INDIA & The WORLD

The G20 Way
Inclusion, Innovation & Ideas

G20
भारत 2023 INDIA

> Kashi has been a centre of knowledge, discussion, debate, culture, and spirituality for centuries. It contains the essence of India's diverse heritage and serves as a convergence point for people from all parts of the country.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

FROM THE
EDITOR'S DESK

India's G20 Mantra: Inclusion, Innovation & Ideas

India's G20 journey is acquiring greater energy, intensity, and momentum as the leaders' summit draws near, fuelling expectations about what can be achieved with diplomacy and dialogue. While the international landscape continues to be riddled with dark clouds of uncertainty and polarisation remains the dominant trend, India has made its G20 presidency one of resurgence, reconciliation, and renewal. Eight months on, the architecture of India's G20 agenda has become more robust and distinctive. Inclusion, Innovation and Ideas have become the three "Is" driving India's G20 presidency of "Hope, Healing and Harmony."

Power of Inclusion

Inclusion has been the leitmotif of over 120 G20-related events held across India in the last eight months. In his remarks at various G20 events, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly underscored the importance of carrying everyone along in India's development journey. In his very first speech after taking over the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022, PM Modi sagely exhorted the world to move beyond confrontation and competition to cooperation and co-creation. "India's G20 presidency will work to promote this universal sense of oneness. Hence our theme — "One Earth, One Family, One Future," he said pithily. In his speech at the Development Ministers' Meeting held in Varanasi in June, PM Modi reinforced the importance of inclusion and development in India's G20 agenda. "I strongly believe that it is our collective responsibility not to let the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fall behind. We must ensure that no one is left behind." This idea of carrying along people from all walks of life is the animating ethos of India's G20 presidency. The logo comprising a blooming lotus and its seven petals with the earth as a backdrop and framed by the master theme of "One Earth, One Family and One Future," encapsulates the kernel of values, as embodied in India's G20 presidency.

In a similar vein, India's G20 Chief Coordinator Harsh Vardhan Shringla highlighted the centrality of inclusivity in

India's G2O presidency at a conference organised by "India and The World" and Centre for Global India Insights. "The G20 theme conveys a powerful message of India's G20 presidency, which is of striving for just and equitable growth for all in the world, as we navigate through these turbulent times, in a sustainable, holistic, responsible, and inclusive manner," said the veteran diplomat.

Empowering Global South

As part of its inclusive approach, India has placed the interests and aspirations of fraternal countries of the Global South on the canvas of its G20 presidency. In all the events held so far, besides delegates from the G20 countries, representatives of developing countries were also invited, illustrating India's approach of carrying the entire world along, including those not present in the room. This is reflected in India's consistent emphasis on resolving the Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy as the developing countries bear the brunt of the knock-on effects of the Ukraine crisis such as escalating food, fuel, and fertilizer insecurity. With the interests of the South on the mind, India's interlocutors have repeatedly focused on accelerating SDGs.

By putting the Global South at the centre of its G20 presidency, India may be leaving a lasting legacy for the successive presidencies to follow. PM Modi enunciated this philosophy of mutual empowerment succinctly in his remarks at the India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit in Papua New Guinea. "India considers it a responsibility to bring the issues, expectations and aspirations of the Global South to the attention of the world through the G20 platform," said PM Modi.

Innovation & Ideas

Looking ahead, ideas and innovation will power India's G20 presidency as New Delhi hosts the leaders' summit in September this year. Nothing exemplifies this focus on ideas and ingenuity better than "Start-up 20," the newest engagement group that has been set up under India's G20 presidency. In this regard, India has a lot to be proud of and flaunt as the country is poised to become the third-largest ecosystem for start-ups in the world. India has nurtured this ecosystem with adequate legislative and financial provisions. The power of ideas and innovation is aptly reflected in the Urban20 engagement group. Under India's leadership, U20 has placed the spotlight on the ongoing urban resurgence in India and other parts of the world. Against this backdrop, we have curated a special section on U20, which showcases different facets of urban renewal that can be accelerated by enhancing cooperation among leading cities of the world. In this regard, the U20 Mayoral Summit serves as a clarion call for cities worldwide to come together, share experiences, and forge collaborative partnerships for shaping sustainable and creative cities.

Taking the big picture, what coheres various strands of India's G20 presidency is a deep sense of oneness and unity that is epitomised in the ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam." The idea of regarding the whole world as one big family underpins India's approach to multilateralism and animates collective efforts to address an array of cross-cutting issues, ranging from climate change and sustainable development to developing digital public infrastructure and reform of global governance infrastructure. Going forward, as PM Modi told the G20 foreign ministers in March this year, we have to "focus not on what divides us, but on what unites us." This spirit of reconciliation and bridge-building is what makes India's G20 presidency truly unique and transformational.

Manish Chand
Editor-in-Chief

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Development a Core Issue for Global South

Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking via a video link at the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh in June, 2023.

In an agenda-setting speech at the Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi on June 12, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlines the centrality of development in India's G20 presidency and argues for accelerating SDGs so that no one is left behind.

Kashi, the oldest living city in the mother of democracy, is a fitting location for the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting. Kashi has been a centre of knowledge, discussion, debate, culture, and spirituality for centuries. It contains the essence of India's diverse heritage and serves as a convergence point for people from all parts of the country. I am delighted that the G20 development agenda has reached Kashi as well.

Accelerating SDGs

Development is a core issue for the Global South. The countries of the Global South were already severely impacted by the disruption created by the global Covid pandemic, and the food, fuel, and fertilizer crises because of geopolitical tensions have delivered another blow.

In such circumstances, the decisions you make carry great significance for humanity as a whole. I strongly believe that it is our collective responsibility not to let the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fall behind. We must ensure that no one is left behind. It is imperative for this group to send a strong message to the world that we have an action plan to achieve this.

Our efforts must be comprehensive, inclusive, fair, and sustainable. We should increase investment in fulfilling the SDGs and find solutions to address the debt risks faced by many countries.

Multilateral financial institutions should be reformed to expand the eligibility criteria, ensuring that finance is accessible to those in need.

In India, we have made efforts to improve peoples' lives in more than 100 aspirational districts, which were pockets of under development. Our experience shows that they have now emerged as the catalysts of growth in the country. I urge the G20 Development Ministers to study this model of development. It may be relevant as you work towards accelerating Agenda 2030.

Bridging the Data Divide

One of the important issues before you is a growing "data divide." High-quality data is critical for meaningful policy-making, efficient resource allocation, and effective public service delivery. Democratisation of technology is an important tool to help bridge the data divide.

In such circumstances, the decisions you make carry great significance for humanity as a whole. I strongly believe that it is our collective responsibility not to let the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) fall behind.

In India, digitalisation has brought about a revolutionary change. Technology is being used as a tool to empower people, make data accessible, and ensure inclusivity. India is willing to share its experience with partner countries. I hope that your discussions will result in tangible actions to promote data for discourse, data for development, and data for delivery in developing countries.

Breathing New LiFE

In India, we hold great respect for rivers, trees, mountains, and all elements of nature. Traditional Indian thought promotes a pro-planet lifestyle. Last year, along with the UN Secretary General, I launched Mission LiFE — Lifestyle for Environment. I am glad that this group is working to develop a set of High-Level Principles on LiFE. This would be a significant contribution to climate action.

Woman Power

Gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial to achieve the SDGs. In India, we are not limited to women's empowerment. Ours is a women-led development. Women are setting the agenda for development and are also the agents of growth and change. I urge you to adopt a game-changing Action Plan for women-led development.

The spirit of Kashi is energized by India's timeless traditions. I hope that you will not spend all your time in meeting rooms! I encourage you to go out, explore, and experience the spirit of Kashi. And I say this not only because Kashi is my constituency. I am confident that experiencing the Ganga Arti and visiting Sarnath will inspire you to achieve your desired results.

Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister of India. This is the text of the video message by PM Modi played at the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting held in Varanasi on June 12, 2023.

India's 7-year Action Plan for Accelerating SDGs will be Transformative

In his keynote address at the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi on June 12, India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar unveiled "an ambitious 7-year action plan for accelerating progress on the SDGs which presents a coordinated, integrated, and inclusive roadmap for G20 actions." He also made a compelling case for placing the development agenda at the heart of G20 discussions and exhorted the international community to speak in unison for those most in need.

Welcome to Varanasi, the confluence of sacred waters and the origins of ancient wisdom. It is only appropriate that we meet in this eternal city to culminate our work — the crucial development agenda which aims to propel global efforts to help those most in need. The world today faces unprecedented and multiple crises. From the pandemic to disruptions in supply chains, from the impact of conflict to climate events, our era is becoming more volatile and uncertain by

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Special Secretary Muktesh Pardeshi and Arindam Bagchi, JS (XP) at the Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi.

the day. Added to this is stubborn inflation, rising interest rates and shrinking fiscal space for many nations. As always, in such times, the weak and the vulnerable bear the brunt.

If progress towards the SDGs was already falling short before COVID-19, this has only been further exacerbated by it. Climate change also continues unabated, with a disproportionate impact on Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. Prospects for a global economic recovery remain dim amidst supply chain disruptions, prolonged debt crisis and pressures on energy, food, and fertilizer security.

G20 Solidarity

The Development Ministerial is an opportunity for us as the G20 to demonstrate solidarity on these developmental issues. The decisions we make today have the potential to contribute to an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future.

The SDG agenda is a landmark not only in its universality, in that it applies to all countries, but also in its integrity, in that it can only be successful as a comprehensive agenda. Unfortunately, since its adoption in 2015, not only have we seen the political

momentum wither, but we have also witnessed fragmentation in international priorities wherein some goals are deemed more important than others. Such cherry-picking is not in our collective interest.

As the world struggles with the multiple interlinked crises that have emerged, we have witnessed a painful illustration of that very interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is in this context that India has put forward an ambitious 7-year action plan for accelerating progress on the SDGs which presents a coordinated, integrated and inclusive roadmap for G20 actions. The action plan not only galvanizes a strong G20 commitment to

> It is in this context that India has put forward an ambitious 7-year action plan for accelerating progress on the SDGs which presents a coordinated, integrated, and inclusive roadmap for G20 actions. The action plan not only galvanizes a strong G20 commitment to the development agenda but also puts forward transformative actions on the three core agendas.

India's Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar with his spouse Kyoko in Varanasi.

> We, as the G20, need to be bold in our ambition. We need to come together to address the crises as one. The theme of the Indian presidency, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future,' therefore is an urgent call for action.

the development agenda but also puts forward transformative actions on the three core agendas. And these are:

1. Bold, decisive actions on fostering Data for Development and Digital Public infrastructure which are needed around the world to jumpstart innovations at the grassroots level. India's own experience with these innovations has transformed our

societies and governance in less than half a decade. And that is what you heard from the prime minister.

2. Investing in women-led development not only helps to accelerate progress across all the SDGs, but it also delivers results on the ground for all sections of society.

3. Securing globally just transitions will help ensure the future survival of the planet, while meeting the aspirations of its diverse people.

Transformational Agenda

These transformative actions will act as a force multiplier for accelerating progress across all the SDGs and will contribute to a more effective and stronger multilateral system.

We, as the G20, need to be bold in our ambition. We need to come together to address the crisis as one. The theme of the Indian presidency, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', therefore is an urgent call for action.

As 'One Earth', we must demonstrate solidarity for those in need. Truly leave no one behind, mobilize resources and direct our efforts where they are most needed.

As 'One Family', we must break all silos and destroy all fragmentations. We need to integrate our approaches, build systems that leverage synergies rather than rely on trade-offs, reinvigorate the systems which deliver on our agendas and ensure that all voices at home and outside are equally heard and taken into account.

For 'One Future', we must keep the aspirations of our young people at the center of our actions. Our actions today must not put their future in danger. We must invest in our collective future today and ensure that it is built on the foundations of equality, mutual respect, and solidarity.

Reforming the global governance architecture and reviving global decision-making to be more representative are fundamental for building a future where truly no one is left behind. Such efforts will facilitate development models wherein no region, no country, and no individual will be left behind.

As we redouble efforts to rescue the SDGs and offer relief to those most in need, we also need to speak of the revival and reform of institutions and systems which will deliver on these goals.

Reforming the global governance architecture and reviving global decision-making to be more representative are fundamental for building a future where truly no one is left behind. Such efforts will facilitate development models wherein no region, no country, and no individual will be left behind. These efforts will enable human-centric globalization without creating climate crisis or debt crisis.

We are meeting at a pivotal moment with multiple important fora and events still ahead of us – the G20 Summit, the SDG Summit, the COP28, and the Summit of the Future. It is in our hands to shape the discussions at these future fora. We must put the development agenda at the heart of these discussions. The international community must speak in unison for those most in need.

It is essential that we constantly strengthen the international architecture and governance systems for the protection of global order, global laws, and global values. In doing so we would invariably find ourselves on the path where diplomacy, dialogue, and cooperation take precedence over competition, conflict, and divisions. Choosing peace, cooperation, and multilateralism is essential for building our collective future.

With such an ambitious task on our hands, our actions must also be equally bold and purposeful. G20 needs to play a key role in assuring that this higher purpose remains well within our grasp. Our efforts will strengthen the hands of our leaders when they come together at these historic summits, which are still ahead of us. The action plan that we adopt here today in Varanasi provides such a roadmap for the G20 to galvanise the critical momentum and ambition for these efforts.

We must put the development agenda at the heart of these discussions. The international community must speak in unison for those most in need.

A Rare Show of Global Unity at G20 Meeting in Varanasi

India has brought together the G20 nations behind a common action plan to expedite progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of the most significant achievements of the Indian G20 presidency so far.

The Development Ministers' Meeting, which took place in Varanasi between June 11-13, comprised two sessions—'Multilateralism: Collective Actions to Accelerate Progress towards SDGs' and 'Green Development: A LiFE approach'. Officials said that nearly 200 delegates from all the G20 nations, nine guest countries and 10 international organizations attended the meeting.

Announcing the outcomes of the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting (DMM) in Varanasi on June 12, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar told a press briefing that the G20 has "unanimously approved" two documents—accelerating the progress of the SDGs and G20 High Level Principles on Lifestyle for Sustainable Development.

Spelling out some of the SDG-related outcomes, the Indian minister said that there would be an overarching focus on "women-led development" and leveraging data for developmental purposes.

At the heart of the G20 Action Plan to expedite the progress of the SDGs lies massive lending increases from global financial institutions, a multilateral answer to the growing debt distress, and strengthening the global financial safety net.

The G20 DMM took place at a critical juncture, with the world already past the halfway mark to the 2030 deadline to achieve the SDGs, which were unanimously agreed upon in 2015.

According to a report by the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, just 12% of the SDG targets are "on track." The funding gap to achieve the SDGs has soared to over $4 trillion, which was nearly $2 trillion before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Extreme poverty, hunger, and debt distress across the world are higher than they were a few years ago. The pandemic, the spillover effects of the Russia-Ukraine war in terms of volatility in food, fuel, and fertilizer prices, and climate change have all affected the global economy.

India has maintained that these economic vicissitudes affect the developing world more than the advanced economies of Europe and North America.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who addressed the meeting virtually, remarked that development was a "core issue" for the Global South.

PM Modi called for increasing investments in fulfilling the SDGs and reiterated his previous appeal of reforming the multilateral financial institutions.

Dr. Jaishankar, who was the chair of the meeting, said that the G20 nations recognized the "great problems" faced by the low and middle-income nations of the Global South.

"I am very happy to say that on this matter, there was no politics, everybody understood the importance of it, everybody rose to that occasion, so there was a desire to be completely helpful on everybody's part," he said.

Dr. Jaishankar acknowledged that a joint communiqué at the end of the meeting couldn't be possible because of objections raised by China and Russia on the phrasing of Ukraine-related paragraphs, which prompted the G20 chair to issue a Chair Summary.

EU, US Back India's Action Plan

Jutta Urpilainen, the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, told the G20 gathering that the G20 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on SDGs came just at the "right moment" and could become a "milestone for G20 work." She confirmed that it is the developing states that are finding themselves in the firing line of the global economic turmoil. "EU is fully committed to the 2030 agenda implementation and accelerated SDG achievement, both with partner countries and at the multilateral level," she said.

Varanasi's Heritage Dazzles G20 Delegates

The ancient city of Varanasi left the G20 foreign delegates truly spellbound.

The G20 meeting kicked off on the evening of June 11, with the delegates being given a tour of the Ganges on a river cruise, an experience like no other.

"From the banks of the river, there were several lines of flames burning the corpses. It is a precious time to feel the life and death of the Hindu people who shed ashes and do not build graves (sic)," Japan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shunsuke Takei remarked.

After disembarking from the cruise, the guests were treated to the famed 'Ganga Aarti' at the Dashashwamedh Ghat. The foreign delegates were left mesmerized by the sacred ritual, the shimmering lamps, and the mantras.

The guests were then treated to musical performances by eminent musician Dr Rakesh Kumar and the dancer Maitrayee Pahari, who showcased various folk dances from Uttar Pradesh, such as Charukula, Mayur, Pai Danda, Diwari, Rasleela, and Jhoomar.

The evening concluded with dinner for the G20 delegates, hosted by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

On June 12, the plenary sessions of the meeting commenced at the Deendayal Hastkala Sankul, a convention centre and a facility to promote handicrafts and textiles. The state-of-the-art centre was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi last year.

The delegates were given a walkaround of the crafts and textiles arcade during the break between sessions in order to give them a sense of the thriving textile industry in Varanasi.

"I leave Varanasi with great appreciation for the local culture and people mastering these age-old handicrafts," the EU delegate said.

A gala dinner was hosted by Dr Jaishankar on June 12. The next day, the guests were taken to an expedition to Sarnath, which is revered by Buddhists globally for being the site of the first sermon by Gautam Buddha after he attained salvation in Bodh Gaya. The G20 delegates were shown around the Dhameka Stupa and the museum by a specially-trained guide.

The excursion seems to have left an indelible imprint on the minds of the delegates, who appreciated the sense of peace and spiritual presence in Sarnath.

"We will keep this (visit) in our memories for the rest of our lives," remarked the Argentine delegate.

The EU is the biggest climate finance donor globally. It has also launched a €300 billion Global Gateway Initiative to support nations in achieving the SDGs.

Isobel Coleman, the deputy administrator at USAID and the head of her country's G20 delegation, told the Varanasi meeting that SDG targets won't be met without advancing gender equality, which is in line with the G20 Action Plan released by India. "When women/girls are able to participate fully in their own communities, extraordinary progress is unleashed," she said.

Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), commended New Delhi for the "excellent" outcome documents.

"A cost-of-living crisis has disproportionately hit developing countries and the most vulnerable. By nearly every measure, we are moving backwards. Backwards on ending poverty. Backwards on hunger. Backwards on women's rights. And backwards on development," the UN delegate warned the G20 meeting.

Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, the French MoS for Development, Francophonie, and International partnerships, said that the meeting served the purpose of accelerating global efforts to fight poverty and climate change, and reform the international financial system.

The delegates of Russia and China also supported India for "practical results" to accelerate progress on SDGs, another sign of the overarching consensus on the major outcomes of the G20 meeting in Varanasi.

India's Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar with G20 delegates in Varanasi.

MANISH CHAND

Focus On Issues that Unite, Not Divide, G20

The first meeting of G20 Foreign Ministers under India's G20 presidency concluded on March 2, with a striking convergence on major global issues ranging from climate change and sustainable development to terrorism, setting a template for a consensus-based approach that has defined India's approach for the next few months.

Setting a constructive tone for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi exhorted the world's top economies to rise above differences and deliver concrete results to address problems of the Global South. "We should not allow issues that we cannot resolve together to come in the way of those we can," said PM Modi in a video message at the beginning

of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the stately Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre. "The world looks upon the G20 to ease the challenges of growth; development; economic resilience; disaster resilience; financial stability; trans-national crime; corruption; terrorism; and food and energy security," he said. "In all these areas, the G20 has capacity to build consensus and deliver concrete results," the prime minister said while alluding to "the crisis in global multilateralism."

Key Takeaways

The key takeaways from the Outcome Document included support of the G20 countries for strengthening multilateralism and development cooperation. The G20 recognized the urgency of UN reforms and the need for reinvigorated multilateralism. Two, the meeting highlighted important principles of international development cooperation, such as host country ownership, equal partnerships, tailoring such cooperation efforts with local needs. They also touched upon the need for the Multilateral Development Banks to mobilise additional financing and welcomed efforts to provide additional financing for Sustainable Development Goals. The Outcome Document stressed on the need to have reliable food and fertilizer supply chains as well as resilient and sustainable energy supply chains.

Focus on Global South

The foreign ministers' meeting saw a collective endorsement of India's plans to make the G20 more inclusive by providing greater prominence to priorities of the Global South, including developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Central Asia. G20 foreign ministers agreed that the knock-on effects of the Ukraine crisis on food security, fuel security and fertiliser security have adversely impacted the Global South. In his message to G20 foreign ministers, PM Modi highlighted the adverse impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on developing countries and underscored the imperative of the G20 in providing a voice to the Global South. "Many

"I commend the Indian Presidency and Foreign Minister Jaishankar for securing G20 consensus on a broad set of agreements."
Antony J. Blinken
U.S. Secretary of State

"India and the UK stand united as friends and partners."
James Cleverly
Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom

"The Indian presidency of the G20 rightly recalls that we have one world, one family and one future. To deliver successfully, we need to work together."
Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs

"Brazil is honoured to join the "troika" and will strive to support the group's activities."
Mauro Vieira
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil

"We have an opportunity to reflect anew on the world & future G20 nations want to help build."

Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia

"We stand in solidarity with New Delhi's call to build a common future for humanity, which is especially important in the context of growing geopolitical confrontation. We share practical objectives of strengthening multilateralism & overcoming global economic crises."

Sergei Lavrov
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

"The fight against the international supply chains of illicit drugs, including fentanyl, requires a framework of international cooperation to combat everything from production to trafficking and illicit profits."

Marcelo Ebrard C.
Secretary of Foreign Relations of Mexico

The key takeaways from the Outcome Document and discussions include the strong sentiment which G20 countries expressed on the need to strengthen multilateralism in the context of the dramatic changes in the global order.

developing countries are struggling with unsustainable debt, while trying to ensure food and energy security for their people. They are also the ones most affected by global warming caused by richer countries," he said. "This is why India's G20 Presidency has tried to give a voice to the Global South. No group can claim global leadership without listening to those most affected by its decisions." Over the next few months, India has kept the focus on the interests of the Global South, thereby changing the narrative about an emerging international order.

Countering Terror

The Foreign Ministers unequivocally condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations and recognized that all acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable. They called for strengthening efforts to deny safe havens to terrorist groups, freedom of operations, movement and recruitment, as well as financial, material, or political support. The G20 also reflected upon the threats arising from the misuse of new and emerging technologies and highlighted the importance of strengthening international cooperation in this crucial area.

For the first time, the G20 Foreign Ministers considered and discussed the topic of countering narcotics and called for inclusive and strong international cooperation in this regard. They also discussed global skills mapping, an important priority of India's G20 presidency.

Strengthening Multilateralism

G20 foreign ministers agreed that the existing international governance architecture has played a key role in promoting international cooperation on global issues. The ministers agreed on the need for revitalized multilateralism to adequately address contemporary global challenges of the 21st Century, and to make global governance more representative, effective, transparent, and accountable. In this context, one can expect the

G20 summit in New Delhi to focus on shaping a more inclusive and reinvigorated multilateralism, which can implement the 2030 agenda effectively.

