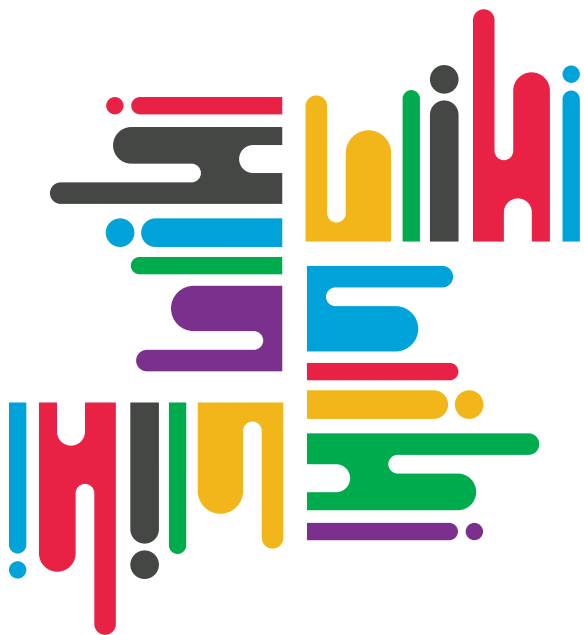




Synthesis note  
February 2024

# Southern Voice Conference 2023

Driving the next decade of sustainable  
development



## Introduction

In October 2023, Southern Voice gathered members and partners in Nairobi, Kenya to culminate its 10th anniversary celebrations in a landmark conference. The opportunity was taken to contemplate lessons learned over the network's past decade of impact and explore what the future holds for development in the Global South. The conference created a space for members of the Southern Voice community to share their thoughts on pertinent issues in global development and voice their needs to enable them continue to respond effectively, including presenting their visions for the future of the network.

The conference aimed to mobilise commitment in participants from the Global South and North to: rebalance power asymmetries within the global development community; enhance participants' visions of change and create more informed views on the nuances involved in guaranteeing truly

sustainable development; develop strategies to inform the objectives of the Southern Voice network in the upcoming years, which can also serve the goals of individual members and key partners; and enhance links within the Southern Voice network and with key partners in the Global North and South by identifying common ambitions, challenges, and complementary capacity for strategic cooperation in future years.

The conference consisted of sessions covering various thematic and process focused topics in development, including but not limited to policy advocacy, education technologies, and climate reform. The conference also featured a public event during which the second edition of the Southern Voice State of the SDGs (SVSS II) flagship report was launched, entitled *Global State of the SDGs: Leveraging Abilities to Navigate Inequalities*.

