

Reflection #1
Delivering Development: Journeys, Directions, and Lighthouses
September 22
Anushka Shah

My recent trip to New York for the "Delivering Development: Journeys, Directions, and Lighthouses" event at the Permanent Mission of India to the UN was an eye-opening experience that left me with a renewed sense of hope and inspiration for the future of global development. The discussions and insights shared during the panel discussions were thought-provoking and shed light on today's world's critical issues.

The first-panel discussion centered on India's potential as a significant partner for other Global South countries in pursuing sustainable development. The panel posed essential questions encouraging us to reflect on the challenges in developing comprehensive programs and public services. It was clear that India's journey in this regard has been challenging, but the lessons learned from these challenges can provide invaluable guidance to other nations on a similar path. The involvement of various stakeholders, including the private sector and local governments, was highlighted as a crucial aspect of this process. Exchanging ideas and experiences among these stakeholders can facilitate more effective development initiatives worldwide.

Christopher Elias, President of Global Development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, delivered a compelling presentation during the event. He emphasized the importance of bridging the gap of equity and access, particularly in rural areas, through the digital economy. The role of digital public and finance goods in promoting development was a significant point of discussion. Elias's insights reminded us of the power of technology in transforming lives and driving economic growth, especially in underserved regions. His vision for a more equitable world resonated with the audience, leaving us with a sense of purpose and a call to action.

The third-panel discussion addressed the pressing issue of gender equality and the need for increased female representation in decision-making positions across various sectors of society. Beyond the moral imperative, the panel explored the economic and social impact of ecosystems that empower women. Examples from around the world demonstrated that institutions benefit significantly from the active participation of women in politics, entrepreneurship, civil society, and business. This empowerment leads to more inclusive and diverse policies and fosters innovation and economic growth.

The discussions also delved into the barriers that hinder women's effective participation in policy and politics, both in the public and private sectors. It was heartening to see the commitment of both public and private institutions to overcome these traditional barriers and create environments where women can thrive. As our world rapidly changes, communities that empower women and provide them with opportunities will indeed have a competitive edge.

Reflection #2
South Rising: Partnerships, Institutions and Ideas
September 23
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The world is currently grappling with numerous challenges, including post-pandemic recovery, conflicts, and mounting debt crises. However, amid these adversities, a new set of actors from progressive nations in the Global South have emerged, focusing their efforts on people-centric developmental models. This shift raises crucial questions about the partnerships that will drive development in the 21st century, the adaptability of existing institutions, and the innovative ideas needed to shape our post-2030 agenda.

One of the key takeaways from the conference was the idea that the Global South is becoming the focal point of global discussions. Samir Saran, President of ORF, succinctly captured this sentiment when he said, "India's G20 has made exotic mainstream. Global South is the lounge that members want entry to." This shift represents a significant departure from the past, where the interests of a privileged few often took precedence over the needs of the many. It signifies a new dawn that seeks to address the long-neglected issues affecting the 7 billion people who were often invisible in the global narrative.

The discussions also highlighted the fragility of the institutions that traditionally governed the global order. João Gomes Cravinho, Portugal's Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasized that while these institutions have shown some elasticity in adapting to changing circumstances, they risk becoming brittle and snapping under the weight of evolving challenges. This underscores the urgent need for institutional reform and innovation to serve the Global South's interests better.

Kamina Johnson Smith, Jamaica's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade underscored the importance of making the multilateral system work and the necessity of reform. She rightly noted that nothing else can provide a just, equitable, and responsive approach, particularly in global crises like the pandemic. The pandemic has forced us to rethink our reliance on the existing system and focus on fostering greater cooperation and self-reliance within the Global South.

The Global South is poised to play a central role in shaping this new order, where the needs of the many will finally take precedence over the interests of the few. As we move forward, we must continue engaging in meaningful dialogues and collaborative efforts to address humanity's pressing challenges in the 21st century.