Important discussions on global health were also held. The Outcome Document highlights the need for strengthening key aspects of global health architecture, support for the pandemic fund, and continued political attention to global health. It stresses the need for implementing the "One Health" approach.

A Force for Global Good

In a video message at the start of discussions, PM Modi made no direct reference to the war in Ukraine but acknowledged that the meeting was being held at a "time of deep global divisions". In an important message, he urged the ministers to focus on "on what unites us" and to come together for the sake of developing countries not represented at the meet. Despite the challenges of the divergent positions on the conflict in Ukraine, the G20 foreign ministers were able to come to a consensus on addressing these key challenges, making the G20 meeting stand out as an example of unity and solidarity.

Setting a positive tone, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that there was "broad consensus across the G20" to work and act together on issues of global concern. "Prime Minister Modi said today that we should not allow issues that we cannot resolve together to come in the way of those that we can and I think what we saw today is a very good reflection of what the Prime Minister said — that is work and agreement on a whole series of lines of effort that

the G20 will take to address the issues of greatest concern to people around the world," he said.

Looking ahead, India's G20 presidency will promote "unity of purpose" as well as "unity of action". There may be divergences on the Ukraine issue, but India is confident that closer to the summit, it will be able to mobilize consensus on the Ukraine issue, and deliver a very successful summit.

"China will continue to take an active part in the G20 agenda, and contribute more to promoting world peace and development and building a community with a shared future for mankind."

Qin Gang
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China

"FMs at G20 India observed a moment of silence for the earthquake & renewed their condolences. We thanked for their support & solidarity."

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye

"With deep people-to-people ties, we are committed to delivering for our people, engaging through our Indo-Pacific Strategy."

Mélanie Joly
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada

Manish Chand is Founder-CEO and Editor-in-Chief, "India and The World," an influential magazine-journal focused on international affairs and India Writes Network (www.indiawrites.org), a portal on global affairs. He is also Director, Centre for Global India Insights (CGII), a think tank focused on global affairs. He has authored and edited several books, including "Journeys Across Continents: A New India on the Global Stage," and "Two Billion Dreams: Celebrating India-Africa Friendship."

In Kerala Backwaters, Blending Harmony and Action

Sherpas from the G20 countries, including G20 Sherpa of India Amitabh Kant (centre), at the 2nd Sherpa Meeting in Kumarakom, Kerala.

There are many issues that divide nations in the 21st century, including compounding economic pressures and differences in political paradigms — but it is in the experience of a shared humanity and planet that we will find collaborative solutions to the foremost pressing problems of our time. The 2nd Sherpa Meeting, held in Kumarakom, Kerala (March 30-April 2), was one such opportunity, with over 100 delegates from G20 nations coming together to discuss avenues to bolster sustainable and inclusive development for all.

For its G20 presidency, India has put forward a set of priorities that keeps the ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (One Earth. One Family. One Future) at its core. These priorities build on a human-centric and planet-friendly approach to development by utilising existing frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as new systems of rapid

For its G20 Presidency, India has put forward a set of priorities that keeps the ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or "One Earth. One Family. One Future" at its core.

"Our G20 theme based on universal brotherhood, i.e., Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or the 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' has found resonance across the world with its all-encompassing inclusive message capturing the diverse global challenges of the day."

V. Muraleedharan
Union Minister of State for External Affairs

transformation, such as India's successful Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) model. At the same time, growth can no longer be traded off for sustainability. The presidency is pushing for faster, greener, and more inclusive growth with minimal trade-offs. In addition, the Indian presidency views women-led development as a cross-cutting enabler of this holistic development, recognising the scale of impact made possible by harnessing the untapped potential of half the globe's population. This G20 presidency, which comes at a critical juncture for the world, is also an opportunity for developing nations to

have their voice heard in international fora, by using this platform to collectively advocate for reformed multilateral institutions that better understand and proactively respond to the contemporary realities of the Global South.

Since the first Sherpa meeting in Udaipur in December last year, 11 of the 13 Sherpa Track Working Groups and all Finance Track workstreams have already met once and held detailed discussions on their priorities. The second meeting continued this positive momentum and witnessed encouraging support for India's decisive, ambitious, inclusive, and action-oriented outcomes. Furthermore,

the meeting provided G20 delegates with an Indian experience unlike any other before — a journey through the picturesque backwaters of Kumarakom. There is perhaps no place better suited to remind us of the harmony that exists between humankind and nature, and how we must act as responsible custodians of this precarious and precious balance.

G20 Sherpa of India Amitabh Kant leads his team in a game of tug of war at Kumarakom, Kerala.

Showcasing Sustainable Tourism

In the breathtaking backdrop of the majestic mountains and the famous Dal Lake, the G20 tourism ministers' meeting in May presented a picture of hope and harmony. The third meeting of the G20 Tourism Working Group, held in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, saw intense discussions on promoting tourist flows among the G20 countries. As a picturesque destination that offers immense potential in the tourism sector, Srinagar was perfectly placed

"The majestic peaks, crystal-clear lakes and serene green landscape of Jammu & Kashmir is more than a tourism destination. It is poetry. It's a land of realisation. It is an energy field vibrating with the ageless Indian cultural values."

Manoj Sinha
Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir

to bring together national and international delegates and experts for accelerating the development of the tourism sector and achieving the targets for 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Under India's G20 Tourism Track, the Tourism Working Group is working on five inter-connected priority areas: Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism, MSMEs, and Destination Management. During the meeting, significant progress was made on the two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group — G20 Roadmap for tourism as a vehicle for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and

G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration. The G20 meeting also offered foreign dignitaries and observers a good opportunity to witness the ground realities in Jammu and Kashmir, wrote a foreign journalist.

In his remarks, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha underlined that Jammu and Kashmir is fully committed to the effort to build on shared aspirations for sustainable tourism. "In the last 4 years, policies and programmes have been reshaped so that the benefits of growth percolate to the masses and nurture nature."

"In 2022, a record 18.4 million tourists visited Kashmir, which was the highest in past seven decades. The number of tourists from foreign countries too touched 20,000-figure. All this indicates normalcy has returned to the region, which is now almost free from militancy," said Lt. Gen. Sinha.

"J&K has a bewitching blend of breathtaking mountains, heavenly meadows, lush green forests, sweet springs, and picturesque alpine sceneries. This enchanting natural beauty is a magnet for tourism," said India's G20 Chief Coordinator Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

Under India's G20 Tourism Track, the Tourism Working Group is working on five inter-connected priority areas: Green Tourism, Digitalization, Skills, Tourism, MSMEs, and Destination Management.

The Kashmir Experience

"The local products of Jammu & Kashmir from One District One Product, gifted as souvenirs to delegates, included Papier Mache Box, saffron from Pampore, Kahwa cups, brass spoon, and walnuts. The G20 delegates got a 'hands-on' experience through do-it-yourself activities at the Craft Bazaar like papier-mâché, Basholi paintings, willow craft, embroidery, pashmina weaving, and they witnessed the art of making local handicrafts.

"I am sure that the joint efforts of all the G20 members, invitee countries, international organisations will result in the achievement of inclusive and action-oriented decisive guidelines for the tourism industry."

G. Kishan Reddy
Union Minister for Culture, Tourism & Development of North Eastern Region

"The tourism sector plays a critical role in skilling, reskilling and upskilling."

Amitabh Kant
India's G20 Sherpa

"The G20 meeting on tourism will undoubtedly spur a greater number of tourists to visit this important tourist location including tourists from all countries. This will bring cheer to the local traders and craftsmen who depend on tourism."

Harsh Vardhan Shringla
India's G20 Chief Coordinator

Centre for Global India
Insights (CGII)

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Focus on
Forging an Inclusive
World Order

The G20 should not allow crises to derail the focus on people's issues and Sustainable Development Goals, said senior diplomats and experts at a conference in the run-up to the G20 summit in New Delhi in September. In his remarks, India's G20 Chief Coordinator Harsh Vardhan Shringla underlined the centrality of inclusion as the driving force behind India's G20 presidency. and stressed that the G20 should not "get distracted," but focus on adopting an inclusive approach to pressing issues of the day that affect the lives of people.

"Expectations are high. It is incumbent on the G20 to deliver on the expectations of the international community at large,"

Mr Shringla said at the conference organised by India Writes Network and its research arm, Centre for Global India Insights, a think tank focused on global affairs, in New Delhi on April 12.

"I think while there is enough to divide us, our approach of inclusivity, our approach is that of looking at the world as one family," Mr Shringla said at the conference entitled "India's G20 Moment: Forging an Inclusive World Order." "What is important is that we take a larger view of the interests of the community. All of us who are members of the G20 take decisions that make a difference to the lives of people across the world."

Besides Mr Shringla, the conference featured eminent speakers, including Member of Parliament Dr Amar Patnaik; Indonesia's Ambassador to India Ina H. Krisnamurthi; UN Resident Coordinator in India Shombi Sharp; Mr Edward Uziel, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Brazil; Deep Kapuria, Chairman, The Hi-Tech Group; and Ashish Kumar Sinha, Joint Secretary (G-20) in MEA. The conference was moderated by Manish Chand, Founder-CEO, India Writes Network and Director, Centre for Global India Insights, a think tank focused on global affairs.

"India's G20 presidency is a defining moment not only for India, but also for the world at a time when there is not much good news, but a sense of gloom and doom following the Ukraine crisis," said Mr Chand. "In such a despairing situation, the world is looking at India anew with a glimmer of hope. Given India's unique position as a bridge-builder between the Global North and Global South, there are greater expectations than ever from this country of over 1.4 billion people," he said.

A special edition of India and the World magazine-journal, focused on India's G20 presidency, was also unveiled at the conference. This special edition comprises big-picture articles by eminent diplomats and experts on various aspects of India's G20 presidency.

Amar Patnaik, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), backed the inclusive approach of India's G20 presidency. "Inclusivity is something which has to be practised by yourself if you were to preach to others; that's what India means when it says, Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," said Mr Patnaik.

"Expectations are high. It is incumbent on the G20 to deliver on the expectations of the international community at large," Mr Shringla said at a conference organised by India Writes Network and its research arm, Centre for Global India Insights, a think tank focused on global affairs, in New Delhi on April 12.

Calling for an international treaty to curb pandemics, Mr Patnaik lauded India's exemplary resilience and innovation during the coronavirus pandemic. India's grand move towards the world in terms of health assistance was providing anti-COVID vaccine. Existential crises like pandemics and epidemics teach the world to unify in hard times," said Mr Patnaik.

"**India's G20 presidency is a defining moment not only for India, but also for the world at a time when there is not much good news, but a sense of gloom and doom following the Ukraine crisis,**" **said Mr Chand.** "**In such a despairing situation, the world is looking at India with a new glimmer of hope.**

Indonesia's Ambassador to India Ina H. Krisnamurthi said India will strive and thrive in its G20 presidency. "Many achievements have already been made by the country on the issue of digital energy transition and many other issues," she said.

India holds the key to SDG

UN Resident Coordinator Shombi Sharp praised India's G20 leadership for "rescuing the SDGs" from political divides. The G20 presidency of India is focusing on bringing a G20 SDG Action plan, he said. "As the world's largest democracy and home to the greatest youth generation in history, India is perfectly positioned to bring countries together across divides," said the UN Resident Coordinator. "It is India that will make or break the SDGs," he said.

Mr Eduardo Uziel, the Charge d'Affaires (CdA) of the Brazilian Embassy in New Delhi, underlined that reforming the global governance structure, including the United Nations (UN) Security Council, will be one of the priorities for the country during its G20 presidency. "Brazil would look to mainstream the issue at G20 during its presidency next year," he said.

Focus on Start-ups

Looking ahead, Ashish Kumar Sinha, Joint Secretary (G20), highlighted the role of start-ups and digital economy under India's G20 presidency. "Startups play a pivotal role in emerging economies. Innovative engagements of startups in the field of disaster risk reduction are backed by collaborative efforts under India's G20 Presidency," he said. "India's move towards this new avenue holds massive potential backed by India's demographic dividend which is the largest in the world as of now. That's where Y20 and Startup20 converge to boost each other," he said. "Startup20 opens up avenues for emerging startups to find the right balance of funding and finances and an appropriate investment climate in a single massive G20 ecosystem."

A special edition of India and the World magazine-journal, focused on India's G20 presidency, was also unveiled at the conference. This special edition comprises big-picture articles by eminent diplomats and experts on various aspects of India's G20 presidency.

HARSH VARDHAN SHRINGLA

India's Economic Resilience Amidst Global Challenges: A Focus on Inclusivity

India has taken over the prestigious G20 Presidency amidst a complex and challenging environment. The crises of today are of varying shades and degrees — be it climate or geopolitical — and have presented us with a unique opportunity to lead the charge, as G20 President, towards an inclusive, human-centric world order.

As a G7 partner, a member of BRICS and QUAD, the current chair of the SCO and G20, and also the 'Voice of the Global South', India has the distinctive honour to offer lasting and meaningful solutions and perspectives to collectively address global concerns, while acting as a bridge between developing countries and advanced economies.

Great Expectations

There is a welcome expectation from India that as a large emerging economy, which has implemented innovative and far-reaching measures to improve governance and the living standards of its billion plus people, it will be able to provide solutions for the global challenges of the day. This responsibility becomes increasingly significant as current global governance structures — that have been in place for the past eight decades — failed to prevent or resolve the crises of the past few years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said, "We must also admit that the tragic consequences of this failure are being faced most of all by the developing countries.

After years of progress, we are at risk today of moving back on the Sustainable Development Goals."

The priorities of India's G20 presidency, thus, are to shape an inclusive sustainable global future and to share India's best practices across sectors. This ambition was set in stone by Prime Minister Modi in Bali last year when he said that India's G20 Presidency would be "inclusive, ambitious, decisive and action-oriented."

This exercise in inclusivity begins with the decision to hold G20 meetings in every state and Union Territory of India rather than confining them to the capital. So far, 131 G20 meetings have been held in 48 different locations in India, covering all but two states and Union Territories.

The theme of India's G20 presidency — 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or "One Earth One Family One Future" — is drawn from the ancient Sanskrit text of the Maha Upanishad. Essentially, the theme affirms the value of all life — human, animal, plant, and micro-organisms — and their interconnectedness on planet Earth and in the wider universe.

The theme also spotlights LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), with its associated, environmentally sustainable and responsible choices, both at the level of individual lifestyles as well as national development, leading to globally transformative actions resulting in a cleaner, greener and bluer future.

The theme conveys a powerful message of India's G20 presidency, which is of striving for just and equitable growth for all in the world, as we navigate through these turbulent times, in a sustainable, holistic, responsible, and inclusive manner. They represent a uniquely Indian approach to our G20 presidency, of living in harmony with the surrounding ecosystem.

Invitees under India's G20 presidency reflect another facet of inclusivity. Africa will be strongly represented under India's G20 presidency with the participation of

South Africa (G20 member), Comoros (President of the African Union), Nigeria, Egypt (invitee country and NEPAD Chair) and Mauritius.

Widening the Canvas

Participation in the G20 under India's presidency has not been confined to G20 members or invitee countries. In a bid to enrich and broaden the base of discussions, other countries and regional and international organisations have also been invited to specific G20 meetings. For instance, Norway, with an interest and expertise in the blue economy, has been invited to the G20 meeting on ocean's health. Similarly, the G20's Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI), under India's presidency, includes some 40 countries and regional organisations. This is a forum for sharing best practices and models of financial inclusion with developing countries.

As Prime Minister Modi has reiterated, sustainable lifestyles are crucial for the environment: "Our lifestyles should complement our commitments for climate actions." Prime Minister Modi's call for a 'pro-planet people's movement' is an exercise in inclusivity in its most fundamental sense. India recognises that climate change cannot be fought from conference tables alone and needs to be fought from the dinner tables in every home. To achieve this, a collective effort by every individual is essential. The circular economy and "Waste to Wealth" are also crucial concepts that India intends to promote as part of the G20 Presidency.

Blending Domestic & Global

India's inclusive approach followed under the G20 presidency is an extension of its existing domestic approach to development and progress, which specifically focuses on engaging all sections of society, particularly the weaker sections. Take digital public infrastructure, for instance. It has enabled

the government to deliver the benefits of development directly to citizens in all parts of the country and has achieved this goal in a transparent, smooth, and corruption-free manner.

The Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme was implemented through Digital Public Infrastructure, along with the "Jan Dhan Aadhaar" trinity of identity cards, affordable internet telephony rates and "banking the unbankable." Through this scheme, 480 million previously "un-banked" Indian citizens now hold bank accounts and directly receive government benefits from programmes such as the National Rural Landless Employment Guarantee scheme or the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana benefits women immensely as 56% of the Jan-Dhan account holders are women with 67% of these accounts based in rural and semi-urban areas. This fact underlines the quintessentially inclusive character of India's development programme. It is not surprising therefore that 'women-led development' is a major priority of India's G20 presidency.

In a similar vein, the approach towards public health has also been inclusive and impactful. Through the COWIN platform, over 2 billion vaccines have been administered to our citizens. Additionally, the "Ayushman Bharat" scheme, the world's largest publicly funded health insurance scheme, has touched the lives of over 500 million citizens.

Another crucial area of focus has been sanitation and availability of drinking water with more than 110 million sanitation facilities created across the country. In addition, about 110 million rural households out of 150 million have also been provided with access to drinking water at their homes. The 'Har Ghar Jal' initiative aims at ensuring that every household has access to water. These are just some examples of India's commitment towards inclusive development which aims at involving all its citizens, especially those from the weaker sections of the society.

Global Public Good

The challenge of inclusivity lies in making sure that every single citizen

in a country is provided with the basic necessities of life while ensuring that there is enough social security support for them, and India is consistently making huge strides in this aspect. Working for the global public good has been an important objective of India's foreign policy as was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. India shared medicines like hydroxychloroquine with over 190 countries in the world while also sharing the 'Made in India' vaccines with over 150 countries through the 'Vaccine Maitri' programme.

In the past decade or so, India's development assistance quantum has doubled and lines of credit have expanded from $14 billion to almost $30 billion. Furthermore, within the Indo-Pacific region, India, along with some of its partners, is a first responder in extending humanitarian action and disaster relief.

At its core, India's G20 presidency is a people-oriented event, through a 'Jan Bhagidhari' or people's participation approach and because of it, there is a great amount of enthusiasm within the country for the G20.

Larger public participation at G20-related events, through seminars, conferences, quiz competitions, Model-G20 and festivals, facilitates their involvement as stakeholders in the G20 presidency process.

Global South

As Prime Minister Modi underlined in his remarks in February this year to G20 Finance Ministers and G20 Central Bank Governors, the G20 must focus on "discussions on the most vulnerable citizens of the world". It was with this human-centric development mindset that he convened the Voice of Global South Summit, attended by heads of state, governments and ministers from 125 countries, soon after India took over the G-20 Presidency.

The democratization and reform of multilateral institutions has been a key theme of India's international discourse in the past few years and so, India will aim to build consensus on all issues among G20 members to achieve definite outcomes during its presidency. The world order created after World War II has become archaic; it lacks the ability to solve the problems of the day and hence lost credibility in the eyes of the world. India thus emerges as a beacon of hope in these times.

As Prime Minister Modi has said, India stands ready and willing to help fellow developing countries in their development journeys in any way we can. India is happy to share our experience, know-how and best practices with the world, to take us all forward collectively, on our 2030 vision of Sustainable Development Goals and empower our people.

The need is to identify "simple, scalable and sustainable solutions" that can inclusively transform our societies and economies.

By firmly believing in inclusivity and taking everyone on board the path to growth and prosperity, India has shown what it means to lead by example. At a time when multiple crises of a global magnitude affect us all, the importance of keeping Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam's sentiment alive has never been more critical.

Harsh Vardhan Shringla is the Chief Coordinator of India's G20 Presidency. Prior to this, he was Foreign Secretary of India. In a four-decade long Indian Foreign Service career, he has been Ambassador to the United States of America, Bangladesh and Thailand. He was Consul General of India in Durban, South Africa and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He is also an experienced multilateral diplomat, having worked on two UN Security Council tenures, served in the Indian Mission to the UN in New York and as Permanent Representative to UNESCAP.

India's G20 Presidency is Critical to Meeting SDGs
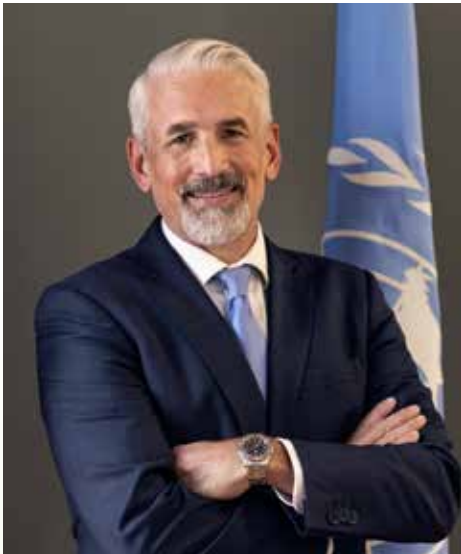
UN Resident Coordinator in India Shombi Sharp describes the current global situation as an unprecedented crisis, with overlapping cascading crises that include climate change, the war in Ukraine, and economic development being pushed back across the world. According to the UN diplomat, the SDGs are still the unifying agenda that the world needs to focus on as part of India's G20 presidency.

The world is going through an unprecedented crisis. This is a tough moment in history, where we're faced with cascading, overlapping crises. We haven't gotten out of the COVID-19 pandemic yet completely, and it keeps threatening to come back. We're also facing the terrible consequences of a senseless war. Economic development is being pushed back across the world, and the cost of living, even for basic necessities like food and fuel, is increasing, especially for the poorest countries and communities. The debt crisis is pushing the poorest countries to the edge of the precipice once again. And all of this comes against the backdrop of the greatest existential crisis of all — the triple planetary crisis, especially climate change.

As the Secretary-General has said, quite soon, the hottest temperatures today will be the coolest of tomorrow, which is a frightening thought. I think we have an almost 50% chance, even within the next five years, of experiencing an average temperature globally of more than one-and-a-half degrees above preindustrial levels.

Therefore, the SDGs are still the unifying agenda that we need to keep focusing on. India's G20 presidency has a critical role in keeping us on track in this regard. We are at the halfway point of the 2030 agenda, and we have seen that not only are we suddenly not making progress, we're actually being pushed back.

Human Development Indicators have declined for the first time ever for two years in a row for most of the countries in the world. Food insecurity has increased almost three times since pre-pandemic levels, and again, there is the debt crisis. Over half of the developing countries are either already in a debt crisis or are very much at risk

Economic development is being pushed back across the world, and the cost of living, even for basic necessities like food and fuel, is increasing, especially for the poorest countries and communities.

of being in a debt crisis. The majority of those countries are the ones most severely affected by climate change as well.

Climate Change

The last eight years have been the warmest on record. To identify the 10 warmest years on record, you only need to look at the last 10, 15, or 20 years. We need to keep in mind that we're talking about $100 billion here, while we actually need a $1 trillion a year just for climate action. Moreover, there's a $4 trillion-a-year financing gap for the SDGs across the board. As the UN Secretary-General António Guterres pointed out during his visit to Mumbai last year, the SDGs are in need of urgent rescue.