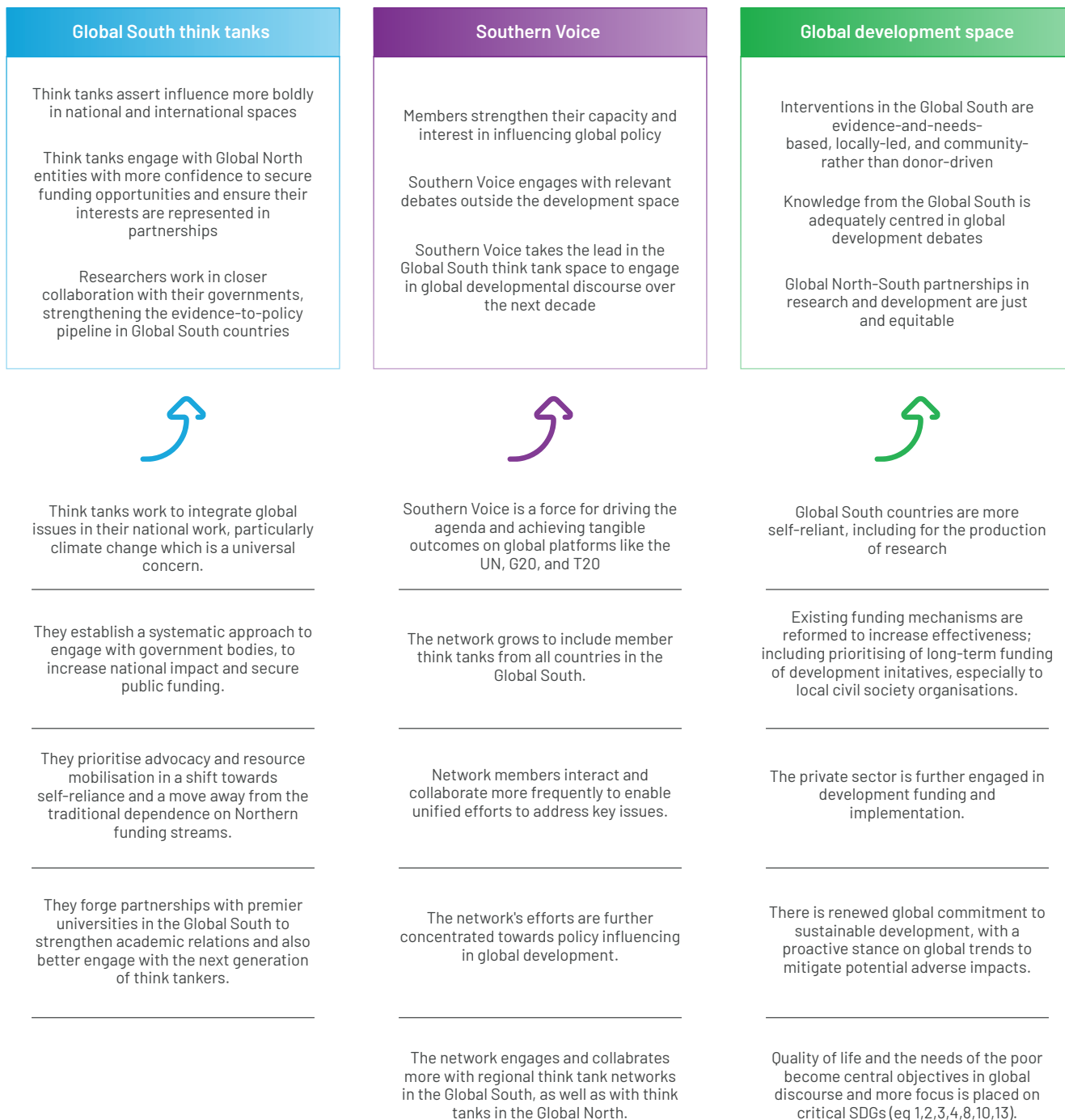
## Visions for the next decade at a glance

Improved peace and security, reduced inequalities and corruption, and more engagement of youth in key development spaces are some of the transformations conference participants expressed wanting to see in our world. To support key development objectives, we asked them to share their visions for progress in global development, and how the Southern Voice network and its partners may contribute to this progress. Figure 1 captures the main trends that emerged.



**Figure 1.** Visions for the next decade

## A reduced Global North-South divide



**Note.** Elaborated by authors.



## Gaps in development discourse: A research and action agenda

### Speakers

- Ibrahima Hathie - Emeritus Researcher, Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative (IPAR), Senegal
- Liliana Alvarado - Executive Director, Ethos Innovation in Public Policies, Mexico
- Julie Garfieldt Kofoed - Senior Director of Sustainable Development Initiatives, United Nations Foundation (UNF), USA
- Mirza Hassan - Senior Research Fellow, BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Bangladesh
- Gilles Yabi - Executive Director, WATHI, Senegal

This session aimed to identify areas in which North-South knowledge asymmetry currently either is, or risks becoming, most prevalent or

problematic. A survey completed by conference participants prior to the session revealed three major concerns: the need for more Southern perspectives on climate, corruption and governance, and inequality.

### Key observations

- Corruption impacts the implementation of essential policies and erodes democratic governance, reducing public trust and increasing calls for authoritarianism. It is crucial to address corruption to ensure the effectiveness of development work.
- The need for strong governance and institutions, along with transparent electoral systems, is fundamental for sustainable development in the Global South.

### Key recommendations

- It is important to invest in partnerships in the South (e.g. with the private sector) to help strengthen the uptake of research into policy and practice.
- For long-term advantages in development, youth should be involved as active contributors to reform processes rather than be token participants.

- There must be a focus on improving education and embracing social media and new technologies to better tell stories from the South.
- Development challenges are interlinked and should not be researched in isolation but as part of an interconnected system.

For instance, climate reform should be interwoven into the work of all SDGs.

- The South needs to assert itself and reduce dependencies on the North to reduce the existing knowledge asymmetry.





## Climate action: Linking national priorities to global agendas

### Speakers

- Jai Asundi - Executive Director, Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), India
- Arthur Bainomugisha - Executive Director, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Uganda
- Karin Fernando - Team Leader for Sustainable Development, Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka
- Maiara Folly - Executive Director, Plataforma CIPÓ, Brazil

This session was supported by the Mercator Foundation and sought to uncover elements of a shared climate change-related agenda that are most pertinent to challenges across the Global South. Through presentations and discussions,

participants worked to discover common priorities for global climate action.

