

# THE GLOBAL SOUTH AWAKENING

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## **Abstract**

The scream of the Global South over the years have been rooted in exploitation by Western Colonial powers in the past, the bipolar Cold War system and the desire of the Global North to perpetuate its hegemonic dominance in the global geopolitical in recent decades. Unfortunately, poverty, slavery, depletion, lack of human rights and abuse of natural resources, unemployment, and inequality were its dominant factors. This paper analyses the challenges faced by global south, the most predominant of which emerges due to universally cooperation among its members. It also makes some suggestions to overcome these challenges. Progress will not occur in these countries unless outside and inside forces make positive changes for the well- being of its people and environment. Though, some strategies have been put in place but more efforts are needed to enhance its viability.

**Keywords:** Global South, Hegemony, Colonialism

## **Introduction**

The disinclination of many leading countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to stand with NATO (Nations Atlantic Treaty Organization) over the War in Ukraine has brought about the term “Global South”. NATO is an international military alliance founded on 4<sup>th</sup> April signing of the North Atlantic Treaty. Its headquarters are located in the Supreme Allied Commander which resides in Boulevard Leopold 111 in Brussels and Belgium. Currently, there are about 30 members. NATO was formed to protect Western Europe’s common security. Despite the fact that World War II had ended, the United States and the Soviet Union’s deteriorating relations would eventually lead to the Cold War. Again, the Soviet Union intended to expand its influence in Europe by spreading communism, but the United States considered the Soviet Union’s ideology as a threat to its way of life. The need for NATO was established. According to UNCTAD, Global South refers to various countries around the world that are sometimes describes as developing, less developed, or underdeveloped. Many of these countries are located in southern hemisphere largely in Africa, Asia and Latin America. They are generally referred as less economically developed countries. It is a broad term that comprises a variety of states with diverse levels of economic, cultural, and political influence in the international order.

Also, Aja (2002) posits that the persistent crisis of development among the Global South has not had a significant change several years after their political independence. Some of their identifiable features include: high level of poverty, high birth rate, malnutrition,

low literacy level, short life expectancy, primordial loyalty, low per capita income, insecurity, high debt burden, political intolerance etc.

They are poorer nation, having higher level of income inequality and suffer lower life expectancy and harsher living condition than those countries in Global North who are richer, more technically advanced with economic growth located mostly in North America and Europe. The fall of Soviet Union in 1991 with the end of so called Second World gave a convenient pretext for the term “Third World” to disappear too and its usage fell rapidly in the year 1990s.

### **Brief History of Global South**

The classification of nations as first, second, or third emerged during and after the Cold War. These were based on their respective economic development and standards of living. In 1970s, Chairman Mao Zedong witnessed significant changes in the international situation. The balance of military forces between the two super-powers of the Soviet Union and the United States developed in a way favorable to the former. In order to maintain its global hegemony, the U.S. made readjustments on its foreign policy and carries out a strategy of retrenchment in Asia and opened to Sino-U.S. relations with the aim of freeing itself from indo-China and concentrating efforts in the defense of Europe which is its key area. In 1974, Mao Zedong’s strategic thinking shed light on the fact that the two super-powers were the main source of instability and turmoil in the world. Their acts of pursuing hegemonies, power politics, the big bullying the small, the strong bullying the weak and the rich oppressing the poor gave rise to strong opposition and resentment by countries of the third world.

First World countries were known as the most highly industrialized nations whose views aligned with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and USA or Capitalist. The Bloc of countries aligned with United States after World War II, which had more or less common political and economic interests,<sup>1</sup> this included the countries of North America and Western Europe, Japan, South Korea and Australia. Some African countries were assigned to the First world because of the links with Western countries. The Second World countries refer to as the former Communist-Socialist, less industrialized states known as the Eastern Bloc. Some of the countries in the Second World were Georgia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Albania among others. Though, some of these countries broke Soviet influence and aligned itself to other countries. For instance, Albania broke in 1960s and aligned with China. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, it became obsolete as the collapse marked the end of Cold War.

