



21ST– 22ND AUGUST 2026
Indian Social Institute (ISI), New Delhi

PUBLIC DIALOGUE FORUM GLOBAL SOUTH COOPERATION & ALTERNATIVES

Across the Global South, the promise of greater sovereignty, solidarity and an alternative world order is unfolding alongside deepening economic inequality, ecological crises, wars, debt, resource insecurity and shrinking democratic spaces. Countries that were once at the margins of global economic and political decision-making are increasingly seeking greater autonomy and a stronger voice in shaping the international order. Yet, the emergence of new South-South alliances and institutions also raises important questions: **Who benefits from these new forms of cooperation? What kind of development are they advancing? And can South-South cooperation become a genuine alternative to existing structures of global economic and political power?**

The emergence and expansion of BRICS is an important part of this changing landscape. Its early promise of South-South cooperation, de-dollarisation, greater autonomy in global finance and a more democratic international order has generated considerable expectations across the Global South. At the same time, the experience of BRICS countries reveals significant contradictions, including neoliberal trade and investment policies, extractive development, corporate concentration, privatisation and unequal ecological transitions.

With India hosting the BRICS Summit in 2026, this is an important moment not simply to assess BRICS as a geopolitical bloc, but to ask a broader question: what kind of cooperation and alternative global order does the Global South need?

The Public Dialogue Forum seeks to create a space for civil society organisations, trade unions, students, researchers, people's movements and other constituencies to critically examine these questions. Rather than approaching the Global South through the narrow lens of economic growth or geopolitical competition, the forum will centre the experiences and demands of working people, communities and movements. It will explore whether emerging forms of South-South cooperation can address historical and contemporary inequalities and contribute to a more just and democratic international order.



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The discussions are just another attempt to connect questions of political economy, development, labour, ecology, technology, finance and social justice through the following workshops:

Proposed Workshops

- **Inequality**– Examining persistent and widening inequalities within and between countries of the Global South, and questioning development models that produce growth alongside concentrated wealth and insecurity.
- **Natural Resource Extractivism**– Exploring how mining, infrastructure, and resource extraction are reshaping communities and ecosystems, and the role of public and private capital in driving extractive development across the Global South.
- **Agriculture and Food Sovereignty**– Discussing the future of food systems, farmers' rights and food sovereignty in the context of trade agreements, corporate agriculture and changing global supply chains.
- **Trade**– Examining South-South trade and emerging trade arrangements, asking whether they can move beyond existing unequal patterns of global trade, support repressive regimes and contribute to more equitable economic cooperation.
- **Labour & Social Security**– Looking at the changing world of work, informalisation and platformisation, and the need for universal social protection and stronger labour rights across the Global South.
- **Gender & “Women-led development”**– Critically examining the language of women-led development and asking whether emerging development frameworks address structural gender inequalities, unpaid and care work, labour rights and women's economic autonomy.



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- **Climate Change and Energy Cooperation-** Exploring the politics of climate finance, energy transitions and infrastructure, and whether cooperation among Global South countries can enable a genuinely just and equitable transition.
- **NDB Investments in India-** Assessing the development model advanced through New Development Bank financing in India, particularly its implications for infrastructure, communities, public resources and ecological sustainability.
- **Alternative Financial Architectures-** Discussing de-dollarisation, development finance and proposals for alternative financial institutions and mechanisms, while asking what a genuinely democratic and accountable financial architecture for the Global South would require.
- **Surveillance and Democratic Rights-** Examining the expansion of digital infrastructures, surveillance and data-driven governance, and their implications for privacy, democratic rights and social control in the Global South.
- **AI, Data Economy and the Global South -** Exploring the political economy of artificial intelligence, data extraction and digital infrastructure, with particular attention to labour, resource consumption, corporate power and the possibilities of alternative technological futures.

Towards an alternative

Taken together, the workshops seek to move beyond a narrow understanding of the Global South as a geopolitical category and instead ask what people-centred South-South cooperation could mean for the people. The forum will bring different struggles and perspectives into conversation to develop a shared understanding of alternatives in finance, trade, development, technology, climate action and social protection.