### Key observations

- Global South countries and researchers need to be further involved in climate debates at a global level, and global climate finance needs to better accommodate the needs of the Global South. This is important as the region is especially vulnerable to the consequences of climate change despite contributing little to the problem.
- There is a dearth of primary environmental data in the Global South but the available data cannot be easily validated. There is also a need to generate timely and accurate data that matches people's lived experiences.
- Climate change is also a social and economic issue. There should be more focus on the intersection between climate and other issues affecting society, such as agriculture, rapid urbanisation, health, and social infrastructure.

### Key recommendations

- The G20 Secretariat being currently situated in the Global South offers an opportunity to work towards bridging the gap between climate policy and research through the Think20 group.

- Global South countries can influence global decisions through international lobbying and the establishment of a Global South climate network, which incorporates researchers and policymakers.
- Local researchers and think tanks need to be empowered to collaborate in navigating interactions with national governments and track their compliance of climate policies at the local levels.
- The climate issue is global but solutions must be localised to be effective. National policies need to be reflected in global commitments for effective interventions.





## Ed-tech: Rethinking our terms for equity and sustainability

### Speakers

- Santiago Cueto Caballero - Senior Researcher, Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), Peru
- Adedeji Adeniran - Director of Research, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Nigeria
- Nisha Arunatilake - Director of Research, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS), Sri Lanka
- Dante Castillo Canales - Director of Innovative Policies and Practices, Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA), Chile
- Moses Ngunjiri - Senior Research Scientist and Head of Education and Youth Empowerment, African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), Kenya

Southern Voice and the Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE, Peru), in partnership with three leading Global South think tanks—Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA, Nigeria), the Laboratory for Research and Innovation in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean (SUMMA, Chile) and the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS, Sri Lanka)—collaborated in a research project commissioned by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to provide insights into the education technologies ecosystem in the developing world. Drawing from this project, this session explored knowledge gaps in ed-tech policy and research in the Global South.

### Key observations

- Pedagogical focus and contextual problem-solving should propel technology implementation in education reform, not the other way around.
- Ed-tech's evolution has frequently been reactionary, primarily responding to immediate crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and chronic issues like poverty. This can overlook the fundamental need for long-term strategic planning.
- Political will and the strategic direction of donors play a significant role in the success of ed-tech initiatives.



- Promoting digital literacy is a complex, multi-layered challenge that demands a concerted effort to build capacity and address prevailing inequalities.
- Research and development in ed-tech needs to explicitly address questions of accessibility and equity, ensuring that the most vulnerable are not only included but are also among the primary beneficiaries of technological advancements in education.

## Key recommendations

- There is a need for a platform or body that can facilitate cross-sectoral and cross-regional coordination, ensuring that the multitude of ed-tech initiatives are synergistic rather than disparate. Also, more research is needed to understand the actual impact of different ed-tech interventions.
- Preparing parents, communities, and schools for the integration of ed-tech is as vital as the technology itself. Ed-tech investments should ensure foundational learning and not neglect the integral role of teachers.





## Financing for development: unpacking innovations and new narratives

### Speakers

- Kwame Owino - Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Kenya
- Mengistu Ketema Aredo - Chief Executive Officer, Ethiopian Economics Association (EEA), Ethiopia
- Fahmida Khatun - Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh
- Damien King - Executive Director, Caribbean Policy Research Institute (CAPRI), Jamaica
- Benson Kiriga - Senior Policy Analyst, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), Kenya

This session explored the prevalent debates on financing for development, followed by an open discussion with participants on which agendas are most critical for the Global South and how to advance them through an evidence-based approach.

### Key observations

- There is much disparity in financial availability and access across countries and regions. The macroeconomic instability of low-income countries has increased, with many facing debt challenges.
- Existing financing mechanisms need to be reviewed and reformed to recognise actors in the Global South as active partners in the world of finance, rather than simply as aid recipients.
- Addressing illicit financial flows is a responsibility for actors in the Global North and South.
- Climate financing is a key aspect of reform in the sector that needs to be focused on in the lead-up to the 2030 Agenda deadline

### Key recommendations

- One priority is the diversification of sources of funding for climate financing, e.g. using concessional borrowing from multilateral agencies.
- Innovative solutions, such as green bonds, could help get support at an international level as part of project proposals.
- To reach SDG Targets, there is a need for long-term and sustainable investments where funds are generated from both national and international sources.