The Third World has always had blurred lines. The terms were used to define neither the countries that were neither First nor Second World countries. It was coined by Alfred Sauvy in 1952, a French economist and historian who defined Third World as countries neither Western countries nor Soviet Federation. Global South was first used in 1969 by political activist Carl Oglesby in the liberal Catholic Magazine *Commonweal*. Oglesby argued that the War in Vietnam was in culmination of a history of Northern

dominance over the global south. Geographically, the Global South has an uneven spread, majority of them are found in Africa, middle East, Asia and Latin America. In essence, underdevelopment presupposes that there exists an advanced economy with its structural advancement in international division of labour and a structurally less developed economy which by event of history has been disoriented, disarticulated and disadvantaged in international division of labour.

These countries were predominantly found in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Oceania among others. Due to impoverished economic situation in these countries, the term “Third World” increasingly became associated with the countries with low GDP and where majority of citizens lived in abject poverty. After the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century which signaled the end of the Cold War, the Third World countries gained independent as they were originally under colonies of European colonial authorities. The majority of poor countries is in the Southern Hemisphere also known as “Global South” (Mignolo, 2011) impoverished and also tinged with politics were there is tensions between the West and the other countries.

### **Prior Developmental Categorization of Global South**

Meanwhile, “developing”, “less developed” and “underdeveloped” (Dirlik, 2015) also face criticism as they hold Western countries as the ideal while portraying those outside the club as backwards. With reference to Nigeria, her economy has virtually remained mono-cultural as greater attention has continued to be paid to the oil sector, with minimal effort in economic diversification into solid minerals, tourism and other non-oil sectors of the economy. Some of the countries classified as belonging to the Global South such as Brazil, Japan, South Africa have adopted some lasting strategies that enabled them attain some level of economic development, yet majority of them still wallow in abject poverty, ignorance, underdevelopment, inequality, unemployment, leadership crisis, inconsistent development strategies among others.

Global South emerged in order for countries in the Southern hemisphere to work in collaboration on political, economic, social, environmental, cultural and technical issues. This is called South- South Cooperation (SSC), a political and economic term that refers to as the long-term goal of pursuing world economic changes that mutually benefit countries in the Global South leading to greater solidarity among the disadvantaged in the world system. It emerged in 1950s and 1960s just after Nigeria gained independence; they sought to promote their common interests.

### **The Awakening of Global South**

Following the changes that accompany and promote the current transition of the international system, Global South emerged as relevant actor despite its ambiguity which assumes the legacy of “Third World” and developing countries which was accompanied by Cold War. A group of nations with rising economies and growing

global affairs. The return of geopolitics and the confrontation of great powers in the course of Covid-19 pandemic especially as a result of War in Ukraine have promoted the awakening and this have given rise to a new leading role for these actors. The Covid-19 pandemic not only enhanced the differences between the Euro-Atlantic nations and the emerging countries in terms of inequality when it comes to accessing the necessary medical supplies and especially vaccine to cure the pandemic but also established a clear differentiation between the actors and also made effort to promote cooperation particularly in the global south.

The war in Ukraine accelerated the process of differentiation of the Global South from Global West, particularly as a result of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia which in turn brought about negative impact on both the Western economies and access to energy, food and fertilizers from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the sanction also set a negative benchmark to many nations of global south. Having gone degrading ordeal of colonization, global south countries see themselves in the depth of neocolonialism. The people of the South have begun to say that these conditions are unacceptable. To protect themselves from such external forces, and stand in solidarity when geopolitics demands it, global south emerged under the canopy of South-South Cooperation in order to utilize exchange of knowledge, goods, technology as basis for development. The resistance to the global south is to pursue its development with the concern for the protection of the natural environment so that it may sustain the present and future generation. The agitations also aim at reaffirming in words and action, that the purpose of the development is the promotion of the well-being of its people, economic growth geared towards satisfying the needs and fulfilling their purposes.

It aims at enabling its people realize the full potential of their talents and creativity, and to develop self-confidence and mobilize contribution to the well-being and progress of their societies. The challenge of the south is to its own resources more effectively to accelerate its development, meeting the need of their people and eradicating poverty, ignorance and diseases. Global south awakening set to use its unity and solidarity in efforts to make the world a more just and secured home for all.

