SPECIAL SECTION

Accelerating Sustainable Development with Convergence of SDGs, Localization and Lifestyles

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Abstract: This paper aims to undertake a critical analysis of the convergence between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and localization of development, with an overview of the India G20 Presidency role in accelerating the SDGs and its interconnectedness with the concept of Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) for Sustainable Development.For the 2024 G20, Brazil has the most opportune moment for taking up critical issues faced by the Global South and shaping the global discourse accordingly.

Keywords: G20 India; G20 Brazil; LiFE; SDGs.

The phase for G20 Southern-led Presidencies began with the Presidency of Indonesia in 2022, India (2023), followed by Brazil (2024) and South Africa (2025). The Indian Presidency has made efforts in taking forward issues that Indonesia very effectively placed on the G20 table. The Indian G20 Presidency would always be remembered as the People's Presidency. With almost 185 official meetings and 230 meetings in 57 destinations in total, it has created records of its own kind. India has also added a working group on Disaster Risk Resilience (DPR) and Engagement Group on Startup 20.

With Covid crisis almost over and most of the economies coming out of the challenges faced last year, Brazil has the most opportune moment for taking up critical issues faced by the Global South and shaping the global discourse accordingly. It is in this context that the role of G20 leadership assumes great significance. Developing nations are deeply concerned about the increasing fragmentation of the international landscape and aspire to have an equal voice in the international development discourse. Brazil's priority to address social inclusion and the fight against hunger, energy transition and sustainable development in its three aspects of social, economic and environmental, and reform of global governance institutions are most timely choices and should be taken forward with well-conceived initiatives.

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remain the most recognizable framework of collective global action towards sustainable development and well-being, and all attendant benefits of equity, shared prosperity, nature rejuvenation, One Health, global cooperation, and citizen partnership, ideally conforming to sustainable consumption and production. With many of the G20 countries involved in formalizing the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and developing the global

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indicator framework, the grouping exhibits proactive and strong leadership in localizing and implementing the SDGs. This commitment is driven by the alignment of globally agreed goals with the national development agenda.

The adoption of the SDGs has prompted a global shift towards localizing these objectives. This entails transferring the implementation of SDG-related actions from national governments to local levels. The essence of localizing the SDGs lies in empowering local governments to take charge of critical areas like food security, water supply, sanitation, and waste management. In the pursuit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the emphasis on localizing reflects the understanding that local governments are well-positioned to engage diverse stakeholders—NGOs, the private sector, and local communities. In developing and least developed countries (LDCs), local governments play a pivotal role in delivering essential services directly or indirectly linked to the SDGs. Success in achieving these global goals hinges on collaborative efforts involving various societal players, including local governments, government agencies, the commercial sector, and civil society.

This paper aims to undertake a critical analysis of the convergence between the SDGs, the localization of development, and its interconnectedness with the concept of Lifestyles for Sustainable Development. The first section presents an introduction to the SDG Agenda 2030 and localization of development, while the following section provides an overview of the localization of initiatives in India, and the India G20 Presidency role in accelerating the SDGs. The next section delves into various facets of Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), while the following explores areas where Brazil has prevailed in mobilizing partnerships viz. through triangular cooperation. The last section concludes with the way forward.

SUSTAINABILITY AND LOCALIZATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Approaching sustainability through SDGs and localization is characterized by interconnected verticals which are operational at the national and sub-national levels. They include creating institutional ownership; establishing robust review and monitoring systems; developing capacities to integrate and encouraging collaboration across diverse sectors.

However, the prescribed nature of the SDGs, with a top-down approach to benchmarking and monitoring, has created tensions at the local level, leading to puzzlement and sometimes resentment. The challenge lies in reconciling the global sustainability agenda with unique local conditions during implementation. The existing literature on SDG localization acknowledges these tensions but struggles to provide a clear way forward. The solution involves exploring opportunities and

drawing from the untapped potential within emerging networks of local actors. There is a need to advocate for a global empirical data aggregation on local sustainable solutions, complementing the top-down SDG agenda. The key proposal is to address the diversity of local needs by leveraging the diversity of local solutions through lifestyle changes, confirming sustainable consumption and production patterns, One Health, and leveraging global digital infrastructure.

The commitment towards SDGs was recently reinvigorated during India's G20 Presidency, where countries adopted the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs, including its High-Level Principles. The Indian Presidency of the G20 played a crucial role in facilitating the inclusion of the African Union, underscoring Africa's integral role in the global economy. Commitments extend to fortifying relations with the African Union, aligning with Agenda 2063, and supporting initiatives like the G20 Compact with Africa and the G20 initiative for industrialization in Africa and LDCs.

