

Countries of the Global South write a new chapter in the Bandung Spirit

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70 years ago, leaders from 29 countries and regions in Asia and Africa gathered in Bandung, Indonesia, to discuss the development path of getting rid of colonial shackles and striving for national independence. The Bandung Conference held in 1955 not only witnessed the solidarity of the countries in the "Global South", but also formed the Bandung spirit of unity, friendship and cooperation. This spirit promoted the rise of the countries in the "Global South" on the international stage at that time, and it still echoes in the cooperation practice of the countries in the "Global South".

Today, faced with profound changes in the geopolitical landscape, imbalances in the global governance system, and inequality in the right to development among countries, the countries of the "Global South" are not satisfied with passively adapting to the international order, but are committed to actively shaping the future. From establishing new multilateral mechanisms to deepening South-South cooperation and reshaping global governance rules, the countries of the "Global South" are pushing the international order towards a more just and inclusive direction with a more confident and pragmatic attitude. Today, 70 years later, looking back at the Bandung Conference, we should not only think about how the countries of the "Global South" can further unite and cooperate, but also explore how the countries of the "Global South" can lead the change.

Establish more representative norms and standards

Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General of the Indian Institute for Developing Countries Research and Information Systems, said in an interview with our reporter that the "Global South" countries should play a more active and indispensable role in the international order. Countries should strive to avoid the excessiveness of political issues, the intensification of contradictions, and the escalation of conflicts in extreme cases. He believes that to a large extent, the reasons why the economies of many "Global South" countries have been damaged are closely related to external factors. In this context, people cannot ignore another important reality: the "Global South" countries generally have a relatively young population structure, and these young people are often easily disturbed by the misleading and manipulation attempts of external forces. In this regard, the "Global South" countries should unite and play a constructive role in leading the development of the global governance system, so as to effectively respond to the spread of false information and misleading narratives.

Chaturvedi pointed out that the international order formed after the end of World War II left an established economic and financial system for the countries of the "Global South", which rarely took into account the actual interests of the countries of the "Global South" in the process of

framework design and rule-making. Even if this may not have been considered "immoral" at the time, the unfairness, inequality and selective application of rules by the Western-dominated rule system to the countries of the "Global South" have further increased the disappointment of the non-Western world. In the 21st century, the rise and sustained development of some countries in the "Global South" have not only broken the previous development myths, but also injected confidence and hope into other developing countries.

"For a long time, countries in the Global South have been at the forefront of promoting reforms of international organizations and global institutions. Due to the slow pace of reform, countries in the Global South have begun to choose to explore new paths in a more inclusive way and establish relevant institutions independently. The establishment of these institutions is the result of in-depth discussions and collective wisdom among member states. Through various formal and informal mechanisms, countries in the Global South are constantly promoting the development and evolution of the global governance system in various fields and establishing more representative norms and standards." Chaturvedi said.

Some scholars believe that the world today is undergoing a transition from the old model to a more democratic and multipolar global governance model, and it is difficult to rely on major powers to unilaterally maintain global stability. In this process, small and medium-sized countries are playing an increasingly critical role. As a symbol of the spirit of independence, the principles put forward by the Bandung Conference still have important practical significance. Some countries in the "Global South" have extensive influence in the region and even globally, with both economic vitality and political momentum. They actively advocate multilateralism and promote international dialogue, and play an irreplaceable and key role in the "Global South". It is imperative to reform the global governance system and enhance the influence of these countries in international organizations.

Taking a development path that suits one's own national conditions

When discussing the transformation of the global development paradigm, Chaturvedi mentioned that the countries of the "Global South" should take the initiative to summarize their own development experience and extract a new development path that suits their own conditions. This new paradigm should not only pay attention to issues such as carbon footprint, but also promote sustainable development based on local advantages and embark on a path of modernization that is different from the resource-intensive model of the West.

Chaturvedi believes that the countries of the "Global South" should play a greater role in global governance, especially in the provision of global public goods. For example, in recent years, international energy organizations initiated by the countries of the "Global South" aim to promote the larger-scale use of clean energy to reduce costs, ensure energy security, promote the transition to clean energy and help address climate change. The cooperation initiatives proposed by the countries of the "Global South" also provide an important platform for the exchange of development concepts, the formulation of evidence-based policies, and mutual learning among the countries of the "Global South", so as to promote the effective implementation of collective actions.