- Resource mobilisation is needed to help sustain the growth of many low- and middle-income countries that are emerging as countries of middle-income status.
- Tax reform measures—such as broadening tax bases, rationing tax systems, or rethinking carbon taxation for Global South countries—can help them with economic buoyancy.
- Investing in public-private partnerships, development of capital markets, and employing exchange rate freezes when needed can also support better financial health for Global South development.





## Locally-led evidence generation: A dialogue with USAID

### Speakers

- Anthea Haryoko - Chief Innovation & Development Officer, Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS), Indonesia
- Peter Nderitu - Senior Programmes Manager, Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP), Kenya
- Amos Njuguna - Chair, Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa, United States International University (USIU), Kenya
- Fortunata Songora Makene - Executive Director, Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania
- Esther Mwangi - Program Development Specialist, The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Kenya

This session explored the potential opportunities for and barriers to greater partnership between

Global North collaborators and donors like the US Agency for International Development (USAID) with Global South research organisations in evaluation and other forms of evidence generation. The session was co-organised by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Center for Global Development.

### Key observations

- Accessible, timely, and contextualised local data and information is essential for better development outcomes from North-South partnerships.
- Organisations in the Global South continue to face certain challenges in working with donors from the Global North, including receiving limited funding and resources, burdensome bureaucratic requirements, constricted timelines, and constraints in the size and scope of available awards.
- Donor agencies also face difficulties in engaging with Global South organisations, such as being unfamiliar with the local landscape, while finding that local organisations have an aversion to risk or do not always have the capacity required to implement projects.

## Key recommendations

- Project priorities need to be jointly established to avoid misalignment, with enough flexibility so that implementers can pivot strategies. This is essential so that the implementers in the Global South have ownership over the work completed.
- Donors should bestow small grants for organisations to conduct small-scale studies in order to build local capacities. This will also allow these organisations to conduct more locally-led impact evaluations to effectively track progress on initiatives.
- Small organisations should explore partnerships with governments to be able to participate in bids alongside larger organisations in order to increase their competitiveness.
- Donors and recipients should co-develop frameworks or modalities that address capacity building and multi-year funding.
- Donors should encourage collaborative work among recipients so that recipients can strengthen their networks and improve their knowledge of entry points and how the ecosystem works.





## Sustainable Development Goals: what the next decade means for the Global South

### Speakers

- Estefanía Charvet - Director of Programmes and Research, Southern Voice
- Sajid Amin Javed - Deputy Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan
- Stephen Jackson - Resident Coordinator, United Nations Development Programme in Kenya (UNDP Kenya)
- Solomon Maina - Non-Resident Fellow for Foreign Policy, The Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS), Kenya
- Njuguna Ndung'u - Cabinet Secretary, The National Treasury and Economic Planning, Kenya

Having reached the halfway point in the implementation of the SDGs, it becomes necessary to evaluate what has been effective and what needs to change. This session drew from the findings of Southern Voice's flagship initiative State of the SDGs (SVSS II) to explore how to navigate the next decade of development based on the lessons learned so far.

### Key observations

- Economic growth can support poverty reduction but it must be sustained by wealth redistribution and strong social protection programmes.
- Development strategies need to balance urgency with inclusion in order to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. As such, it becomes important to understand how and why some policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic created structural exclusion in the Global South.
- The global shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflict, and climate issues have contributed significantly to the lack of progress in implementing the SDGs. For Global South countries there is the added problem of high cost of capital with higher interest rates charged on loans.

## Key recommendations

- To successfully accelerate the implementation of SDGs, Global South governments and think tanks must form impactful partnerships tailored to the needs of the region, which increase its capacity to absorb shocks and recover sustainably.
- For economic recovery in the Global South, efforts and strategies must focus on human capital development, institutional leadership (and therefore, capacity building), and innovative domestic resource mobilisation.
- To refocus on reaching implementation targets for SDGs, policymakers must prioritise accelerating the development of sustainable food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and combating climate change.
- The Global South must prioritise aligning budgets with the 2030 Agenda at the national level. Regionally, there must be more South-South cooperation and investments.





## Shifting priorities through Brazil and South Africa's G20 presidencies: A dialogue with the next T20 leaders

### Speakers

- Elizabeth Sidiropoulos - Chief Executive, South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), South Africa
- Luciana Mendes Santos Servo - President, Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), Brazil
- Philani Mthembu - Executive Director, Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), South Africa
- Debapriya Bhattacharya - Member of Board of Trustees and Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh

This session brought together representatives of Brazil and South Africa in the Think20 Troika for an exchange with Southern Voice members and partners, ahead of Brazil assuming the presidency

of the G20 on December 1, 2023 and South Africa's expected assumption of the G20 presidency in 2025.

