



Declaration

- The 6th IBSA Academic Forum, held at Kochi, India, highlighted the enduring relevance of the foundational charter of IBSA, emerging from the 2003 Brasilia Declaration which stood in favour of democracy, equity and multi-polarity, and advancing the social, political and cultural aspirations of its people.
- The Academic Forum appreciated the new efforts made by the respective Governments to rejuvenate IBSA and associated fora. It contemplated on the vision and journey of IBSA, particularly in the context of contemporary global dynamics, and concluded that IBSA offers a progressive way forward.

Greater Relevance of IBSA

- The Forum deliberated upon the persistent shortcomings in the larger Global Governance architecture, and the emerging global challenges. The Forum, in this context, discussed at length, the reforms that are needed at the multilateral level.
- The role of IBSA was explored in detail with regard to its unwavering commitment to multilateralism, its crucial role in promoting world peace and security, and mainstreaming sustainable development. It also explored IBSA's potential to influence

setting new norms, and promoting inclusivity in global governance so as to include the voice of developing countries.

- However, it was noted that the global context in which IBSA operates at the present juncture is different from the time of its formation.
- In this regard, the Academic Forum recommends the early convening of an IBSA Summit.

IBSA for UN Reforms

- The collective response from this platform suggests that IBSA was and remains relevant for a variety of reasons that make it distinct from several other country groupings. These features include the basic character of emerging, large, plural and constitutional democracies with faith in the global rule of law.
- There is potential scope for enhanced cooperation for democratisation of the UN among others. It was felt that substantive reforms at the UN Security Council would come from the real efforts of IBSA. To realise this mandate, the Academic Forum calls for stronger and continued engagement by the three countries in IBSA.

SSC, IBSA Fund, SDGs

- The forum reiterated that the edifice of the IBSA partnership stands on strong pillars of South-South Cooperation.
- IBSA's deep roots in SSC are reflected in the creation of the IBSA Trust Fund. The Academic Forum foremost recommended the significant enhancement of financial commitments to the IBSA Fund to increase its reach and scale.
- The Forum discussed the recently adopted BAPA+40 Declaration and felt that the IBSA countries may take a global lead in implementing the declaration in the true spirit of promoting South-South Cooperation. With the rich experience of individually contributing to development cooperation, IBSA support for partner developing countries under the principles of SSC would stand for plurality of approaches and convergence of modalities.

- IBSA has the potential to actively facilitate SSC discourse and promote wider partnerships across actors in civil society and the private sector. The three countries should work together to promote a Southern view of international cooperation that recognises the specifics and the importance of the efforts made by Southern countries to promote a more sustainable and equitable development.
- The Academic Forum appreciated the milestone IBSA Declaration of SSC in 2018, which was widely recognised and celebrated at the recently concluded BAPA+40. The Forum recommended that IBSA make special efforts to document, highlight and popularise the success of the IBSA Trust Fund and evolve new avenues of partnership. Such efforts should be backed by IBSA countries' commitment to additional resources for the Fund and to promote plurality of development interventions and outcomes.
- The Agenda 2030 of the UN is a common vision. The IBSA countries have adopted transformative national policies in the past and in the present to fulfil the global goals (earlier in the MDG era and now in the context of SDGs). IBSA must strive to ensure that the natural manoeuvring space with regard to domestic policy choices on SDGs is retained and showcase the success of domestic interventions. This should also include the projects undertaken under the IBSA Fund that are expected to contribute to the implementation of SDGs in partner countries, particularly the LDCs.

Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education and Research

- The Forum noted that IBSA countries have a long history of premier and prestigious institutions of higher learning and that these institutions need to be connected and leveraged to evolve new academic paradigms advancing Southern perspectives on development discourse, liberal democracies, pluralistic societies and vibrant civil societies that IBSA countries are known for.
- This may be a necessary step to strengthen the creation of knowledge contextualised around Southern perspectives, rather than those rooted in colonial legacy; and

promoting people-centred development models that may address rising inequalities in economic opportunities and inadequacies of political systems nationally and globally.

- The Forum recommended academic collaboration (joint research and exchange programmes) in a number of new areas that are important to IBSA, including among others human security, renewable energy and green technologies, blue economy and ocean governance.
- The Forum also explored the possibility of promoting student/faculty exchange and dual/triple degrees in selected programmes in IBSA universities.. It was suggested that the IBSA Academic Forum may consider constituting a task force with selected members to make concrete proposals in this regard.

IBSA, Multilateralism and Trade

- The Forum highlighted that IBSA's faith in multilateralism is at the core of its origin and subsequent engagement. IBSA as middle powers can only consolidate their emergence through multilateralism. However, at a time when multilateralism is under tremendous stress, it is pertinent for IBSA countries to coordinate their efforts once again to jointly respond to the proposals on reforming the WTO, to address pending issues of concern on development, preserve the space of special and differential treatment and highlight collective positions on the new issues and proposals of procedural reforms at the WTO including the Dispute Settlement Mechanism.
- IBSA should effectively coordinate on the nature and scope of multilateralism that suits its vision, needs and aspirations with regard to equity in global governance, including tackling lasting challenges like climate change and imbalances in resource flows including technology.
- Achieving larger intra-IBSA trade volumes has been a long-standing aspiration of IBSA. Empirical evidence strongly supports the view that IBSA countries are embedded in regional economic cooperation frameworks and the cumulative potential of intra-regional trade covering IBSA countries is many times higher than intra-IBSA trade on its own. The Academic Forum observed that IBSA countries would benefit from preferential trade among their respective regions.

- The Forum also observed that with improved coordination on standards, rules and procedures and expansion of concessional treatment, investment promotion in IBSA may be strongly pursued. The Forum recommended that such efforts should also focus on trade in services.
- IBSA should make special efforts to deepen integration in financial services and banking cooperation to strengthen the economic partnership. IBSA countries should also collaborate on global norm-setting in the financial services and banking sectors and promote technological self-reliance in associated technologies.

Finally, the Forum proposes the continuity of this Academic Forum annually. The intervening period should be used for collaborative studies, duly supplemented by the high quality academic output by the IBSA Fellows.
