.1	98.3	84.0	100	90.4
EAP	Solomon Islands	0.8	0.562		55.886	26.6	37.1	4.8						75.4	42.5
AS	Somalia	19.0	0.380		67.771			2.6					32.6	30.64	27.6
SSA	South Africa	64.0	0.717	6.257	48.061	20.5	63.0	8.8	17.7	13.1	25.8		71.7	93.4	75.7
SSA	South Sudan	11.9	0.381		67.305	67.3	44.1	6.8						1.7	9.3
	Spain	47.9	0.911			0.6	33.9	9.7	21.3	10.4	35.5	99.6	90.0	100	95.4
SA	Sri Lanka	23.1	0.780	2.921	48.617	1.0	37.7	4.4	25.4	16.6	41.0	47.1		100	51.2
AS	Sudan	50.4	0.516	52.328	62.837	15.3	34.2	4.6	28.6	27.8	29.4			49.4	26.4
LAC	Suriname	0.6	0.690	2.854	43.209	1.1	39.2	5.9				55.8	25.2	98	78.4
	Sweden	10.6	0.952			0.6	29.8	10.5	28.7	17.5	46.8	99.7	95.6	100	95.7
	Switzerland	8.9	0.967			0.0	33.7	11.7	25.2	12.5	38.2	96.7	99.8	100	97.3
AS	Syrian Arab Republic	24.7	0.557		57.504	24.8	26.6	4.2	32.5	29.5	37.5			75	
ECA	Tajikistan	10.6	0.679	7.445	51.674	6.1	34.0	7.6	22.0			55.3		100	56.8
SSA	Tanzania (United Republic of)	68.6	0.532	47.215	41.577	44.9	40.5	3.1	13.7	9.1	18.1	11.3	25.1	36	29.1
EAP	Thailand	71.7	0.803	0.491	43.139	0.0	34.9	5.6	30.1	15.2	50.0		26.3	100	89.5
EAP	Timor-Leste	1.4	0.566	48.254	46.374	24.4	28.7	14.3						100	34.0
SSA	Togo	9.5	0.547	37.612	44.111	26.6	37.9	6.0				19.4	5.8	25	37.0
EAP	Tonga	0.1	0.739	0.875	57.045	0.0	27.1	8.1				29.5	32.0	100	58.5
LAC	Trinidad and Tobago	1.5	0.814	0.534	50.292			6.4	24.4	17.0	35.2			100	84.7
AS	Tunisia	12.3	0.732	0.978	45.457	0.3	33.7	7.0	37.9	30.7	52.4	74.3	81.1	99.7	72.4
ECA	Turkmenistan	7.5	0.744	0.249	51.898			5.4	39.9			94.9		100	
EAP	Tuvalu	0.0	0.653	2.114	64.276	3.6	39.1	18.4				8.7	37.2	99.1	74.3
ECA	Türkiye	87.5	0.855		46.499	0.4	44.4	3.7	18.5	18.5	18.5		78.7	100	87.3
SSA	Uganda	50.0	0.550	57.168	54.504	42.1	42.7	4.4				18.7	17.8	35.9	15.3
ECA	Ukraine	37.9	0.734	0.244		0.0	25.6	8.2	24.1	11.7	37.8	87.6	71.9	100	82.4
AS	United Arab Emirates	11.0	0.937		54.411	0.0	26.4	4.7	36.2	32.1	40.5		98.5	100	100.0
	United Kingdom	69.1	0.940			0.2	32.4	11.1	22.3	13.0	35.4	99.8	98.1	100	96.3
	United States of America	345.4	0.927			1.2	41.3	16.5	20.1	12.7	31.2	97.5	97.0	100	93.1
LAC	Uruguay	3.4	0.830		44.743	0.2	40.6	9.0	14.5	10.4	22.5			100	89.9
ECA	Uzbekistan	36.4	0.727	1.730	49.155	2.3	31.2	7.4	32.8	17.5	45.3	79.8	74.5	100	89.0
EAP	Vanuatu	0.3	0.614		54.386	10.0	32.3	4.2						60.7	45.7
LAC	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	28.4	0.699		48.426			4.6					27.1	100	
EAP	Viet Nam	101.0	0.726	1.919	42.319	1.0	36.1	4.6	22.7	15.4	31.2	57.8	43.7	100	78.1
AS	Yemen	40.6	0.424	37.419	72.869	19.8	36.7	6.2					19.2	65	13.8
SSA	Zambia	21.3	0.569	47.906	48.617	64.3	51.5	5.3						14.5	33.0
SSA	Zimbabwe	16.6	0.550	25.800	58.098	39.8	50.3	3.6	30.2	20.9	36.8	26.5	31.8	33.7	38.4