### Key observations

- The ongoing run of the G20 presidency being held by a nation of the Global South and the African Union's recent admission presents an opportunity to strengthen the caucus of developing countries within the G20.
- Global South think tanks need to collaborate and engage more actively with G20 processes to support building consensus among countries on important and timely issues in order to inform global policy.
- Think tanks are best placed to form the link between global governance and the G20 discussions. The T20 is vital in providing technical input regarding priorities in Global South countries so they are not set by Global North stakeholders.

### Key recommendations

- The G20 needs to become more inclusive with a focus on incorporating additional Least Developed Countries, as well as ensure that its members from the Global South are enabled to make a meaningful impact and that issues of non-members are represented.



- Think tanks from the Global South should support analysis on trending issues, such as global finance architecture and trade reform, as well as build analysis on pertinent issues that have not been incorporated in global agendas. Increasing the influence of the T20 in G20 processes will help further legitimise the work of the G20 and its impact on UN processes.
- Think tanks from the Global South need to collaborate to create and deploy a comprehensive framework for analysis of T20 contributions in order to assess its effectiveness in translating rhetoric into reality and its impact in influencing the G20 so that areas for improvement can be identified.
- The more developed countries in the Global South which are represented in the G20 should do more to strengthen the standing of other Global South countries and represent their interests within the G20.





## On the road to 2030: Shaping our future

### Speakers

- Tania Vásquez Luque - Senior Researcher, Institute of Peruvian Studies (IEP), Peru
- Sajid Aiman Javed - Deputy Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan
- Chukwuka Onyekwena - Executive Director, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA), Nigeria
- Estefanía Charvet - Director of Programmes and Research, Southern Voice

Based on the challenges identified by the second edition of Southern Voice's State of the SDGs initiative, this session explored the opportunities, strategies, and priorities for the remainder of the post-2030 Agenda era and beyond. The goal was to gather insights from the Global South

that contribute to the discussions of the transitions required to build a more inclusive and sustainable future.