### **Theories of Global South**

As many countries considered to be part of Global South were under colonization, they are at disadvantage to develop quickly. Many theories associated with it were as follows:

**Dependency Theory:** The theorists here suggest that every information must first pass through Global North before countries in Global South receive it. Although, many of the countries in the global south rely heavily on political or economic help of developed nations. What brought about dependency theory was the push for developing nations to become modernized and to pull them out of poverty. Dependency theory argues that underdevelopment as experienced in Latin, America and elsewhere is the direct result of capital intervention, rather than a condition of lacking development or investment. It

also argues that development is not really about helping the developing world at all rather, it is about changing societies just enough so they are easier to exploit, making Western companies and countries richer, opening them up to exploit cheap natural resources and cheap labour.

**Modernization Theory:** Modernization came up with an attempt to remake Global South in the manner and likeness of First World or Global North, in order for quick development. Modernization theory came in to remake the Global South by importing Western technical capital, western technology to developing countries. In essence, undeveloped countries are undeveloped because they have wrong cultural and social systems and wrong values and practices that prevent development from taking place.

**Post development:** Post development theorists emerged to question the effect from the perspective of post development. They were of the view that developing nations should not always follow Western ways for its development rather they should attempt to pursue their own intellectual ability. The goals of post development were for society at any level to follow non-Western ways for its development and achievements.

### **South-South Cooperation**

The 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia is considered a milestone for South – South Cooperation. In 1970s, the establishment of the G77 and UNTAD formalized the setup of South – South Cooperation. It derives from the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BABA) by 138 UN Member States in Argentina on September 18, 1978. South - South Cooperation is a technical cooperation among developing countries in the Global South. It is a tool used by the state, international organizations, academics, civil society and private sectors to collaborate and share knowledge, skill and successful initiatives in specific areas such as agricultural development, alternatives to the existing economic and political order. South -South Cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and attainment of international agreed development goals for sustainable development.

Historically, it is used by policymaker and academics to describe the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries also known as Global South. There is hope that countries in the Global South will assist each other in social, political, and economic development which is guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership, independence, equality and mutual benefit. The following institutions established by South – South Cooperation represent a new phase:

- ❖ Brazil-Russia – India- China- South Africa (BRICS)
- ❖ India-Africa Forum Summit.
- ❖ India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)

### **Objective of South - South Cooperation**

One of their key objectives is to nurture and increase developing nation self-reliance by way of increasing their creative potential in order to identify responses and technology capacities by devising the necessary ways to deal with them. Another notable objective of the cooperation is to strengthen and boost economic ties. Improvement in the energy and oil and bank investment. Some of which were reached during the 2009 summit Venezuela signing an oil agreement with South Africa and memorandum of understanding with Sierra Leone to form a joint mining company.

It also aim at recognizing the problems and needs of the least developed countries, small island developing states, and countries severely affected by natural disasters and other crises.

### **North-South Cooperation**

The North – South Cooperation on the other hand is the process by which developing countries and newly independent nations of the third world mostly in Asia, Africa and Latin America engaged the industrialized countries of North America and Western Europe in talks concerning changes to international economic system during the 1970s. It is a broad term that refers to a variety of issues concerning developing nation's economic and social development including trade and assistance issues.

It covers trade and tariff concerns, international finance, foreign aid, and the governance of multinational corporations and organizations.

### **Benefits of South-South Cooperation**

Just like any other ideology, South-South Cooperation emerged out of frustration from injustice of political and economic dominance from the global North. North political independence stands test of non-existence due constant interference from former colonizers. One of the remarkable benefits of South-South Cooperation is that it has promoted a large number of knowledge and expertise exchanges through programs, projects and initiatives that have helped solve specific problems in the countries of the Global South. Also, innovative forms of knowledge exchange, technology transfer, emergency response and recovery of livelihoods led by the South are transforming lives. According to Antonio Guterres, the countries of the South has contributed more than half world growth in recent years, (Armillas-Tiseyra, 2014) the intra south trade is higher than ever accounting for more than a quarter of the world trade and this has helped lift millions of families out of poverty. Examples of solidarity among members; Cuba support in the fight against Ebola in West Africa, Colombia through strategic knowledge reduce hunger to Mesoamerican countries. Also, lessons from Chile to the Caribbean countries on product labeling as a measure to end obesity and its related.