The G20 prioritizes technology's transformative role with endorsements for the G20 Principles on Harnessing Data for Development (D4D) and the launch of the Data for Development Capacity Building Initiative. Commitments extend to affordable financing, sustainable biofuels, and support for reliable energy supply chains, emphasizing initiatives like the Global Biofuels Alliance. The Green Development Pact, agreed by the leaders, highlighted the pivotal role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in fostering inclusive and sustainable development through interoperability and data flow trust.

The Indian G20 Presidency has taken up LiFE as one of the core areas for redefining the development pathways. The G20 Leaders Declaration emphasized on Mainstreaming Lifestyles for Sustainable Development and endorsed the G20 High-Level Principles (HLPs) on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in the Development Ministers Working Group meeting at Varanasi. The commitment to sustainable development, outlined in the G20 High-Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development, calls for robust collective actions to promote the global adoption of sustainable production and consumption patterns. Specific actions include the active implementation of the G20 High-Level Principles, support through international cooperation and financial aid, encourage International Organizations to incorporate the HLPs into their programmes, and endorsement of initiatives like "Travel for LiFE", all emphasize the necessity of collaborative global efforts and supportive policies for attaining a sustainable and environmentally conscious future (G20 India 2023b). Furthermore, under India's Presidency of G20, a unique task force on LiFE has been constituted under the T20 process: Task Force 3 on LiFE, Resilience and Values for Well-being. The Task Force

addresses global challenges undermining SDGs, including poverty, food security, health, and well-being, emphasizing the imperative for strong ethical and sustainability frameworks. Priority areas, which this task force deliberated on, were Circular Economy, Food Security, One Health, Infrastructure Financing, International Financial Institutions, and going beyond GDP (G20 India 2023c). The task force was a pioneering effort for giving a multidisciplinary conceptual framing towards an idea of environmentally conscious lifestyle.

MAINSTREAMING LIFESTYLES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Centrality of the concept of sustainability assumed key importance in the evolution of various facets of SDGs. Lifestyle for Environment, built upon the concept of sustainable lifestyle, was first unveiled in COP26 in Glasgow as an individual-centric behavioral movement, but eventually expanded into a new economic model. While announcing the LiFE campaign, the Prime Minister of India stressed: "This can become a mass movement of environmental conscious lifestyle. What is needed today is mindful and deliberate utilization, instead of mindless and destructive consumption." LiFE is a pioneering pathway which recognizes the central role of individuals and communities in driving human development and fostering behavioral changes essential for nature's revival. The idea of lifestyles came to the forefront due to the disparities one sees in consumption patterns of individuals and communities which have been historically influenced by lifestyle choices. Gradually it extends to encompass the aspect of intragenerational and intergenerational considerations, recognizing that sustainability and equity are two sides of the same coin. LiFE encourages a shift away from resource-extractive production processes toward resource-regenerating systems.

Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and Circular Economy

LiFE incorporates various facets which are interlinked and interoperable. The first and foremost is the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns and operationalization of a circular economy framework. As defined by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), "SCP is a holistic approach to minimizing the negative environmental impacts from consumption and production systems while promoting quality of life for all" (UNEP 2016). The three principles of SCP–namely, improving quality of life without increasing environmental degradation; decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; and applying life-cycle thinking–balance the developmental needs on the one hand, whilst charting out a trajectory for sustainable consumption and production patterns on the

other. The approaches of SCP are particularly discussed within the framework of Circular Economy (CE), where the economy is reconstructed on the 3 R's–Reduce, Reuse and Recycle–which gives an alternative economic vision from the mainstreamed linear model of production. MacArthur, E. (2013) refers to the circular economy as "an industrial economy that is restorative by intention; aims to rely on renewable energy; minimizes, tracks, and eliminates the use of toxic chemicals; and eradicates waste through careful design."

The key principles of a circular economy–designing out waste, building resilience through diversity, relying on energy from renewable sources, thinking in "systems," and waste is food–provide a concrete trajectory for systemic transformation. Several such models of circular economy have been explored in China and the European Union (see Heshmati 2017 & Mhatre et al. 2021). According to Lacy and Rutqvist (2015), the Circular Economy could generate US$ 4.5 trillion of additional economic output by 2030. The study also pointed out that the existing status quo in business practices will lead to a global shortage of eight billion tons in the balance of natural resource supply and demand by 2030. This deficit mirrors the total resource utilization in North America during 2014, and could result in a substantial economic growth loss of US$ 4.5 trillion by 2030, potentially escalating to US$ 25 trillion by 2050. The G20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration has put a special emphasis on the Circular Economy. The paragraph on *Designing a Circular Economy World* highlights the critical role of Circular Economy in promoting SCP. The declaration prioritizes decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation through circular economy practices. The initiative Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Industry Coalition (RECEIC) was also launched in this regard. It involves efforts to improve waste management, achieve substantial waste reduction by 2030, and prioritize zero waste initiatives, aligning with the principles of Sustainable Consumption and Production (G20 India 2023a).