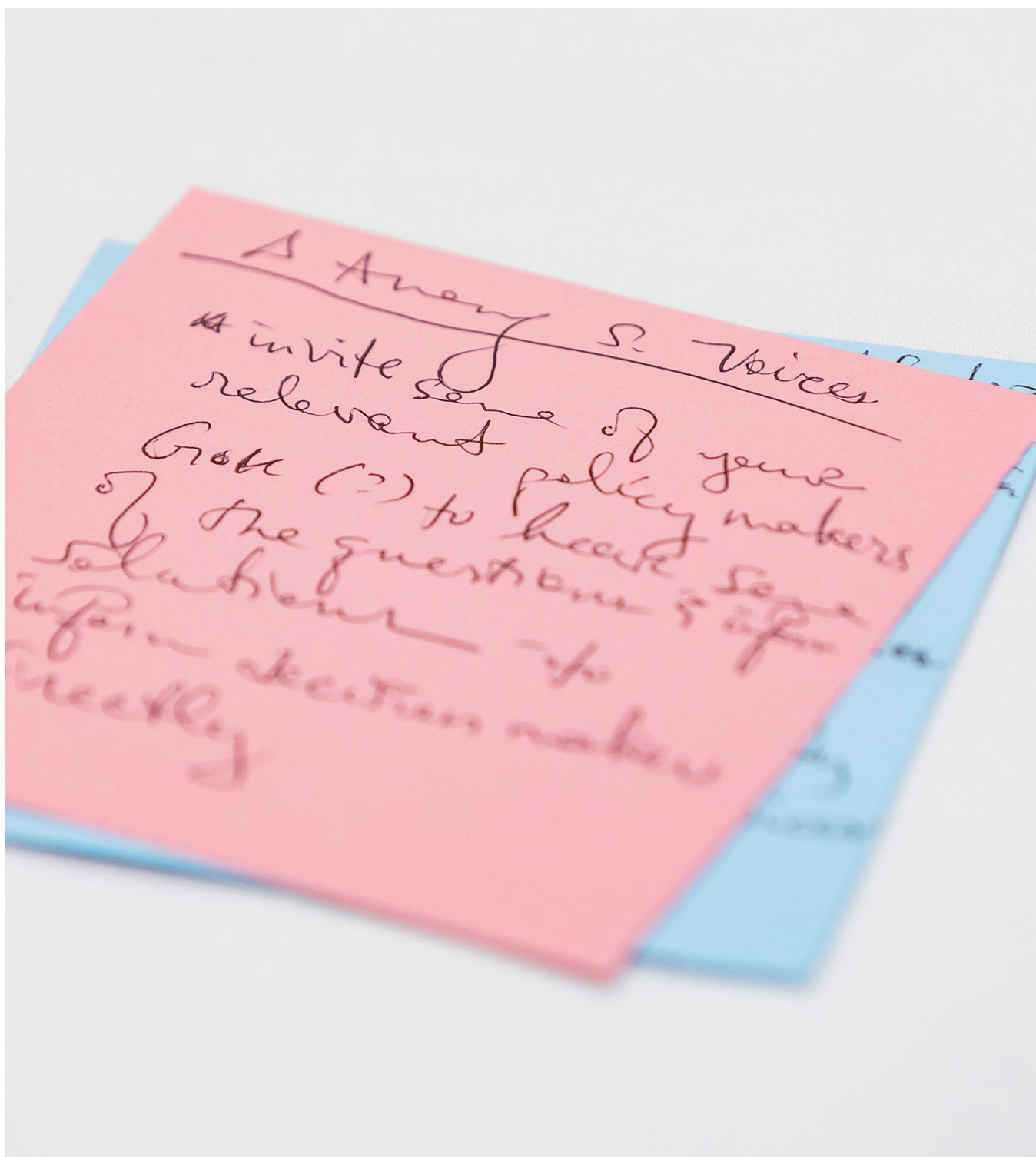
### Key observations

- Think tanks are tasked to bridge knowledge, data, and measurement gaps, as well as bolster governmental capacity to integrate SDGs into planning, budgeting, reporting, and monitoring.
- The critical role of data, heightened by the SDGs, has prompted think tanks to expand their research scope and interdisciplinary collaborations, thereby considering research areas as interconnected rather than isolated.
- The future of work, job creation, and local ownership of technology must be prioritised to prevent continued dependency on the Global North. The Global South must take leadership in its own development agenda and the mobilisation of its resources.

### Key recommendations

- Think tanks need to serve as the voice of local civil society, engage in both top-down and bottom-up policy implementation, as well as support and advance evidence-based intervention to increase their impact.

- Modernisation of pre-SDG agreements is needed to reflect current priorities with an emphasis on policy coherence, integration with other treaties, realistic goal-setting, and robust financing.
- A strong evaluation framework is essential for renewing SDGs to ensure they have more impact-oriented goals based on lessons learned. There is also a need for reflection on the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) unmet targets to avoid the risk of repeating the same flaws as with the SDGs.
- The goals of regional bodies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America & the Caribbean must be more reflective and complementary to the 2030 Agenda.





## Repositioning care work in the Commission on the Status of Women and beyond

### Speakers

- Lorena Alcázar - Projects Director, Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE), Peru
- Florencia Caro Sachetti - Associate Researcher - Social Protection Programme, Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), Argentina
- Ama Fenny - Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), Ghana

The year 2025 marks 30 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing +30) that referred to the unequal distribution of unpaid care work as a barrier to gender equality. In this session, guests strategised on the changes

required at the global and national levels to increase data collection of unpaid care work and design policies that recognise its importance.

### Key observations

- The valuation of care work and the issue of unpaid care is complex, and primarily affects women in the Global South. There is variation on the extent of the problem depending on the socio-economic context of the women affected.
- Institutionalising care as a social right must be a priority to achieve or progress toward gender equality.

### Key recommendations

- To solve the gendered unequal distribution of unpaid care work, interventions must address the root causes of gender inequality such as cultural and religious values, rather than focusing on treating the symptoms.
- It remains crucial to ensure that women are actively included in decision-making bodies and spaces to reap impactful interventions.
- The value of unpaid care work needs to be included in countries' GDPs for proper data collection and to create national policies that recognise its importance.

- More research work is needed to quantify key indicators in unpaid care work in order to provide an investment case for governments and private entities to support affected women.
- Creating awareness of the societal cost of unpaid care work and knowledge sharing are key entry points to breaking harmful cultural and religious barriers.





