

1st IBSA Youth Summit

26-28 August, 2021

Action Plan

The participants, representing government authorities, youth communities, public organizations, students and working youth of the Republic of India, the Federative Republic of Brazil, and the Republic of South Africa gathered at the 1st IBSA Youth Summit, which took place from 26-28 August, 2021 in virtual platform to discuss the current state and prospects for the development of youth cooperation of the IBSA countries in a wide range of areas.

In the new and emerging global context, effective views and experiential sharing of the youth in IBSA countries is essential for their constructive participation in dialogue and decision-making processes; active contribution to, and leadership in, positive transformation of their communities by way of joint actions, at a national, regional and global level.

A series of participatory dialogues, events and commitments is thus needed to bring together youth, youth functionaries, civil society organizations, government bodies, opinion makers and decision makers, to discuss, identify and agree on proposed actions that will strengthen social, economic, political cohesion at the country and the regional level for IBSA countries. Thus it makes it imperative to search for new mechanisms of cooperation and integration in various fields, keeping focus on the agency of 'youth' by creating joint programs and projects.

Strategic intervention and Common Charter for Youth of IBSA Region

- **Youth Exchange Programs, Youth Camps, Capacity Building Programmes between Brazil and South Africa** on identified themes with India and vice versa
- Engage **young people in the democratic process** at all levels of governance, from the local to the international as youth participation is very much needed and essential for a democratic society
- Define a "**IBSA Youth Strategy 2021-22**" by drawing ideas from existing and emerging national youth programs of the IBSA countries and sustained advocacy to formulate and implement **youth responsive programs** by national governments.
- Evolve a **Youth Development Index in the countries of IBSA Region** to measure the level and value of youth participation in civic, economic, social, political arena. These parameters to track and monitor the implementation of youth agenda in a comparative manner between countries.
- **Urgent positive measures** to be undertaken by the governments independently and jointly to reduce the adverse impact of **COVID-19** on the health of youth and enable the youth to progress in the post COVID period.

Further to the results of the four dialogue sessions held within the Summit's framework, the IBSA participants suggested the following action plan:

1. Youth in Governance in the IBSA Region

- Data collection and analysis on youth taking part in the democratic process at all levels of governance, from the local to the international.
- Documentation of youth engagement by the public authorities which helps young people to be relevant in the decision-making process and also allows them to broaden their own experiences.
- Promotion of civic education to instill ethical values that can help youth to distinguish right from wrong for promoting active youth participation in governance
- Inclusion of youth for greater representativeness in the political system
- Engaging young people in formal political processes so that they have a say in formulating today's and tomorrow's politics.
- Adequate representation of young people in political institutions, processes, and decision-making, and in particular in elections, they must know their rights and be given the necessary knowledge and capacity to participate in a meaningful way at all levels.
- Remove obstacles to participating in formal, institutionalized political processes by youth so that they do not feel disempowered which may lead to young people being increasingly excluded from taking part in decision-making, or in debates about key socio-economic and political issues, despite their sensitivity to the demands for social equity and justice, environmental protection and cultural diversity.

2. Youth Development & Exchange Programs of IBSA countries

- Facilitate learning from the best practices of flagship youth development programs in IBSA countries through youth exchange programs, capacity building programs, youth camps and study tours.
- Propose a Common IBSA Country Cooperation System of credits for citizen students and professionals seeking higher education and training in among these three countries.
- Focus on enhancing cooperation and support provided for youth seeking to engage in cross-country projects and programs in fields of science, technology and innovation, across thematic areas within IBSA countries.
- Adopting a more 'gender-responsive programming' when devising the overall IBSA Youth program mandate in relation to education and capacity building.
- Encourage inter-country youth exchanges between IBSA countries by way of formal academic and professional programs in place; whereby governments and private sector can create supportive environment
- Accelerate capacitation of youth via the creation of an online 'IBSA forum for digital transformation for Youth' guided by youth-led discussions and dialogues.
- Engage with youth on a formal IBSA platform for enhancing the agro-based food value chain across the rural and urban economies; especially in a post-COVID context
- Support the endeavor of building a strong team of young entrepreneurs across IBSA countries to promote the spirit of social entrepreneurship.
- Undertake an online economic mentorship program for youth with updates on changing labor market scenarios and resource availability which may be linked with successful mentors across IBSA to sharpen the skills and knowledge in different career paths.