Amidst all the negative news, there are still some bits of silver lining and good news to be found. For example, the Black Sea Grain Initiative has been extended, which is crucial in mitigating the impact of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. To date, more than 25 million tonnes of grain have been released, which has helped significantly reduce the pressure on global commodity prices.

Last month, the High Seas Treaty, which had been under negotiation for a decade, was finally agreed upon, resulting in the protection of 30% of the world's seas. India played a crucial role in achieving this optimistic outcome. While its ongoing G20 leadership is receiving significant attention, there are many other reasons to celebrate India. India is the world's largest democracy and home to the greatest youth generation in history. Positioned better than any other country I can think of, India is well-equipped

to bring nations together across divides in any direction.

The G77 and G20 countries play an important role in the success of the SDGs. However, it is India that will ultimately determine the outcome. This is partly due to the fact that nearly half of the global targets must be met in India, making it both a domestic and international leadership story. We have witnessed in recent years the remarkable progress in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in India. However, hundreds of millions more will need to be lifted out of poverty in order to achieve the 2030 SDG targets.

We are witnessing incredible progress in areas such as electrification, access to clean water, financial inclusion, and digitalisation, as has been mentioned. Additionally, there have been remarkable investments in renewable energy, both from the public and private sectors. The pace of change in India is truly impressive, as exemplified by the emergence of electric auto-rickshaws. These blue vehicles were non-existent when I arrived just a year-and-a-half ago, but now they are appearing everywhere, offering a glimpse into the exciting transformations happening in the country.

India's global leadership in taking action on climate change, such as the Panchamrit targets set by Prime Minister Modi and their participation in COP26, is truly remarkable. India has become the fourth largest country in the world in terms of investments in renewable energy, with more and more energy coming online to reach 500 gigawatts. Prime Minister's Modi's LiFE mission is also an important contribution, as is the designation of the International Year of Millets. Millets are a miracle food that provide nutrition, food security, and sustainability.

The alignment between G20 and SDGs is so clear that I have been calling it the SDG20. The goals of the two are essentially the same, which is to rescue the SDGs and pull the focus back from political

divides to understand how the poorest and developing countries are being affected the most. India's legitimacy is unique, having demonstrated inclusive development at home and a trusted voice, straddling so many dimensions. Its G20 presidency is focusing on bringing a G20 SDG action plan right to the Leaders Summit. Days later, we go to New York for the SDG summit, the global stocktake. Hopefully, India will come with fully prepared acceleration action plans, like bringing a prepared meal to the table.

India's presidency is also working closely to gain momentum for the Secretary-General's SDG stimulus plan within the G20, which is crucial to address the lack of financing, calling for a whopping $500 billion, and other priorities such as debt restructuring, reforming the international financial architecture, and MDBs. A strong partnership between India's presidency, the Bridgetown initiative, and President Macron's initiative is also in place. Therefore, it is undeniable how crucial India's leadership is at this moment in time, as we are precisely at the midpoint for the SDGs.

India's G20 Moment and UN Reforms

Regarding Security Council reform, the president of the General Assembly visited here a few months ago and informed us that, although we have been working on this reform for two decades, there has never been more momentum than now. Last year, 73 countries' heads of state and government demanded Security Council reform at the General Assembly, which shows that the majority of member states acknowledge that we need that reform to reflect the current world. It's the domain of member states' decision-making, and the UN staff and the Secretary-General don't have a say in this. India has been a big proponent of that, and personally, I think India couldn't have a better resumé. However, it's up to the member states, but we are optimistic about it.

I would like to mention two other important areas of reform that India strongly advocates for. The first is counter-terrorism, which the Secretary-General has prioritised since his arrival and creating the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism. India has been leading efforts in this area, such as hosting the president of the Security Council counter-terrorism committee and contributing to the Trust Fund for counter-terrorism. The Delhi Declaration was also a significant contribution to modernising counter-terrorism efforts in the digital world and drone technology.

> **India's presidency is also working closely to gain momentum for the Secretary-General's SDG stimulus plan within the G20, which is crucial to address the lack of financing, calling for a whopping $500 billion, and other priorities such as debt restructuring, reforming the international financial architecture, and MDBs.**

The second area of reform is peace and security, particularly in peacekeeping. India is the largest troop-contributing country in the history of peacekeeping and continues to make incredible sacrifices and provide support to the global peace and security architecture. Recently, India handed over 150 heavy vehicles, including armoured vehicles, to peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan. In conclusion, I believe that the moment for reform is now, and India is the place to be.

Shombi Sharp, a US national, is the UN Resident Coordinator for India since November 2021. Mr. Sharp has devoted more than 25 years of his career to promoting inclusive and sustainable development internationally, bringing experience he has acquired at the United Nations and externally to this new position. Within the Organization, he most recently served as United Nations Resident Coordinator in Armenia, after holding several leadership positions at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where he was Resident Representative in Armenia.

G20 Must Prioritise Inclusivity and Dialogue for Urgent Global Challenges

Indonesian Ambassador to India Ina Krisnamurthi commends India's presidency for its emphasis on continuity and convergence and its focus on pro-people policies, particularly its inclusivity in health policies during the pandemic. The G20 provides a platform for dialogue and understanding despite its challenges. It is crucial for the voices of developing countries and emerging economies to be heard in multilateral fora regarding urgent global issues such as climate change, water security, food security, and energy security.

Under Indonesia's G20 presidency, we had three main priorities: strengthening the global health architecture, digital transformation, and energy transition. We also placed emphasis on translating global partnerships into concrete and impactful deliverables, so that G20 outcomes would not be limited to mere statements and documents that could be easily discarded. Finally, we aimed to ensure that G20 initiatives had a direct impact on our grassroots communities. And for that reason, during our presidency, we made a concerted effort to establish concrete projects, and we are proud to say that we have secured commitments for 361 cooperation projects worth approximately $283 billion. These commitments were agreed upon at the G20 summit, where we focused on actions for a strong and inclusive recovery.

Indonesia commends and praises India's presidency for emphasizing the importance of continuity in the G20. Two crucial points that stand out are continuity and convergence, which are reflected in India's focus on pro-people policies. It is crucial for emerging economies like Indonesia and India to prioritise pro-people policies because of our large populations. Therefore, focusing on the welfare of our people should be a top priority.

Continuity and convergence can also be seen in India's priorities this year, including the focus on LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment). This is a continuation of our own emphasis on enhancing sustainable SDGs by 2030, which unfortunately got overlooked due to the pandemic. India has made it stronger and even better with its life priority. Indonesia believes that India has the ability and capability to advance the

G20 agenda, particularly in the interest of emerging countries.

During the pandemic, Indonesia benefited from India's policy of inclusivity in health, particularly during the peak period of the delta variant of COVID-19.

Indonesia has a lot to learn from

India's extensive efforts in digitalisation, including the UPI. Singapore has already established a platform that includes UPI, and later this year, Malaysia will also join the effort. Indonesia will also be joining it as part of ASEAN. There is no doubt that we need to learn from India's achievements in digitalisation. Regarding energy transition, the International Solar Alliance is just one small example of India's leadership in this area. If anyone doubts India's leadership in energy transition or energy security, they need only look at what India has accomplished over the years. Therefore, Indonesia has no doubt that India will strive and thrive in this year's G20.

On a more serious note, last year and this year, the G20 was caught at the centre of a global geopolitical storm. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that this is not the era of war was an expression of hope. The Bali Leadership Declaration is a concrete implementation of that hope. So, we believe that the G20 is living proof that it can be a bridge for divisions. It is an expression of optimism that global cooperation still exists.

When discussing the G20, it's important to acknowledge that it has one of the most diverse memberships of all international groupings. The G20 should provide an avenue for people to sit and talk with each other, not necessarily to fix all problems or challenges, but at least to find a room or window of understanding between each other. This was evident during the FMM G20 in New Delhi, where despite pessimism about the negotiation table, there was eagerness for dialogue, and many schedules of bilateral meetings between ministers collided due to this eagerness for understanding.

I think the challenges that may arise in the negotiation rooms should not cause G20 to lose sight of its main objective, which is to address urgent global challenges. Despite the difficulties, the G20 provides a platform for people to be in the same room and listen to each other.

I also want to emphasise inclusivity in international politics, especially regarding SDGs. It is noteworthy that for the first time in the history of G20, four emerging economies are taking a leading role. However, we cannot forget that SDGs cannot be achieved unless the voices of developing countries and emerging economies in many multilateral fora are heard. We need to repeatedly voice our opinions on climate change, water security, food security, and energy security.

India has initiated the conversation with its focus on sustainable living, and I hope that Brazil, as the leading chair for COP in 2025, will also prioritize this issue. So, we must vocalise what emerging economies and developing countries want in multilateral fora.

Lastly, regarding the mobilisation of resources, I believe that in this imbalanced world, both geopolitically and geoeconomically, it is essential to mobilise adequate resources for everyone. As Ambassador Shringla mentioned, the principle of SDG 2030 is inclusivity, which means "Leaving Noone Behind." To achieve this goal and include everyone in the SDG 2030 achievement, we must mobilise resources from the triple helix or quadruple helix or any other means necessary to ensure that the voices of emerging economies are heard.

Indonesia's Ambassador to India H.E. Ina H. Krisnamurthi has been Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Indonesia to India since March 2022. She is also accredited as Indonesia's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bhutan. She has an outstanding diplomatic resume, with postings in key world capitals and multilateral organisations. Prior to coming to New Delhi, she served as Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on Economic Diplomacy and before that was Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations.

AMAR PATNAIK

Health Care Infrastructure and Licensing: India's Solutions for Universal Health Care at the G20

In this article, Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik emphasises the significance of inclusivity in tackling health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The author highlights the importance of sustained investment in public health and education, and the establishment of a new metric that evaluates development while considering factors such as climate change, inequality, and democracy. The author suggests that the G20 should contemplate adopting India's approach to inclusivity in its pandemic strategy for the future.

Inclusivity is a concept that one must practise oneself before preaching it to others. India's culture is founded on the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which highlights inclusivity and the notion of the world being a family. During the parliament session, when India was dealing with the once-in-a-100-years pandemic, the question of why India sent vaccines to other countries when we ourselves were struggling to provide it to our citizens was repeatedly raised. However, India's decision to send vaccines to other countries was based on its belief in inclusivity and the recognition of the three main issues in health: awareness, accessibility, and affordability.

The Global South was facing challenges in accessing the COVID-19 vaccine. While some countries had achieved a first dose vaccination rate of 60-70-80%, some African countries had only managed 2-3% vaccination rate. India, along with South Africa and New Zealand, took the lead in relaxing the international agreement on intellectual property rights, TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), to eliminate the need for licensing from big pharmaceutical companies providing vaccines. Inclusivity is not just the government's responsibility; it must be embraced by all stakeholders, including private players, communities, and society at large.

India's approach to relaxing the international agreement on intellectual property rights, TRIPS, and allowing for

compulsory licensing to enable countries to manufacture vaccines and transfer technical knowledge is a notable example. The G20 should consider adopting this approach as part of its strategy and goals to prepare for any future pandemics. In the unfortunate event of another pandemic, a compulsory licensing scheme can facilitate vaccine production by enabling countries to manufacture vaccines and transfer technical know-how.

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India emerged as a leading participant in the GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation) experiment of the WHO, with some other countries not even participating. This is a lesson that we must take away from the pandemic, and it is what India did.

The second aspect concerns universal health care, which can be approached through two models. The government of India's Ayushman Bharat model is an insurance-based system available to all citizens, focusing on availability and accessibility. However, in Odisha, due to its geographical position, we follow an assurance scheme that is true to the spirit of universal health care.

It is essential to note that Odisha's model is not an insurance scheme. The critical difference lies in the fact that when you walk into a government hospital, you are not charged for outdoor or indoor treatment. This is in stark contrast to the insurance-based model, which requires you to make payments for medical treatment. As Harsh Vardhan Shringla (former foreign secretary of India and ambassador to the US, and G20 chief coordinator) aptly pointed out, during pandemics and natural calamities, it

is the poor, including women and children, who suffer the most. To address this issue, Odisha introduced an assurance scheme in 2019, based on a completely card-based system. Under this system, patients receive free treatment at government hospitals, primarily at the primary level.

But that doesn't address the issue of universal health care because we need to invest much more in health infrastructure at the primary, sub-primary, and district levels to meet WHO standards. India is still grappling with this issue, and other countries in the Global South may face even greater challenges due to their lower expenditure on health as a percentage of their GDP.

The important lesson to learn from this is that the world must continue to invest in public health, particularly at the community level, as a percentage of GDP. The Multidimensional Poverty Index, which is a global index, takes into account not only economic development but also factors such as health, education, and quality of life.

Many emerging developed countries still rank low in the multi-dimensional poverty index, despite making significant progress. India has made enormous strides in reducing multi-dimensional poverty over the last 15 years by almost 24-25 points, with Odisha reducing it even more by 35%. However, there is still much more work to be done, as India currently ranks below 61 other countries. This highlights the need for continued efforts, not just in health care but also in education. This is a lesson we must learn and apply, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The third point of importance is quite intriguing, as I had once raised the question in parliament whether we require a fresh metric for evaluating development. This has been a subject of discussion for a considerable period. Joseph Stiglitz suggests the need for a novel metric, since according to him, the three primary existential crises in the world are climate change, inequality, and democracy. Here, democracy refers to

strengthening the institutions at the rural level, the district level, and the delivery point, rather than merely the concept we usually associate with it.

As we examine these three concerns more closely, it becomes apparent that the current method of calculating GDP fails to account for them adequately. I recall approaching Dr Manmohan Singh and posing the question, "Do you think we need a new metric for measuring development?" His response was to point out the existence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are already in place. Perhaps, he suggested, it is time to consider discussing the accomplishments of the SDGs in the same breath as GDP, particularly at high-level gatherings such as the G20 and G7. Only then, he surmised, can we hope to significantly reduce the inequities that continue to persist both globally and within individual countries.

In addition to licensing, we must also address the issue of infrastructure, which includes both physical and human resources such as doctors, paramedics, staff, and individuals capable of administering injections. The fact remains that despite the challenges, 2 million vaccine doses have been administered in a country with a population of 1.4 billion. However, our population-to-paramedic staff ratio is below the standards set by the WHO. It is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the health care community that they have been able to accomplish so much. Nevertheless, there is still much more that needs to be done to address the critical health care needs of our country.

The final point I would like to make concerns the standardisation of global health education across countries and the need to facilitate the movement of medical personnel, such as doctors, across borders. This will enable us to better address any future global health crises by ensuring that paramedics can move freely across borders. Additionally, there is a pressing need to codify the participation of both the North and the South in the delivery of universal health care across the world.

As a member of UNITE (United Global Parliamentary Network for Global Health), I have been involved in discussions regarding the creation of a Pandemic Treaty. Such a treaty would help us prepare for future global health crises by addressing issues related to intellectual property, shortages in physical and human resources within the health care sector, and building the resilience of communities, as we have seen in India.

My state, Odisha, has particularly been a forebearer in handling natural disasters and has been internationally recognised for its handling of several cyclones. In fact, the protocols and the Disaster Management Act that we relied upon during these natural disasters helped us to handle the pandemic. When we decentralized the power of the district magistrate collector to sarpanches in Odisha, it ensured that not only isolation, but also the distribution of food grains, cooked food, and blood to patients who required it from time to time—for example, thalassemia patients—were taken care of. There are several other areas that came up during the handling of the pandemic that we need to address. So, I think we need an elaborate international order in the form of a Pandemic Treaty that takes care of intellectual property, infrastructure, and community resilience to handle future global health crises. This is the way forward.

Dr Amar Patnaik is Member of Parliament in Rajya Sabha from Odisha representing the Biju Janata Dal. He is also the party's national spokesperson and head of the party's IT wing. Dr Patnaik is the author of "Pandemic Disruptions and Odisha's Lessons in Governance." Dr Patnaik hold a bachelor's degree in Physics from St Stephens College at Delhi University, MBA in Finance and Systems from Xavier's Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar, and Master's programmes in public management from Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore and the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

ASHISH KUMAR SINHA

India's Startup 20 Advocates Inclusion and Sustainability in Digital Transformation

Startup 20 is a new engagement group established by the Indian G20 presidency comprising actual startups, venture capital, and hedge funds. Ashish Kumar Sinha, joint secretary, G20, explains that unlike working groups, engagement groups have greater freedom to decide their own agenda and prioritise issues they feel are most relevant, allowing them to stay more connected with the current issues that require attention. Sinha further highlights India's impressive credentials in the startup arena that helped establish Startup 20 as a separate engagement group.

Startup 20 is an engagement group, which means it is a non-governmental entity that operates separately from the government. For those who are unfamiliar with the G20's structure, there are around 10 to 11 engagement groups, and in our presidency, we have 11, including Startup 20. The primary role of engagement groups is to engage in discussions and deliberations with their counterparts in the member and invited countries on specific subjects. Unlike working groups that represent the government and their positions, engagement groups are comprised of actual stakeholders.

Business 20 comprises businessmen, Startup 20 includes actual startups, venture capital, and hedge funds. In short, people from the same ecosystem belong to these groups. Urban 20 includes entities involved in urbanisation, while Think 20 consists of think tanks. Engagement groups are essentially non-governmental fora, and their main role is to discuss, deliberate and provide recommendations to the government and the presidency for consideration. Therefore, they have a recommendatory role to play.

Compared to working groups, engagement groups have greater freedom to decide their own agenda and to prioritise issues that they feel are most relevant, as they are composed of actual actors on the ground. This allows them to stay more connected with reality and current issues that require attention. Furthermore, engagement groups have the flexibility to calibrate and recalibrate their agenda within the course of a presidency. If a significant event occurs that is relevant to a particular engagement group's perspective, it can be included in their agenda.

Startup 20's Origins and Purpose

Startup 20 is an engagement group that was established during the Indian presidency. This was no small feat, considering that the G20 agenda has already become quite expansive since its inception. The G20 began as a mechanism between finance ministers and central bank governors of 20 countries, and later evolved to include leaders at the summit level. Over time, the G20 has expanded to encompass almost all issues of governance, from energy to agriculture, education to the digital economy, which has resulted in a packed calendar of meetings. Therefore, there has been considerable reluctance in countries to add new groups, whether they are working groups or engagement groups. Nevertheless, due to India's impressive credentials in the startup arena, we were able to establish a new engagement group, which is Startup 20. Likewise, we have also established a new working group on Disaster Risk Reduction. Those who follow G20 events will understand that India naturally holds a leadership position in these two areas.

India has developed a robust startup ecosystem and is poised to become the third-largest ecosystem for startups. India has supported this ecosystem with adequate legislative and financial positions, resulting in over 100 unicorns and over 85,000 startups in the country. Therefore, we were able to propose the establishment of Startup 20 from a position of strength to the G20 membership, and they accepted it due to its uniqueness and the need for it. It was evident that if Startup 20 was discussed only as a part of Business 20, it would not receive the attention it deserved. Hence, we established it as a separate engagement group. We recognize that this is a greenfield virgin territory with many issues yet to be harmonized, such as defining what a startup is and identifying the stakeholders, players, ecosystem, and financing required. These

issues are being discussed, and we have set it on our presidency's agenda. We have already held two meetings, in Hyderabad and Sikkim, and are moving ahead.

The Importance of Startups

Startups have become essential due to their agility and nimbleness in responding to any situation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most players in the industry who were involved in vaccine production, research, supply chain, and PPE kits were startups. Startups have the greatest potential for job creation and are environmentally conscious with the least possible carbon footprint due to their specific peculiarity and specifications.

Regarding Startup 20, India has developed a robust startup ecosystem and is poised to become the third-largest ecosystem for startups. India has supported this ecosystem with adequate legislative and financial positions, resulting in over 100 unicorns and over 85,000 startups in the country.

Most startups are also involved in the area of data and digitalisation, which has become the most important transformation in the world, led by countries like India. Our presidency's priority is inclusion, which aligns with the theme of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which means the whole earth is a family. Therefore, our focus on inclusion is reflected in everything we do, even in the theme of our presidency.

Then, if we break it down to our priorities, we have climate finance, which is once again about inclusion, specifically the inclusion of developing countries into climate action. This requires a committed flow of finance from developed countries to developing countries. We have also discussed the accelerated achievement of SDGs, inclusive and resilient economic

growth, and digital transformation, including UPI and other related matters.

UPI is the biggest financial inclusion tool that we've seen, in comparison to many other countries where digitalisation or such payment interfaces have been present. In the Indian and emerging market context, such tools become inclusion tools. We approach and use these technologies from the standpoint of development, with a primary focus on addressing developmental issues through digital progress and transformation, be it UPI, ONDC, CoWin, the Aadhaar system, or the unique ID system. Each one of these is inclusion. We are presenting all of these Indian experiences on the table for G20 members to discuss, deliberate, share with each other, and learn from, and India is willing to learn from theirs. We need to collaborate on these so that the rest of the world, which is yet to see the fruits of digitalisation and data for development, can benefit.

The world is increasingly becoming connected to the internet, yet there remains a digital divide. As we discuss the use of data for development, we must also address the issues that we have already seen and anticipate for the future, including concerns about data privacy and cross-border data flow. As a developing country, we should also focus on digital skilling. In developing countries, about 30% of the population lacks mobile internet connectivity, let alone broadband. Therefore, when we discuss inclusion and digital transformation, we are once again essentially talking about inclusion.

The Voice of Global South Summit has been an important initiative for us. At the beginning of our presidency, our prime minister reached out to all the countries that are not currently represented in this mechanism. We sought to understand their requirements and priorities. Under India's G20 presidency, we are bringing all these issues into focus—not just our own, but those of all developing countries. This includes bridging the digital divide, promoting digital skilling, and financing digital infrastructure, among other priorities. Inclusion is a critical component of each of our priorities, and is being addressed by every working group and engagement group involved.

In the realm of startups, by fostering greater familiarity among G20 countries and their respective ecosystems, we can also promote inclusion. Suppose a startup seeks to conduct a pilot project and discovers that certain destinations offer more cost-effective or tax-friendly environments. It can then pilot its project in another country, such as an Indian startup conducting a pilot project in Brazil, and subsequently scale up accordingly. This is another way in which inclusion can be promoted on a broader scale. While we have put forth our agenda and conveyed our story and ideas behind it, it is premature to say what we have achieved. Our agenda has been broken down into sub-agendas and discussion parameters, and we have completed about one-third of our formal meetings, with nearly 100 meetings in total when considering all other engagements. However, we still have more than half way to go. It would be premature to judge the deliberations, as the agenda is presented by the presidency but is enriched through the deliberations of all G20 countries. Who knows, we may end up achieving more than we initially anticipated, as all countries bring their experiences to the table in each field.

Mr Ashish Kumar Sinha is a career diplomat with over 17 years of experience in the Indian Foreign Service. Before taking over the position of Joint Secretary G20 in the Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Sinha served as India's Deputy High Commissioner in Nairobi, Kenya. Since joining the Indian Foreign Service in 2005, he served as a Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York for three years. He had the opportunity to serve in the Embassies of India in Spain and Nepal in diplomatic capacities.