## Informing UN agencies' strategies for food systems transformation

### Speakers

- Azizah Fauzi - Researcher, Centre for Indonesian Policy Studies (CIPS), Indonesia
- Laure Tall - Research Director, Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative (IPAR), Senegal
- Sarah Ssewanyana - Executive Director, Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), Uganda
- Margarita Beneke de Sanfeliú - Director of the Center for Research and Statistics, Salvadorean Foundation for Economic and Social Development (FUSADES), El Salvador

Over the past few years, the question of food systems transformation has made its way to the centre of the development agenda. In this session, speakers and participants shared insights on the main challenges to inclusive, sustainable food

systems in their countries or regions, before exploring together the types of institutional transformations, within UN agencies, to effectively address these challenges.

### Key observations

- The difficulties faced during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that action is needed at the global, national, and local levels to transform food systems.
- In the Global South, the growth in population is not matched by the growth of the agricultural sector.
- Young people continue to be under represented in discussions on the future of agriculture.
- In the current market, producers are often unable to simultaneously provide affordable food and have a decent livelihood.
- There are societal factors that sometimes inhibit women from participating in agriculture and related food development, which must be addressed for growth and systemic reform.

### Key recommendations

- The empowerment of smallholder farmers in the Global South is a priority for sustainable food systems transformation.

- Governments across the Global South will require guidance and support to orchestrate the transition to coordinated food systems governance.
- Evaluation of food system interventions should evolve to centre on the impact felt by communities rather than the implementation of specific activities.
- Partnerships are critical to food systems transformation—as multilateral organisations/ agencies work with local actors in this pursuit, it is vital that the relationships are equitable.
- The evidence-to-policy interface needs to be strengthened at all levels. Solutions need to be localised and evidence-based for lasting impact.





## State of the think tank sector: Exploring trends and solutions

### Speakers

- Enrique Mendizabal - Founder and Executive Director, On Think Tanks (OTT), Global
- Gabriela Suárez Buitrón - Executive Director, FARO, Ecuador
- Muhammad Asif Iqbal - Managing Director, Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), Pakistan
- Denis Foretia - Founder and Executive Chairman, Nkafu Policy Institute, Cameroon

On Think Tanks' 2023 state of the sector report points to funding and political concerns as two common challenges to the work of think tanks from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the USA. In this session, participants reflected on the findings to understand which of the presented challenges are most felt by think tanks of the Global South,

explore commonalities and differences, and brainstorm solutions.

### Key observations

- There is general pessimism from Global South think tanks about political instability and how it affects their sustainability in the sector.
- Amid plans for growth, there is also growing concern and uncertainty regarding finance and funding, with increased constraints to receiving foreign funding affecting various parts of the Global South in different ways.
- Female-led think tanks were more pessimistic overall in the report findings. This is thought to be as a result of having more realistic expectations and experiencing more challenging conditions in the male-dominated field.
- There is an issue concerning acknowledgements and recognition of research, with Global South think tanks often being treated merely as data collectors.
- The innovative culture the think tank sector demands is often obstructed by government inertia and bureaucratic limitations.

### Key recommendations

- To strengthen the sector, it is important to not only diversify funding sources (e.g. more



focus on the private sector) but also the funded activities by seeking support for initiatives not centred solely on research work.

- Think tanks in the Global South need to establish clear missions, visions, and agendas. This will help them better define terms of engagement with partners and choose who to work with.
- The think tank sector needs investments with goals beyond immediate results, such

as funds for long-term projects and capacity building activities.

- There should be a focus on capacity building to enable think tanks to plan, design, monitor, and evaluate in different ways, in order to meet the challenges of the ever-evolving global development space.





## Collective policy advocacy at the UN level: An influence roadmap

### Speakers

- Julie Garfieldt Kofoed - Senior Director - Sustainable Development Initiatives, United Nations Foundation (UNF), USA
- Gabriela Keseberg Dávalos - Director of Global Public Affairs, Southern Voice
- Julius Chokerah - Chief Economist, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, Kenya

In this session co-led by Southern Voice and the United Nations Foundation, participants explored strategies for the Southern Voice network to make a collective impact at the global policy level, particularly at the United Nations in New York.

### Key observations

- In theory, every member state has a voice in the UN. However, due to the discourse being concentrated in New York, opportunities for influence are often skewed towards Global North representatives.
- Over the next year, the issues of development and climate financing, multilateral reform, and sustainable development are most pertinent in engaging with key UN processes.
- The key events and processes to target for influence in 2024 based on the most pertinent issues include the Summit of the Future, the G20 Summit, the HLPF, the ECOSOC forum, COP 28, World Bank and IMF meetings, and Financing for Development forums.
- Independent think tanks in the Global South have limited opportunities to influence UN processes, as the body predominantly interfaces with national governments.

