

2nd Voice fo Global South Summit 2023 Global South: Together for Everyone's Growth, Everyone's Trust

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In the Mirrors of Time.

The world as we know of – always comes to an end at the very next moment that have thought about it and yet – at the same time – miraculous as it is - a brave new world is always born. In this eternity of the ever expanding 'now' lives and thrives the many dreams and the many aspirations that we as mere mortals create and nourish. Some call it the flow state. As I write this article for you I believe I am experiencing that flow within me. Freedom ! The Freedom to speak and the Freedom to write. The Freedom to express myself as I am. The Freedom to choose from my many own identities merged into one consciousness of being. The flow of life and the flow of living the life. As someone who has experienced the atrocities of colonial occupation and the nearly Kafakagesque grotesqueness of our war of liberation in 1971 – I can probably feel more vividly than ever before what it is like to be free.

Centuries of misdirected ambitions of mostly marauding individuals and corrosive national interests created the darkness of colonialism. Colonialism was not only limited to the forcible transfer of natural resources from the global south to the cause of industrialisation and prosperity of the west – rather, it was also a mindless decimation of the heathen cultures and the indigenous autonomy of the individuals living in the colonised world, which was at its peak, close to 80% of the global population.

Diplomacy and statecraft as we know of today quite literally grew out of the cold, objective, Adam Smith, Westphalian type of world views that the 16th to 20th century europe and then their brethren idolized. But if we would simply care to take a minute and do a bit of introspection of the many nations and of the many peoples who had been colonised and later freed from direct political oppression thanks largely to an American push post World War 2, we will have seen that there exists deep 'institutional voids' in the whole of the social, political, economic, cultural, and even legal narratives underwriting the epistemology of the nation states that they embody today. We often forget that centuries of decimation in leadership and wealth literally gave way to fragile if not broken national identities. Invariably all the countries which we call poor or impoverished today were once rich landscapes with happy people. What happened to that happiness? While there is always a peace dividend, peace can not be enforced from the top. It ought to be grown from within. Deep investments are needed to be made if peaceful and progressive societies are to be had. There is no shortcut.

A Twin-Engine Growth.

Bangladesh, under the dynamic and determined leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina started asserting her strategic autonomy in matters related to economic and social emancipation since 2009. We broke free of the constraining clutches put in place for fifty years or so by some of the development partners and we continued re-investing in our people and in our infrastructures supporting agriculture, industry and communications. The results are visible now. A 460 billion US\$ economy, Padama Bridge, Rooppur Nuclear Power, BRT, MRT, Karnaphuli Tunnel. We now have independent and democratic institutions which can think for themselves and serve the citizens to the best of their abilities. Citizens have finally awakened to take full ownership of the state. We are happy to see that India, with its legacy of profound experiments in civilisation-building, spanning over more than five millennia of recorded history has taken the onerous burden of lighting the way forward.

I have always admired Prime Minister Modi for his unshakeable faith in the heritage and in the history of his nation – which is indeed a nation of many nations – and a cradle of a spiritually enlightened civilisation – and certainly much wider than the ideations of the modern republic which embodies the name, India – that is Bharat. The 2nd Voice of Global South Summit 2023, titled " Global South: Together for Everyone's Growth, Everyone's Trust", is one of the many steps taken in the right direction of finding the right loadstars for the economic and social emancipation of the many peoples of the south which can enable the the many ecosystems of this theatre to set themselves at par in the global productivity and development spectrum. The grand adventures that our many peoples of many colours and creeds have taken up for finding our long lost *shambhala* – home – needed someone with the right perspectives to set the stage for a transformative dialogue among leaders from Global South. We from

Bangladesh, along with the leaders from the global south, have recognized the unprecedented challenges ranging from the strengthening economic cooperation, COVID-19 pandemic to climate change and multi-pronged geopolitical tensions – many of which are consuming human lives at an unprecedented rate. The summit provided a unique platform for Bangladesh and India, as neighboring countries, to strengthen their ties, emphasizing the need for unity, collaboration, and shared values in addressing global challenges and to project our inclusive and syncretic visions for the region and for the globe forward.

Bangladesh and India, under the leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, have been fostering inclusive development and advocating a culture of peace, progress and prosperity. Our leaders have acknowledged the interconnectedness of safety and shared prosperity, aligning their efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure access to concessional financing. Bangladesh, with its notable achievements in economic development, social empowerment, digital transformation and environmental sustainability, stands as a significant contributor to the G-20 discourse – which India chaperoned this year. Especially in matters related to innovation and entrepreneurship, these two countries combined provide a major impetus to global growth in the South. In the spirit of fostering human-centric development, Bangladesh and India, together with other Global South nations, advocate for equitable access to sustainable development, poverty eradication, and reduced inequalities. Our leaders underscored the need for development cooperation based on principles of trust, transparency, equal partnership, and respect for national sovereignty. The emphasis on human-centric climate action and inclusive energy transitions aligns with the commitment to a sustainable future for all.