The Sustainable Development Goal 12 maps countries' progress towards Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns through various SDG indicators. The recent UNSG report (2023) *Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet* highlights that, in 2019, the total material footprint was 95.9 billion tons, close to the world's domestic material consumption of 95.1 billion tons. It also highlights the divergence between the Global North and Global South vis-à-vis their material footprint and their domestic material consumption. Northern America and Europe have about 14% higher material footprint than domestic material consumption, while in Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, the material footprint was lower than domestic material consumption by 17% and 32%, respectively.

Lifestyle plays an important role in carbon emission contribution, and similar divergences have been analyzed in the recent United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) *Global Emission Report 2020*. According to the report, current per capita consumption emissions in the United States of America are approximately 17.6 tons CO_2e per capita, around 10 times that of India at 1.7 ton per capita. Various estimates indicate a significant correlation between income and emissions, revealing a highly unequal global distribution of consumption emissions. Studies suggest that the top 10% of income earners contribute approximately 36–49% of the global total emissions, while the lowest 50% account for about 7–15% of emissions (Chakravarty et al. 2009; Chancel & Piketty 2015; Oxfam 2015; Hubacek et al. 2017; Dorband et al. 2019; Kartha et al. 2020). The disparity is even more pronounced among the highest-income, highest emitters, with the combined emissions share of the top 1% likely exceeding that of the bottom 50%. Nearly half of the consumption emissions from the global top 10% and 1% are linked to citizens in high-income countries, with the remaining portion associated with citizens in middle-income countries (Chancel & Piketty, 2015; Kartha et al. 2020). The results of the Oxfam and Stockholm Environment Institute (Kartha et al. 2020) are detailed on Table 1.

2015							
Top 1%	15%	Top 10%	49%	Middle 40%	44%	Bottom 50%	7%
North America	5.7%	North America	16%	China	17.5%	India	2.5%
Middle East and North Africa	2.7%	Europe	8.5%	Europe	5.8%	China	2%
China	2.1%	China	7.3%	North America	4.6%	Other Asia	1.1%
Europe	1.6%	Other Asia	4.7%	Other Asia	4.6%	Sub-Saharan Africa	0.68%
Russia/ Central Asia	1.2%	Middle East and North Africa	4.5%	Russia/ Central Asia	3.2%	Middle East and North Africa	0.49%

India	0.8%	Russia/ Central Asia	2.6%	Middle East and North Africa	3%	Latin America	0.2%
Latin America	0.6%	India	1.9%	India	2.4%	Europe	0.1%
Other Asia	0.4%	Latin America	1.3%	Latin America	2.2%	Russia/ Central Asia	0.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.3%	Sub-Sahara Africa	0.9%	Sub-Sahara Africa	0.8%	North America	<0.1%
Other rich	0.2%	Other rich	0.9%	Other rich	0.3%	Other rich	0%
1990							
Top 1%	13%	Top 10 %	50%	Middle 40%	41%	Bottom 50%	8%
North America	6.9%	North America	21.2%	Europe	10.2%	China	6.1%
Europe	2.5%	Europe	14.2%	Russia/ Central Asia	8.6%	India	1.4%
Middle East and North Africa	1.2%	Other Asia	5.1%	North America	6.4%	Other Asia	0.3%
Russia/ Central Asia	0.9%	Russia/ Central Asia	4.7%	China	5.1%	SS Africa	0.2%
Other Asia	0.9%	Middle East and North Africa	1.8%	Other Asia	4.5%	Middle East and North Africa	0.1%
Latin America	0.6%	Latin America	1.3%	Latin America	2.2%	Russia/Central Asia	0.1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.1%	Other rich	0.8%	India	1.6%	Latin America	<0.1%

Table 1 - Shares of total carbon emissions associated with individuals in different global income groups from different countries and regions. Source: Oxfam and Stockholm Environment Institute (Kartha et al. 2020).

New Vehicles for Systemic Transformation–Social Enterprises

The systemic transition towards SCP patterns and Circular Economy requires new models of enterprise, primarily dedicated to social and environmental objectives. Broadly referred to as "purpose-driven" or "for-benefit" enterprises, these include social enterprises, sustainable businesses, cooperatives, public benefit corporations, community development banks, community interest companies, and numerous other models. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Social Enterprises are identified as "any private activity conducted in the public interest, organized with an entrepreneurial strategy, whose main purpose is not the maximization of profit but the attainment of certain economic and social goals, and which has the capacity for bringing innovative solutions to the problems of social exclusion and unemployment" (OECD nd).