Developing regions

AS	Arab States	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific	SA	South Asia
ECA	Europe and Central Asia	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

Footnotes

a - Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

b - 2024 is the year the MVI report was published. MVI scores may refer to a previous year.

Definitions

Total population: De facto population in a country, area or region as of 1 July.

Human Development Index (HDI): A composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development—a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. See Technical note 1 at https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/documentation-and-downloads for details on how the HDI is calculated.

Multidimensional Poverty Index: Proportion of the population that is multidimensionally poor, adjusted by the intensity of the deprivations.

Multidimensional Vulnerability Index: Quantitative measure that assesses a country's exposure and susceptibility to adverse external shocks and stressors under two main pillars: structural vulnerability and lack of structural resilience. A lower MVI score indicates that a country is relatively less vulnerable compared to its counterparts; however, this does not imply that the country is completely shielded from or immune to the impact of external shocks.

Poverty headcount ratio at $2.15 a day (2017 PPP): Percentage of the population living on less than $2.15 a day at 2017 purchasing power adjusted prices.

Gini coefficient: Measure of the deviation of the distribution of income among individuals or households in a country from a perfectly equal distribution. A value of 0 represents absolute equality, a value of 100 absolute inequality.

Current health expenditure: Level of current health expenditure expressed as a percentage of GDP. It provides an indication of the level of resources channelled to health relative to other uses.

Graduates from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes in tertiary education, both sexes: Number of graduates at the tertiary level from STEM programmes, expressed as a percentage of the total number of graduates in tertiary education.

Share of female graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level: Number of female graduates at the tertiary level from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programmes, expressed as a percentage of the number of female graduates in tertiary education.

Share of male graduates graduating in science, mathematics, engineering, manufacturing and construction at the tertiary level: Number of male graduates at the tertiary level from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programmes, expressed as a percentage of the number of male graduates in tertiary education.

People using safely managed drinking water services: Percentage of people using drinking water from an improved source that is accessible on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination. Improved water sources include piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs and packaged or delivered water.

People using safely managed sanitation services: Percentage of people using improved sanitation facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite. Improved sanitation facilities include flush/pour flush to piped sewer systems, septic tanks or pit latrines: ventilated improved pit latrines, composting toilets or pit latrines with slabs.

Access to electricity, rural: Access to electricity, rural is the percentage of the rural population with access to electricity.

Individuals using the Internet: Proportion of individuals who used the Internet from any location in the last three months. Access can be via a fixed or mobile network.

Sources

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Access to electricity, rural: World Bank (2025). DataBank: World Development Indicators. Washington, D.C. Available at http://data.worldbank.org. Accessed on 18 March 2025.

Individuals using the Internet: International Telecommunication Union (2025). ITU DataHub. Available at https://datahub.itu.int/data/. Accessed on 19 March 2025.