We recognise that the need to reform global governance structures to address contemporary challenges is both prominent and imminent. For a truly democratic world, a more inclusive multilateralism and comprehensive reforms of international institutions, including the United Nations is a must. Democratising the institutional narrative underwriting the multilateral system is crucial for implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We have reasons to believe that most of our problems in the south are ultimately ours alone and very few of the erstwhile colonial powers are either incapable or are unwilling to share the burden which their past indiscretions created. The world is in need of people's champions. Those who are connected to the roots and sing the songs of the people and of Mother Earth.

Ways Forward.

To address the economic challenges facing by the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) due to the compounding impacts of Covid-19 and conflicts in various part of the world, we must adopt a forward-thinking initiative on international scale. We are running low on trading currencies and supply of imported energy because of guided diversions. But that must not hamper our collective actions to safeguard productivity and their transference across international borders. A collective commitment can be implemented to incentivize and support graduating LDCs in their transition, i.e., extend duty-free and quota-free market access and other essential facilities for at least 6 years to graduating LDCs. This extended support duration can facilitate a seamless and sustainable transition, allowing these nations to navigate economic challenges with enhanced resilience. We must support those who have broken free of the vicious cycles of poverty and not punish them!

To address the disruptions in supply chains and economic hardships faced by numerous nations, particularly in the Global South, due to wars around the world, a concrete and globally applicable solution need to be espoused. Most of the global south have little to nothing to do with any of the conflicts raging globally and yet suffer the worst. Enterprises and nations that have profited from wars ought to be urged to allocate a minimum of 25% of their runway profits from war to the nations most affected. This measure seeks to alleviate the economic impact of conflicts on vulnerable economies and contribute to global economic stability.

The pressing need to safeguard the global environment for future generations necessitates a robust commitment to climate action on an international scale. Developed nations ought to be reminded to fulfill their commitments by providing increased climate finance and sharing advanced technologies. This support can be instrumental in assisting developing nations, especially those in the Global South, to effectively mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. By honoring these commitments, the

international community can collaboratively work towards limiting global temperature rise globally accepted standards.

To recognise the acute need for comprehensive transformation, it is crucial to emphasize on the necessity for reforms within multilateral institutions and the international financial architecture, that comply with more mature global standards. The terms of global trade ought to be reviewed to ensure equity and inclusivity. Moreover, a concerted effort is required to enhance the representation of Global South countries in decision-making processes within these institutions. These reforms aim to contribute to a more equitable global governance system, aligning with internationally accepted principles of collaboration and mutual benefit.

Considering the significant role, the Global South plays in hosting refugees and displaced individuals due to proxy wars and conflicts, a global call is important for prioritizing peace-building efforts. It is imperative for the international community to collectively resist wars, fostering stability and security in conflict-ridden regions. Besides, supports from the friendly countries is sought for the early repatriation of the 1.2 million forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals, commonly known as Rohingya, to their country of origin, Myanmar.

Safeguarding the Earth for generations to come, our singular home, necessitates proactive measures. To guarantee this pledge, robust Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) are required, aiming to keep the global temperature below the critical threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Besides, developed countries must uphold their promise made at the 2015 Paris Conference by contributing a minimum of one hundred billion dollars annually. Acknowledging the challenges faced in arranging these funds due to a lack of political commitment, a practical solution emerges: developed nations could allocate at least 10% of their defense expenditures each year, totaling over two trillion dollars, to the climate fund. This approach ensures that the burden of climate financing is equitably distributed and aligns with the urgent need to address the environmental crisis for the sake of our collective future. I must take cognisance of the fact that even at a time of global financial crisis the global military expenditure increased by 3.7 per cent in real terms in 2022, to reach a new high of \$2240 billion. Military expenditure in Europe saw its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years, according to SIPRI.

The 2nd Voice of Global South Summit provided a platform for leaders to address shared challenges and articulate a collective vision for the future. The call for unity, collaboration, and a shared sense of purpose echoed throughout the summit. The collaboration between Bangladesh and India – as an axis for inclusive development and as has been emphasized in the 'Voice of the Global South Summit,' reflects a shared commitment to addressing global challenges and fostering inclusive development. The leaders' recognition of the interconnectedness for safety and shared prosperity reinforces the idea that our neighboring nations can play an instrumental role in shaping a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. As they express their commitment to further strengthen the Voice of the Global South, the collaboration between Bangladesh and India stands as a narrative arc to realise the potential of unity and purpose in creating a future that upholds inclusive aspirations and shared values.

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