However, owing to their differential social and public characteristics, these business models still lack a common definition and legal framework on a global scale. Among the very few studies, the global landscape is best captured by the survey study of the British Council *More in Common: The Global State of Social Enterprise*, June 2022, estimating around 11 million businesses worldwide as social enterprises. Country-specific data highlighted variations, with Turkey and the United Arab Emirates leading in international operations (32.6% and 27.8%, respectively), while Ethiopia and the Philippines exhibited lower rates (3.1% and 5.8%, respectively).

These Social Enterprises globally exhibit diverse goals, with common priorities, including community improvement, job creation, health enhancement, environmental protection, and education. Regional differences were observed, such as a focus on the environment in Morocco (55.6%), the Philippines (53.9%), and Sri Lanka (53.3%), and a priority on addressing financial exclusion in Greece (39.7%). In India and Hong Kong, health and well-being emerged as key priority areas for social enterprises with a share of 41.5% and 47.3%, respectively. In the UK 67% of social enterprises have plans to integrate climate action into their constitutional framework, showcasing a commitment to environmental responsibility. In Malaysia, Morocco, and Nigeria, social enterprises frequently operate within the environmental and sustainability sectors.

Financing for Resilient Infrastructure

Another facet of this new paradigm is financing for resilient infrastructure. Financial globalization has often been at cross-heads with financing needs for development. There has been a long debate as to whether financial globalization promotes growth (and development) in developing countries. One of the key recom-

mendations by T20 Task Force 3 addresses the issues around financing for resilient infrastructure by suggesting that the global financial architecture and institutional approaches should be reformed based on accepted LiFE principles by the G20, which would address financial flows for physical, social, digital, and energy infrastructure from the perspective of sustainability, resilience, circularity, inclusivity, rural-urban balance, and trans-species balance (T20 Task Force 3 Statement).

Discriminatory access to capital and resources for Global South countries is a concern, with three out of five of the world's poorest nations facing high risks of debt distress and one in four middle-income countries at significant risk of a fiscal crisis in early 2022 (UNDESA 2022). Despite a decade of low-interest rates, developing countries experience higher borrowing costs, with their average interest expenses on debt three times greater than those in developed nations. In contrast, developed countries now face an average interest cost of about 1% on sovereign debt, a notable drop. Least developed countries (LDCs), even with access to concessional lending, often contend with interest rates exceeding 5% or 8%, significantly elevating their average borrowing costs. This situation intensifies debt dynamics, leading to reduced fiscal space as LDCs allocate a substantial 14% of their domestic revenue to interest payments, compared to developed countries, allocating approximately 3.5%, despite having larger debt stocks (UNDESA 2022).

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Ethical Issues in Functioning of Financial Institutions

This discriminatory systemic issue highlights the lack of ethical components in the functioning of our Financial Institutions. The recent UNSG report (2023) *Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet* strongly condemns discriminatory access to finance. It emphasizes that persisting with a morally bankrupt financial system hinders developing countries from meeting targets achieved by developed nations with fewer constraints. The issue of ethical considerations in finance represents another facet of the lifestyle paradigm, emphasizing the role of excessive financialization and its detachment from ethical behavior.

The recent collapse of banks under U.S. capitalism underscore the ethical disconnect within an expansive financial system. Since the emergence of the neo-classical school in the 1970s, there has been a notable trend toward significant deregulation of financial markets and the separation of finance from the real economy.

According to Pereira (2010) and Lapavitsas (2009), between 1980 and 2007, the growth of financial assets outpaced real wealth by approximately four times, as measured by the increase in gross domestic product (GDP). Financial wealth increasingly operated independently of production, and finance permeated various aspects of human societies. This era witnessed a proliferation of financial instruments, disproportionately concentrating risks on investors while yielding profits for bankers. The subsequent collapses of banks and the economic system, stemming from excessive and unchecked lending, once again underscore the absence of ethics in the functioning of our financial institutions.