In this post-pandemic recovery and the political-economic crisis caused by the War in Ukraine, and climate change, South- South Cooperation has contributed to breaking the cycle of poverty, instability and development inequalities while promoting national development strategies. South – South Cooperation has shown to be beneficial in

creating jobs, improving infrastructure, and increasing commerce in nations throughout the global south. The office is supporting the countries of global south to fight the pandemic and its social and economic fallout through cooperation and promoting awareness of the economic, social and political development. Working together on common ground will mutually benefit the partners. The principle of South - South Cooperation should be fluid enough to accommodate well-intended intervention; a relationship where partners occupy similar position thrives.

### **Achievements of South - South Cooperation**

South - South Cooperation has succeeded in lowering dependence on the aid programs of Western countries also in creating a shift in the international balance of power. China is spearheading the creation of an Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area, which according to China's vision would override the already bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements in the region. The Russian Federation is developing cooperation with Asian partners within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Eurasian Economic Union. The Russian Federation is contributing US\$18 billion to the CRA which will be credited by the five partners with a total of over US\$100 billion. The CRA is now working. In 2015 through 2016, work was in progress to develop financing mechanisms for innovative projects with the new bank's resources (Brandt, 1980).

### **Challenges of South-South Cooperation**

One of the many challenges of South-South Cooperation has been on lack of technical support and weak organization both at international and most local countries. Most intergovernmental institutions set up to provide cooperation have in most cases, lack professional support and financial resources. Collective action and negotiations at the global level have been hindered by the lack of facility capable of providing continuing technical and intellectual support needed for regular consultation, co-ordination of action and settlement of differences. Despite rapid progress in South-South Cooperation in scale, scope and dimension, there are shortcomings as emerging countries and middle-income countries face challenges in the areas of high poverty rate, unemployment, malnutrition and serious deficits in infrastructure and productive capacities and impact of external shock. Also, the lack of sufficient capital to start a South-South bank as an alternative to the IMF and World Bank. Also, the actual dissemination of knowledge and skills at a large scale which is the key to advancement in the mutual learning process is a work in progress. Again, the need to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) along with other multilateral bodies to ensure equitable representation from the Global South.

This need arises because of new challenges emerging from different parts of the world. A classic case is a need to reform UNSC by giving representation to rising powers like India, Brazil, Japan and South Africa. In the regard the existing multilateral institutions like the G-77 and G-20, where the Global South countries have fair representation, need to be revitalized to address global issues more democratically. The concern of global

multilateral bodies is to ensure equity in the global decision-making process rather than being hostage of the whims of Global North.

India being the leader of the Global South, India provides a voice to the Global South Movement. Whether on the issue of climate change, energy transition, taking a stand on normative issues or protecting the Global South's interest, India played a proactive role in international forums over the years. The issue of ensuring equity and climate justice along with access to technology has been some of the core concerns of India over years. India's approach to global energy security as well as energy transition was aptly highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G-20 Summit in Bali in November 2022 where he underlined the need for "Stability in energy market" (Connell, 2007). India is the largest and oldest democracy in the world, often called the "mother of democracy" (Cohn, 1999). India over the years has been providing technical assistance to countries of the Global South for conducting successful election.

Global South encompasses larger part of the earth's surface. Millions of people living in global south suffer from hunger, lack of education, malnutrition and diseases.

The most essential factor that posed a disruption to the international relations are the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Ukraine War. While the pandemic disrupted the supply chain of vaccines and caused a challenge to the global community and the present, the Ukraine War on the other hand is posing a challenge to the supplies of food, energy and fertilizer. The Global South in both cases is at the receiving end of the problems. A November 2022 FAO study titled *Responding to the Ukrainian Crisis: Leveraging Social Protection for Food Security and Nutrition* stated: "If the conflict persists, the global number of undernourished people could increase by 8 to 13 million people in 2022/23, with the most pronounced increases taking place in Asia-Pacific, followed sub-Saharan Africa, and the Near East and North Africa" (Cassano, 2012).