Table 3. Sustainable development and cooperation indicators

		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
SA	Afghanistan	4,985.0	0.0	3.7	0.0	25.1	0.1	261.2	0.2	20
ECA	Albania	233.8	110.1	252.4	163.1	1.1	20.6	165.0	1.7	41.9
AS	Algeria	155.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	10.5	22.0	3.9	0.1
	Andorra						51.1			18.7
SSA	Angola	194.5	32.1	949.0	0.2	2.9	0.4	293.7	0.8	52.9
LAC	Antigua and Barbuda	12.2	0.0	8.5	0.3		10.6	1.0	3.5	0.9
LAC	Argentina	155.4	53.8	3,539.0	319.6	2.8	24.6	627.6	4.0	9.2
ECA	Armenia	148.1	306.4	333.0	75.3	0.5	18.4	35.4	2.6	9.1
	Australia						35.1		14.0	12.3
	Austria						29.6		6.4	36
ECA	Azerbaijan	81.5	39.7	146.9	96.6	0.0	20.2	28.0	4.2	1.3
LAC	Bahamas						20.5		4.2	1.1
AS	Bahrain						18.7		23.7	0
SA	Bangladesh	1,461.9	4,816.4	3,341.1	556.1	62.2	7.1	1,349.3	0.7	25
LAC	Barbados						37.6		2.8	5.5
ECA	Belarus	97.0	0.0	40.2	134.1	0.1	32.8	30.9	5.9	8.2
	Belgium						43.5		7.2	11.7
LAC	Belize	42.8	13.7	57.7	4.2	0.7	9.7	7.6	0.7	30.8
SSA	Benin	540.4	303.2	154.3	23.9	9.2	0.2	167.3	0.5	54.5
SA	Bhutan	73.2	146.6	12.5	0.0	0.9	0.4	41.3	2.5	82.5
LAC	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	254.2	239.5	108.2	3.3	3.3	10.9	77.6	1.9	12.8
ECA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	274.5	102.1	369.1	215.2	0.5	27.1	120.2	6.9	36.6
SSA	Botswana	79.1	20.0	201.1	0.6	5.5	4.2	14.3	3.0	27.4
LAC	Brazil	314.9	486.6	3,460.6	5,962.8	106.3	21.0	473.5	2.3	46.5
EAP	Brunei Darussalam						20.1		21.2	0
	Bulgaria						35.2		6.2	20.4
SSA	Burkina Faso	1,200.5	326.0	376.5	133.2	49.9	0.1	259.1	0.3	71.4
SSA	Burundi	589.9	12.9	21.0	0.2	8.7	0.0	34.8	0.1	83
SSA	Cabo Verde	64.0	67.1	34.9	1.8	2.1	5.8	50.3	1.9	21.8
EAP	Cambodia	623.3	1,026.3	184.7	645.4	7.3	3.0	327.3	1.0	52.4
SSA	Cameroon	831.7	483.8	695.6	76.0	15.2	2.2	152.8	0.4	79.2
	Canada						42.6		14.3	23.8
SSA	Central African Republic	650.1	61.9	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	41.6	0.1	90.9
SSA	Chad	739.8	11.5	21.0	16.5	11.0	0.0	44.1	0.1	70
LAC	Chile	26.9	721.5	691.6	439.8		22.7		4.3	24.2
EAP	China	212.1	431.6	3,406.0	799.3	130.1	41.4	520.0	9.4	15.2
LAC	Colombia	1,067.9	801.4	3,248.3	2,112.3	74.6	17.0	2,005.9	1.9	29.7
SSA	Comoros	107.6	20.0	73.0		0.7	0.2	24.6	0.4	39.3
SSA	Congo	146.6	595.1	72.7	23.3	2.3	0.0	37.5	1.2	71.4