New Well-being Measurement Approaches–Going Beyond GDP

This facet focuses on the measurement of well-being and its intrinsic interconnection with prevailing models such as Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), the Circular Economy, resilient infrastructure, and ethical dimensions in financial practices. Empirical observations derived from countries emphasizing Gross Domestic Product (GDP)-centric growth show that elevated income levels do not uniformly translate to heightened well-being, especially amid challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, limited access to essential services, and social inequities. The present Polycrises, unequal burdens on LDCs, uneven growth across countries, and supply-chain disruptions have necessitated to go beyond GDP. There is a need to incorporate the ecological dimension and natural capital as important components in the new measure of well-being, considering mainstreamed indexes often lack a strong focus on these dimensions. Assessing the uses of well-being metrics is pertinent for policy-making, particularly in capturing economic, social, and environmental factors. Indicators should reflect priorities like climate change, SDGs, and emerging dimensions of digital infrastructure to transform and ease the lives of citizens. Interlinking the beyond GDP approaches with the models discussed above, the Task Force 3 Statement categorically mentions that "developing well-being indicators will be a prerequisite for setting priorities and allocating resources. Systemic transformation approaches that support comprehensive indicator profiles should be encouraged, with the aim of promoting, among others, business models and corporate practices for sustainability, social inclusion, care work, trusteeship, and good governance as part of the LiFE economy."

The recent policy brief by the United Nations Secretary General indicates that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a comprehensive "Beyond GDP" framework, intentionally crafted to address the shortcomings of GDP. Specifically, SDG target 17.19 calls for the development of measurements complementing GDP, fostering statistical capacity-building in developing countries by 2030. This commitment aligns with initiatives like *Our Common Agenda* and the report *Valuing What Counts: United Nations System-wide Contribution on Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product* contributing to the evolving landscape of metrics, and emphasizing the need for a holistic approach beyond GDP.

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Various well-being measurement frameworks have emerged to supplement traditional GDP metrics, particularly in the Global South, incorporating dimensions such as health, education, biodiversity, and inequality. It is important to note that uneven access to opportunities is associated with low intergenerational mobility in education and income, and could adversely affect future economic growth (Heckman et al. 2009; Krueger 2012; Corak 2013; Marrero & Rodriguez 2013; Narayan et al. 2018). The impact of health (SDGs 3), education (SDG 4), sustainable and inclusive growth (SDG 8), and sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) on reducing inequality and promoting overall well-being is substantial.

The Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), in its *Discussion Paper on Evolving Conceptual Framework for Measuring Well-being for Decision and Policy Making,* has developed indicators related to the concept of LiFE for measuring well-being under the Sustainability pillar. Similarly, the OECD's well-being framework, tailored for Latin America and the Caribbean, evaluates well-being distribution across populations in 11 countries, addressing disparities in health, education, and environmental quality. Furthermore, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has introduced a Wellness Index for 153 countries, bridging the gap between growth-focused policies and health, education, and individual well-being. This index spans physical, intellectual, environmental, and social wellness dimensions, providing pol-

icymakers insights into strengths and weaknesses. ADB also considers well-being inequality, incorporating the Gini Index and the ratio of male to female Labor Force Participation.

The United Nations Human Development (UNDP) Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) modifies the Human Development Index (HDI) by accounting for inequality in the distribution of each dimension across the population. The IHDI value equals the HDI value when there is no inequality across people, but falls below the HDI value as inequality rises (UNDP 2022). Therefore, the IHDI measures the level of human development when inequality is accounted for. Table 2 provides IHDI data for some of the Global South countries.

Country	Human Development Index (HDI)	Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)		Income shares held by (%)			Gini coefficient
	Value	Value	Overall loss (%)	Poorest 40$	Richest 10%	Richest 1%	
	2021	**2021**	**2021**	**2010-2021***	**2010-2021***	**2021**	**2010-2021***
Brazil	0.754	0.576	23.6	13.2	39.4	25.7	48.9
India	0.633	0.475	25.0	19.8	30.1	21.7	35.7
Indonesia	0.705	0.585	17.0	18.1	29.6	18.3	37.3
South Africa	0.713	0.471	33.9	7.2	50.5	21.9	63.0
Mexico	0.758	0.621	18.1	14.3	35.5	28.4	45.4
Bhutan	0.666	0.471	29.3	17.5	27.9	14.2	37.4
Bangladesh	0.661	0.503	23.9	21.0	26.8	16.3	32.4
Sudan	0.508	0.336	33.9	19.9	27.8	15.4	34.2
Kenya	0.575	0.426	25.9	16.5	31.6	15.2	40.8
Ghana	0.632	0.458	27.5	14.3	32.2	15.2	43.5

Table 2: IHDI Data for Global South Countries. Source: (UNDP 2022).

The analyses of diverse well-being indices by international organizations underscore a global transition away from a sole reliance on GDP, prioritizing eco-friendly, socially inclusive, and people-centric metrics. Recognizing the persistent challenges in attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing nations, there is a growing consensus on integrating SDGs into economic and social frameworks, promoting sustainable and lasting advancement. India's COP26 initiative, "Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)," champions the cause of sustainable livelihoods and lifestyles harmonized with both planetary and human well-being. This reflects a broader paradigm shift towards holistic indicators that encompass environmental responsibility, social inclusivity, and the overall welfare of individuals and the planet.