This shows that the countries of the Global South are the most vulnerable to the Ukraine crisis. Along with the rise in energy cost and fertilizer prices together with the food crisis, which pose a substantial challenge to the Global South. There a great need to review how essential commodities can reach Global South countries. Along with the need to securitize food, fertilizer and vaccines, reduction in price and adequate food supply are urgently needed by the Global South. The Ukraine War proved how the rise in prices disrupts the energy supply to the Global South. This is happening because European countries are purchasing energy from the world market to tide over supply disruption from Russian, hence a natural spike in energy prices. In 2022, the price of a barrel of oil crossed over \$100, resulting in the hardest hit countries being from the Global South. There is a need to ensure an adequate and uninterrupted supply of energy to the Global South as analysts are of the opinion that Ukraine War is showing no sign of ending. This may aggravate the woes of the Global South. The need to reframe a new form of energy security agreement globally where energy flow can be ensured uninterruptedly (Mahler, 2018).



The most challenging problem confronting the Global South in the context of energy security is ensuring a sustainable energy transition. Since the energy transition is a costly affair involving technology and finance, the countries of the Global South are the hardest hit in this regard. The Global South is facing a difficult situation in this regard. Also, it is a fact that countries of the Global South are facing the adversarial consequences of climate change due to the historical polluters of the Global North. In this regard, there is a need to look at the process of climate change repercussion on the Global South from the border perspective. This aspect needs a critical look from a Global South perspective. Another most contentious issue that the Global South is confronted with in global arena is the dialectic approach to normative issues like human rights, democracy, and the responsibility to protect. It has been observed that there are certain common principles which can be the basis of democracy. Like the concept of democracy, there is a need to look at the concepts of Human Rights and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Using R2P as a pretext, the Global North intervenes South is currently facing a major identity crisis. The crisis mainly emanates from historical experiences, Covid-19 pandemic, Cold War legacies and issues relating to securitization, Ukraine War all these aggravate the problem of Global South.

### **Conclusion**

The Global South is facing major crises like lack of food and energy among others and impact of recession on the economy. The economic shift has gone hand in hand with enhanced political visibility, Brazil attempting to push peace plan to end the War in Ukraine. There is great need to include nations from global south into the fruit of development and a redesign of global political and financial governance. This will be of immense help to removing inequalities, increase opportunities for employment, growth and spread of prosperity. Historically, Global South has faced numerous challenges including poverty, political instability, and underdevelopment. However, in recent decades, it has become increasingly active in development finance as also emerged as a formidable force driving economic growth, promoting social development, and demanding greater representation on the global stage.

The Global South is extremely former colonies of European powers. Their emergency as Sovereign and independent states happened at the juncture of their realization of their own identities with aspirations and the downfall of the European powers losing their wealth, power and ability to hold on to their many jewels of their crowns. The new state that were largely impoverished and continue to beholden to erstwhile masters have today come of age and are graduating out of poverty into relatively well-off situations. They no longer want to continue being locked in dependency situations nor want to continue to observe sanctities of arbitrary lines forcing them to take sides. They are rising out of slumber to shake themselves free from the stifling embrace of the neo-super Colonial powers who replaced the former European Colonial powers in 1945.

As unipolarity retreat, the Global South is coming back alive. The impacts are coming alive more through the individual actions of its states. The South's impacts are felt assuredly in the new and growing coalitions such as BRICS. They are beginning to

constrain the actions of the great powers and induce them to respond to at least some of the Global South demands. Global South states are greatly focused on attracting trade and investment and moving value chain. For decades now, most of these countries have opened themselves market forces as they retain protectionist policies. The focus on self-interest also extends to rejecting a new cold war dynamic that pits US against China and Russia. Many of the Global South states are wealthier now and have learned how to play of both sides to gain benefits. They have also seen from experience that limited great power competition has its uses but that a new cold war would endanger their interests and rile their societies.

Since 21th century, a shift in wealth as World Bank referred it has brought about a shift in economic with enhancement of political visibility in recent decade. The World Bank (WB) has acknowledged a shift in wealth from the North Atlantic to the Asia – pacific region challenging conventional notions of economic power distribution. Recently, majority of fast growing economies are seen in African continent. This is as a result of vast investments from larger economies within global south, especially India and China. Solidarity among the countries within South -South Cooperation provides them upper-hand in international negotiation. One example of the successive of this synergy is the Paris Climate negotiation where China, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Brazil stood their ground on behalf of developing countries not to bear equal responsibility of the economies implication of the accord. It is predicted that by 2030, eighty percent of the World middle class population will be living in developing countries and this can bring about new momentum to the existing global order.

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