### Key recommendations

- Think tanks of the Global South can increase their influence by coming together in workstreams focusing on key areas of sustainable development to engage with key UN processes on an annual basis.

- To move beyond knowledge production, Global South think tanks can come together in networks such as Southern Voice to organise side events and offer policy recommendations at the national, regional, and global levels.
- There needs to be additional platforms for think tanks in the Global South to learn about how the UN works in order to encourage them to achieve an impact beyond their national contexts.





## Equitable partnerships & decolonisation: Buzzwords or catalysts for change?

### Speakers

- Andrea Ordóñez Llanos - Executive Director, Southern Voice
- Fréjus Thoto - Executive Director, African Center for Equitable Development (ACED), Benin
- Fernanda Wanderley - Executive Director, The Institute of Socio-Economic Research of the Bolivian Catholic University of Saint Paul (IISEC-UCB), Bolivia
- Bitrina Diyamett - Executive Director, Science, Technology, Innovation, Policy Research Organization (STIPRO), Tanzania

As part of an ongoing initiative, Southern Voice and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) have been seeking to define a research and action

agenda for the future of partnerships in research for development which reflects the priorities of Global South scholars and knowledge-producing institutions. This session sought to examine the dynamics of equitable North-South partnerships.

### Key observations

- When a project's research questions involving a North-South partnership are not co-created, the agency of Global South researchers and the potential impact of the work on policy are limited.
- Knowledge production across the Global South is highly dependent on partnerships—to varying degrees, it is dependent largely on the strength of a country's national science system.
- Investment in research as a fraction of GDP remains very limited.
- Standards of academic communities in the Global North should be challenged.

### Key recommendations

- The strengthening of national science systems in the Global South is of primary importance to reduce disparities between the Global North and South in research on development.
- The mobilisation of domestic funding should be emphasised. To achieve this, Global South

think tanks need to increase engagement with the private sector.

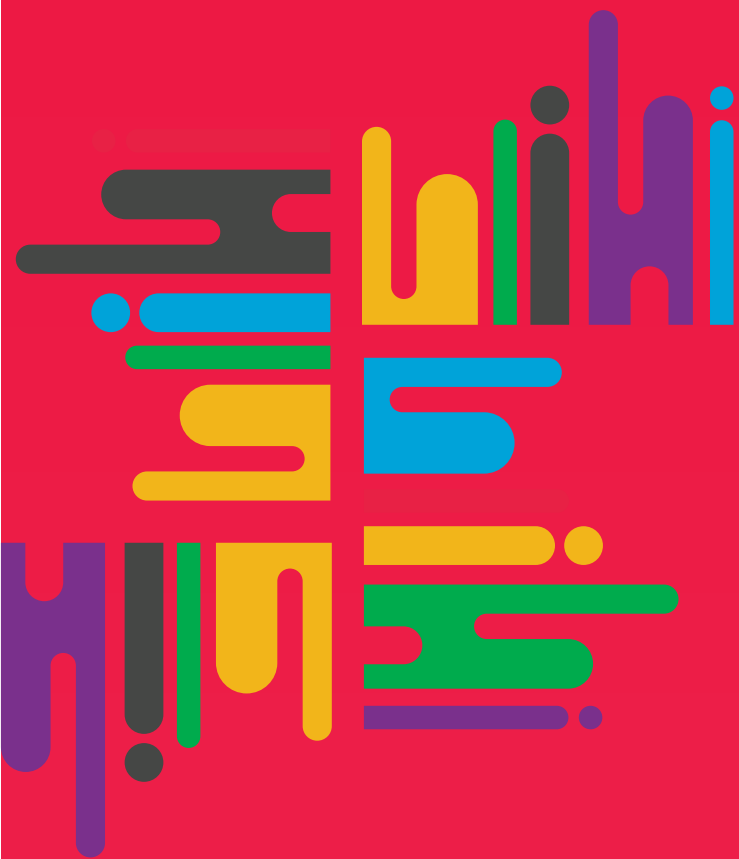
- Countries increasing engagement with members of their diasporas may be beneficial to strengthening their national knowledge systems.





# SOUTHERN VOICE CONFERENCE 2023





## Synthesis note

Founded in 2013, Southern Voice is a network of think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America & the Caribbean. It contributes to the global dialogue on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Southern Voice's ultimate aim is to address the existing 'knowledge asymmetry' and 'participation deficit' in the development dialogue. It does this by producing, promoting, and disseminating evidence-based policy analysis by researchers from Global South countries.

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