EDUARDO UZIEL

Brazil-India Cooperation in G20: Strengthening Bilateral Ties for Global Impact

Eduardo Uziel, Brazil's Deputy Chief of Mission in New Delhi, discusses the significance of India-Brazil cooperation within the G20, as well as strong bilateral relationship between the two countries. The diplomat stresses that as emerging economies, their participation in the G20 provides a platform for collaboration across numerous areas of mutual interest, including Security Council reform and sustainability.

For Brazil, the opportunity to cooperate with India in the G20 is not only significant for the G20 itself, but also because of the strong bilateral relationship we share with India. As members of the Brazilian Embassy in India, we are actively engaged in sustaining our bilateral relationship with India, which is especially significant this year as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of our diplomatic ties. It's a crucial milestone, and we're delighted to be able to combine it with the G20 by following India in the presidency. However, the reality is that Brazil and India have been collaborating for several years, working together to shape the international agenda. We have a robust relationship that includes increasing trade and investments, and we already cooperate in various fora such as IBSA, BRICS, BASIC, and G4. So, in essence, this collaboration has already begun, and it's only going to become stronger with the G20 presidency succession.

Global South

The significance of this lies in the origins of the G20 itself and its original purpose as a forum for discussing economic and financial measures, with emerging economies being a distinguishing factor. Prior to the G20, the G7 had been in existence for a considerable period, but it comprised a homogenous group of economies with a particular view of the world and a degree of contentment with the existing global order.

The G20 provides a platform for emerging economies such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, and South Africa play a significant role in its proceedings. The succession of four developing countries in the presidency of the G20 is a fortunate occurrence. The fact that the next three presidencies will be held by IBSA countries—India, Brazil, and South Africa - is particularly noteworthy. This offers ample opportunities for cooperation across numerous areas of mutual interest.

I would like to draw your attention to two areas that I consider particularly significant, although I am choosing them somewhat arbitrarily. Firstly, the Security Council reform is a topic that cannot be ignored when two diplomats from Brazil and India are in the same room. The majority of countries within the United Nations support it, and it is long overdue. The current geostrategic landscape indicates the necessity of diverse perspectives within the council.

Brazil and India have been collaborating for several years, working together to shape the international agenda. We have a robust relationship that includes increasing trade and investments, and we already cooperate in various fora such as IBSA, BRICS, BASIC, and G4.

We need creative solutions, new ideas, and fresh impetus to bring about change.

The G4 proposal, which has been on the table for some time, presents the right approach. Of course, adjustments will be necessary, but that is the very essence of negotiation. India, Brazil, and South Africa can bring this issue of reforming and improving global governance institutions to the forefront of discussion within the G20.

The second area is less obvious, but increasingly important for Brazil, India, and the world. It's related to sustainability and the fight against climate change, which is biofuels. Recently, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who is a close friend of Brazil and was an ambassador in our country, launched The Global Biofuel Alliance in Bengaluru. This comes from the cooperation between Brazil and India, and it's shared by many developing countries in the south. Biofuels are an essential path

Brazil's then President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva with India's then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

to sustainability because they are cheaper, don't require new technology, and are cleaner than most energy sources, especially for urban mobility. This is an experiment that India has introduced in the G20, and I'm sure that Brazil will follow suit.

The Future of Presidency

In preparing for this presentation, I contacted my friends among the Sherpas and Sous Sherpas in Brazil to ask about their priorities for the G20. They chuckled on the other end and said, "Be candid with them, tell them we're still working on them." Of course, Brazil has undergone a significant political transition, and we are still finalising our priorities. However, they also mentioned that certain themes from India's presidency will continue, such as sustainability, strengthening the SDGs, digital inclusion, and the fight against hunger and poverty. These are all issues that will undoubtedly be priorities for Brazil as well. The exact approach and strategy for addressing them are still being decided. Additionally, I can add that gender and indigenous peoples will also be important issues during our presidency. These priorities align well with India's priorities, and I am confident they will also align with South Africa's priorities.

Eduardo Uziel is currently Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Brazil, New Delhi. He is a Brazilian diplomat since 2000 and was posted in the Brazilian Mission to the UN, in the Embassy in Tel Aviv and in the Mission of Brazil to the EU.

MUKTESH PARDESHI

India is United to Make its G20 Presidency A Great Success

India's presidency of G20 is a historic event, and Indian citizens of all stripes and persuasions are coming together to ensure that the country succeeds in rallying the world's most advanced economies to address pressing global challenges, writes Muktesh Pardeshi.

During my travels across India for G20 meetings, spanning from Port Blair in the south to Srinagar in the north, Dimapur in the east to Diu in the west, I have personally witnessed a profound sense of national pride regarding India's 2023 G20 presidency and its pivotal role in projecting India onto the global stage. The presidency, which has come to India for the first time, is more than just a multilateral diplomatic endeavour; it has evolved into a year-long national undertaking, involving the entire central government, all 36 states and union territories, the parliament, businesses, the hospitality industry, academia, professionals, scientists, cultural groups, media, and, particularly, the youth. In the history of independent India, we have never hosted another such year-long event at such a large scale and at the pan-India level. The whole country is unquestionably united in its resolve to rise to this historic opportunity

and to ensure the success of India's G20 leadership.

As the world's largest democracy and the fifth largest economy, we bear significant responsibilities as the head of the current G20 group—an esteemed platform for global economic cooperation. We have already surpassed six months of our term, which commenced on December 1, 2022. During this time, we have embraced a distinctive approach, pioneered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself in his "Mann Ki Baat" address, emphasizing the infusion of Jan Bhagidari (people's participation) into our endeavours. Aligning with this vision, we have taken our presidency to various regions of our country to highlight our regional and cultural strengths. The collaborative efforts of local governments and the wider populace demonstrate our collective commitment to assuming a global leadership role and ensuring its whole-hearted success.

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Diplomacy Beyond Delhi

The conduct of diplomacy is generally concentrated in the capital city. In this respect, our approach to the G20 presidency is quite unique and unprecedented. We have achieved visible success in our mission to engage every Indian citizen as an active participant in India's G20 process. A notable recent initiative in this regard is the Ministry of Education's extensive series of events—including workshops, exhibitions, seminars,

and conferences—held between 1-15 June 2023 at the state, district, block, Panchayat, and school levels. These events aimed to raise awareness and involve individuals from all segments of the population in G20-related activities. This initiative alone witnessed an impressive participation of over 15.3 million people, comprising 11.9 million students, 1.39 million teachers from about half-a-million schools, and 1.95 million individuals from various communities. This unprecedented level of engagement reflects a strong interest and enthusiasm among the masses, serving as an excellent example of integrating diplomacy and global affairs into people's daily lives.

Similarly, at a smaller scale, various stakeholders such as museum staff, tourist guides, and cab drivers have become integral contributors to a dedicated ecosystem focused on showcasing India's cultural diversity and rich heritage to visitors. Each individual has recognized the significance of these efforts in establishing India as a preferred tourism destination. The three meetings of the Tourism Working Group, held under our presidency, have covered significant locations such as Rann of Kutch, Darjeeling, and Srinagar, with the concluding Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place along the serene Konkan coast in Goa in late June. These events bring optimism and cheer to local small-scale businesses and practitioners of traditional arts and crafts. Diplomacy becomes a true means of national development and collective well-being.

Engaging Young Minds

Our efforts to engage the youth, particularly those attending universities and colleges, have yielded tremendous success through the G20 University Connect initiative. Designed as a series of on-campus lectures delivered by academics, former diplomats, and subject matter experts, this initiative aims to interact with young students and cultivate their interest in G20-related

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matters. These events encompass a range of activities: lectures, model G20 simulations, essay competitions, and interactive sessions. In my personal interactions with students from various colleges over the past months, I have been truly impressed by the abundance of ideas and perspectives they shared regarding India's growing global prominence and the accompanying responsibilities. The enthusiasm and self-assurance exhibited by our motivated younger generation indicate their potential to make a positive impact on the success of our G20 responsibility.

A National Endeavour

The enthusiasm surrounding India's G20 stewardship extends beyond a few cities; it encompasses a wide geographic and demographic range. Firstly, the meetings have been held in over 50 cities, spanning

nearly every state and union territory in the country. Secondly, these meetings go beyond the participation of bureaucrats and diplomats alone. Each meeting venue serves as an opportunity to showcase our vibrant culture, traditional crafts, and technological advancements through exhibitions and immersive experiences. These initiatives actively involve our artisans, craftsmen, and startup entrepreneurs, enabling them to exhibit their cultural artifacts and innovative creations in front of a global audience.

The successful hosting of each meeting necessitates extensive coordination at multiple levels, requiring a comprehensive whole-of-government approach. This approach entails collaborative planning and execution of various aspects such as infrastructure, logistics, security, and medical facilities, for which actors from state governments, municipalities, and the central government must work in unison with each other.

An Active and Decisive Presidency

In the first half of our year-long presidency, we have conducted 125 meetings out of the scheduled 230 across 60 cities (by the end of May 2023). These meetings have seen active participation from over 15,500 delegates.

Notably, several significant outcomes have been achieved during these six months, including the unanimous adoption of an Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals and the G20 High-Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development at the Varanasi Development Ministers' Meeting. Furthermore, the ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—embracing the world as one family—has been widely disseminated. Our unity in diversity serves as a defining

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characteristic as India takes on a larger global leadership role.

The collective effort of the entire nation in showcasing our strength and unity will undoubtedly be one of the hallmarks of our G20 presidency as we embark upon Amrit Kaal—the period of 25 years leading to the centenary of India's Independence in 2047.

Ambassador Muktesh Pardeshi is Special Secretary in India's G20 Presidency Secretariat. In a diplomatic career spanning over three decades, he has served as India's Ambassador to Mexico, High Commissioner to New Zealand, and Chief Passport Officer. Views are personal.

ASHOK SAJJANHAR

One Earth, One Future: India's Value-Driven G20 Presidency

India assumed the presidency of G20 from Indonesia on 1st December, 2022. While accepting this responsibility, PM Modi said that India's G20 presidency will be "inclusive, ambitious, decisive and action-oriented." He said that it will be India's endeavor that "G20 works as a global prime mover to give impetus to collective action." It is these ideals which permeate and form the ethos of India's foreign policy that serve as the bedrock of India's G20 presidency.

These values are particularly relevant today as the world has been subjected to huge instability and volatility over the last three years and more. The Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected all the 200 countries of the world in health and social as well as economic arenas. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict in Europe has had global implications through high inflation, shortages of food, fertilizers and energy, unsustainable debts, supply chain disruptions, and more. In addition, the challenges of climate change, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and others continue to unsettle the global economy and community. It is in these circumstances that India has been entrusted with the responsibility of steering the activities of the G20 in 2023.

G20 Theme

During its presidency, India has focused on issues of critical importance to the world. The theme identified by India for its presidency is "One Earth, One Family, One Future." This flows from the philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The World Is

One Family) which appears in our ancient scriptures and forms the foundational paradigm of our foreign policy. The logo and the theme of India's G20 presidency convey a powerful message for just and equitable growth for all as the world navigates through turbulent times. They also embody India's overarching priorities during its G20 presidency. The presence of the lotus in India's logo is symbolic of what is auspicious, pure, eternal, and detached. The lotus denotes success amidst the current challenges faced across the globe. According to an observer: "Lotus is known for its ability to bloom unblemished in the murkiest of waters. It is a poignant symbol for humanity to emerge victorious from its challenges."

Ensuring Peace

The biggest challenge that confronts the world today is that of ensuring peace and harmony. In its statements on the Russia-

Ukraine conflict at the UN and at other fora, India has always advocated the path of dialogue and diplomacy. On the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in September, 2022, PM Modi told President Putin that "today is not an era of war." Speaking in Bali at the conclusion of the G20 Summit last year, PM Modi exhorted the countries to evolve a new world order as had been done after the Second World War. He added that it was imperative to show concrete and collective resolve to ensure peace, harmony and security in the world. He expressed the hope that "next year when the G20 meets in the holy land of Buddha and Gandhi, we will all agree to convey a strong message of peace to the world."

Climate Change

Climate change has emerged as the most formidable challenge and even an existential threat for the world's survival as we know it today. India has launched a number of initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure to deal with this looming disaster. In the context of the G20, India has advanced the concept of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) which was introduced by PM Modi during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021. It was launched in the presence of UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at the Statue of Unity, Gujarat in October, 2022. Mission LiFE is envisioned as an India-led global mass movement that will encourage individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment. India has highlighted LiFE as a critical focus area for discussion and action during its presidency. The underlying theme of LiFE is that people need to change their lifestyles and live in more sustainable ways if the environment is to preserved and safeguarded for future generations. This principle is also captured in SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production.

The Global South

India has always been a champion of the concerns and interests of the under-privileged. Challenges being faced by developing countries have risen manifold on account of the severe shocks that the world economy and polity has received over the last several years. Even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the condition of the developing countries was deteriorating because of the economic shocks due to the international financial and economic crisis in 2007-'08 and the Euro sovereign debt crisis a few years later. The pandemic and the conflict dealt a double whammy on the economic, social and health situation of most developing countries. To compound the situation, these countries do not have a voice at the global negotiating tables where discussions take place to seek solutions to these challenges. Moreover, the decisions taken by groups like the G20 which accounts for 85% of the global GDP and 75% of global trade have the greatest impact on the developing countries.

Keeping the above in view, PM Modi organized a Voice of the Global South Summit on 12-13th January right at the beginning of India's presidency. Around 125 countries participated in these deliberations, several of them at the Head of State/Government level. PM Modi told the participating leaders, "Your voice will be the Voice of India." Issues of inflation, debt, supply chain disruptions, shortages of food, fuel, energy and fertilizers that plague the economies of the developing countries are expected to find a prominent place in the Final G20 Declaration that will be adopted at the Summit in New Delhi in September, 2023.

PM Modi vigorously articulated the concerns of the Global South at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan on 20th May, 2023. Several issues like LiFE and promotion of millets find prominent mention

in the "Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security" that was adopted by all G7 members as well as other participants in Hiroshima.

As a result of its own experience, particularly during the pandemic, India believes that digital technology and digital public platforms are key to deepening engagements of governments with citizens, reducing corruption, and promoting expeditious delivery of services and financial transactions. Digital solutions to traditional problems have transformed and elevated the lives of people across the world. During its presidency, India has sought to share its success stories and best practices in this field for the benefit of the global community and to provide a better standard of living to the dispossessed of the world.

Jan Bhagidari

It has been India's endeavor to take the meetings out of the confines of one or two major cities like Delhi and Mumbai to different parts of the country. Right at the beginning, India announced that its G20 presidency will comprise around 200 events covering 32 sectors to be held in 50-55 cities across all the states and Union Territories of the country. The benefit of this would be to make the ordinary citizens of the country active stake-holders and supporters of the G20 process. It would also expose the visiting delegations to the rich diversity and mosaic of Indian culture, art and life. The endeavor was to create a uniquely Indian experience which would be spiritually invigorating and intellectually rejuvenating. India has been eminently successful in achieving these objectives. G20 has emerged as a mass movement in the country with the active engagement of common citizens, youth, women, students and people from different walks of life. Greater interaction

and better appreciation of each other's unique traits and characteristics is the best way to promote peace, understanding and cooperation.

The Way Ahead

Some themes deliberated upon in the meetings under India's G20 presidency include strengthening multilateralism, reliable food and fertilizer supply chains as well as resilient and sustainable energy supply chains, development cooperation, global health, economic slowdown, cost of living crisis, counter-terrorism, global skill -mapping, threats from misuse of new and emerging technologies, climate action, provision of adequate finance and technology by developed to developing countries, humanitarian assistance, disaster response and women-led development.

Through its G20 presidency, India has sought to foster peace, security, wellbeing and prosperity of all people in the world, particularly of the developing countries. Ideals of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," and policies of Neighbourhood First and Vaccine Maitri, place higher human values above parochial ideas. It is an approach that has permeated all aspects of India's G20 presidency.

In an editorial on December 1, 2022, the day that India assumed the G20 presidency, PM Modi committed to making India's year of chairmanship as one that will focus on promoting a "universal sense of oneness." He also called for making India's G20 presidency one of "healing, harmony and hope." While it is still early to say whether India will be able to get a consensus G20 Declaration issued in September, 2023, it is clear that India is leaving no stone unturned to make significant progress on all substantive issues under discussion based on India's G20 theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future."

Amb. Ashok Sajjanhar has worked for the Indian Foreign Service for over three decades. He was the ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia. He is currently the president of Institute of Global Studies in New Delhi. Amb. Sajjanhar writes and speaks on issues relating to international relations and Indian foreign policy.

RAJAT KATHURIA

It's Time for Emerging Economies to Reinvent G20

The world needs consensus and cooperation to progress, and G20 obviously has its task cut out. The monopoly of the West in international institutions needs to be contested, says Rajat Kathuria.

India's assumption of the G20 presidency is a historic moment. It gives us a chance to demonstrate why we are perennially described as one of the fastest-growing emerging markets (EM) and why we aspire to be a manufacturing hub like China, while being home to the maximum number of dollar billionaires in history for the level of our per capita income. This year, G20, which constitutes 85% of the world's GDP, 75% of its trade and 60% of its population,

will see exactly what economist Joan Robinson said, "Whatever you can rightly say about India, the opposite is also true." Many liberal intellectuals are labelling India as an 'emerging, rather than a developing country', and if anything, Robinson's paradoxes have arguably become more acute.

While per capita income has increased, inequality has grown even more. Income inequality is confined not just to India,

but several other G20 economies, including Brazil and South Africa, the two presidencies after India.

As members of G20 countries travel to 50 cities and attend 200 meetings planned for India's presidency, they will witness first-hand the heterogeneity and the richness of India or in AL Basham's words, 'the wonder that is India'. They will also come face-to-face with the contradictions that make up contemporary India. The logic of how differing objectives of varied interest groups across different states and regions in India thwarts collective action might also become easily apparent to anyone who keeps their eyes and ears open.

G20 delivered on its commitment to international cooperation in 2008 to help overcome a situation that could have been worse in its absence. That is the only acknowledged success of the august body. As it now attempts to address another crisis (war and its derivatives, debt, energy, inflation, and protectionism), and avert another (climate change) consensus building is going to be nigh impossible under a business as usual (BAU) paradigm.

Monopoly of the West

For long, EMs have been at the receiving end of the agenda and standards-setting of the West. Invoking the metaphor of firm behaviour, how many monopolies do we know of that are benign? Google, Apple, Meta, Standard Oil or IBM? Naturally, when there is a conflict between domestic interest and compliance with international norms and practices, one expects most countries to act in their own interest. If they possess monopoly power, they will use it if they feel they can get away with it. There's nothing surprising or amoral in that. Even the ones with exorbitant privilege act in their self-interest. That is the way monopolies function, and for a change, evidence reflects the prediction of textbook economics. The Doha Development Round of multilateral trade negotiations did not settle concerns of EMs; instead we moved on to discussing standards, labour, and environment, pushed hard by the West.

Former US President Donald Trump refused to appoint a replacement to the Appellate Body of the Word Trade Organisation (WTO) rendering the institution dysfunctional because some of its

rulings did not suit the US. Price support for agriculture has been routinely frowned upon as market distortionary. In contrast, billions of dollars of direct income support to farmers is kosher because that's the way the West does it. Many other issues reflect the double standards, astuteness, and monopoly of the West, such as reneging on the $100 billion per year climate finance promise and subsequently attempting to include all manner of finance under its scope, to singling out coal as a fossil fuel to be eliminated while continuing with others, such as oil and gas.

The most egregious of all is the restarting of coal-fired power plants in Europe. Imports of coal have begun and mining has reopened in China. When things are good, the virtues of the market can be extolled for the rest of the world to embrace. When the going gets tough, however, it is not so easy! External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar got it right when he said that there is a mindset in Europe that indicates that when the rest of the world has a problem, it's their own problem, but when Europe has a problem, it's the world's problem.

Creating Opportunities

The ability of the G20 to create opportunities in the background of such contradictions will depend upon several things, such as negotiating power of coalitions within the G20, and geopolitical developments. 2008 has been the only demonstrated success of the G20. The financial crisis of 2008 had its roots in the developed world and was triggered by loose monetary policy, shady regulation and compromised governance. It quickly spread to other countries demanding coordination among major nations. For the first time, EMs were invited to be part of a group that had been hitherto limited to a homogenous gathering. Consensus happened because EMs in the mix conformed to the standards set by the West.

Proportionate Representation

In the 'peace' that has followed since, G20 has often been characterised,

For long, EMs have been at the receiving end of the agenda and standards-setting of the West. Invoking the metaphor of firm behaviour, how many monopolies do we know of that are benign? Google, Apple, Meta, Standard Oil, or IBM? Naturally, when there is a conflict between domestic interest and compliance with international norms and practices, one expects most countries to act in their own interest.

although disputably, as a 'talk shop.' That peace has now been rudely interrupted by the war. 'This time is different' is a cliché that is used to describe shocks that are often hyped disproportionately because of a proximity bias. However, this time it is different because EMs are unlikely to accept the authority of the West. In all likelihood, they will challenge it doggedly. In many ways, led by a democratic India, EMs will demand justice for the wrongs of the West that are often conveniently forgotten and consigned to the pages of history. The tokenism of belonging to an elite group now needs to extend to an even partnership and proportionate representation on bodies, like the International Monetary Fund. An information nugget is relevant here - there are 12 Indian-origin CEOs running the most powerful companies in the world!

Consensus & Cooperation

The ongoing economic crises around food, energy security and inflation might have cooperative solutions under the G20, but climate and sustainability are becoming harder, if not impossible. However, that does not imply that India and other EMs should not continue their fight for climate justice. Until justice is delivered, the G20 is unlikely to generate consensus anymore. India has turned the corner. The focus on climate justice and ending years of intellectual dishonesty must be returned to the table. India has an opportunity to do that and also exhibit its prowess in diversified fields, such as yoga, traditional and creative industries, tourism, hospitality, and all things digital, among others. Simultaneously, it must bury red tape and set its own house in order.

The world needs consensus and cooperation to emerge, and G20 obviously has its task cut out. The monopoly of the West and acceptance of their agenda

The ability of the G20 to create opportunities in the background of such contradictions will depend upon several things, such as negotiating power of coalitions within the G20, and geopolitical developments.

needs to be 'decolonised' and contested. Starting with Indonesia last year, the presidency of the G20 is in the hands of EMs for four straight years (Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa). This presents an opening for continuity and challenge. Contestation, not for the sake of vulgar demonstration of newly acquired influence, but for the sake of justice. As per reports, 2022 FIFA World Cup attracted the maximum number of Asian spectators in the history of the World Cup. There could be logical reasons for this other than jumping to the conclusion that Europe had erected entry barriers. Metaphorically, though the citadel has been breached, there is still a long and winding road ahead.

Rajat Kathuria is Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shiv Nadar Institute of Eminence, and Professor of Economics. Views are personal

NAGESH KUMAR

Reinvigorating Global Partnership for Global South

The leadership of G20 by the countries of the Global South is a historic opportunity to put the reinvigorated global partnership at the centrestage of the G20 agenda to fix the constraints of finance and technology for sustainable development and green transformation. It would be an important legacy of the Global South for building a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for all, says Dr Nagesh Kumar.

Established initially as a forum of the largest economies for coordinated action to address the challenges thrown by global financial crises, the G-20 has evolved over the years into the premier forum for advancing international economic cooperation on different aspects of sustainable development. The India Presidency represents an important phase in its evolution in that for the first time, all the Troika members are from the Global South.

