

Research Conference of the Southern Experts on Post-2015 Agenda *Concept Note*

1. The Southern Voice Initiative

The [Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals \(Southern Voice\)](#) is a network of 48 think tanks from Africa, Latin America and South Asia that has identified a unique space and scope for itself to contribute to the post-2015 dialogue. The initiative is informed by the spirit of collaboration, participation and wide academic inquiry by providing quality data, evidence and analyses that derived from research in the countries of the global South. The initiative seeks to inform the discussion on the post-2015 framework, goals and targets, and help give shape to the debate itself.

In fine, the *Southern Voice* is to address the existing knowledge asymmetry in the global development by infusing fresh perspectives and insights originating from Southern think tanks. The [Centre for Policy Dialogue \(CPD\)](#), Dhaka works as the Secretariat of the *Southern Voice*. *Southern Voice* operates as an open platform where concerned institutions and individuals from both South and North interact with the network members.

With only a little over a year remaining in the run up to the 2015 deadline, the Southern Voice on Post-MDGs initiative is crossing a critical phase. In this connection, it is maintained that a conference of the Southern researchers showcasing their outputs relating to shaping and implementation of the post-2015 agenda may add value to its efforts.

2. Southern Voice's Activities

Southern Voice, in its less than two years of existence, has undertaken a number of programmes. A few of these are briefly described below.

(i) Supporting Research for Reinterpreting Existing Knowledge

To take advantage of the available knowledge in the network, *Southern Voice* has implemented a research grant programme for its members to rework their existing research outputs in light of the post-2015 discourse and debates. Ten research awards were made through a call for proposal; subsequent process included submission of proposals, peer review of the proposals, funding of the selected proposals, review and editing of the draft papers and publication of the papers. Nine research outputs have already been posted on the *Southern Voice* website under the [Southern Voice Occasional Papers \(SV OP\)](#) series.

(ii) Supporting Research on New Issues

The other component of the research grant programme involved promoting original research on new issues that have emerged from various reports, structured conversations concerning the post-2015 agenda as well as from the discussions around them and beyond. Thirteen research grants were offered during [this phase](#). The selection of researchers was done based on the submitted revised versions incorporating the comments provided by eminent experts. The awardees are currently working on their respective studies. On completion, these papers will also be posted on the *Southern Voice* website under the SV OP series. A number of [blogs](#) based on interim results of the studies have also been published.

(iii) Other Research Activities

Southern Voice is also spearheading two global initiatives along with other research partners. Against the backdrop of MDGs expiration within a year, *Southern Voice* along with the North-South Institute (NSI) and CPD, have launched "[Post-2015 Data Test: Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level](#)", an initiative that examines how the universal post-2015

development agenda can be applied and measured across a range of country contexts. Carried out by local think tanks in six countries – Bangladesh, Canada, Peru, Senegal, Tanzania and Turkey, the Post-2015 Data Test examines country priorities and challenges related to accessing data and measuring progress in seven potential post-2015 goal areas. Apart from road-testing the possible goals, indicators and targets of the post-2015 development framework and identifying data challenges for measuring their implementation, the Post-2015 Data Test seeks to encourage, capture and promote analytical inputs from the global South as well as to expose the national level challenges of implementation of post-2015 agenda.

Southern Voice network along with ODI (Overseas Development Institute), DIE (Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik), ECDPM (European Centre for Development Policy Management) and the Department of Economics, University of Athens is engaged for the drafting of the fifth European Report on Development (ERD 2014) on the topic of '[Financing and other means of implementation in the post-2015 context](#)'. *Southern Voice* is responsible for carrying out a set of country illustrations (CIs). The CIs are taking place in Bangladesh, Ecuador, Indonesia, Mauritius, Moldova and Tanzania. These CIs will provide empirical evidence and insights for elaborating the research and analysis, deriving substantive conclusions, and making the policy recommendations in ERD 2014.

(iv) Southern Voice Publications

Southern Voice publishes a Southern Voice Occasional Paper series which reports on inputs received from various activities (including research) of the initiative. Till date a total of 15 titles are available under the series. To facilitate academic engagement further, *Southern Voice* members regularly contribute blog pieces on issues of post-2015 agenda to bring Southern insights to the wider discussion on critical questions concerning the future global goals. Recently, *Southern Voice* in partnership with [post2015.org](#) has launched a blog series with contribution from the *Southern Voice* network members.

The proposed global conference of the Southern experts on post-2015 international agenda will be appropriate complement to the abovementioned activities and consolidate the research works undertaken by it.

3. A Research Conference

(i) Objectives and Scope

The conference will bring together researchers who are preparing contributions for a *Southern Voice* volume on post-2015 international development agenda. The basic objective of the conference is to receive expert feedback for finalisation of the papers for the volume to be published by a commercial publisher. The proposed conference is expected to be an opportunity to bring together researchers from around the globe to have an indepth discussion on the papers prepared under the *Southern Voice* initiative.

The specific objectives of the conference are the following.

- (i) To elicit critical assessment of the conclusions and recommendations emerging from the studies. Research Outputs prepared by the *Southern Voice* awardees will be critically reviewed by reputed experts from the network and beyond at the conference.
- (ii) To expose the members of the *Southern Voice* networks to the on-going global debates on post-2015 agenda. If considered useful, other global experts will be invited to make presentations at the conference.
- (iii) To explore the possibility of launching an open and self-driven platform for researchers of the Southern countries which will remain functional beyond 2015.

The discussion at the conference will be prepared under the following three themes.

- (i) International Development Agenda for Post-2015 Period;
- (ii) Implementation Issues of the Post-2015 Agenda; and
- (iii) National Implications for Implementing Post-2015 International Development Goals.

The papers prepared by the *Southern Voice* research grantees will be grouped under the above said three clusters.

(ii) Date and Venue

The conference will be a two-day event, with a selection of keynote presentations, panel discussions and parallel sessions. The conference will take place in Istanbul, Turkey in February 2015. It will be organised just before the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) Exchange 2014.

(iii) Participants

The expectation is that, at least thirty researchers from the network, particularly those who have received *Southern Voice* research grants and fifteen experts from different multilateral organisations will participate in the proposed conference. They will be joined by experts from the TTI Secretariat.

(iv) Outcome

The outcome of the conference will be finalised content of a volume to be published by a reputed publisher and working out a publication plan including timeline towards that end. The other intangible outcome would include improved understanding of the *Southern Voice* researchers regarding post-2015 issues as well as strengthened bonding among the network members (and others).

(v) Implementation Modalities

Southern Voice in association with its Secretariat at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) will be responsible for developing the content of the conference, programme schedule, select presenters among the *Southern Voice* research grantees and global scholars with relevant expertise as discussants.

TTI will provide the conference venue, accommodation for participants, food, local transport and other necessary logistical support

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