The next two sections delve into the practical implementation of LiFE within the unique context of Intermediary Cities, highlighting its multifaceted strategies to address the complex urban dynamics and the integration of Triangular Cooperation, recognized by G20 members as a pivotal aspect enriching the practical application of LiFE.

INTERMEDIARY CITIES

Intermediary Cities (ICs) are urban agglomerations that connect metropolitan centers with rural areas. In developing countries, these are defined as urban centers with a population of one to five million. Due to their intermediation role, these cities act as hubs for the provision of goods and services, facilitate rural-urban migration and provide a conducive environment for income diversification and poverty alleviation (OECD/UN-Habitat 2022). They have the potential to foster well-being, promote job creation and contribute to poverty reduction, and can also act as powerful laboratories for piloting new solutions and fostering social and economic innovation (OECD 2022). In the Indian context, ICs comprise urban agglomerations having a population of one to five million. These cities are categorized as smaller urban areas regulated by Municipal Councils under the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.[1] According to the World Urbanization Prospects, 2018, around 56 such urban agglomerations fall under this category in India (UNDESA 2018).

Due to socioeconomic, institutional, and geographical issues, intermediary cities are disproportionately exposed to detrimental impacts on the environment. Rapid urbanization and environmental pollution are closely interlinked in ICs whereby it hinders the capacity of authorities to provide public services and safe environment from increasingly frequent extreme climatic events. While, on the one hand, abrupt

1. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act provides for three types of municipalities in each state in India: Nagar Panchayat for a transitional area, Municipal Council for a smaller urban area, Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area.

climate extremes impact ICs disproportionately, on the other, rapidly urbanizing ICs themselves drive climate change as a result of increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. ICs are witnessing increased and greater regional variability in global precipitation and associated flooding as a result of climate change–global extreme daily precipitation is projected to intensify by 7% for each increase of 1 °C–thereby contributing to large economic losses (OECD/UN-Habitat 2022). Meeting the Paris target by mid-century would lead to a GDP loss of 4.2%. Studies undertaken by Guo Jessie et al., (2021) found that under a more severe temperature increase scenario of 3.2 °C by 2050, global GDP is set to decline by 18% with Asia accounting for 15% of the combined losses. ICs are vulnerable to the Urban Heat Island effect and increasing health risks and mortality as a result of frequent heat wave spells. As cities grow, they become sources of carbon-intensive energy platforms that lead to an increase in GHG emissions. By 2030, emissions from cities in non-OECD countries will account for 81% of global energy use (OECD 2010).

While climate mitigation strategies and adaptation techniques are both essential in climate action towards net zero, it may not be a complete solution to the problem. Behavioral changes for efficient resource utilization by reducing energy consumption, and water wastage, managing environmental pollution and promoting the use of eco-friendly products can contribute to net-zero climate action, while improving both well-being and public health.

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Sarovar, which entails rejuvenation of 50,000 ponds across India under the Ministry of Rural Development. The other example is *Community Financing for Segregation*, which is being implemented by Municipal Councils for efficient waste segregation at the source with the help of local resources and innovative collection systems.

TRIANGULAR COOPERATION (TRC)

Aligned with the vision of the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, Triangular Cooperation is an innovative modality to implement the LiFE approach and has been acknowledged by G20 members and engagement groups, most notably the T20, as a dynamic modality that can supplement the North-South and South-South cooperation models in its pursuit of sustainable development. This approach complements traditional cooperation models and fosters sustainable development (G20 India 2023a).

Brazil's Priority for Triangular Cooperation (TrC)

With Brazil assuming the Presidency of the G20 on 1 December 2023, triangular cooperation will become an important area under the Brazilian Presidency of G20 as triangular, or trilateral, cooperation has a long history in the country and is a key element of its development cooperation (OECD/IsDB 2023). Brazil is active in multiple international cooperation for development fronts: technical, educational, scientific, technological and humanitarian cooperation, as well as contributions to international organizations, peacekeeping operations and refugee support in Brazil. Brazil's contribution to trilateral technical cooperation initiatives is steered by the principles of South-South cooperation; namely, it is driven by demands from developing countries, non-interference in the domestic affairs of countries benefiting from trilateral technical cooperation, non-conditionality and non-association with trade operations (ABC 2019). In 2021, Brazil allocated US$ 8.5 million for triangular cooperation activities (OECD 2023). The main sectors of its trilateral projects are government and civil society and the agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors.