The countries of the Global South will continue to helm the influential forum for the next two years as Brazil and then South Africa takes over the presidency from India. This provides an important opportunity for the Global South to advance the sustainable development agenda which is of special interest to them. Most developing countries are not only not on track to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the mid-point of the 2030 deadline, but progress has been reversed in

several targets. The poly-crisis comprising the Covid-19 pandemic, the food and energy security challenges resulting from the Ukraine War, and the debt crisis, are threatening to push 175 million people back into extreme poverty. The successful implementation of the SDGs in developing countries requires global cooperation and partnership.

The 2030 Agenda adopted at the United Nations Summit in 2015, therefore, included a reinvigorated global partnership covering finance, technology, trade (market access), capacity-building, data, monitoring, and accountability. In this context, a Special Think-20 Policy Roundtable on Finance and Global Economic Governance for Green Transformation hosted by the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID) jointly with the Boston University Global Development Policy Centre (BU-GDPC) in New Delhi on 2 March 2023 discussed the issue of addressing the issue of finance

and access to technology and policy space for augmenting productive capacity for sustainable development. This article reflects on some of the key issues that came up for discussion at the Policy Roundtable as well as other papers prepared for the ongoing discussions at the Think-20.

Financing Sustainable Development

A staggering amount of finance is needed for SDGs and climate action. Songwe, Stern, and Bhattacharya (2022) estimate that developing countries will require an investment of $2.4 trillion annually by 2030 for climate mitigation and adaptation, out of which $1 trillion needs to come from external finance. The global community has found it challenging to keep its development finance commitments whether it is the 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) as overseas development assistance (ODA) commitment made way back in the 1970s or $100 billion per annum in climate finance by 2020 made at COP15 in Copenhagen in 2009. SDGs and climate action cannot be undertaken with private finance because of their exorbitant cost.

Given that Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) provide financing at the lowest cost to developing countries, an important solution that was discussed was enhancing the lending capacity of MDBs through reforms and their recapitalization. Over the next five years, the MDB capital needs to at least treble, if not more. It is possible to enhance

this with relatively modest resources, e.g., a 50% increase in the capital of the MDB system may cost only about $20 billion, which should be easy to accomplish, given the scale of foreign exchange reserves available. The governance structures of MDBs also need to be reformed to force them to work together as a system rather than as each individual institution. Capital increases will have to go hand in hand with voice and

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India's Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bhupender Yadav at the COP27 climate summit, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt in November 2022.

representation reform, including the ability to appoint the heads of the Bretton Woods institutions. MDBs should also be made to help in building the absorptive capacity of developing member countries through the development of

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transformative projects in clean energy, sustainable transportation system, sanitation, and sustainable forestry, among other areas.

Innovative sources such as SDRs, carbon taxes, and IFTT need to complement the MDBs reform. Regular issuance of special drawing rights (SDRs) and their utilization is one such option. Carbon taxation is another innovative mechanism and has tremendous potential, especially in the North and some of the revenue can be used for international transfers. International Financial Transactions Tax (IFTT) is another such possible innovative option to generate perpetual resources for

climate action in the Global South.

New calculations made by ISID-BUGDPC suggest that even a modest tax of 0.05% could generate revenues of US$650 billion p.a., roughly equivalent to three and a half times the annual flows of ODA, hurting only the speculators. Besides resources for climate action, IFTT could also provide another global public good by helping curb the volatility and the disruptive consequences of short-term capital flows. IFTT was put on the G20 agenda at the 2009 Pittsburgh Summit in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. The 2011 Cannes Summit, however, failed to endorse the IFTT proposal, despite strong support from President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, and other European leaders. The changed context since 2011 warrants bringing IFTT back on the agenda. While the need for climate finance becomes more urgent by the day, limited fiscal space in developed countries dampens the prospects of plugging shortages of finance.

The combined effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the inflationary spiral stoked by the

Ukraine war, food and energy security challenges, and the debt crisis, have stretched budgets in both developed and developing countries. Over the past decade, the world has also suffered highly disruptive consequences of boom-bust cycles following monetary policy changes in developed countries—from the 'fragile five' of 2013-14 to the ongoing volatility in financial markets.

IFTT has the unique ability to curb volatility while generating resources required for climate action. Given that it has been on the agenda in the past and a lot of analysis and discussion has already taken place, IFTT seems like a proverbial 'low-hanging fruit' waiting to be plucked. Hence, in view of its relevance in the changed context, it should be revived on the G20 agenda and taken forward.

Sustainable Industrialization

The policy roundtable also emphasized the critical need for reform of multilateral trade rules to provide flexibility for the diversification of productive capacity for a clean transition. To achieve the objective of Net Zero, the renewable energy capacity needs to expand in an unprecedented manner. However, the entire global value chain for renewable energy equipment is highly concentrated in a few countries.

The productive capacity for renewable energy equipment needs to be enhanced massively in a diversified manner for fostering their rapid deployment for the clean transition, including using industrial policy instruments such as domestic content requirements (DCRs). This would require multilateral trade rules like Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs)

The productive capacity for renewable energy equipment needs to be enhanced massively in a diversified manner for fostering their rapid deployment for the clean transition, including using industrial policy instruments such as domestic content requirements (DCRs). This would require multilateral trade rules like Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) under the World Trade Organization to provide a peace clause or an exception for climate action.

under the World Trade Organization to provide a peace clause or an exception for climate action. Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies should be facilitated by the Trade Rules. The agricultural green revolution in developing countries was facilitated by the fact that new technologies were available in the public domain. Most climate technologies, however, are developed in advanced countries and are covered by patents. Climate change, like the public health crisis, is a global emergency. To speed up climate action, the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement under WTO should be amended to extend flexibilities like compulsory licensing provisions for climate technologies, like the case of public health for developing countries. The Roundtable also emphasized the need to resist the tendency to evolve new protectionism in the name of climate action such as the introduction of Carbon Border Adjustment Measures by the European Union that is likely to lead to massive welfare losses for developing countries.

Prof. Nagesh Kumar, Director of the Institute for Studies in Industrial Development (ISID), a New Delhi-based policy think-tank served as Director at UNESCAP, Bangkok from 2009-2021. During 2002-2009, Prof Kumar served as the Director-General of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). He has served as a consultant for the World Bank among other international organizations. He has authored 18 books and over 120 peer-reviewed papers.

VIJAY BHATKAR

Leveraging Science and Digitalisation for Global Public Good

Dr Vijay Bhatkar, Chair, Science20 engagement group, discusses India's role in leveraging science and technology for global public good. He argues that India's G20 presidency provides a great opportunity for promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, facilitating digital infrastructure and technology accessibility.

The year 2023 has been an important year for Indian diplomacy. This year, we are not only hosting the G20 summit, but the SCO summit too. This highlights India's rising diplomatic clout. India has positioned itself as the voice of the Global South. The theme of India's G20 presidency "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is quite interesting. It is something that is fundamentally embedded in our culture. It implies that the world is one family. It represents oneness and inclusivity. The term originated from holy books like Atharvaveda and Samaveda. It is the representation of how India perceives and treats the world. But it's a bit disappointing to see that there is a need to highlight the things that are fundamental to humanity and have already been mentioned thousands of years earlier.

It somehow also portrays the amount of polarisation in the world. It's not only a great theme, but also an eye-opener. Countries should work together to protect the foundations of humanity instead of being narcissists of their interests. But before moving forward, let's revisit the basics.

Why G20 is Important

Let's understand this with a simple analogy. Why do you make a group? To solve problems that you cannot solve on your own. Collectively, it becomes easier to tackle an issue. You might argue that there are multilateral forums like G7, UN, etc, and also countries can solve their issues bilaterally. Why do we need G20? Now, here's why G20 is important. G7 is a western block. It is not only economic, but also political in nature. It does not include China, Russia and India, which hold a meaningful stake in the world economy. To be honest, it works more like a politically motivated institution. It doesn't properly represent Asia, South America and Africa. Also, it will certainly become irrelevant in the future as China and

India, who are emerging as economic giants, are not included in the group. So, we can infer that the G7 countries do not represent the world. Speaking of representation, the UN also does not represent the world properly. The UN Security Council has an unjust mechanism of veto powers. Some countries have permanent representation in the council.

India, representing one-fifth of the world, does not have a permanent representation in the UN. The UN has several structural loopholes that are often exploited by major powers. The concept of G20 is quite simple. The top 20 economies are included in a group. It's a merit-based selection process, and no country has an unjust advantage or veto or permanent representation. It represents the world more precisely than G7. Unlike G7, it is not politically biased. It is more focused on addressing and solving global issues.

I understand that the UN and G20 are distinct bodies, and while the UN includes all countries, I personally believe that the G20 is more efficient and effective than the UN in solving problems related to trade, economy, climate change and more. If you believe that issues can be resolved through unilateral, bilateral, or trilateral means, and that the G20 is unnecessary, I think you may be overlooking the bigger picture. Bilateral and trilateral groups are focused

The G20, consisting of the top 20 economies, has the capacity to tackle global problems on a larger scale and with greater impact. The G20 serves as a platform not only for addressing the problems of developed nations but also for discussing the concerns of developing and underdeveloped countries.

on specific problems and cannot address issues on a larger scale. The G20, consisting of the top 20 economies, has the capacity to tackle global problems on a larger scale and with greater impact.The G20 serves as a platform not only for addressing the problems of developed nations but also for discussing the concerns of developing and underdeveloped countries. It provides an avenue for adversarial nations to engage in discussions and reach consensus on various issues. Initially established to address global economic matters, the G20 has expanded its focus to include climate change, corruption, and other areas. It has also incorporated sectors such as science and research, infrastructure, health, agriculture, energy, and more. By now, you may have begun to recognise the significance of the G20 and its role in upholding global order, making it an integral part of the global framework.

India's Role

In recent years, India's economy has experienced a remarkable average growth rate of 6-7%, positioning it among the world's fastest-growing economies. This substantial economic progress has elevated India's significance as a key participant in the G20. Currently holding the presidency of the G20, India possesses the opportunity to assume a crucial role in shaping the global agenda and addressing the concerns of developing and underdeveloped nations. Additionally, India serves as a representative voice for South Asia.

India, during this summit, will not only advocate for the concept of the global south but also actively promote multilateralism. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has affirmed that India's primary focus will be on promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, enhancing digital infrastructure and technology accessibility, and strengthening the global trade system. India can promote an open and inclusive trading system. In the post-pandemic era, free and open trade constantly faces the threat of protectionism. Additionally, trade is hindered due to tensions between major powers. India can play a key role in resolving the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Throughout the conflict, India has consistently maintained a neutral stance. I believe that both leaders would feel comfortable attending the summit hosted by India. India has the capability to act as a peacemaker between these two nations. Moreover, India can play a critical role in promoting economic stability and offering suggestions for reforms in financial systems.

India can also formulate constructive policies pertaining to research and development, technology transfer, and initiatives for the global good. During India's current presidency, a new initiative called G20-CSAR has been launched, which stands for Chief Scientific Roundtable. India has the opportunity to propel this initiative forward. Its primary objective is to establish a robust institutional framework that addresses global issues concerning science and technology policies. India can play a significant role in fostering consensus among countries to contribute their technologies for the betterment of the world. It can facilitate scientific collaborations for the advancement of future technologies. Additionally, India can become the representative voice of developing and underdeveloped countries in addressing energy demands.

In this era of an ongoing global recession threat, energy prices have reached

their peak, exacerbating the situation. Furthermore, the imposition of sanctions by Western countries on Russian, Iranian, and Venezuelan oil serves as an additional challenge. Should this trend persist, the world will inevitably face a global energy crisis, potentially leading to the collapse of smaller nations. It is imperative for India to play a crucial role in facilitating a mutual understanding among major powers to avert such a crisis and safeguard global energy stability.

India can help in accelerating the transition to sustainable energy. India should cooperate with G20 members to produce green hydrogen energy on a large scale. This can be a gamechanger in the near future. India can become an energy hub, which can provide sustainable energy at affordable rates. It might solve the whole energy crisis.

In this aspect, India can represent and put forward the stance of developing and underdeveloped countries in front of developed countries. India can act as a bridge between developed and developing countries and it can bring multilateral reforms to the table.

India will showcase the prowess of digital development and offer suggestions on achieving a digital economy's objectives. With the successful creation of a robust, streamlined, and user-friendly transaction mechanism known as UPI, India has exemplified an effective model. Leveraging this expertise, India has the potential to assist nations in implementing large-scale digitalisation of their systems.

In a nutshell, India possesses several areas where it can assume a leadership role in the G20 summit. Over the past few years, India has demonstrated both the determination and capacity to actively address significant global challenges. It has established its prominence across diverse domains, highlighting this as an opportune moment for India to further consolidate its position as a global leader.

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India should leverage this opportunity to showcase its rich and diverse culture, thereby reinforcing its role as a "Vishwa Guru" (world teacher). It can serve as the voice of both developed and developing nations, representing the interests of South Asia. Furthermore, India can play a pivotal role in mediating peace between adversaries, addressing energy crises, and promoting multilateralism. Above all, India can foster the message of unity and inclusivity. Overall, this summit presents a remarkable occasion for India to enhance its diplomatic influence and expand its soft power. I am confident that India will utilise this opportunity for the betterment of the global community. Moreover, I am optimistic that the world will witness positive transformations and reforms in the aftermath of this summit, making it a resounding success.

Honoured with Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, and an array of national awards, Dr Vijay Bhatkar stands as a revered figure in the realm of technology and innovation in India. Known as the mastermind behind India's pioneering supercomputer PARAM, he has made indelible contributions to the field of Information Technology. Currently he is the National President, VIBHA, Chancellor, Nalanda University and guiding India's notable national initiatives in Science and Technology as well as in Arts and Humanities.

ASHIMA GOYAL

Fostering International Financial Stability and Promoting Economic Growth

In this article, Ashima Goyal highlights the risks and failures within the international financial architecture, the importance of regulation and supervision in the finance industry, and the role of macro-prudential measures in addressing volatility and arbitrage flows. The author also emphasises the need for coordination among countries and institutions in monetary policy decisions.

Volatile cross-border flows were implicated in the East Asian Crisis at the turn of the century. The global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 was due to excess leverage and non-transparent risks in US banks. Under the zero advanced economy (AE) interest rates and quantitative easing (QE) that followed the GFC, EMs saw large inflows in search of yield. These became outflows during periods of global risk-off. As a result, growth was lower in most countries in the decade following the GFC. The international financial architecture seemed like it was unable to perform its function of maintaining financial stability. Large pandemic-time fiscal stimulus and debt have created new risks. Considering the Indian presidency, what steps can the G20 take to foster the financial stability essential for sustainable growth?

After the GFC, major source AEs tightened regulation for banks, where the crisis had originated with securitization failures. However, they did not strengthen regulations for non-bank financial intermediaries (NBFIs). Consequently, cross-border flows migrated to the latter. It was only natural for such arbitrage to occur. With quantitative tightening and rising interest rates, there are risks to both AEs and EMs arising from NBFI arbitrage and the resulting volatility. Foreign capital plays a crucial role in deepening markets, supplementing domestic savings, and financing current account deficits, but excessive volatility jeopardises all these contributions.

Many types of risks lurk. For example, fixed income funds now constitute a significant source of portfolio flows to EMs. These funds possess fixed liabilities, and when rates rise, assets may need to be sold at lower prices, potentially resulting in defaults. In the UK in 2022, the Central Bank (CB) had to intervene and rescue insurance companies whose unregulated use of derivatives to hedge interest rate risks forced them into distress sales of G-Secs as yields skyrocketed following

the Truss unfunded budget. In AEs, the focus on self-regulation and internal risk assessment persisted even for banks. Only large banks were considered to pose systemic risks. In 2018, Trump eased regulations for small banks. The subsequent US Fed investigation, conducted after a wave of small bank failures, uncovered instances of staff being pressured to reduce regulatory burdens on firms. The investigation emphasised the importance of demonstrating due process and gathering more evidence before taking action.

The US Commodity Futures Modernization Act, passed in 2000, lightened position limits for swap dealers, among other deregulations. Subsequently, there was a significant increase in oil price volatility, which negatively impacted both oil-exporting and importing countries. While some level of volatility is beneficial for market

The US Commodity Futures Modernization Act, passed in 2000, lightened position limits for swap dealers, among other deregulations. Subsequently, there was a significant increase in oil price volatility, which negatively impacted both oil-exporting and importing countries.

price discovery, excessive volatility adversely affects the real sector. It remains a puzzle as to why these evident arbitrage gaps were allowed to persist. The finance sector accounts for a substantial portion of AE output and wields considerable lobbying power. It is supported by free-market ideologies that argue against the effectiveness of regulation, asserting that it only adds to costs. However, the repeated shocks experienced in this century have revealed the shortcomings of under-regulated markets. While financial liberalisation offers numerous

advantages, it requires appropriate guardrails to ensure stability.

Regulations need to be formulated to address the well-documented failures within the finance industry, which encompass issues such as asymmetric information, excessive volatility, arbitrage, and systemic spillovers. Initially, systemic spillovers were believed to be confined to large institutions. However, Silicon Valley Bank showcased the rapidity at which rumours spread and deposit withdrawals occur in a digitally-driven transactional landscape.

Most American macroeconomists advocated for tighter macroprudential regulations to complement and mitigate risks associated with quantitative easing (QE). For instance, after the GFC, Yellen had advocated for implementing minimum margin requirements across the market to reduce volatility and limit large exposures. During a 2019 conversation with Krugman, she expressed regret that they still lacked tools to prevent risky lending. While the US has implemented certain measures to moderate credit demand, there are currently no measures in place to moderate credit supply.

EMs employ macro-prudential tools with greater intensity in comparison to AEs. In AEs, the primary measures revolve around restraints on consumer credit, with tightening predominantly focused on the banking sector, thereby leaving NBFIs' risk-taking relatively unrestrained. EMs, on the other hand, employ more comprehensive measures, which have thus far appeared effective in safeguarding their financial sectors.

Countercyclical macro-prudential regulation has the potential to diminish incentives for excessive risk-taking. Broad-based implementation of such regulation can effectively address arbitrage gaps, while market and rule-based approaches can minimise regulatory distortions, discretionary actions, and delays. Measures like margin requirements or financial transaction taxes can help mitigate volatility. Additionally, the establishment of exposure limits or higher capital adequacy standards for small banks could have prevented the succession of failures witnessed in the US this year.

Given the inherent temptations within the financial sector, it is crucial to prioritize supervision along with enhanced transparency and standardized disclosures. The most effective approach is likely to be a combination of self-regulation and rule-based regulation, complemented by robust supervision. The creation of simple and comprehensive macro-prudential norms can be achieved through frameworks such as comply or explain, akin to the Basel bank standards. Such market-oriented regulation would prove beneficial for AEs as well, as it would help mitigate financial vulnerabilities. Concerns exist that stronger regulation may lead to higher borrowing costs, but in reality, a reduction in volatility would actually lower costs.

A minimal set of macro-prudential measures is necessary as universal criteria across countries and institutions to address arbitrage flows. These measures have been previously

discussed in G20 meetings, although taxation has traditionally been considered within the jurisdiction of individual countries. However, in a recent development, the G20 has reached an agreement on a global minimum corporate tax as part of efforts to combat base erosion and profit shifting. This agreement paves the way for potential new agreements on taxation and regulation.

The G20 can achieve its highest productivity in providing collective goods that necessitate coordination across countries. When a country tightens its regulations in isolation, it can lead to capital flight. The G20 has the ability to bolster regulators against domestic lobbies and political pressures that give rise to expensive domestic crises and subsequent global spillovers. Additionally, the G20 can advocate for the importance of exercising restraint and maintaining balance in monetary and fiscal policy.

The international financial architecture is failing to fulfill its role in diminishing volatility but has shifted the burden of protection

In AEs, the primary measures revolve around restraints on consumer credit, with tightening predominantly focused on the banking sector, thereby leaving NBFIs' risk-taking relatively unrestrained. EMs, on the other hand, employ more comprehensive measures, which have thus far appeared effective in safeguarding their financial sectors.

onto EMs. Following the philosophy of "unfettered markets work best," the IMF advocated for financial liberalization. However, after experiencing multiple financial crises, the IMF now supports capital flow management (CFM) with certain limitations that diminish its effectiveness. Either these restrictions should be removed, or alternative measures such as automatic dollar swap lines, hedging, insurance, and other safety nets against global shocks should be provided to EMs. Otherwise, costly self-insurance, CFM, FX reserves, and interventions become necessary and should be backed by the G20. Central banks (CBs) can

reduce spillover effects by refraining from overreactions and extreme positions. For instance, the implementation of inflation targeting should be conducted with flexibility rather than strict adherence. The real policy rate should not deviate significantly from the equilibrium real policy rate, which is determined based on expected inflation.

EM central banks (CBs) must establish some flexibility in order to navigate global shocks and effectively respond to domestic economic cycles.

In the presence of a freely floating exchange rate and significant outflows during quantitative tightening (QT), the currency is likely to depreciate, leading to a rise in inflation. If an inflation-targeting CB faces such circumstances, it would need to raise interest rates, aligning with the monetary tightening of the US, even if there is no excessive domestic demand.

Unlike EMs, AEs experienced excessive fiscal stimulus, and inflation in EMs was primarily influenced by commodity price shocks.

However, EM CBs are compelled to track the Federal Reserve's actions by either raising rates in sync with US rates or maintaining rates while experiencing currency depreciation. To preserve their policy freedoms, EM CBs need to employ various instruments such as CFM (capital flow management), reserves and macroprudential measures.

In India, the exchange rate is determined by the market, but foreign exchange (FX) intervention is employed to prevent significant deviations from the real equilibrium exchange rate.

As the country's reserves declined, financial sector analysts and economists exerted pressure to raise rates and align with the Federal Reserve, arguing that intervention distorts the market and suggesting it would be preferable to allow the rupee to float freely. However, the RBI persisted with intervention, asserting that the large FX reserves accumulated during periods of excessive inflows serve the purpose of reducing rupee volatility and providing room to adjust the policy rate in accordance with the domestic economic cycle.

Adequate foreign exchange (FX) reserves were one of the distinguishing features that set India apart from other troubled South Asian countries. Since July 2022, inflows have resumed due to India's strong economic performance, resulting in a rise in reserves.

As a result, the Indian economy is considered in a favourable position amidst the global disarray. Replicating the Indian experience elsewhere would require incorporating contextually relevant analysis and implementing suitable policies.

As the dollar serves as the reserve currency, the Federal Reserve (Fed) bears a unique responsibility to prevent excessive reactions that could generate domestic risks and global spillovers.

Despite the Fed's mandate being primarily focused on the domestic economy, it must consider the substantial feedback effects originating from emerging markets (EMs) that have a significant impact on the United States.

Given that EMs contribute over fifty 50% of global income, their growth becomes crucial for overall global economic expansion.

Considering that monetary policy acts with long and varied lags, a policy of raising rates as long as inflation is below the target is a recipe for overreaction. Announcing that rates will be high for long is also inappropriate. The Fed should be data-based and proceed carefully not because it is good for EMs but because it is better for the US.

Ashima Goyal is an Emeritus Professor at IGIDR, a member of RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, and the Chair of T20 Task Force 5 on repurposing the global financial architecture.

