

India's Strategic Outreach to the Global South

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India's Strategic Outreach to the Global South: A BRICS-Driven Diplomacy

Context:

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's visit to Brazil from July 2-9, 2025**, marked his **longest overseas tour in 11 years**. In addition to attending the **BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro**, he visited **Ghana, Trinidad & Tobago, Argentina, and Namibia**. This tour highlights India's increasing diplomatic and developmental engagement with the **Global South**, aiming to project itself as a **leader and voice** for the developing world.

India as a Leader of the Global South

India has actively worked to build its identity as a representative of the Global South, focusing on inclusive development, multilateral cooperation, and South-South solidarity.

Key Initiatives:

- **Hosting Voice of Global South Summits**

- Held in **2023 and 2024**, bringing together **over 120 developing countries**.
- Themes included: **climate change, debt distress, energy and food security, and digital inequality**.

- **G20 Presidency 2023**

- Advocated for **inclusive growth, debt relief, and African representation**.
- **Secured permanent G20 membership for the African Union**, marking a

significant diplomatic success.

- **Development Partnerships**

- India expanded **capacity-building programs, training initiatives, and development aid** across **Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia**.

- **Alternative to China's BRI**

- India presents a **transparent, sustainable development model** as a counter to China's **debt-driven Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.

- **Historical and Moral Positioning**

- Draws from its **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** legacy and anti-colonial past to foster solidarity with the Global South.

What is the Global South?

- The **Global South** refers to developing countries, primarily in **Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania**, often with colonial legacies and lower economic development.
- It stands in contrast to the **Global North**, comprising **wealthier, industrialized nations**.
- **Not a geographical term**, it signifies a **collective identity** among countries that advocate:
 - **Climate justice**
 - **Fair trade**
 - **Technology transfer**
 - **Multipolar world order**

India actively represents the Global South in platforms like **BRICS, G77, and the Voice of Global South Summit**.

Gaza Conflict and Strained Ties with the Global South

Background:

After the **October 7, 2023** Hamas-Israel conflict, India adopted a **pro-Israel stance**, which generated concern among several Global South countries.

Diplomatic Fallout:

- India **lost to Pakistan** in the **UNESCO Executive Board Vice-Chair election**, indicating diplomatic backlash.
- There was **lower high-level participation** from developing countries in India's **Second Voice of Global South Summit**.
- Several Global South nations perceived India as **aligning with Western powers** and **not opposing Israeli actions** in Gaza.

India's Diplomatic Recalibration on Gaza and Iran

To address growing dissatisfaction, India adjusted its stance at key multilateral platforms:

Course Correction:

- At the **June 2024 BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting** and the **July 2025 BRICS Summit**, India **strongly criticised Israeli actions** in Gaza.
- Also **condemned Israeli strikes on Iran**, balancing ties between West Asia and the Global South.

Strategic Implication:

While **Israel remains a key defence partner**, India's public statements reflect an effort to **regain trust** and retain its **moral leadership** in the Global South.

BRICS 2025 Summit: India's Gains and Trade-offs

India made key diplomatic achievements at the **Rio BRICS Summit 2025**, even as it navigated sensitive issues.

Key Outcomes:

- **Terrorism**

- BRICS, including **China**, **condemned the Pahalgam terror attack** and backed India on **cross-border terrorism** and **terror financing**.

- **Operation Sindoor Concerns**

- After launching **Operation Sindoor** in Pakistan, India faced skepticism.
- To counter this, India dispatched **multi-party delegations** to explain its position and garner support.

- **Declaration Trade-offs**

- India secured tough language on terrorism but had to **accommodate references to Gaza and Iran** in the final declaration to maintain consensus.



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