For a long time, the countries of the "Global South" have always advocated the concept of cooperation with solidarity as the core, emphasizing equality, inclusiveness, mutual respect and demand orientation, which is also the core value of South-South cooperation. Different from the traditional aid model, South-South cooperation projects start from the real needs of partner countries. Chaturvedi said that the countries of the "Global South" have reached a broad consensus: development cooperation requires not only concessional loans and grants, but also the absorption of applicable technologies, human resource capacity building and talent training, and the establishment of a trade ecosystem that is conducive to the development of the countries of the "Global South". Therefore, he called for the integration of concept innovation in the practice of international development cooperation to more comprehensively respond to the development demands of the countries of the "Global South".

In addition, Chaturvedi stressed that the promotion of any development program should focus on localization and avoid the "one-size-fits-all" intervention logic. Global development should be seen as a process of coordination and cooperation, rather than North-South confrontation or East-West competition.

Countries in the Global South

We must firmly defend our own safety

In the complex context of global governance, the relationship between security and development is becoming increasingly close. For the countries in the "global South", how to deal with the relationship between the two has become a key issue in international relations.

Chaturvedi analyzed that the security issues of the "global South" countries are usually intertwined with development issues, and therefore need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner, including promoting poverty reduction, strengthening infrastructure construction and seeking countermeasures to social inequality. In academic research in the field of development and international relations, the relationship between traditional security and development is not a new concept. The two are considered to have a two-way causal relationship and can interact with each other. It is worth noting that at present, the "global South" countries are actively involved in development affairs in the field of traditional security. In his view, in the past, especially during the Cold War, the "global South" countries tended to focus more on development issues, while security issues were more dominated by the "global North" countries. However, the military-industrial complex, security industry and its derived security ecosystem in the "global North" countries have actually caused more harm to the "global South" countries rather than providing real security guarantees. Just as they need to be self-reliant on development issues, the "global South" countries should also be responsible for themselves on security issues.

Chaturvedi said: "The unique security challenges faced by the countries of the Global South can only be best understood by the countries of the Global South themselves, so the solutions should also come from the countries of the Global South. It is not difficult to understand why the countries of the Global South are increasingly actively demanding a greater voice in international security issues and promoting the reform of the UN Security Council to better reflect the interests of these countries."

Countries in the Global South

We should jointly uphold multilateralism

As the international environment becomes increasingly complex and trade protectionism rises, the countries of the "Global South" not only face unfair global resource allocation, but also lack sufficient voice in global issues. This makes the countries of the "Global South" increasingly concerned about how to defend their own interests and promote the construction of a more just and reasonable global governance system to adapt to the requirements of the changing times and the trend of multipolarization.

Chaturvedi believes that the current "global South" countries need to establish institutions that can carry their common vision and expectations in order to better shape the global governance concept of the "global South" countries. The BRICS New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank should be further studied from this perspective to explore their differences with the World Bank at the conceptualization and operational levels.

In addition, in today's era, the role of international organizations and multilateral institutions in world politics is more important than ever, because the response to many global challenges depends on the international community taking action in a coordinated manner. At the same time, multilateral institutions should be reformed to reflect the current world order, rather than stagnating in an old era that has undergone tremendous changes. Wider participation from emerging economies and countries in the "global south" is essential to ensure the legitimacy and recognition of multilateral decision-making.

Introducing diverse voices and perspectives into the decision-making process is key to addressing pressing global issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, and social inequality, all of which require coordinated international action. A closed, rigid, and non-consultative decision-making system is clearly not in line with people's expectations of how multilateral institutions should operate, Chaturvedi said.

Ekaterina Koldunova, associate professor at the Department of Asian and African Studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, said that despite the profound changes in the world pattern, the Bandung Conference still has practical significance and represents the voices of countries and their peoples that have long been ignored on the international stage. The participants of the Bandung Conference not only reached a consensus on historical issues and colonialism, but also put forward a series of propositions on the ideal international order to the international community. She believes that the Bandung spirit is still instructive for how to promote collective action among countries today. This process requires not only ensuring peaceful coexistence among major powers, but also listening to the voices of small and medium-sized countries, and recognizing the inherent diversity among partners while gradually establishing an institutionalized framework for interaction mechanisms. In her opinion, in the current world pattern, the "BRICS+" cooperation model fully demonstrates the principle of multilateralism.

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