Shared Values Animate India's G20 presidency: USIBC President

Prime Minister Modi's recent visit to the US was transformative and significant for the future of both nations and the world. In this interview with Manish Chand, Editor-in-Chief, India and The World and Director, Centre for Global India Insights (CGII) in Washington, Atul Keshap, President of the United States India Business Council (USIBC), underlines shared values of democracy, diversity and pluralism that binds India and the US. Keshap, a former US ambassador to India, also talks about India's unique achievements in creating Digital Public Infrastructure, which is being showcased in its G20 presidency.

Q) What's your view of India's G20 presidency? How can the US collaborate for a successful Indian presidency of the G20?

A) India has had a very successful G20 presidency, and they have shown how the very encouraging work by India to empower the citizen, especially through digital tools, has been a great model for countries all around the world that are struggling to lift their people up to new levels of prosperity and happiness.

I think about how India has completely transformed in the past few years in terms of citizens' access to the banking system, credit, things like sanitation, roads, electricity, education, and healthcare. The changes in India have been sweeping in the past decade and are really impressive. And a lot of that has been based on digital tools like UPI and Aadhar Card and how they unlock all these government services for the people. That kind of model, which India is talking about in its G20 presidency,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US President Joe Biden and US First Lady Dr Jill Biden at the White House in Washington on June 22, 2023.

is a great model for India and the world, and many countries can derive benefit from it.

So, from the US perspective, these are all positive things, and I think Americans appreciate and applaud what India has done to transform the lives of its citizens. And having an Indian 5G stack or 6G stack is going to be something that protects citizens' rights and freedoms. It's not like certain other 5G stacks that are deeply worrisome in terms of citizens' privacy and their ability to enjoy their freedoms.

So, people in America feel really good about what India is contributing to the world, and through the G20, India is spotlighting those things. So, I think we are very supportive. India can speak to the US government about their views, but from the view of just myself and the companies I represent, many of these things are areas where American companies and Indian companies can work very productively together to amplify these platforms that India has developed.

Q) The anthem of India's G20 presidency is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," which means "the whole world is one family." India is trying to position values at the heart of its G20 presidency and global multilateral diplomacy. How do you view the importance of values in diplomacy?

A) As someone who has spent 30 years in the world of diplomacy, I would say interests are the true glue of any relationship. The United States and India have profound convergence on certain interests, especially in the Indo-Pacific and in the strategic realm. Beyond that strong glue and shared interests, values are important.

I believe Americans love and respect India because Indians are free people, and India has a diverse, pluralistic, and democratic society. It is a pillar of democracy worldwide and has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty through sustained development and economic liberalisation. These are things that Americans admire.

Americans appreciate the rise of India, and the fact that India has a $3 trillion economy does not worry us because the values and operating system are essentially the same. This is also why Indians have been highly successful in America, as they recognise and embrace those values in our country, allowing them to thrive.

From my perspective, interests are very clear, and values are also evident. This means that we have a tremendous opportunity to positively shape the development of the world over the next 20-40-50 years.

Italy Backs India's Focus on Global South

VINCENZO DE LUCA
Italian Ambassador to India

Italy's Ambassador to India, H.E. Vincenzo de Luca, is upbeat about the success of India's G20 presidency. In this interview with Manish Chand, CEO & Editor-in-Chief, India Writes Network and Centre for Global India Insights, the Italian envoy underlines the need for bolstering multilateralism and cooperation between Italy and India to promote interests of the Global South.

Q) Italy hosted a very successful G20 summit in Rome in 2021. What are Italy's expectations from the G20 summit India will host in September 2023?
Italy wishes India a very successful G20 Summit in Delhi in September. In times of great distress, the temptation is huge to sort problems on one's own or at least giving priority to one's own immediate interest. However, we believe it is high time to make a case for a multilateralism and to address global challenges with global governance. The G20 is the ideal format to carry forward such discussions, as it was set up to face an international economic crisis. And it is a truly global forum, encompassing all continents, with more than 20 countries (including the guests) with different levels of economic development and cultural backgrounds.

Q) What are specific areas in which Italy can partner with India to help actualise the priorities of New Delhi's G20 presidency? On which issues are India and Italy aligned in G20?
A) There are many links between our 2021 Presidency's vision "People, planet, prosperity" and the Indian idea of Vaisudhaiva Kutumbakam. We are glad to see that some work which was launched

under our Presidency is carried forward by the Indian Chairmanship, as the Finance- and Health Task Force, and the ambition to reform international financial institutions. Moreover, as India, Italy sees herself as a bridge towards the Global South and is close towards their demands, especially of African countries. This is why we see a remarkable potential for our bilateral collaboration in the multilateral framework.

Q) Accelerating green energy transition is a major priority of India's G20 presidency. How can Italy advance its partnership with India in green/renewable energy, both bilaterally as well as in multilateral groupings such as G20?
A) Energy transition is one of the pillars of the Plan of Action between Italy and India, which was adopted for the period 2020-2024 to foster bilateral collaboration. Cooperation agreements of the Italian energy infrastructure company Snam and Indian counterparts already exist, and the Energy Transition Partnership launched during PM Modi's visit to Rome in October 2021 has achieved some progress in the fields of energy transition and renewable energy, also through the meaningful involvement of the private sector.

Q) **India made Global South a key focus of its G20 presidency. How can Italy work with India to promote the interests of the Global South?**

A) As it was envisioned by Council President Meloni in her meeting in Delhi with Prime Minister Modi, last 2nd March, Italy and India have a strategic connection thanks to the role that the two countries intend to play with regard to the Global South. Italy and India, in two distinct but interconnected geopolitical scenarios, can play a mutually reinforcing role in stimulating and supporting a new global agenda aimed at addressing the most urgent contemporary issues that primarily affect the South, but which have a major impact on security, stability and environmental sustainability of the whole world. A number of topics on the agenda of the Indian G20 Presidency, from debt relief for developing countries, to the reform of international financial institutions, to the tracks "health and finance" and "climate change", are in strong continuity with the agenda of the Italian Presidency of 2021. Moreover, looking forward, as it prepares to take over the Presidency of G7, in 2024, Italy sees the worth of addressing the concerns of a large part of the world on the present political and economic global governance.

Q) **"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" is the mantra of India's G20 presidency, which emphasises the interconnectedness of the world as one family. What are your views on the importance of values in multilateral diplomacy and human-centric globalisation?**

A) If we believe that we live in "one world" and "one family", we need to bear in mind that families, also international ones, need dialogue to function. This means, a functioning international order with

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni in New Delhi in March 2023.

"multilateralism as a mindset," based a few principles that cannot be put in question: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States, big and small, and peaceful approach to dispute settlement. Only against this backdrop multilateral institutions and the international family as whole can operate in harmony with the principle "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam".

Q) It's going to be three months since Italy's PM Giorgia Meloni's landmark visit to India in March this year. What's the progress in implementing key outcomes of the visit?

A) The elevation of our bilateral relations to a Strategic partnership has energized the collaboration in new spheres of mutual interest and given new impetus to the negotiation of a series of MoU in the fields of defence cooperation, mobility and migration, police, and exchange of classified information.

Q) Italy is a manufacturing giant in Europe. In what ways can Italy help India in moving up the manufacturing value chain?

A) Italy ranks second in Europe for manufacturing and it is among the leading manufacturing powers globally. In India, at least 350 Italian companies already established their production facilities, which contribute to improve the quality and value of Indian manufacture. Italian companies share technology and know-how with their partners and work with them to find innovative solutions. In the near future, we hope to start new cooperation on Industry 4.0, which involves the integration of advanced technologies, such as automation, artificial intelligence, and Internet of Things, into manufacturing processes for improved efficiency and productivity.

Q) Defence is the next big frontier in the Italy-India partnership. Are the two countries exploring a defence industry framework agreement? Can we expect greater involvement of Italian companies in defence manufacturing in India under the "Make in India" initiative?

A) The strategic partnership, established on the occasion of the last meeting between the Prime Ministers of our countries, opens up opportunities for new collaborations in the defence industry. We hope that the defence industry framework agreement can be signed as soon as possible. Within this context, new industrial collaborations may be created, even if the concrete outlines are currently difficult to predict. In a broader sense, however, it is true that our defence industry is always open to work together with partners, transferring technology and developing new products.

Q) India and Italy are deepening their strategic convergence in crucial areas such as the Indo-Pacific. In what areas in the Indo-Pacific can India and Italy work together?

A) There are many fields of collaboration in the Indo-Pacific for Italy and India. On the occasion of PM Meloni's state visit to India, Italy joined the Indian IPOI (Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative) under the Science, Technology and Academics cooperation pillar.

We are also part of the Indian Ocean Rim Association and participate in the Information Fusion Centre of the Indian Ocean Region in Gurgaon, Haryana. At the same time, Italy is already actively present with vessels in the context of the European Maritime Awareness mission in the Strait of Hormuz and in the EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and we believe that the new Coordinated Maritime Presence tool of the European Union offers new opportunities of collaboration. Last but not least, Italian vessels are cruising through the Indo-Pacific and we are expecting offshore patrol vessel Francesco Morosini in August in Mumbai. On that occasion, we hope to foster ties between our two Navies and defence production systems.

MELISSA CONLEY TYLER

Bridging North-South Divide: India Breaks New Ground with Think20 Townhall

Think20 has been perceived as a Global town hall to provide ideas to push the envelope of the official G20 agenda. But it is for the first time India is breaking new ground by providing a platform for unheard voices from the Global South by inviting Think Tank representatives from non-G20 member countries to share their views with G20 members, says Melissa Conley Tyler.

India is making good on its promise to provide a platform for voices from the Global South. The Think20 has been one of the G20's engagement groups since the Mexican presidency in 2012. It brings together think tanks and other non-government experts to provide ideas to push the envelope of the official G20 agenda.

I have attended many of these Think20 meetings from when Australia hosted in 2014 to India's hosting this year. While others, such as Germany, have been innovative in their agenda-setting, I think India is genuinely breaking new ground in creating a platform to include voices from the Global South.

You would expect that each of the Think20s would have superficial differences in style and presentation: from a serious summit in Beijing to a more casual event at a Turkish seaside resort. But each has also shown deeper differences in how the host country conceptualises and approaches its task as G20 host.

In the case of India, the idea of being a voice of the Global South has resonated through its presidency. This has been evident in the Think20 process. Because G20 has no permanent secretariat, meetings are arranged solely by the host country. There is coordination across a troika of the prior, current and subsequent hosts, which enables limited handover. But essentially each host has the freedom to organise G20 events in its own image. For example, the Argentina Think20 had a pan-South American feel, with very few organisations having been involved in previous meetings. Saudi Arabia had not previously sent think tanks to attend, so it had no organisational memory prior to its hosting year.

Innovative Townhall Format

The Think20 meeting I attended in Delhi in March was notable for its innovative format. Instead of asking think tanks from the G20 countries to speak to each other, as has been standard, it convened

a Global Think Tank Townhall of representatives from non-G20 countries to share their views with G20 members.

Speakers at the Global Townhall included participants from Cameroon, Maldives, Israel, Morocco, Kenya, Peru, Bhutan, Kosovo, Nepal, Afghanistan, UAE, Qatar, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nigeria and the Czech Republic. These are not countries that would previously have had significant involvement in the Think20 process.

Providing a space for their voices should help the G20 achieve its mission of coordinating the policies of systemically important economies to ensure economic growth and stability as a public good for all countries. Having the input of voices from non-G20 countries can only assist in this task.

Inclusive G20

There is no doubt that there is currently a North-South divide on many issues amid a fractured and polarised geopolitical landscape. Developed countries are very much focused on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. By contrast, much of the Global South is disengaged by the war. It has other problems and challenges to deal with, including

equitable access to healthcare, climate adaptation, insufficient digital infrastructure, terrorism, lack of development finance, food and fuel insecurity, the debt crisis and the overriding imperative of sustainable growth. Leaders in the Global South want Western leaders to care about their concerns.

So, India's role in giving a platform for voices from the Global South will receive a very positive response. Countries who want more of a say in

So, India's role in giving a platform for voices from the Global South will receive a very positive response. Countries who want more of a say in global governance will thank India for its attempts to make the G20 more inclusive and representative of the diversity of a changing world.

global governance will thank India for its attempts to make the G20 more inclusive and representative of the diversity of a changing world.

Countries of the Global South feel strongly that issues of importance to them should be part of the agenda for the Think20, rather than just the concerns of developed nations.

The Road Ahead

India has committed to achieving this through its G20 presidency. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put it, "Our G20 priorities will be shaped in consultation with not just our G20 partners, but also our fellow-travellers in the Global South, whose voice often goes unheard."

India's role in putting such issues on the agenda will be appreciated. As will be any platforms provided so that the unheard voices of the Global South can help shape inclusive growth. However, the danger for India is to see itself as "representing" the Global South or becoming "the Voice of the Global South". I've witnessed efforts by China to paint its work in terms of South-South Cooperation and believe that it is a difficult path. I'm not convinced that smaller countries are ever inclined to trust great powers to speak for them.

Where India shares interests with other countries of the Global South, it can help ensure that these are articulated — and,

> India's role in putting such issues on the agenda will be appreciated. As will be any platforms provided so that the unheard voices of the Global South can help shape inclusive growth. However, the danger for India is to see itself as "representing" the Global South or becoming "the Voice of the Global South".

indeed, push for collective action. This is not the same as speaking for them.

India can and should use its global weight to provide a space for countries of the Global South to share their opinions. That means prioritising the core interests of the Global South in the G20 agenda, and then providing spaces for countries to share ideas and work together. The Think20 gathering in Delhi this year was an excellent example of how this can be done.

Melissa Conley Tyler is Executive Director of the Asia-Pacific Development, Diplomacy & Defence Dialogue (AP4D), a new initiative funded by Australia's departments of defence and foreign affairs and hosted by the peak body for development non-profits. She participated in multiple Think20 meetings during her 13 years as National Executive Director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA). She attended India's Think20 Global Think Tank Townhall as a guest of the Observer Research Foundation and Ministry of External Affairs.

PARIDHI PARDESHI

Advancing the Business20 Agenda: The India Way

India's G20 presidency has led to further expansion of the B20 group, was which was created in 2010 to evolve the G20's finance core into a strategic multilateral platform. B20 will continue to prioritise global health architecture, digital transformation, and energy transition, while also turning focus on tech and innovation, financial inclusion, and the economic empowerment of Africa, writes Paridhi Pardeshi

The most pressing question of the current decade is how the world can confront its most urgent economic, environmental, and social issues. The solution forms the bedrock of many global discussions on this topic, including in the current Indian G20 presidency. It lies in equitable, inclusive, and sustainable growth that allows for appropriate financial resource distribution towards tackling climate change, empowering vulnerable communities, promoting global interconnectedness, and embracing digital change. This cannot materialize without the dedicated efforts of multiple stakeholders. Governments, of course, are responsible for providing the right policy climate to help navigate nations through various crises and steer public resources towards sustainability and inclusion. Civil society is also increasingly becoming important in providing recommendations for global dialogues. Then come businesses, key drivers of more than 70% of the world's GDP[1]. Business-led innovation and policy direction can be the right catalyst for driving growth beyond the baseline in challenging times.

B20: An Overview

It is momentous, then, that the Business20 (B20) has been given the most prominent position amongst various engagement groups of the G20 meetings since its inception in 2010 during the South Korean presidency. The introduction of this group was seen as a major move to expand beyond G20's original finance core and evolve into a strategic multilateral platform. Since 2010, B20 has averaged between 700-1000 of the most influential business leaders from across the globe, who work towards

1 Smit, S. et al. (2022) Toward a sustainable, inclusive, growing future: The role of business, McKinsey & Company. Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/sustainable-inclusive-growth/toward-a-sustainable-inclusive-growing-future-the-role-of-business.

B20 India Inception Meeting

(From L to R): Chandrajit Banerjee, DG, CII; N Chandrasekaran, Chair, B20 India & Chairman, Tata Sons; Amitabh Kant, India's Sherpa to G20; Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Communications and Railways; Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution; Som Parkash, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry; Pankaj Kumar, Chief Secretary, Gujarat; Anurag Jain, Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry; and Sanjiv Bajaj, Chairman & Managing Director, Bajaj Finserv Ltd, at the Opening Session, B20 Inception Meeting at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

providing policy recommendations to the main G20 group—one that represents around 80% of the world's GDP and 75% of the world's trade output[2]—and establishing appropriate economic and social governance.

B20 and India

The government of India anointed the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), an organization that has played a significant role in India's nation-building and advancement of its private sector in the past 125 years, as the B20 Secretariat in December last year. CII has been deeply

[2] Hutt, R. and Conley, T. (2022) What is the G20?, World Economic Forum. Available at: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/11/g20-summit-what-you-need-to-know/#:~:text=The%20G20%20is%20a%20forum%20of%20the%20twenty,and%2060%25%20of%20the%20population%20of%20the%20planet.

The Steering Committee (SC) is made up of India's most esteemed business leaders, who will ensure that India effectively represents the emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) on the global stage while also fulfilling its domestic aspirations.

involved in the G20-B20 process from the very beginning—it has been the sole institution representing Indian industry in the B20 deliberations since 2012 and has also been an active partner of the Global Business Coalition, a group of apex industry associations from the G20 countries.

CII received the baton from Indonesia's national chamber of commerce, KADIN, on

1 December, 2022, at the Bali Summit and promised to build upon the commitments championed by the previous presidency: enshrining innovation as a key driver of post-crisis growth, enabling sustainable growth that is inclusive of vulnerable groups, women, and MSMEs, and embracing collaboration between the developed and developing economies towards recovery. Inspired by this, the B20's theme for this year is RAISE: Responsible, Accelerated, Innovative, Sustainable, and Equitable business. RAISE signifies a shift in the way business is conducted.

Under the chairmanship of Mr. N Chandrasekaran, chairman of Tata Sons, B20 India has also set up two sub-mechanisms to guide the main body and help it deliver actionable recommendations. First, the International Advocacy Caucus (IAC) consists of global CEOs and heads of international organizations and will play a major role in activating their respective networks to enhance the visibility and legitimacy of B20 advocacy across countries. Second, the Steering Committee (SC) is made up of India's most esteemed business leaders, who will ensure that India effectively represents the emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) on the global stage while also fulfilling its domestic aspirations. The SC operates through the following sub-committees: coordination and resource mobilization, programme and ministerial interface at the central and state level, inclusivity, overseas business participation, and inward investments. The SC members have also been allocated the responsibility of working with state governments through CII on conducive Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) measures to be implemented during the year.

B20 Meeting in Imphal, Manipur

(From L to R): L. Ramesh Babu, Joint Secretary (Summits), G20 Secretariat, Government of India; Dr Rajesh Kumar, Chief Secretary of Tripura; Som Parkash, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Government of India; N. Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur; Dr Raj Kumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs; Pradeep K. Jha, Commissioner, Textiles & Commerce, Industries, Government of Manipur and Gopi More, Member, CII North Eastern Council.

Paridhi Pardeshi, an EY Project Consultant, was until recently associated with the B20 Secretariat. Views are personal.

Task Forces

Task Force on Inclusive Global Value Chains (GVCs) for Resilient Global Trade and Investment:

Chair: Ms. Mallika Srinivasan, Chairman & MD, Tractors and Farm Equipment (TAFE), India

Co-chairs: 8, representing India, Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, and Italy

Priorities:
- Key enabler for integration into GVCs
- Trade 4.0
- Diversifying services trade
- Less developed countries' issues in global trade

Task Force on Future of Work, Skilling, and Mobility:

Chair: Ms. ShobanaKamineni, executive vice chairperson, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, India

Co-chairs: 9, representing India, Argentina, Brazil, China, Germany, Indonesia, Switzerland, Turkey, and the USA

Priorities:
- Technology and employability
- Reskilling and upskilling
- Talent development
- Mobility of persons
- Women in the workforce

Task Force on Energy, Climate Change, and Resource Efficiency:

Chair: Mr. Sajjan Jindal, Chairman, JSW Group, India

Co-chairs: 10, representing India, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Indonesia, and the UK

Priorities:
- Investment in green energy
- Transition to electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel
- Just transitions
- Net zero and climate finance

Task Force on Digital Transformation:

Chair: Mr. N Chandrasekaran, B20 India Chair and Chairman, Tata Sons, India

Co-chairs: 10, representing India, Brazil, Finland, France, Indonesia, Sweden, the UK, and the USA

Priorities:
- Digital divide
- Internet penetration and digital literacy
- Taxation and data sharing

Task Force on Financing for Global Economic Recovery:

Chair: Mr. Uday Kotak, Managing Director & CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank, India

Co-chairs: 8, representing India, Brazil, China, France, Indonesia, the UK, and the USA

Priorities:
- Debt servicing
- Financing for economic recovery
- Development of sustainable and resilient infrastructure
- Financing health infrastructure

Task Force on Tech, Innovation, and R&D:

Chair: Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Axilor Ventures &co-founder, Infosys, India

Co-chairs: 8, representing India, Brazil, China, and the USA

Priorities:
- Inclusive innovation and R&D ecosystems
- Diversifying R&D hubs
- Strengthening the global IPR regime

Task Force on Financial Inclusion for Economic Empowerment:

Chair: Mr. Dinesh Kumar Khara, Chairman, State Bank of India

Co-chairs: 4, representing India, China, the UK, and the USA
- Priorities:
- Financial inclusion
- Digital financial services
- Financial innovation

Action Councils

Action Council on ESG in Business:

Chair: Sanjiv Puri, Chairman & Managing Director, ITC, India

Co-chairs: 5, representing India, Belgium, Brazil, and Indonesia

Priorities:
- Making supply chains sustainable
- Integrity and compliance
- Environmental and social due diligence
- Strengthening compliance support for MSMEs
- Affordable and accessible health and education

Action Council on African Economic Integration

Chair: Mr. Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, India

Co-chairs: 10, representing India, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa

Priorities:
- Addressing challenges to African economic integration
- Issue of African industrialization
- Lack of physical and digital connectivity
- Facilitating investment to build regional production networks

URBAN RENAISSANCE
GLOBAL COOPERATION, THE G20 WAY

KIRITKUMAR J. PARMAR

A Clarion Call for World Cities to Join Hands for A Shared Future

The U20 Mayoral Summit in Ahmedabad serves as a clarion call for cities worldwide to come together, share experiences, and forge collaborative partnerships for shaping sustainable and creative cities, says Kiritkumar J. Parmar.

As we approach to the Urban 20 Mayoral Summit, the city of Ahmedabad embraces the guiding principles of India's G20 theme — 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or "One Earth, One Family, One Future." This mantra encapsulates the essence of our collective efforts to build a harmonious and sustainable world. In line with these principles, we must recognize that the challenges we face extend beyond borders, and our solutions must be rooted in unity, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

The U20 Mayoral Summit serves as a clarion call for cities worldwide to come together, share experiences, and forge collaborative partnerships for the betterment of their citizens. During this summit, we will engage in meaningful discussions on key urban challenges. Through knowledge exchange, innovation, and strategic alliances, we can catalyse positive change that transcends geographical boundaries. As the host of the sixth cycle of U20, the city of Ahmedabad has been championing the urban development agenda with a focus on climate resilience, sustainability and inclusivity. Ahmedabad takes prides in its rich cultural heritage, dynamic growth, and unwavering commitment to sustainable urban development. With a vision for inclusive growth, the city has focused on transforming itself into a sustainable and liveable city for all. The Smart City initiative has played a crucial role in leveraging technology and innovation to enhance the quality of life in our city. The Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS) has revolutionized public transportation, providing a reliable and efficient mode of travel. The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project has transformed the riverfront into a vibrant recreational space, promoting social interaction and enhancing the city's aesthetic appeal. Ahmedabad has become a frontrunner in solar energy generation through the successful implementation of solar rooftop installations on public buildings and the promotion of solar-powered street lighting systems. These initiatives have not only reduced our carbon footprint but have also resulted in cost savings for the municipality.