Trends in Triangular Cooperation with Focus on LiFE

As mentioned above, TrC is the dynamic cooperation modality offering low-cost, environment-friendly solutions**.** For example, the India-Germany-Ghana pilot project on bamboo and bamboo cultivation can be the perfect example for advancing low-cost, environment-friendly solutions. Figure 1 suggests that the

current trend of TrC also indicates the focus on LiFE, such as agriculture, food security, health, environment protection, business services, education, water sanitation, social infrastructure, tourism etc.

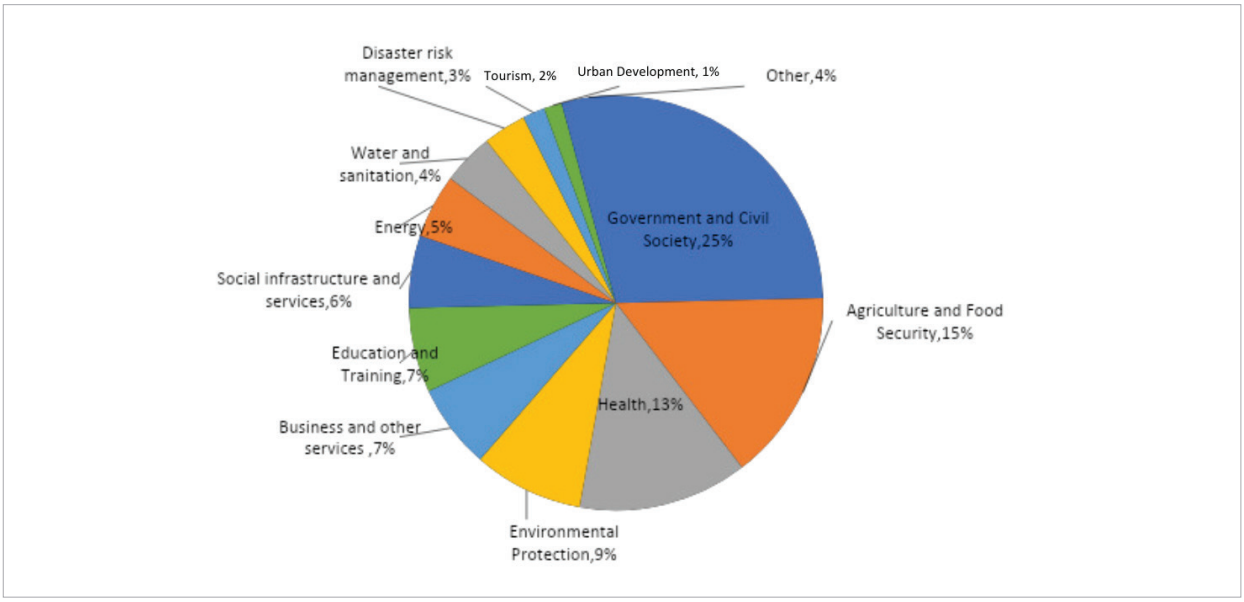

Figure 1. Triangular cooperation projects by thematic area. Source: OECD's Triangular cooperation repository of projects2. Note: support the government and civil society sector includes projects of public financial management etc.

It is essential to mention that the OECD (2023) found that 56% of screened triangular cooperation disbursements between 2020 and 2021 targeted the environment, using the OECD's environmental marker. This is above the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) average of 33% for 2019-2020. About one-third of the over 1000 TrC projects collected in the OECD's online repository addresses life-related issues (GPI 2019). For example, India and France's Indo-Pacific Triangular Cooperation (IPTDC) Fund aims to support climate and SDG-focused innovations, emphasizing green technologies in the region.

IBSA International Fund

The IBSA Forum of three countries–India, Brazil and South Africa–, from the three continents that form the Global South, tasks itself to voice the collective interests of the South in international forums and international politics on issues of peace, security and development. The distinguishing feature of IBSA is that it is a grouping of emerging economies committed to participatory democracy and rule-

2. The database is available online at: https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm.

based international order. The IBSA Trust Fund, launched in 2003, marks an exemplary model of South-South cooperation that supports developing and least developed countries (LDCs) of the Global South to achieve their broad development objectives. Born out of the need to address shared developmental challenges in fellow developing countries, the IBSA Fund has emerged as a unique expression of Southern solidarity and helped partner countries to achieve sustainable and inclusive development. Towards this end, the IBSA Fund has played a vital role in strengthening South-centric developmental cooperation, and also brought new gravitas to the IBSA partnership. Since the inception of the Fund, 42 development projects have been supported in 36 countries through allocations totalling US$ 46.5 million. Projects ranged from enhancing food security to developing livelihoods through entrepreneurship and expanding access to sanitation and renewable energy (UNOSSC 2022).