continues ›

		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
SSA	Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	2,921.3	505.9	17.3	266.4	64.6	0.0	313.7	0.0	96.3
LAC	Costa Rica	80.2	570.3	935.7	13.9	6.6	21.3	305.4	1.7	34.2
	Croatia						27.0		4.5	34.1
LAC	Cuba	114.0	21.4	3.8	0.2	1.0	2.9	24.3	2.0	20.9
	Cyprus						38.6		5.3	15.6
	Czechia						38.4		8.3	17.2
SSA	Côte d'Ivoire	823.4	1,132.1	855.9	124.5	17.9	1.4	819.6	0.5	58.2
	Denmark						45.0		4.5	39.5
AS	Djibouti	139.7	84.2	135.5		3.5	1.4	127.2	0.6	26.9
LAC	Dominica	25.3	46.5	5.8	0.0	0.6	19.5	13.0	1.2	8.9
LAC	Dominican Republic	130.6	55.4	495.7	61.5	1.4	10.7	104.4	2.8	14.8
LAC	Ecuador	272.2	152.6	2,502.9	3,284.7	26.4	15.0	842.2	2.5	18.9
AS	Egypt	700.4	1,115.8	5,936.9	1,762.5	4.2	10.8	1,269.0	2.2	6.1
LAC	El Salvador	232.8	507.1	660.2	164.7	6.4	10.6	254.8	1.3	21.9
SSA	Equatorial Guinea	15.3	0.0	2.8	0.5	0.9	0.1	3.5	2.0	4.2
SSA	Eritrea	54.7	1.3	0.0	0.4	0.5	0.2	12.6	0.2	80.7
	Estonia						40.4		8.3	38
SSA	Eswatini (Kingdom of)	110.4	0.0	197.1	0.4	2.6	2.3	60.1	1.1	64.7
SSA	Ethiopia	4,335.8	856.5	122.2	179.8	356.0	0.5	463.7	0.1	90.6
EAP	Fiji	157.2	224.2	256.1	0.1	1.0	2.5	87.4	2.4	28.4
	Finland						34.5		5.8	50.2
	France						49.4		4.1	16.2
SSA	Gabon	53.6	100.6	137.8	30.7	1.0	3.4	27.6	2.0	91.3
SSA	Gambia	235.8	13.8	129.2	0.0	1.7	0.2	62.2	0.2	47.7
ECA	Georgia	294.9	178.6	1,059.5	29.0	2.5	28.7	230.5	3.5	25.2
	Germany						45.0		7.0	17.6
SSA	Ghana	647.0	556.8	34.3	113.1	313.8	0.6	254.9	0.7	39
	Greece						43.0		5.0	21.5
LAC	Grenada	5.9	29.3	13.8	0.3	0.4	18.8	11.4	1.2	10
LAC	Guatemala	422.5	7.2	809.4	64.3	14.0	3.7	307.0	1.2	62.1
SSA	Guinea	357.7	104.0	125.4	13.3	6.2	0.0	82.2	0.3	66.6
SSA	Guinea-Bissau	149.1	33.2	0.0	0.2	1.5	0.2	28.7	0.2	87.4
LAC	Guyana	52.5	197.9	26.1	1.0	1.0	13.1	32.1	4.0	12.1
LAC	Haiti	826.9	71.7	12.2	17.4	5.6	0.3	85.2	0.3	76.7
LAC	Honduras	350.7	622.8	405.8	49.2	5.9	4.4	178.4	1.0	45.9
	Hong Kong, China (SAR)						39.8		4.6	0.4
	Hungary						35.5		4.6	15.3
	Iceland						38.2		7.8	82.4
SA	India	919.5	4,529.7	8,604.9	3,508.0	457.5	2.4	2,070.9	2.1	34.9
EAP	Indonesia	1,021.1	1,388.0	5,302.1	424.2	81.5	4.9	1,505.9	2.4	20.2

