



## **Press Release**

### **Launch of Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST)**

- South–South cooperation (SSC) has been in existence for the last several decades. Post-2015, particularly in light of adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Financing for Development Agenda (FfD) and WTO meeting, SSC has assumed new importance across various international forums. This calls for a new coalition and information exchange among the Southern research institutions and think-tanks which could contribute in building consensus on evolving a suitable model for promoting Southern development cooperation for mutual benefit.
- Thus launching of the Network of Southern Think-tanks (NeST) at the Conference on South-South Cooperation (SSC): Issues and Emerging Challenges’ being organised by RIS in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and UN India on 10-11 March 2016 at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, assumes great importance.
- In an interaction with media Amb. Shaym Saran, Chairman, RIS underlined the growing importance of South-South Development Cooperation in view of shrinkage of resources in the developed North and the emergence of South as a new centre of economic gravity. Therefore he emphasised on the forging of a new international consensus on developmental cooperation.
- Amb. Saran also stressed on an emerging southern consensus on developmental cooperation which is non-prescriptive and non-intrusive. In this context, he called for widening the ambit of South-South by proactively enlisting Southern think-tanks, civil society, academia and media in this process. He also emphasized that in this context, the launch of network of Southern Think-Tanks called NeST would be a path-breaking initiative on the parts of Southern countries.

- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (Independent Charge) would deliver the inaugural address at the Conference on 10 March 2016 at Stein Auditorium in India Habitat Centre. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary would be giving valedictory address on 11 March 2016 at 17.00 hrs.

### **Key Issues before the Conference**

#### **Indian narrative on South-South Cooperation**

- The Conference is an effort to put forward India's narrative on development agenda and the nature, scope and modalities of South-South Cooperation. More than 100 eminent speakers would be attending the event from abroad, in addition to a large number of Indian scholars, researchers, subject experts, high ranking officials from government officials, academia, civil society members etc. would be taking part in it. As is known, India's development partnership programme is based on solidarity and demand-driven.

#### **Thematic and sectoral framework for SSC**

- The shifting of the global center of gravity from North to South is increasingly evident especially in the areas which are significant for further economic development in the South though there are several contemporary challenges. The areas of development include financing and partnership, peace and security, environment, people centered development, and science, technology and innovation (STI).
- This shift in gravity has been fueled by rapid and sustained economic growth over a fairly longer period of time in the "emerging economies" during the last decade. Such a shift has also resulted in efforts at building a new development cooperation architecture that led to considerable flow of resources within the Southern countries.
- The South began looking beyond the North-South Cooperation (NSC) and Triangular Development Cooperation (TDC), which had traditionally been fuelled by the Official Development Assistance (ODA) for development cooperation. South-South Cooperation (SSC) emerged as a parallel mechanism to support global quest for improved quality of life across the world.
- The SSC has contributed meaningfully to qualitative transformative changes that took place due to the rise in development partnership – that focused primarily on capacity building and experience sharing to begin with – and now increasingly infrastructure and institution building. Increase in the quantum of financial resources committed to SSC in contemporary times resulted in the desire of Southern providers to harness the potential of their cooperation through the creation and formalization of several platforms like New Development Bank, etc. Post-Busan, the prominent and unquestionable role of SSC in global development architecture gained currency.
- Broadly speaking, intra South trade, investment and development cooperation are all components of SSC which together contribute to the global development compact.

### **Private sector and civil society and SSC**

- The role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and private sector will also be discussed in details. Due to its vast and diverse spectrum in terms approaches, SSC carries different connotations in different contexts. India's specific measures provides support for CSOs and private sector to engage with SSC.

### **Indian idea of One World**

- India's vision of 'one world' has existed for centuries, it has only attracted greater attention in contemporary times when the world is faced with graver problems such as climate change, environmental pollution, growth in inequality, etc which require global solutions. However, given the global real politic, it may seem incongruent to assume unilateral pursuance of the idea. In this context SSC stands for human centric development and not economic development alone.
- Guiding principles of SSC have been premised on the commitment to the promotion of human freedom, opposition to colonialism and creation of equitable conditions for peaceful and harmonious socio-economic development of all countries. Through various international platforms, almost all developing countries have taken a position that national development across the South must not only be an outcome of the efforts of respective national governments but also the just treatment of the South at the hands of the global community in general. This imposes major responsibilities on the nations to ensure that their economic processes are guided by ethical principles and directed towards desirable ends by political will. The notion of 'one world', reflecting the principle of internationalism and hope for a world free from the systemic ills has figured prominently in India's Foreign Policy.

### **Future course of action**

- The conference would, among other things, deliberate on the modalities for enhancing our collective understanding on the dynamics of SSC; South and the global economy; Global aid architecture and SSC; and Theoretical framework for SSC, besides sharing regional and sectoral experiences.

### **Exhibition on South-South Cooperation**

- Coinciding with Conference, RIS is also organizing an exhibition consisting of 45 stalls in the Charminar Lawn of IHC, which would, inter alia, showcase some important facets of India's growing international development cooperation programme, in addition to the contribution made by international development assistance agencies in this field. In addition, a cultural programme would also be held on 10 March 2016 at 1900 hrs.