

ATTEMPTS TO SUBSUME SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN GLOBAL AID ARCHITECTURE NOT HELPFUL: INDIA

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

India has cautioned that attempts to "subsume" the South-South cooperation in the international aid architecture are not helpful and do no justice to the future potential of cooperation between developing nations.

South-South cooperation is about developing countries working together to find solutions to common development challenges, according to the [United Nations](#) Office for South-South Cooperation. It describes the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador [Syed Akbaruddin](#) said: "More and better South-South cooperation now is on account of the global South enjoying more rapid and sustained economic growth. Yet, South-South cooperation retains its distinct nature and values, as well as diversity of forms and flows. It defies easy categorisation".

The trajectory of global growth and the declining share of ODA (official development assistance) during the last decade or so has seen attempts to subsume South-South cooperation in the international aid architecture, he said on Thursday at the second high-level United Nations Conference on South-South cooperation in [Buenos Aires](#).

"Such efforts are not helpful. They do no justice to either its historical heritage or its future potential. Let us not venture to strait jacket South-South cooperation into a format that it cannot fit into," Akbaruddin said.

He told the conference that over the last decade, India has extended Lines of Credit of about USD 25 billion to more than 60 countries of the South.

All projects follow universally recognised norms and do not create unsustainable debt burdens while ensuring skill and technology transfer to help local communities maintain and sustain assets created, the envoy said.

These projects not only cover "traditional" sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, education, health and rural development, but also new frontiers ranging from the "blue" economy to the "digital" economy, Akbaruddin said.

They encompass climate action activities such as through the International Solar Alliance and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as is being undertaken by the Indian navy at Port Beira in [Mozambique](#) now, he said.

"The South Asian satellite is testimony that the sky is no longer the limit when it comes to India's efforts at South-South cooperation among like-minded countries," Akbaruddin said.

He stressed that the cardinal principle of South-South cooperation is that sharing valuable capacities, experience and knowledge amongst developing countries can be a catalyst for development.

"It does not substitute or supplant but only supplements North-South cooperation," the envoy said.

He noted that as opportunities for sharing the fruits of knowledge, technology and growth have changed, nations are now seeking new channels of cooperation, rather than conflict; new pathways for development, rather than destruction.

In recent years, India's development cooperation with fellow partners from the South has expanded and formats of consolidating partnerships have broadened, including Grant assistance, Lines of Credit, Small Development Projects, technical consultancy, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, educational scholarships and a range of capacity building programmes, Akbaruddin said.

Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, about 13,000 training slots are provided annually to nominees from 161 countries. All Least Developed Countries are eligible for preferential market access in India under India's 'Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme', he said.

Akbaruddin said that the India-UN Development Partnership Fund established in June 2017 is a new mechanism contributing to the achievement of SDGs of fellow developing countries.

The Indian envoy also participated at a signing ceremony for [UNESCO](#) South-South Cooperation projects, funded through the UN-India Development Fund.

"UNESCO has been quick to develop projects. This is South-South cooperation in its essence. The first project with UNESCO is taking off and we hope there will be many more to come," Akbaruddin said, adding that the Government of Gambia expressed appreciation to India for the project, saying in a tweet that "support of India and UNESCO can make a real difference in addressing capacity gaps, saving lives".

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