continues ›

		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
SA	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	241.3	0.0	120.7		0.0	12.3	37.7	8.6	0.9
AS	Iraq	1,205.0	801.2	197.3	3.9	3.8	14.4	160.2	4.3	1.1
	Ireland						32.1		6.1	12.7
	Israel						29.4		6.3	6.2
	Italy						31.5		5.2	17.5
LAC	Jamaica	104.7	0.0	172.7	112.7	2.1	15.0	38.2	2.4	10.5
	Japan						37.2		7.6	8.8
AS	Jordan	1,414.9	345.1	799.6	913.2	10.0	7.1	476.4	2.1	11.5
ECA	Kazakhstan	71.3	1.7	1,068.9	0.3	0.6	14.9	264.1	11.8	2
SSA	Kenya	1,621.5	1,545.0	701.0	487.2	317.7	1.9	682.9	0.4	67.7
EAP	Kiribati	87.2	0.0		0.0	0.1	0.1	20.6	0.7	41.9
	Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of)	6.6				0.6		2.2	2.4	14.7
	Korea (Republic of)						45.4		11.1	3.6
	Kosovo (under UNSC res. 1244)							79.3		
AS	Kuwait						1.5		23.0	0.1
ECA	Kyrgyzstan	357.9	591.5	108.1	0.4	0.6	5.9	84.4	1.5	27.6
EAP	Lao People's Democratic Republic	377.2	187.6	38.7	2.3	4.5	2.4	78.9	3.4	49.2
	Latvia						26.4		3.5	44
AS	Lebanon	1,581.6	12.4	226.4	0.8	6.1	7.6	121.0	3.0	6.8
SSA	Lesotho	141.4	50.3	0.0	6.5	2.4	0.4	17.7	0.4	34.9
SSA	Liberia	369.5	137.3	43.4	7.7	7.7	0.3	84.7	0.3	92.8
AS	Libya	306.2		0.0		0.0	4.8	20.2	8.4	3.1
	Liechtenstein						48.9			56.9
	Lithuania						29.4		4.6	33.2
	Luxembourg						38.7		10.5	20.5
SSA	Madagascar	731.3	270.4	75.6	54.3	3.4	0.1	129.1	0.1	83.1
SSA	Malawi	1,117.4	290.2	93.6	80.1	45.8	0.1	193.0	0.3	62.9
EAP	Malaysia	59.3	0.0	53.7	37.4	5.5	12.4	9.6	8.1	7.5
SA	Maldives	68.9	21.7	416.0	28.3	0.3	17.4	54.4	5.5	1.2
SSA	Mali	1,108.4	162.5	176.7	12.1	23.2	0.8	126.2	0.3	71.1
	Malta						43.0		3.0	8.6
EAP	Marshall Islands	136.8	0.0	150.9		0.1	2.3	15.1	0.0	12.2
SSA	Mauritania	395.2	164.9	155.0	233.5	7.1	0.3	105.7	0.9	19.6
SSA	Mauritius	41.1	52.4	2.4	23.6	0.7	25.7	14.7	3.3	8.6
LAC	Mexico	363.3	292.8	1,907.6	1,768.4	67.6	20.5	1,259.6	3.8	13
EAP	Micronesia (Federated States of)	153.8	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.1	5.7	13.3	0.0	2
ECA	Moldova (Republic of)	621.0	253.5	576.7	435.2	4.7	24.4	236.1	4.0	21.4

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		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
	Monaco						59.0			
EAP	Mongolia	215.9	179.1	337.5	155.6	0.5	12.9	66.0	8.1	3
ECA	Montenegro	65.7	118.1	78.1	24.5	0.6	31.3	14.8		39.6
AS	Morocco	522.8	1,275.2	2,689.3	1,236.7	6.9	6.4	859.6	1.9	10.9
SSA	Mozambique	2,554.6	147.9	183.3	227.0	31.7	0.2	536.3	0.3	76.9
EAP	Myanmar	818.0	306.7	0.7	34.3	7.7	2.1	95.1	0.6	62.9
SSA	Namibia	222.9	152.0	192.9	138.1	4.6	3.9	72.6	1.5	30
EAP	Nauru	36.6					9.3	5.7	0.0	1.9
SA	Nepal	535.1	845.3	72.7	13.0	12.9	4.7	354.8	0.6	73.7
	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)						44.4		6.9	12.2
	New Zealand						35.9		6.9	28.9
LAC	Nicaragua	175.0	1,322.6	112.6	68.4	3.0	4.9	69.8	0.8	50.4
SSA	Niger	1,400.2	789.0	46.2	9.5	19.2	0.1	393.3	0.1	79.6
SSA	Nigeria	2,149.1	2,649.7	840.6	546.9	353.0	0.0	676.7	0.6	80.3
ECA	North Macedonia	138.8	120.4	226.1	0.0	0.3	24.6	51.8	4.8	19.5
	Norway						45.9		8.0	61.4
AS	Oman						10.9		18.4	0.1
SA	Pakistan	1,128.6	1,958.4	3,173.4	224.6	177.8	1.3	718.4	0.8	41.6
EAP	Palau	27.5	5.6	57.3	0.1	0.0	6.9	2.8	81.2	0.9
AS	Palestine, State of	1,722.7	10.4	28.0	41.1	3.8	8.0	208.5		15.4
LAC	Panama	101.2	113.3	782.8	106.7	7.2	15.5	406.3	3.3	28
EAP	Papua New Guinea	584.8	152.0	354.6	94.2	2.7	0.2	179.4	0.6	54.6
LAC	Paraguay	105.1	28.2	986.0	119.7	0.6	10.9	663.5	1.2	58.8
LAC	Peru	367.7	536.0	984.3	4,054.8	16.0	9.3	406.0	1.7	30.6
EAP	Philippines	564.9	1,453.5	3,362.9	751.3	12.6	7.6	1,674.2	1.4	28
	Poland						23.0		7.8	15.2
	Portugal						43.5		3.4	32.3
AS	Qatar						13.6		48.2	0
	Romania						32.4		3.7	23.6
	Russian Federation						24.8		14.4	3.5
SSA	Rwanda	836.1	308.7	179.6	45.9	129.1	0.3	262.7	0.1	79.9
LAC	Saint Kitts and Nevis						47.4		2.5	1.5
LAC	Saint Lucia	25.9	15.2	16.7	16.0	0.8	10.8	2.8	1.7	9.7
LAC	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	17.4	20.3	44.7	5.2	0.4	28.5	3.1	1.0	5.1
EAP	Samoa	131.2	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.8	26.4	2.2	35.9
	San Marino						36.2			
SSA	Sao Tome and Principe	88.1	1.4	3.2	0.1	1.8	2.0	20.6	0.9	42.5
AS	Saudi Arabia						37.0		18.7	0.1