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Financing for the TrC

As we are aware, the BAPA 40+ outcome document mentioned that multilateral, regional and bilateral development cooperation providers should consider increasing financial resources and technical cooperation to promote South-South and triangular cooperation. Figure 2 shows that between 2016 and 2021, 17 DAC members disbursed US$ 451 million of their ODA through triangular cooperation, which accounted for 0.24% of the total ODA in 2021. It shows that TrC's funding needs to be increased. Since the introduction of reporting in the CRS in 2016, DAC members have significantly boosted the volume of ODA they disburse through triangular cooperation. Only two DAC members reported in 2016, disbursing US$ 26 million through triangular cooperation (at constant 2021 pricing). In 2021, 13 DAC members reported disbursing (OECD/IsDB 2023).

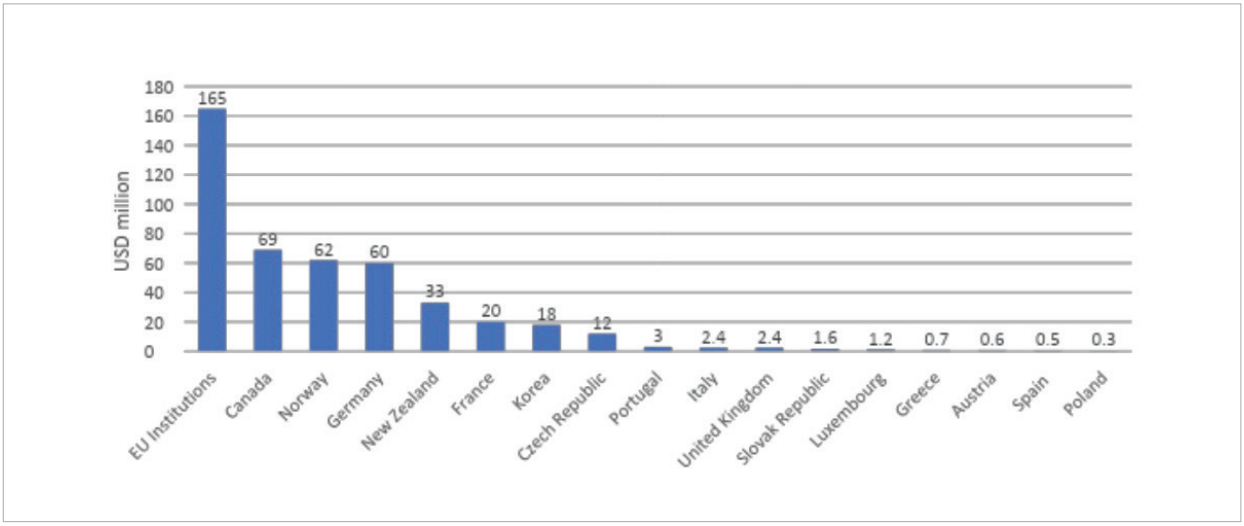

Figure 2: Official Development Assistance Disbursements for Triangular Cooperation by DAC Members, 2016–2021 (CRS). Source: OECD/IsDB (2023).

WAY FORWARD

The G20 Brazilian Presidency has an important opportunity to lead the global conversations on sustainability, inequality, hunger and unemployment–all the key issues that President Lula has identified as his priorities. He is absolutely right in suggesting to mobilize global financial resources to address these challenges. He rightly said: "we will ensure that the political and financial tracks are coordinated and work alongside each other. There's no point in agreeing on the best public policies if we don't allocate necessary resources for their implementation."

The G20 Brazilian Presidency has an important opportunity to lead the global conversations on sustainability, inequality, hunger and unemployment–all the key issues that President Lula has identified as his priorities.

The implementation of the new economic model requires a comprehensive approach encompassing tools, concepts, evidence, roadmaps, and collaborations. This entails a deeper understanding to facilitate rational resource allocation, localized development, and increased access, equity, and inclusion through technology and finance. Reformulating development partnerships, trade relations, and capacity creation is essential. To achieve this, a reconfiguration of institutions and multilateral structures grounded in values, well-being,

and lifestyles is imperative. Science and technology play a crucial role in this transformation, guided by ethical principles and responsive to the needs of all, especially marginalized populations. Impact funds and novel incentives are necessary to encourage innovation addressing unmet needs in various sectors. Cooperation in green technologies is vital for moving towards sustainable consumption and production patterns, requiring a streamlined international mechanism to deliver essential technologies and prevent a climate catastrophe.

At the individual level, the new paradigm extends beyond anthropocentrism, emphasizing climate change mitigation, intergenerational justice, and trans-species justice. Philosophies promoting a moderate and balanced approach to life take center stage. This holistic approach, embracing ethical considerations, technological innovation, and a shift in individual perspectives, forms a robust way forward for effective policy implementation.

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