



India as Voice of Global South

For Prelims: Global South, Global North, G20, UNSC, BRI, Green Energy Fund.

For Mains: Challenges and Way Forward for India's G20 Presidency.

Why in News?

As India assumed the [G20 Presidency](#), the External Affairs Minister of India iterated the country's **role as the "voice of the Global South"**, that is otherwise **under-represented in global forums**.

What is Global North and Global South?

- **'Global North'** refers loosely to countries like the **US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia** and **New Zealand**, while **'Global South'** includes **countries in Asia, Africa and South America**.
 - This classification is more accurate as the **countries share similarities in terms of wealth, indicators of education and healthcare, etc.**
- Some of the **South countries like India and China have emerged economically**, in the last few decades.
 - The progress achieved by many Asian countries is also **seen as challenging the idea that the North is the ideal**.

What were the Earlier Used Classification Systems?

- **First World, Second World and Third World Countries:**
 - First, Second and Third Worlds countries refer to countries **associated with the [Cold war](#) -era alliances of the US, the USSR, and non-aligned countries**, respectively.
- **World Systems Approach:**
 - It emphasises an interconnected perspective of looking at world politics. There are **three major zones of production: core, peripheral and semi-peripheral**.
 - The **core zones** reap profits, being the owners of cutting-edge technologies – countries like **the US or Japan**.
 - **Peripheral zones**, on the other hand, engage in less sophisticated production that is more **labour-intensive**.
 - **Semi-peripheral zone** is in the middle including countries like **India and Brazil**.
- **Eastern and Western Countries:**
 - **Western** countries generally **signify greater levels of economic development and prosperity** among their people, and **Eastern** countries considered as **being in the process of that transition**.

What Led to the Emergence of Global North and South?

- **Non-Feasibility of Earlier Classification:**
 - In the **post-Cold War world**, the **First World/Third World classification was no longer feasible**, because when the **Communist USSR disintegrated** in 1991, most countries had **no choice but to ally at some level with the capitalist US**, the only remaining global superpower.
 - The East/West binary was also seen as often perpetuating stereotypical thinking about African and Asian countries.
 - Categorising incredibly diverse countries into a monolith was felt to be too simplistic.
- **Commonalities in Global South Countries:**
 - Most of the Global South countries **share a history of colonisation**. The region has mostly **remained under-represented in international forums** such as their **exclusion from the permanent membership of the UNSC**.
 - This exclusion is seen as something that contributes towards the slower growth of global south.

What are the Initiatives for South-South Cooperation?

- **Global:**
 - [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa \(BRICS\) Forum](#)
 - [India, Brazil and South Africa \(IBSA\) Forum](#)
 - **International Day for South-South Cooperation:**
 - Originally observed on December 19, the date for the **United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation was moved to September 12 in 2011**.
 - It commemorates the date when the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) adopted a **plan of action in 1978 to promote and implement technical cooperation among developing countries**.
- **Indian:**
 - **Proposal on TRIPS Waiver:**
 - Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, **first proposed by the India and South Africa in 2020**, would involve a temporary global [easing of intellectual property rights \(IPRs\)](#) on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to enable them to be produced on a far larger scale, to support global health and a way out of the pandemic. agreement on Covid-19 vaccines, drugs, therapeutics, and related technologies.
 - **Vaccine Maitri Campaign:**
 - In 2021, India began its historic campaign called the [“Vaccine Maitri” initiative](#) which is in accordance with the [‘Neighbourhood First’ Policy](#).

What are the Roadblocks to the Development of Global South?

- **Issue of Green Energy Fund:**
 - Despite **Global North countries’ higher contribution towards global emissions**, **they are neglecting to pay for [funding green energy](#)**, for which the ultimate sufferers are the least emitters – the lesser developed countries.
- **Impact of Russia-Ukraine War:**
 - The [Russia-Ukraine war](#) severely affected the least developed countries (LDCs) **aggravating the concerns related to food, energy and finance**, thereby, threatening the development prospects of LDCs.
- **China’s Interference:**
 - **China is increasingly making inroads in the Global South** through the [Belt and Road Initiative \(BRI\)](#) for developing infrastructure.
 - However, it is still **questionable that whether BRI will be a win-win situation for both parties** or it will focus **only on China’s Profit**.
- **US Hegemony:**
 - The world is now **considered to be multipolar** by many but still, it is the **US alone who dominates international affairs**.
- **Inadequate Access to Resources:**

- Global North-South divergences have been historically characterised by **major gaps in the access to resources required for crucial developmental outcomes.**
 - Industrialisation, for example, has been skewed in the favour of advanced economies since the early 1960s, and no major evidence of global convergence was found in this regard.
- **Impact of Covid-19:**
 - Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already **existing divides.**
 - Not only have the countries faced different challenges in dealing with the initial phases of the pandemic, but the **social and macroeconomic implications being faced today have been far worse for the global South.**
 - The **vulnerability of the domestic economies** is far more apparent now in countries ranging from Argentina and Egypt to Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

How can India be the Voice of Global South?

- Championing the Global South today would demand **more active Indian engagement with the messy regional politics within the developing world.**
- India **must also come to terms with the fact that the Global South is not a coherent group and does not have a single shared agenda.** There is much differentiation within the South today in terms of wealth and power, needs and capabilities.
 - This demands **a tailored Indian policy to different regions and groups** of the developing world.
- India is eager to become a **bridge between the North and the South** by focusing on practical outcomes rather than returning to old ideological battles. If India can **translate this ambition into effective policy**, there will be **no contradiction between the simultaneous pursuit of universal and particular goals.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of G20? (2020)

- (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- (c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
- (d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

Exp:

- The G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union, with representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- In order to achieve a robust global economic growth, the member countries which represent and contribute more than 80% of the global GDP came at the premier forum for international economic cooperation, which was agreed by leaders at the Pittsburgh Summit in Pennsylvania (USA) in September 2009.
- The G20 members include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union (EU).
- **Therefore, option A is the correct answer.**

Mains

Q. “The broader aims and objectives of WTO are to manage and promote international trade in the era of globalization. But the Doha round of negotiations seem doomed due to differences between the developed and the developing countries.” Discuss in the Indian perspective. **(2016)**

[Source: IE](#)

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