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		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
SSA	Senegal	607.9	816.0	966.5	129.3	60.9	1.4	915.8	0.7	35.4
ECA	Serbia	447.1	93.8	1,337.8	1,122.2	4.9	29.3	235.2		27.2
SSA	Seychelles	10.1	0.0	3.9	29.3		35.0		10.3	1.9
SSA	Sierra Leone	477.0	48.5	11.8	0.0	17.0	0.0	172.5	0.1	71.6
EAP	Singapore						37.7		9.6	1.1
	Slovakia						33.0		6.4	17.9
	Slovenia						31.9		5.7	23.4
EAP	Solomon Islands	233.4	26.1		69.3	1.1	0.1	64.1	0.5	50.1
AS	Somalia	2,224.1	23.3	20.0	0.0	20.1	0.7	257.1	0.0	95.4
SSA	South Africa	961.1	400.9	1,371.4	1,131.3	204.3	3.3	508.4	6.3	9.7
SSA	South Sudan	1,865.1	0.4	0.0	12.7	7.7	0.0	125.2		32.4
	Spain						36.0		4.5	19
SA	Sri Lanka	285.3	243.6	1,229.4	0.7	3.7	10.1	208.0	0.9	48.8
AS	Sudan	1,463.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.1	151.6	0.4	61
LAC	Suriname	17.8	10.4	312.4	15.0	0.4	20.2	11.1	4.2	14.5
	Sweden						40.4		3.4	57.9
	Switzerland						47.1		3.9	27.7
AS	Syrian Arab Republic	2,513.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	9.5	7.3	41.3	1.1	1.1
ECA	Tajikistan	549.9	93.5	174.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	118.8	0.9	34.9
SSA	Tanzania (United Republic of)	1,380.2	1,467.6	557.4	111.9	118.1	2.2	540.1	0.3	78.3
EAP	Thailand	184.1	544.3	106.0	36.6	9.6	17.5	61.7	3.8	19
EAP	Timor-Leste	227.9	20.8	10.2	0.1	1.7	0.0	32.1	0.5	11.4
SSA	Togo	310.6	116.2	28.4	32.7	3.3	1.1	69.3	0.3	75.1
EAP	Tonga	135.9	154.9		0.2	0.2	8.0	15.2	2.1	2.3
LAC	Trinidad and Tobago						25.4		19.9	0.5
AS	Tunisia	709.3	505.8	1,149.3	13.4	2.9	13.7	392.8	2.6	11.6
ECA	Turkmenistan	21.6	0.0	347.5	0.2	1.8	5.9	136.5	9.0	0.1
EAP	Tuvalu	43.6	0.0		0.1		4.0	6.7	0.0	5.2
ECA	Türkiye	1,676.5	322.5	3,600.6	1,727.8	8.0	22.3	903.9	5.1	12
SSA	Uganda	1,975.5	503.1	226.0	98.9	192.1	0.1	424.1	0.1	90.9
ECA	Ukraine	16,362.4	7,058.0	9,022.1	142.8	239.0	18.3	11,228.4	3.6	8.9
AS	United Arab Emirates						40.0		19.6	1
	United Kingdom						41.4		4.4	12.2
	United States of America						37.8		14.0	10.9
LAC	Uruguay	13.2	242.0	523.6	276.4		33.2		2.6	57.8
ECA	Uzbekistan	188.0	1,456.1	2,805.2	630.3	0.7	26.0	833.9	3.9	1
EAP	Vanuatu	113.9	13.3	0.0	0.2	0.2	1.1	22.9	0.9	25
LAC	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	265.5	0.0	30.0	2.3	4.2	9.6	9.4	3.0	33.7