- Focus on building strength of the IBSA International Youth Business-Incubator Forum, by readying a strong team of chosen “1000 young entrepreneurs” across IBSA countries, to promote and champion the spirit of social entrepreneurship in IBSA.
- Create an integrated online platform for communication and exchange of experiences in the field of youth entrepreneurship and creative industries, for exchanging technical and support information like building of a cross-country social network for idea exchange, educational and training resource, and seeking mentors willing to guide the IBSA countries youth for entrepreneurial initiatives.

3. Youth Development Index

- Put in place a ‘Youth Development Index’ for all countries in the IBSA region to measure the extent and value of youth participation in the economic, civic and social, and political arena.
- Utilize the Youth Development Index defined parameters for inter-country cooperation, comparative country performance on parameters, and alignment of broad objectives for fostering youth development in the region which will be easier to track and monitor, while building an environment for positively challenging the key stakeholders.
- The Youth Development Index to be a tool for continuous and effective monitoring, evaluation of youth policies and programs, identification of problem areas, introduction of corrective measures, re-examination of approaches, methods and implementation strategies.
- Evolve methods of collecting and processing vastly scattered youth related data in IBSA countries.
- Practice the use of indicators to examine the current practices, survey past trends, project and predict future scenarios, and indicate possible solutions for Youth Development in IBSA region
- Determine ways to employ Youth Development Index as an “observatory of social change” in the IBSA countries/region and as a support tool for national and regional policy making bodies for judicious resource allocation and priority identification.

4. Health of Youth - Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in IBSA Countries

- Ensure that measures to ease the financial impacts on households are comprehensive and sufficient to bridge the gap resulting from loss of earnings and its impact on health
- Governments should ensure there is continuity in learning by promoting high-tech, low-tech and no-tech solutions for education, work and health.
- Consider solutions such as delivering text-based content on health via cellular networks rather than videoconferencing that relies on high-speed internet and paper-based distance learning materials for families without any digital connectivity access given the digital divide in the IBSA countries.
- Youth with special needs, such as those with disabilities, will require additional attention and support on health related issues be it physical, mental, emotional.
- Social protection measures such as cash transfer payments, unemployment support, paid sick leave, and access to healthcare be expanded.
- Promote universal health coverage for societal interest. To ensure effective access to healthcare for all young people during this time, long-recognized structural barriers, such

as those posed by language or by facilities that are inaccessible to persons with disabilities, must now be dismantled.

- As many young people with mental health conditions are experiencing a deterioration of their health status due to prolonged social isolation and stress. This has increased the incidences of young people with mental health conditions. Mental health therefore should be integrated as part of the broader health response. There may be longer term mental health impacts that are currently unknown, to which public service providers should be sensitive and implement mitigation measures which have implications for mental health of youth.
- Build the capacity of youth to be able to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own health.
- Health education, public health promotion and evidence-based information are critical in combating the spread and effects of COVID-19. The role of governments as well as youth organizations and community groups will be essential to challenge the spread of misinformation online and to ensure that trustworthy public health information is disseminated.
- Young people themselves should be engaged in spreading public health information in innovative ways such as videos to promote effective hand washing or explain how social distancing can save lives in their communities.
- Encourage young innovators who are responding to the pandemic through projects with social impact. The governments and the private sector need to partner with young people to launch initiatives that leverage young people's efforts to support their communities. Young people can support vulnerable members of their community through voluntary initiatives.