While Ahmedabad itself has made significant strides in urban development, it is essential to recognize the collective progress of the state of Gujarat. Gujarat

has emerged as a model for sustainable and inclusive development, with its cities becoming centers of growth and innovation. The state's commitment to waste management and sanitation practices has significantly improved public health and hygiene standards. Additionally, the state's investment in robust transport networks, such as the Ahmedabad-Mumbai Bullet Train project and the development of industrial corridors, has facilitated seamless connectivity and economic growth. Indian states are fortunate to have the unwavering support and commitment of honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, who has placed great emphasis on boosting the economy through urban development. His visionary approach has propelled India's growth trajectory, creating opportunities for all. As mayors, we must translate this commitment into action, fostering an environment that nurtures entrepreneurship, innovation, and inclusive economic development.

As the Mayor of Ahmedabad, I am honoured and delighted to welcome mayors and urban experts from cities across the G20 courtiers to the Urban 20 (U20) Mayoral Summit, on 7-8 July 2023.

The U20 Mayoral Summit serves as a clarion call for cities worldwide to come together, share experiences, and forge collaborative partnerships for the betterment of their citizens.

This extraordinary event brings together visionary leaders to foster collaboration, exchange knowledge, and chart a path toward a sustainable and inclusive urban future. I am eager to learn from the experiences of fellow city leaders and explore innovative approaches to address the challenges faced by rapidly urbanizing cities. Through these deliberations, mayors will get opportunity to voice the aspirations of citizens on the international platform. Through peer-to-peer learning, actionable strategies that can be implemented in the cities to drive an informed strategic change. Together, we can shape a future where cities are sustainable, resilient, and inclusive, ensuring a high quality of life for all residents. Let us seize this opportunity to collaborate, inspire, and create a lasting impact on urban centres.

Addressing Climate Change, Digitalisation: Ahmedabad's approach at U20 Sherpa meeting

Ahmedabad recently hosted the U20 Sherpa meeting, highlighting the city's urban planning achievements and showcasing its cultural heritage. The conference addressed key issues such as climate change, sustainable development, and economic growth, emphasising the city's commitment to implementing measures and sharing best practices to tackle global challenges, says Urban 20 City Sherpa of Ahmedabad Praveen Chaudhary. As the host city, Ahmedabad had the opportunity to highlight its innovative approaches to urban challenges, exemplified by projects like the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project and the BRTS, which have greatly improved the quality of life for residents, elaborates Chaudhary.

Q *Could you elaborate on the purpose and significance of the U20 Sherpa meeting held in Ahmedabad, as well as its potential impact?*

A Urban 20 (U20) is a forum that brings together delegates from the largest cities in the world to discuss urban issues and propose solutions to be presented to the G20. The U20 Sherpa meeting, hosted by the U20 chair for the sixth cycle - Ahmedabad, highlighted the increasing significance of cities in the international decision-making process. This conference facilitated the dissemination of information and best practices, as well as the exchange of knowledge and experiences in urban planning and development.

In the sixth cycle of U20, the top priorities encompass climate change, the circular economy, affordable housing, and digitalisation. The primary objective of the U20 Mayors' Summit, scheduled for July 2023, is to generate a communique enabling cities to restructure their governance mechanisms and policies for effective adaptation to global issues. Moreover, the formal integration of the U20 engagement group into the G20 underscores the growing imperative for efficient city planning as the key to resolving diverse urban challenges worldwide.

Q *In what way did Ahmedabad benefit from hosting the U20 Sherpa meeting, and could you elaborate on the significance of the city's urban planning achievements?*

A The U20 Sherpa conference in Ahmedabad also provided an opportunity to showcase the city's cultural heritage and urban initiatives, including the Heritage Walk and the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, to an international audience. The U20 Sherpa meeting garnered global attention for Ahmedabad, elevating its visibility on the international stage and bolstering its potential to attract investment and opportunities for further growth. The city successfully demonstrated its innovative approaches to urban challenges, exemplified by projects like the Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project and the BRTS, which have significantly improved the residents' quality of life. Moreover, hosting such a prestigious event enabled local businesses to showcase their products and services, resulting in economic benefits for the city.

Q *What were some of the key issues that were discussed at the U20 Sherpa meeting, and how do you envision the city of Ahmedabad responding to these challenges?*

A At the U20 Sherpa meeting, the delegates engaged in crucial discussions on urban challenges including climate change, sustainable development, and economic growth. These discussions proved beneficial for Ahmedabad and other cities as they provided an opportunity to learn from each other's experiences in addressing similar challenges and exploring potential solutions. Ahmedabad is actively implementing various measures to combat climate change, such as maximizing the utilization of wind and solar energy and transitioning to electric-based public transportation systems. The city's latest budget incorporates sustainable financial strategies, including impact levies. With a vision for the next decade, Ahmedabad aims to become a zero-waste city with significantly reduced carbon emissions.

Q *What role will Ahmedabad play in the upcoming mayoral meeting? Could you clarify on the city's approach to knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices?*

A As the host city, Ahmedabad will extend invitations to mayors from

> **"** The U20 Sherpa meeting, hosted by the U20 chair for the sixth cycle - Ahmedabad, highlighted the increasing significance of cities in the international decision-making process. This conference facilitated the dissemination of information and best practices, as well as the exchange of knowledge and experiences in urban planning and development

significant cities and leaders from prominent organisations to facilitate discussions on the six U20 priority areas. The city has meticulously planned a two-day event featuring both formal and informal sessions, along with thematic conversations, aimed at addressing emerging challenges in each city while fostering mutual learning. This conference, organised by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, will serve as a platform for engaging technical experts from renowned organisations such as the World Bank, the United Nations, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), C40, and Asian Development Bank (ADB), alongside other experts who provide community perspectives on the thematic areas. Through these discussions, the city aims to enhance its governance and policies to effectively adapt to global concerns.

Q *Could you shed light on Ahmedabad's approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change, and the measures being taken to mitigate its impact?*

A Ahmedabad's approach to addressing climate change is noteworthy. The city has taken steps to transition to a sustainable energy system, including fostering energy efficiency and renewable energy. The city achieved 10%

> **"** As the host city, Ahmedabad will extend invitations to mayors from significant cities and leaders from prominent organisations to facilitate discussions on the six U20 priority areas. The city has meticulously planned a two-day event featuring both formal and informal sessions, along with thematic conversations, aimed at addressing emerging challenges in each city while fostering mutual learning

of its energy production from renewable sources of energy. The city has already installed solar panels on public buildings and implemented a solar rooftop programme that provides incentives for residents and enterprises to promote the use of renewable energy. In addition, the city has installed 21MW-capable wind turbines to encourage the development of large-scale energy initiatives. Similarly, Ahmedabad has instituted a number of measures to increase energy efficiency, including promoting the use of energy-efficient appliances and LED lighting in public buildings. The city has converted approximately 200 buses to electric operation and 743 buses to CNG operation, which has positively affected energy efficiency. As a result, annual carbon emissions have fallen by more than 24,000 metric tons. Furthermore, The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project has been a triumph by redeveloping nearly 11.5 kilometres of riverfront into a green public space. As a result, more people are utilising public transport and cycling, ultimately enhancing public health.

Q *What role does community engagement play in Ahmedabad's urban planning and development strategies? Could you provide examples of successful community-led initiatives?*

A Ahmedabad is at the forefront of incorporating community participation into urban planning and development. One of the key initiatives in community participation is the town planning scheme, which mandates participatory approaches in land reconstitution for the city's growth and development, as well as the

allocation of land for public purposes such as constructing street networks, social amenities, and other essential infrastructure.

The Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project, aimed at rejuvenating the Sabarmati Riverfront to establish an inclusive public space for all residents of the city, stands out as one of Ahmedabad's most noteworthy town planning endeavours. This project encompasses the creation of parks, walkways, and various amenities along the riverfront, along with the construction of commercial and residential structures.

Furthermore, the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority has formulated several master plans that outline the city's long-term vision for growth and development. These plans encompass strategies for managing population growth, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering economic development.

Similarly, the Citizen's Complaint Redressal System (CCRS) implemented by the

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city government offers a platform for citizens to express their concerns and provide suggestions concerning municipal development and service delivery. As of 2021, this system has received over 500,000 complaints, with 85% of them successfully resolved. By incorporating such a system, the city ensures that its budget and planning decisions align with the needs and priorities of its residents.

Praveen Chaudhary, Dy Municipal Commissioner, CEO Smart City Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Urban 20 City Sherpa of Ahmedabad

HITESH VAIDYA

NILAYA VERMA

Envisioning India's Digital Urban Future Through Planning

Accelerating digital adoption in India's urban planning is crucial to the country's economic and developmental goals, and India's G20 presidency will be important in realizing those goals, as well as the idea of a 'Digital Bharat,' says Hitesh Vaidya and Nialaya Verma.

In today's fast-growing world, cities are constantly evolving and becoming the drivers of economic growth. It is estimated that 17 of the 20 fastest-growing cities in the world between 2019 and 2035 will be from India[1]. Cities also contribute 63% of India's total GDP, which is expected to increase to 70% by 2030, thereby fuelling India's growth. Given this, planning for cities becomes increasingly important. Currently, urban planning in India follows a traditional route of master planning wherein revision is as infrequent as once in 10 years, or even longer. This creates significant urban challenges, such as growing urban sprawls, a continuous load on infrastructure, delays, and cost overruns. For cities to continue to contribute towards India's economic growth, it is of crucial importance to leverage data and technology in urban planning, thereby creating better sustainable cities of the future.

The foundation of effective and iterative urban planning lies within the four technological pillars of data, process, capacity, and assessment. Data forms the foundation for effective planning. There is a need to standardize what data is collected, the way data is collected, the frequency of collection, modes of data-sharing among departments, and various other protocols for cities to be able to use it efficiently in its planning methods.

Leveraging Data to its Full Potential

Leveraging data sourced for urban planning requires a multi-faceted approach wherein inter-departmental coordination plays an essential role in data integration, analysis, and sharing. While India has progressed in generating useful data resources, with the most striking examples being from the National Urban Digital Mission and Smart Cities Mission projects, the need is to further model that data into a framework that ensures its utility in data-driven planning methods.

Data forms the foundation for effective planning. There is a need to standardize

[1] View: India's urbanisation challenges and the way forward - The Economic Times (indiatimes.com)

what data is collected, the way it is collected, frequency of collection, modes of data sharing among departments, and various other protocols for cities to be able to use it efficiently in its planning methods.

By tapping into diverse data sources like satellite imagery, land records, and household surveys, and using advanced analytics, planners can identify trends, forecast future growth, and allocate resources effectively. This will help tackle prevalent issues like parking space occupancy, traffic flow, residential congestion, land use patterns, air pollution, and waste management services across all Indian cities.

Stretching on the point of interoperability, the role of open data platforms in urban planning management will be most crucial. For example, the London City Dashboard and London DataStore are innovative open-data dashboards that translate data into workable information for the planners to identify gaps and accordingly act upon it. In India, the launch of the India Urban Data Exchange

(IUDX) platform has been an essential first step, but more work is required to mainstream data-driven approaches in cities. This information-sharing and participatory planning approach also empowers citizens, making the government more accountable.

Limiting Time and Cost Overruns

Time and costs in urban planning and infrastructure are correlated. The more time a project takes to go from the planning and designing stage to completion, the higher its cost runs. Projects in India see unforeseen delays and unstructured cost management right from the planning stage, leading to quality issues.

Digital project management tools can help address this not just keeping a check on progress but also ameliorating precision. Technological tools such as AI, Blockchain, GIS, etc., can help cities collect data in real time. Leveraging technological processes such as Building Information Management (BIM) can lead to greater efficiency and quicker project completion, thereby significantly cutting down on cost overruns.

To put more legitimacy, NITI Aayog officials have also stated that BIM could save up to 20% of the cost by shortening the project life cycle.

Upscaling and Assessing Local Urban Bodies

The foundational element to digitising urban planning in India lies in the technological upscaling of the urban local bodies (ULBs) in India. The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992, grants devolution of responsibilities, including urban planning, to ULBs. With the responsibility to curate policies and directives intended for planning, ULBs can help integrate relevant digital methods in the planning mechanism. However, for its full realisation, the ULBs

"By tapping into diverse data sources like satellite imagery, land records, and household surveys, and using advanced analytics, planners can identify trends, forecast future growth, and allocate resources effectively.

themselves need to be properly aware of the ongoing situation around the subject.

Cities like Pune have already started adopting digital means in its planning practices. With the viewpoint that technological errors are negligible compared to human errors, the city's municipal body is already applying AI, machine learning, and satellite imagery to regularise property tax and keeping a check on illegal construction zones. This sets an example for other cities to follow and adopt similar adoption actively. Such adoption, or sandboxing, can be further supported in the form of capacity-building, including training and skill development for urban body officials, which will help upscale their digital and technical competencies.

Furthermore, the role of private players in the form of public-private partnerships will help introduce innovative solutions to planning challenges, streamlining digital work-flow, and service delivery. In parallel, funds allocated to ULBs should mandatorily encompass a separate allocation dedicated to digital upscaling of the planning process.

Finally, an assessment framework is required to monitor the various levels of

maturity across different cities. This will help assess the readiness of cities, identify potential gaps, and suggest measures to fill those gaps.

Planning: An Iterative and Continuous Process

The current practice of drafting urban plans and their subsequent implementation in a tenure-based cycle leaves little room for any technology-inductive moderation. The planning process should thus be an ongoing practice, with scope for real-time technology and data-related upgradation. This periodic exercise will also help cities better understand the specific gaps and the corresponding solutions necessary.

India's high-level committee on urban planning was constituted in 2022 to recommend urban planning reforms. The committee's draft recommendations reiterate the point that plans should be revised and reviewed at more frequent intervals to stay ahead of the curve. For proper follow-through and implementation of the recommendations of the report, it is imperative to collect and, thereafter, connect the data to the appropriate

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technologies. Leveraging data and technology effectively can help in better governance, data-backed decision-making, fluid and comprehensive **planning, and** management of **c**ities.

While this article introduces the four technological pillars of effective and iterative planning, a detailed research report including the challenges and roadmap for an iterative urban planning process will be launched at the Urban20 Mayoral Summit for the 2023 Cycle, chaired by the city of Ahmedabad in July 2023.

Accelerating digital adoption in India's urban planning will be crucial to achieve its economic and developmental goals. With India helming the G20 presidency this year, policymakers with global coordination will have to deliberate on digital upgradation for better time and cost efficiency, leveraging the data resources to counter city-based challenges, continue digitally empowering the urban local bodies as an institutional intervention, and acknowledge planning that aligns with the philosophy of course correction. The realisation of 'Digital Bharat' is not a distant dream and urban planning will be at the core of its fulfilment.

Hitesh Vaidya is Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs, which is the technical secretariat for U20 engagement group for G20. A seasoned urban development expert, Vaidya is a former country representative of UN-Habitat India.
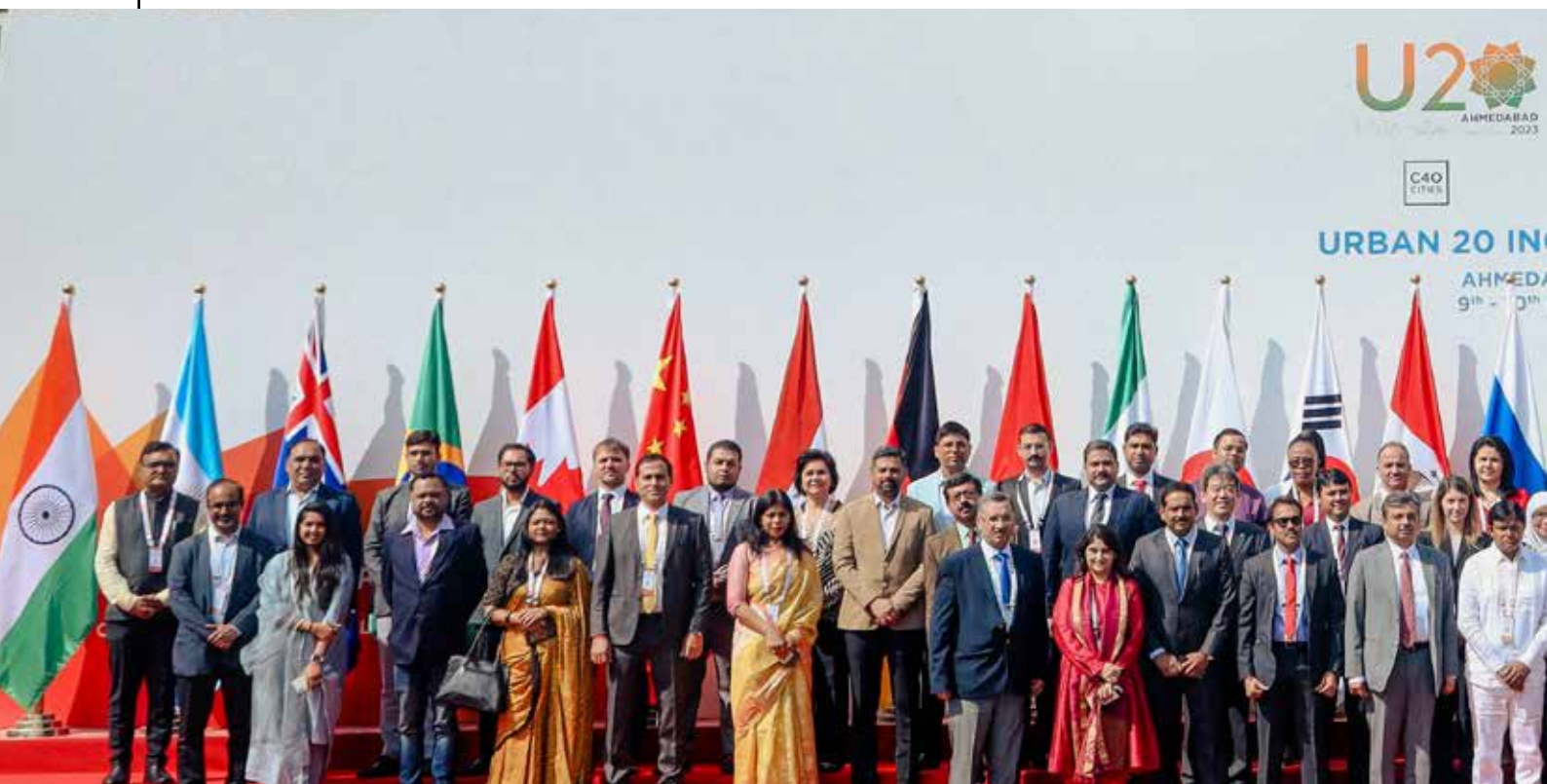
Nilaya Varma is co-founder, Primus Partners. He is one of the leading public policy, investment promotion and digital transformation specialists globally, having led Government policy formulations in multiple countries.

KANAK TIWARI

NILESH RAJADHYAKSHA

URBAN20
Shaping Holistic and Smart Cities

The article gives an overview of the Urban20 (U20) engagement group under the G20, its objectives, history and current focus and priorities under India's G20 presidency. Faced with critical global crises such as climate change, forums such as G20 have a major role to play in steering inter-governmental dialogue, policies and actions towards sustainable and equitable development to go hand in hand with economic growth. Cities exemplify this dichotomy and can be a powerful force to take up this role as the environmental impact of urbanisation and urban living is the largest and at the same time, global economic growth is also concentrated in cities. The U20 engagement group is therefore at a stage where it can shape global agendas. The sixth U20 cycle is with India this year and with Ahmedabad as the Chair city, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) as the Technical Secretariat and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as the nodal ministry, it is time to move from 'intention to action'.

The Urban Imperative

Policies and practices adopted and propagated by cities have powerful implications to achieve global agendas of development, especially as cities comprise more than half the world's population and contribute more that 80 per cent of the global GDP. By 2050, about two thirds of the world population will be living in cities, indicating a quantum jump in the requirements of urban infrastructure, resources such as water, social institutions and economic opportunities. Cities will also be critical for driving climate change adaptation and resilience and implementing the push towards "net zero" development as they contribute to more than 75% of the growth in GHG emissions. Estimates suggest that the cost of not building multi-hazard resilient cities, will be around $300 billion every year by 2030. This is the urban paradox that while cities can exert significant influence on the global development agenda as primary engines of growth, they are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, disasters, environmental degradation, resources depletion, and socio-economic inequities with millions of people living in highly dense settlements. Thus, cities have to be at the frontline for developing effective solutions to these pressing global issues and it is the right time to harness the potential of urbanisation as a catalyst to drive the 'right' kind of growth that is sustainable, inclusive and equitable.

What is Urban20?

The Urban 20 (U20) Engagement Group was created under the G20 to focus and amplify the voice of cities and foreground urban issues in the negotiations and decisions of the Heads of Governments of G20 countries. U20 is a city diplomacy forum that strives to establish a practice of engagement among cities from G20 countries to develop a collective message that emphasises the role of cities in taking forward the sustainable development

agenda. U20 was launched in December 2017 at the One Planet Summit in Paris under the leadership of the Mayors of Buenos Aires and Paris with C40 and UCLG as joint conveners. Since 2017, there have been five cycles of the U20 chaired by Buenos Aires (2018), Tokyo (2019), Riyadh (2020), Milan and Rome (2021), Jakarta and West Java (2022) and Ahmedabad for the 6th cycle U20 (2023). The larger objective of U20 is to raise the profile of urban issues in the G20 agenda and take the unique perspective of cities to the global forum. U20 also strives to establish collaboration and cooperation among cities through knowledge sharing with specific focus on challenges of climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Why is Urban20 special

Urban20 is a unique engagement group in the entire spectrum of G20 working streams. While other working groups and engagement groups have experts or representatives of specific organisations, U20 mirrors the G20 itself as members of this group are actually representing people from cities of G20 countries. In fact, with the focus of India's G20 presidency on 'jan

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bhagidari' i.e., taking G20 to the people, the U20 engagement group is the apt vehicle to do exactly that and bring forth the voice of the people to the global platform.

How does Urban20 function?