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		SDG 17.3.1					SDG 17.6.1	SDG 17.9.1		
		Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants	Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans	Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF) - on an experimental basis	Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants	Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical cooperation	Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita	Renewable energy consumption
		millions of US$					per 100 inhabitants	millions of 2022 US$	t CO2e/capita	% of total final energy consumption
Region	Country	2022	2021-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2020-2022[a]	2021-2022[a]	2021-2023[a]	2021-2022[a]	2023	2021-2022[a]
EAP	Viet Nam	633.1	1,384.2	903.6	1,507.5	43.5	21.7	362.3	3.7	24.2
AS	Yemen	3,063.4	6.9	10.2	0.1	3.0	1.4	129.9	0.3	3.7
SSA	Zambia	851.2	997.9	115.7	78.9	46.6	0.4	267.7	0.4	83
SSA	Zimbabwe	779.3	5.8	24.2	51.0	28.8	1.3	48.9	0.7	82.4

Developing regions

AS	Arab States	LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
EAP	East Asia and the Pacific	SA	South Asia
ECA	Europe and Central Asia	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa

Footnotes

a - Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified.

Definitions

Gross receipts by developing countries of official sustainable development grants: Grants are transfers in cash or in kind for which no legal debt is incurred by the recipient.

Gross receipts by developing countries of official concessional sustainable development loans: Loans are transfers in cash or in kind for which the recipient incurs legal debt. A concessional transfer is one that gives away something of value. For the purposes of this indicator, a loan will be regarded as concessional if it includes at least a 35 per cent grant element when its service payments are discounted at 5 per cent per year. This test is derived from the World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Framework for Low-Income Countries and has also been adopted in the total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD) framework. See https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Policy-Papers/Issues/2018/02/14/pp122617guidance-note-on-lic-dsf and https://www.tossd.org/docs/reporting-instructions.pdf.

Gross receipts by developing countries of official non-concessional sustainable development loans: These are loans (see above) which bear a grant element of less than 35 per cent when their service payments are discounted at 5 per cent per year.

Gross receipts by developing countries of mobilized private finance (MPF): Mobilized private finance (MPF) consists of private resource flows for activities in developing countries that have been mobilized by interventions of multilateral development banks (MDBs), bilateral development finance institutions or other bilateral agencies, i.e., where a direct causal link between the official intervention and the private resources can be demonstrated. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) method for counting MPF is used. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/mobilisation.htm. MPF is a "memorandum item" because it would likely include and overlap with some finance that would also be found in the foreign direct investment (FDI) subindicator. MPF data are typically collected on a commitment basis rather than in terms of developing-country receipts. This indicator excludes private flows mobilized in recipient countries themselves since they do not constitute additional resources. The indicator is experimental and should be evaluated during the 2025 review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators.

Gross receipts by developing countries of private grants: Private grants refer to grants for developmental purposes from private institutions outside the recipient country, excluding commercial flows and personal transactions such as remittances. They comprise grants from philanthropic foundations and other non-governmental organizations.

Fixed broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: Fixed broadband subscriptions refer to fixed subscriptions to high-speed access to the public Internet (a TCP/IP connection) at downstream speeds equal to, or greater than, 256 kbit/s. This includes cable modem, DSL fibre-to-the-home/building, other fixed (wired) broadband subscriptions, satellite broadband and terrestrial fixed wireless broadband. This total is measured irrespective of the method of payment.

Total official development assistance (gross disbursement) for technical co-operation: Total official development assistance (ODA) is defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions per capita: Total annual emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2), one of the six Kyoto greenhouse gases (GHGs), from the agriculture, energy, waste and industrial sectors, standardized to carbon dioxide equivalent values divided by the economy's population. This measure excludes GHG fluxes caused by land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) since these fluxes have larger uncertainties.

Renewable energy consumption: Renewable energy consumption is the share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption.

Sources

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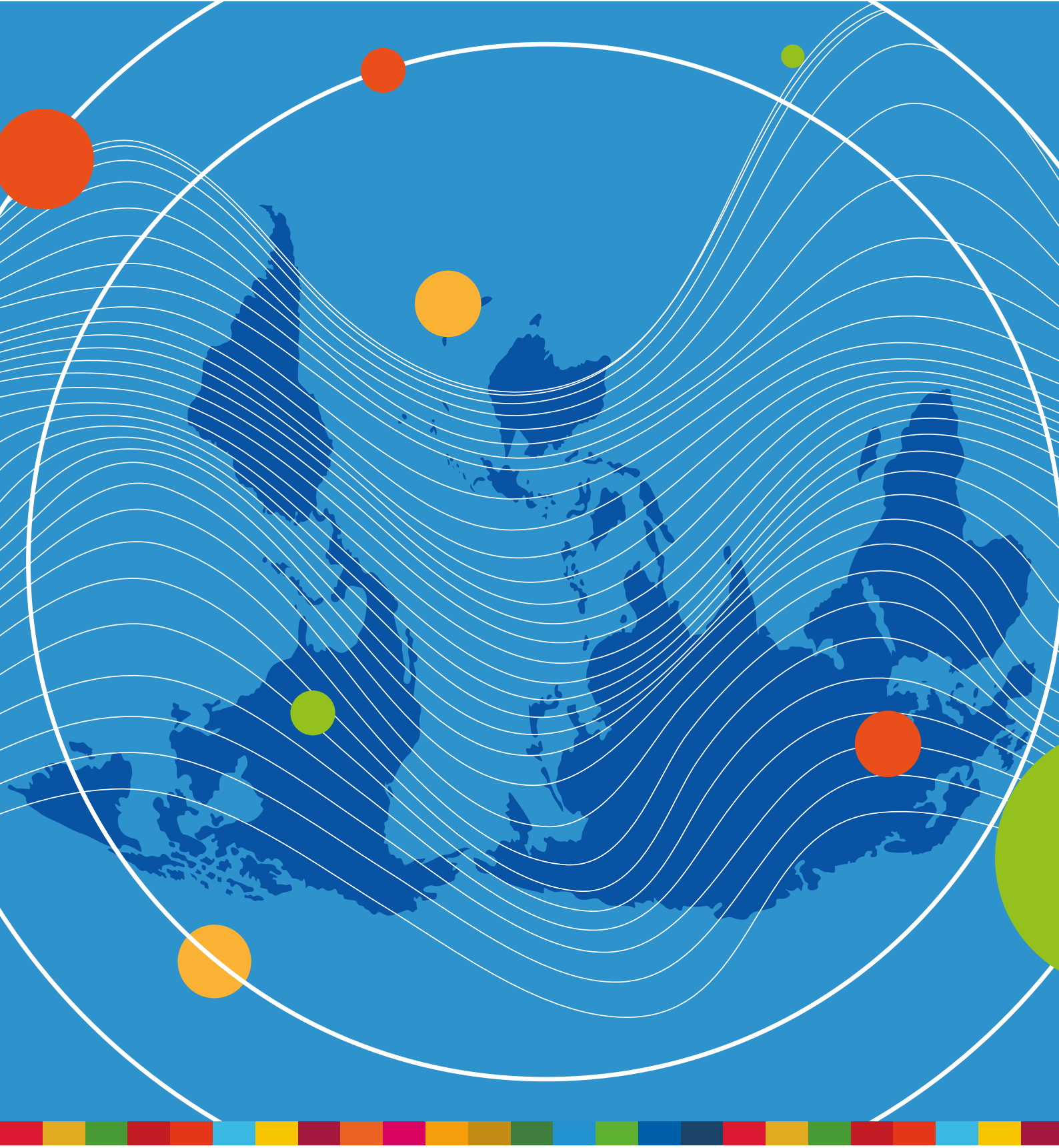

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