Every U20 cycle commences with the acceptance of the G20 presidency by a particular country and continues till the handover to the next country. Two key meetings are held during the cycle namely, the Sherpa Meeting and the Mayoral Summit. These are planned to take place before the G20 summit so that the deliberations in the former two can inform the latter. The participants are city sherpas (officers from city government) and mayors or lead representatives from the U20 cities. Two groups of cities come together under U20 - Participating Cities from G20 countries and Observer Cities that are

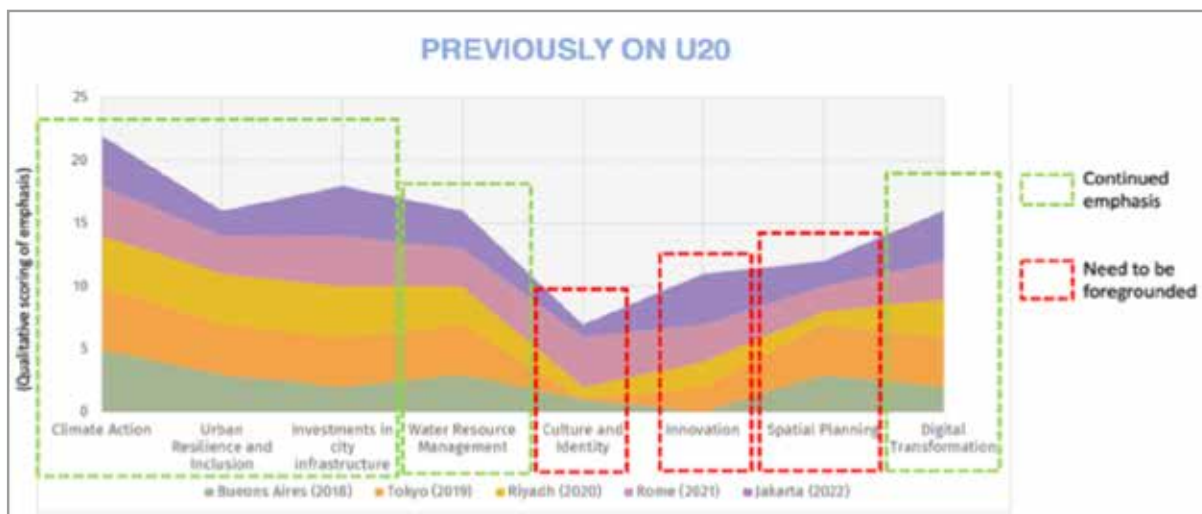invited by the chair city for a particular U20 cycle.

The main outcome of the U20 process is the U20 Communiqué. This communiqué is a political manifesto developed over 4-5 months with inputs from all participating and observer cities and comprises collective commitments and recommendations to share with the G20 Presidency and Heads of States. U20 Communiqués have explicitly underscored the urgency with which the cities have to act to ensure sustainable environments, healthy communities and social cohesion. Previous U20 cycles have foregrounded issues and priorities of vital importance for the urban sector through their Communiqués that are endorsed by collectively by the participating and observer cities. Most recently, the Jakarta Communiqué called for stronger and united post-pandemic recovery that is sustainable, resilient and just. The U20 Communiqué for the sixth cycle will be led by Ahmedabad and developed with inputs from U20 cities. In this endeavour, Ahmedabad will be supported by MoHUA, the nodal ministry for U20; NIUA, the U20 Technical Secretariat; the U20 conveners, C40 & UCLG and other key knowledge partners. The table gives a brief summary of priority areas foregrounded in previous

Table: Priorities foregrounded in previous Communiqués

Chair city - year	Priority areas in the Communiqué
Jakarta - 2022	1. Invest in health and housing as a cornerstone to an economic and social recovery for all 2. Foster a sustainable energy transition and equal access to sustainable mobility 3. Provide education and training on the future of work to give all people equitable access to the job market
Rome-Milan - 2021	4. People: Strengthening health systems; Guaranteeing local public service provision; Prioritising equal access that leaves no one behind; Investing in cultural life; Fostering social cohesion 5. Planet: Smart investments for a green and just recovery; Accelerated climate action ahead of COP26; Supporting intermediary cities; Building cities with nature for climate resilience and wellbeing; Transforming food systems 6. Prosperity: Adapting to the future of work and a just transition; Strengthening local democracy; Promoting fiscal autonomy; Fostering local economic development; Protecting digital rights
Riyadh - 2020	7. Partner by investing in a green and just COVID-19 recovery 8. Safeguard our Planet through national-local collaboration 9. Shape New Frontiers for development, by accelerating the transition to a circular, carbon-neutral economy 10. Empower People to deliver a more equitable and inclusive future
Tokyo - 2019	11. Climate Action: Set targets and develop pathways towards decarbonisation by 2050; Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate change; Enhance energy efficiency, encourage energy system transition and zero-emission transport; Increase resource efficiency and promote circularity; Encourage the global mobilisation of city dwellers and cities for an effective response to climate change 12. Social Inclusion and Integration: Promote equality in economic opportunity, access to basic social services and political participation; Promote resilient, accessible and inclusive urban development; Mainstream a gender perspective across the G20 agenda to achieve greater gender equality; Proactively address needs of ageing populations; Facilitate socio-economic integration of migrants in societies 13. Sustainable Economic Growth: Promote inclusive economic development and solve urban challenges by harnessing digitalisation and emerging technologies; Develop sustainable, resilient and quality infrastructure to ensure no one is left behind; Enhance local governments' access to adequate finance for sustainable infrastructure; Ensure a just transition to decarbonised development
Buenos Aires-2018	14. Step Up Climate Ambition 15. Empower Citizens for Future Labor Markets 16. Achieve Social Integration and Inclusion 17. Develop a Safe and Sustainable Food Future 18. Enable Wider Access to Finance for Infrastructure

Figure 1: Analysis of priority areas in previous U20 cycles

Communiqués.

What is the focus of Urban20 under India's G20 presidency?

During India's Presidency of the G20, the U20 will underscore the importance of transforming the urban sector to drive lasting positive outcomes for the world. Ahmedabad as the Chair city for the sixth U20 is soliciting the solidarity of cities to collectively find common solutions that are in harmony with the overall objectives of the G20 and its theme of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' meaning 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. In the current cycle, six priority areas have been identified as critical for inspiring city level actions to respond to global agendas. These priority areas were identified by undertaking an analysis of previous U20 Communiqués (see Figure 1) through which it was inferred:

● Some priorities covered in previous cycle need continued attention in this cycle
● Some priorities had been touched upon in previous cycles but needed reinforcement

Further, an overview of issues being brought forth by SDGs, COP27 etc. was also carried out as the SDGs call for a

paradigm shift that will 'leave no one', in line with the World Habitat Day 2022 theme of "Mind the Gap: Leave No One and Place Behind". Both also recognise the leading role of local governments in definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban policies and legislation for sustainable urban development. Based Following are the priority areas of the sixth U20 cycle that were put forth based on these analyses. These will be further developed by collaborative deliberations among the U20 cities to prepare a purpose-driven Communiqué:

1. Encouraging Environmentally Responsible Behaviours
2. Ensuring Water Security
3. Accelerating Climate Finance
4. Championing 'Local' Identity
5. Reinventing Frameworks for Urban Governance and Planning
6. Catalyzing Digital Urban Futures

What is the sixth cycle of Urban20 striving to achieve?

U20 is a platform for cities to exchange knowledge and showcase the innovative and pioneering work they have undertaken. However, it also has the responsibility to champion sustainable development globally through the force of cities. It can create

Figure: Six priority areas of the 6th U20 Cycle

Encouraging Environmentally Responsible Behaviours	Championing 'Local' Identity
Ensuring Water Security	Reinventing Frameworks for Urban Governance and Planning
Accelerating Climate Finance	Catalysing Digital Urban Futures
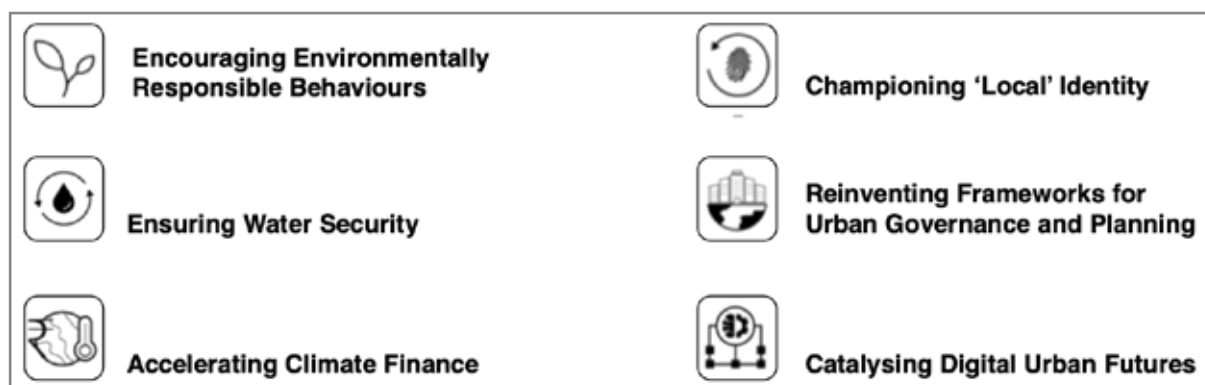
a framework that will enable the global community to translate its commitments for a desirable urban future. Following are the key goals the sixth cycle and its key stakeholders intend to achieve:

1. Moving from 'intention to action':
The sixth U20 hopes to move from intention to action and draft a roadmap for global change that will be driven by cities. This may be achieved by closing the gaps between policy and practice at all levels of governance. For this, cities have to be empowered to achieve the right balance between economic prosperity and environmental impact; increasing densities and sprawl; diversity and social cohesion; technological advancements and digital divide, and multiple other contradictions faced by urban areas.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) recognises this decade as the 'Decade for Action' to achieve the SDGs and G20 India is also focussing on creating an actionable agenda for international cooperation on global issues. At the U20 Sherpa meeting, the G20 Sherpa, Shri Amitabh Kant urged the U20 Engagement Group to provide clear, precise and actionable recommendations in its Communiqué that can be considered by G20 leaders and and be reflected in the G20 agenda, given the importance of cities in bringing about impactful transformation.
2. Maximising convergence with G20:
U20 is making efforts to match the

fundamental intention of India's G20 presidency to be 'inclusive, ambitious, decisive and action oriented' (in the words of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi). U20 is also in complete tandem with The U20 priorities areas are in fact aligned with each one of the overarching priorities espoused by G20 namely, (i) Energy Transition: Shaping a Green World; (ii) Get a LiFE: Promoting Eco-friendly Lifestyle; (iii) Bridging the Divide: Digital Public Goods; (iv) Climate Finance: Funding Green Growth; (v) Enhancing G20 Collaboration for Food Security, Popularising Millets; (vi) Democratising Global Financial Governance: Adapting to 21st Century Realities; and (vii) Accelerating SDGs: Making World a Better Place to Live in. In fact a number of priorities are common among various G20 working streams. U20 is making efforts to connect the dots by participating in deliberations of other groups as well as inviting their inputs. The intention is to map out these synergies and develop a collective voice to inform the G20 agenda through the recommendations and communiqués of these different working groups.

The cross-cutting aspects of inclusion, gender mainstreaming and social cohesion are also being explored as part of convergence of U20 with other groups such as Women20 and Youth20 and Civil20. In fact recently U20 Technical Secretariat and

" Through this U20 cycle the idea is to establish a knowledge networking mechanism or platform for cities at NIUA. This is envisaged as an open subscription based platform which can continue functioning even after the cycle is over

Y20 jointly organised the biggest Youth Conclave in the country on 13-14 March, 2023, which had participation of young persons from across India.

3. Mobilising the Partner Ecosystem: As a starting point of this U20 cycle, NIUA invited 200 national and international organisations for a partners' meet and mapped out areas of interest and expertise in relation to the six priority areas. The three ways in which partners are contributing to the U20 are: (i) collaborate on thematic events; (ii) co-creation of knowledge such as white papers on priority areas and other publications; and (iii) connect U20 with other ideas and expand its outreach and capacity. This has led to a consolidation of efforts and bringing together of ideas and thoughts on the numerous issues being covered under every theme.

4. Making knowledge the currency among cities: While one of the objectives of U20 is knowledge exchange among cities, it has primarily been through deliberations on the Communiqué in the past. Through this U20 cycle the idea is to establish a knowledge networking mechanism or platform for cities at NIUA. This is envisaged as an open subscription based platform which can continue functioning even after the cycle is over. Through such a platform, cities across the world would be able to share and access best practices, project details and experiences among peers.

5. Magnifying the role of cities in formulating global policies: G20 countries as a whole are close to 80% urbanised (on an average). Cities are undoubtedly going to be the drivers of geo-political agendas and global policies of growth and international cooperation. This is not only due to sheer volume of numbers but also as financial centres of the world and as places that are more and more looking towards transformational policies and practices for environmentally responsive and socially inclusive development. It is time to amplify the voice of cities to situate the urban

WHERE ARE WE IN THE SIXTH CYCLE OF URBAN20?

The sixth U20 cycle commenced on December 1, 2022 with Ahmedabad taking over as U20 Chair. The logo for U20 Ahmedabad was launched by the Chief Minister of Gujarat and a number of local events were organised for awareness and jan bhagidari in the U20. Two key meetings of the U20 cycle will be hosted by Ahmedabad. The City Sherpa meeting has been successfully completed and the Mayoral Summit is in July, 2023.

The City Sherpa Meeting was organised on 9-10 February, 2023 and was attended by more than 200 people including 75 representatives and sherpas from 42 cities, which is the highest recorded in-person participation in any U20 Sherpa Meeting since the inception of the U20 Engagement Group. At the Sherpa meeting, the zero-draft of the Communiqué was shared by the Ahmedabad Sherpa and cities deliberated on the priority areas and gave their respective inputs. City Sherpas expressed an overwhelming support for all the six priority areas and expressed solidarity in taking a collaborative agenda ahead as part of the Ahmedabad U20 cycle. It was also felt that U20 is an opportunity for global peer learning and creating a visionary roadmap that can steer the G20 agenda.

Cities from G20 countries, a number of partner organisations, senior government officials, experts and representatives from G20 Secretariat participated and spoke at the event. They spoke about the leadership India provide in taking the global discourse towards action. All the eminent speakers emphasised that economic growth has to go hand in hand with sustainable urbanisation; and that people have to be ambassadors of 'de-globalising, decarbonising and digitising our cities'.

One of the highlights of the City Sherpa Meeting in Ahmedabad was the convergence of U20 with other working streams of G20. The G20 Sherpa presented the G20 priorities to establish a consensus on key linkages with the U20. Chairs and representatives of three G20 working groups and four G20 Engagement Groups discussed linkages and alignments of thematic priorities with the U20. These included the Infrastructure Working Group that has finance for urban infrastructure as the central priority; the Digital Economy Working Group that focusses on inclusive economic growth through digital transformation; and the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group that is making efforts to strengthen international cooperation around disaster risk reduction through the creation of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Engagement groups that participated included Startup 20, Youth 20 and Think 20. Relevant policy issues, areas of commonality among different groups and deeper collaboration on these were discussed.

perspective in global forums such as the G20. This has already been recognised by the Group of 7 (G7) as the Urban7 (U7) in 2022 and the Japan Designated Cities Mayors' Association in 2023 were special groups under the G7 to collect voices from local leaders and cities. The G7 Communiqué in fact acknowledges "We acknowledge the significant role of cities, their associations, and networks as actors in our transformation towards sustainable development. We commit to foster exchange among and with cities." As the world moves forward towards achieving the SDGs, Cities can indeed help enhance the collective action needed to create pathways of cooperation that ensure that no one is left behind. ■

Kanak Tiwari and Nilesh Rajadhyaksha are both Programme Directors of the Urban Strategy Unit at NIUA and jointly head the Urban20 Technical Secretariat.

U20: A Brief History

Urban 20 (U20) is one of the Engagement Groups under G20. It is a city diplomacy initiative to foreground the unique perspective of cities in the G20 agenda. The U20 brings together mayors from G20 cities under a common framework and coordinates a joint position to inform the discussions of national leaders.

The current edition is the sixth cycle of the U20, hosted by the city of Ahmedabad, India, under the G20 Presidency of India.

A **Communiqué** is prepared as the outcome of U20 deliberations by cities, which further informs G20 discussions and agenda.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Buenos Aires	*Tokyo*	*Riyadh*	*Rome-Milan*	*Jakarta*	**Ahmedabad**

Key Priorities

The effort of the sixth U20 is to move from intention to action and to draft a roadmap for global change that will be driven by cities by closing the gaps between policy and practice at all levels of governance. Resonating with India's G20 theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future', U20 will emphasize that actions at the city level can drive lasting positive outcomes for the world, underscoring the interconnectedness of the world and our shared future.

The following six priority areas have been identified by U20 Chair, to be deliberated upon by the U20 cities throughout the cycle:

Accelerating Climate Finance
Enabling environment for cities to access climate finance
City readiness for climate financing

Encouraging Environmentally Responsible Behaviours
Just Transitions & Behavioural Change
Net Zero Built Environment
Circular Economy

Catalysing Digital Urban Futures
Data Driven Governance
Digital Transformation
Digital Innovations and technologies

Ensuring Water Security
Protect and revitalize water ecosystems
sustainable water management
Water Governance

Championing 'Local' Identity
Promote local economic development
Leverage traditional knowledge and frugal innovation

Reinventing Frameworks for Urban Governance and Planning
'Regulatory' to 'Strategic' planning framework
Hybrid Governance & Urban Regeneration

The U20 Team

Chair City	**Nodal Ministry**	**Technical Secretariat**	**U20 Global Conveners**	
AHMEDABAD	MoHUA	NIUA	UCLG	C40	

Key U20 Convening

City Sherpa Meeting : 9 & 10 February 2023

- *Creation of technical documents such as status papers and white papers to support the communiqué*
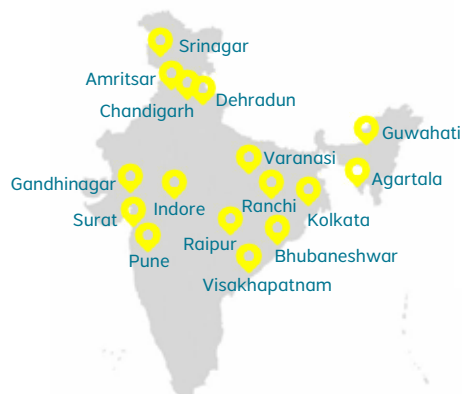- *Subject Matter Expert engagement through webinars, conferences podcasts*

- *Side events by partners related to the U20 Priority Areas*
- *Convergence with other G20 working groups and engagement groups*

Mayoral Summit : 7 & 8 July 2023

Legend

🔴 Participating Cities

⚪ Observer Cities

Rotterda
Paris
Madrid
Milan
Barcelona
New York City
Los Angeles
Mexico City
Riyadh
Tokyo
Narayanganj
North Dhaka
Rajashahi
South Dhaka
Lagos
Matale
Quito
Jakarta
Sao Paulo
Johannesburg
Port Louis
Buenos Aires
Durban

Inception Meeting :

70 + **International Delegates**

40 + **Cities**

200 + **Participants**

6 **G20 Working Stream Convergences**

Srinagar
Amritsar
Chandigarh
Dehradun
Guwahati
Varanasi
Gandhinagar
Agartala
Surat
Indore
Ranchi
Kolkata
Raipur
Pune
Bhubaneshwar
Visakhapatnam

Note: The maps are general reference purposes only and not to scale

Engagement Group Urban 20

Mr Amitabh Kant,
G20 Sherpa

"Urbanization will be the single biggest agent of change in the next few decades and this will be a change worldwide."

Mr Bhupendrabhai Patel, *Hon'ble CM of Gujarat*

- Inclusivity & sustainability
- Holistic development
- E governance & Citizen centric seva
- Online Building Permission System
- Green Mobility

Mr Hardeep Singh Puri,
Hon'ble Minister, MoHUA

"COP 27 on climate change and COP 15 on biodiversity have reiterated the urgent need to enhance urban resilience so that cities are equipped to deal with global stresses and shocks."
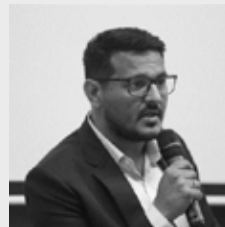
Mr Praveen Chaudhary, *City Sherpa, Ahmedabad*

- Innovation and cultural production
- Comprehensive road map leading up to the communiqué
- Cities' role in innovation and cultural production

JAN BHAGIDARI ACTIVITIES

In line with the G20's theme of "One Earth, One Family, One Future", U20 considers people at the centre of development and growth. As such, active involvement and participation by citizens in U20 events not only helps in gaining valuable insights and feedback from the people, but also helps raise awareness about various challenges and sustainable ways of living. Thus, "Jan-Bhagidari" events under U20 are organized to engage people and collaborate to find solutions to urban issues and celebrate good practices.

Urban Climate film festivals, multiple cities in India

Urban climate film festivals are being organized across multiple cities in India in association with **NIUA and Agence Française de Développement (AFD).** It gives people an opportunity to watch 16 hard-hitting films from 12 countries across the world, interact with filmmakers passionate about the climate cause, and engage with a community of climate warriors.

Urban 20 Manthan

U20 Manthan is a series of webinars, one taking place each month focusing on one priority area of US20. It brings together panelists from across the world who discuss on the topics and interact with the participants. It has been a huge success.

23 Panelists   **600+** participants

Urban Chaupals, Talks and Podcasts by Urban 20 and Youth 20

Twenty Talks is a discussion series on the youth's perspective of urban issues, in association with twenty colleges from all over India.

Urban Chaupal is an informal community engagement session in selected urban areas aligning to the local aspects of the U20 and Y20 priorities

U20 Samvad are a series of 15+ podcasts

U20 India Climate Dialogues

Mainstreaming Gender in U20 Agenda, New Delhi

A two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue was organized by NIUA and UN-Women. The event focused on creating a Women-Led U2O Framework as a step towards ensuring Gender inclusion in Urban Development

An MoU was signed between NIUA & UN-Women to setup a Gender Forum. A policy report on 'Gender and Disability Inclusion' in Urban Development was also launched.

U20 seminars, workshops and conferences

In collaboration with NIUA, multiple cities and partner organizations, various seminars and conferences have been undertaken. Events were also organized to explore and discuss the convergences of U20 with other working Groups and Engagement Groups of G20, such as Women20 (W20), Youth20 (Y20), etc.

January 2023

- Alliance @ U20, New Delhi
- Smart Cities CEOs Conference on Data and Technology, Panaji
- CEO' s Conference on Data & Technology, Chandigarh

February 2023

- Dhara 2023, Pune
- Convergence Event with UN CT and W20

March 2023

- Circular Resources for our Common Future: Cities as Drivers, New Delhi
- U20-Y20 National Youth Conclave, New Delhi
- National Conference on "Climate Finance for Cities, New Delhi
- Municipal Finance Agenda for U20 (IIPA), New Delhi

April 2023

- Asian Cities Summit, New Delhi
- Mainstreaming Climate Action in Cities, Bengaluru
- CEO's Conference on Data & Technology, Chandigarh

May 2023

- Haryana Institute of Public Administration, Gurugram
- Municipal Governance Agenda for U20 (IIPA), New Delhi
- Conference on "Reinventing Urban Governance for Indian Cities", Indore
- Creating a Women-led U-20 Framework- A Two-Day Multi Stakeholder NIUA-UN Women Dialogue, New Delhi
- Y20 Consultation Summit -Launch of U20-Y20 convergence initiative, Srinagar

**148+** *events organized by Smart Cities across India*

U20 Mayoral Summit
7-8 July 2023, Ahmedabad

Notable media outreach:

- Dhara 2023
- U20-Y20 National Youth Conclave
- Urban Climate Film Festival
- Conference on Mainstreaming
- Climate Action in Cities
- Asian Cities Summit
- Conference on Reinventing Urban Governance for Indian Cities
- Articles & U20 Bulletin 4 editions
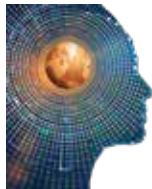
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वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE