

REPORT

*SAMVAD*  
CONVERSATION

CHANGING  
CONTOURS OF  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION:  
WHAT ROLE FOR  
CIVIL SOCIETY?

29 NOVEMBER 2021

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**PRIA@40**  
SHAPING OUR TOMORROWS, TODAY

**FIDC**  
FORUM FOR  
INDIAN DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION  
भारतीय विकास सहयोग मंच



Empowering civil society



# CONTENTS

Key Take-Aways -----	02
Profile of the Panellists -----	03
The Conversation (SAMVAD) -----	05
Programme Design -----	15
PRIA@40 Events -----	18

- **Use triangular cooperation as a platform** – We need to work together to help operationalise the recommendations which can improve civil society engagement and collaboration by using triangular cooperation as a mechanism.
- **Promote and protect civic space** – The civil societies and other actors need to develop clear policy positions on the value of an inclusive and independent civil society, respecting, protecting and promoting civic space in line with rights to the freedom of peaceful assembly, association and expression.
- **Incentivise civil society to be effective** – We must not just instrumentalise civil societies to deliver programmes, but we require efforts to make a shift in the mindset of the governments and incentivise civil society organisations to be more transparent and accountable.
- **Civil societies adding values for development cooperation** – Bringing expertise from the grassroots, holding government and intergovernmental agencies accountable, explaining complex issues in lay terms and collaboration, are some of the value additions from the civil society for development cooperation.



**Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi** is currently Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based Think-Tank. He works on issues related to development economics, involving development finance, SDGs and South-South Cooperation, apart from trade, investment and innovation linkages with special focus on WTO. He has been part of several important initiatives of the Government of India and takes keen interest in transforming economic policymaking towards integrated and evidence-based approaches.

**Ms. Anabel Cruz**, Founder Director of the Institute for Communication and Development (ICD) of Uruguay, has long experience in civil society promotion, research and training in various countries in Latin America, and in the regional and global context. She has worked with local, national, regional, and global CSO networks and platforms. She has extensively promoted civil society transparency and accountability, leading international research and coordinating efforts to implement common standards as well as spaces for reflection, exchange of information and training.



**Prof. Sook Jong Lee**, Professor, Sungkyunkwan University and Former President and Senior Fellow of East Asia Institute, South Korea, research interests include multilateralism, democracy, and civil societies, focusing on South Korea, Japan, and other East Asian countries. Previously, Dr Lee was a research fellow at the Sejong Institute, visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, professorial lecturer at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University, and visiting fellow at the German Institute for Global and Area Studies.





**Dr. Susanna Moorhead**, Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), had over 30-year career in international diplomacy and development. She directed field-based famine and rehabilitation programmes in rural Mali for Save the Children and was Deputy Director of the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex until 1997. She has served as the UK's Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank; was Director of West and Southern Africa at the UK Department for International Development (DFID); and Head of DFID India, when it was the UK's largest development programme.

**Dr. Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay** is the Director of Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India. For more than 30 years he has been working on citizen participation in urban and rural contexts. He is an internationally acclaimed researcher, trainer, and facilitator of organisation development and participatory planning, monitoring, evaluation, and impact assessment. Currently, he is the Co-Coordinator of Asia Democracy Research Networks (ADRN) and serves on the Governing Council of Asia Democracy Network (ADN).



**Dr. Rajesh Tandon**, Founder President, Participatory Research in Asia, India, is currently a UNESCO Co-Chair on Community Based Research and Social Responsibilities in Higher Education. He serves as chairperson of the Global Alliance on Community-Engaged Research (GACER) network, which facilitates the sharing of knowledge and information worldwide to further community-based research and has also served as an Advisor to the Commonwealth Foundation, UNDP, and numerous other international agencies.

As Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) completes its 40 years, it recommits to continue institutional strengthening and capacity development support to civil society and non-profits with a special focus on new-generation civil society and non-profit groups. Between August and December 2021, PRIA will be convening [PRIA@40 Conversations](#) with communities, partners, associates, supporters, experts, investors and colleagues, drawn from civil society, government, business, media and academia, to share ideas and experiences that can help 're-imagine' PRIA, its interventions and the world in the coming period.

In this context, PRIA convened a virtual roundtable discussion on [Changing Contours of Development Cooperation: What Roles for Civil Society?](#) On 29 November 2021 in collaboration with [Forum for Indian Development Cooperation \(FIDC\)](#). The roundtable was attended by 36 participants, was moderated by **Dr. Rajesh Tandon** (Founder- President, PRIA).

The conversation (samvad) explored the following key questions:

- What strategies would make Development Cooperation more responsive and accountable for attaining SDGs and Climate Goals in the post-pandemic recovery and resilience?
- What roles civil society must play to make Development Cooperation inclusive, effective and equitable? What strategies would enable meaningful engagement of civil society with the global governance institutions?

The conversation (samvad) began with a short presentation by **Ms. Yashvi Sharma** (Training Specialist, PRIA) about PRIA's 40-year journey. The journey has been about providing support in the form of sharing information and ideas; generating new knowledge, building linkages and relationships; providing intermediation expertise, and at times emotional support. Efforts to mobilise individuals, especially the poor and marginalised sections, but increasingly also the middle class, make them aware of their rights and responsibilities, thus fuelling their sense of agency to demand – services, inclusion, participation, and knowledge. To know more about the journey, click [here](#).

Speaking of PRIA's work on the theme of *Empowering Civil Society*, Ms. Sharma mentioned that it has been one of the oldest programmes of PRIA and therefore it has the longest history of our interventions. In the early 80's PRIA provided support to hundreds of voluntary organisations to clarify their vision, mission and strategies to be effective at the grassroots. As the CSOs grew and matured, PRIA provided training, mentoring and coaching support on a variety of themes related to their institutional strengthening. PRIA has been instrumental in catalysing the birth of CIVICUS and FIM Forum for Democratic Global Governance – two global networks which have been championing civil society voices, since their inceptions. To know more, click [here](#).

The presentation was followed by **Dr. Tandon** setting the stage for the discussion. In his opening remarks, he said that the contours of development cooperation have been changing ever since in the 1980s, in many countries around the world; societies were emerging from dictatorial and authoritarian regimes. India has been one of the few countries that stood the time of last 74 years, in sustaining its democratic governments, institutions and practices. India played a very important role in assisting the new emerging democracies in the 1980s. Development organisations in the non-government sector had begun to gain some visibility in the early 1980s. One of the very early engagements of PRIA, at the United Nations level, was the conference on 'Education for All' in 1990 – a conference which followed the International Literacy Year of the UN in 1990. This conference brought together UNESCO,

UNICEF, World Bank and all the national governments to focus attention on education, not just literacy, but education for all.

The next decade i.e., the 1990s began with the fall of the Berlin Wall, in a way it was the emergence of a post- Soviet Union era. An era in which democracy and capitalism were declared as victorious and civil society began to be seen as a part of this era. The vocabulary of civil society got reinvented in 1990. Civil society engagement with the UN was in the following ways:

The **first** was through the UN conferences – 1992 Rio conference, 1995 Beijing Conference, 1996 Copenhagen Conference, where civil society engagement was very active, and it not only influenced the agenda but also the discourse and the follow-up action. Regional networks of civil society in Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America made submissions to their governments. People's campaigns for social development worked together hand in hand. It was around the same time that *Social Watch*, as an institutional civil society located in Montevideo, Uruguay, played a significant role in partnership with the developments that were happening in UN conferences. There were many such conferences where civil society made contributions to engage not only our governments but also the non-governmental bodies like the UN.

The **second** engagement was in the 1990s with International Financial Institutions like World Bank, IMF, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter- American Development Bank. NGO Working Group on World Bank also provided a platform for the civil society to engage with not just the World Bank but also regional banks that were affiliated with it, on issues like concessional credit, participation of the primary stakeholders in development planning, programming, implementation and monitoring. The event that triggered a much greater engagement and attention to civil society was the Seattle Inter-Ministerial meeting in 1999. The new millennium brought the Jubilee campaign which was yet another important initiative that brought together civil society, trade unions, community organisations, indigenous associations, academics and media people.

The turn of the millennium saw another shift in the development contours. The new millennium brought in the digital era where countries like India began to play an important role in the advancement and use of digital technology in development cooperation and economic development. In this period, the World Economic Forum began to gain much significance as a gathering of finance ministers and heads of international finance institutions. In 2001, civil society initiative, beginning with Brazil, led to the creation of the World Social Forum and the slogan of World Social Forum was *another world is possible*. The slogan holds relevance even today given the pandemic. In this post-pandemic era, not only another world is possible, but another world is also critical and desirable. In 2004, we hosted the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India. A lot of conversations were conducted of which the most important was that on *Decentralisation*. India had already started working on decentralised governance. Countries like Brazil, the Philippines, South Africa and Kenya were beginning to show results of development planning and development policy through decentralised action on the ground.

The **third** contour shifted in 2008 with the financial crisis. In this context, G20 was born. It was at this moment that the role of civil society in the system of the commonwealth was proposed with a vision to engage with civil society in the G7 countries and also the ones that would be impacted by the policies of G7. After the start of the G20, democratising global governance was one of the big issues that civil society raised. In the current context, the question of democratising global governance becomes all the more significant because we are witnessing vaccine-related inequity. There can be no better time than now, to think about engaging with citizen groups and civil society in a meaningful way to ensure equitable global governance. In this light, the value of entities like South-South cooperation and triangular

cooperation becomes much more valuable as they can tap the competencies of civil society from Southern countries. Lastly, he spoke of the Forum for India Development Cooperation (FIDC) which presents a model of partnership between the Government of India and its Ministry of External Affairs. They are responsible for global cooperation, development cooperation, academia and civil society.

In this context, domestic actions must be taken forward to form global solidarity to make this world liveable for all, safe for all, healthy for all, and ecologically sustainable for all. With this **Dr. Tandon** invited **Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi** (Director General, Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries) to deliver his keynote address.

*'Triangular cooperation is nothing new for India'*, said **Prof. Chaturvedi**. FIDC is a fantastic example of triangular cooperation between civil societies. In the year 1955- 1957, FIDC had developed a very robust partnership with the United States in terms of providing infrastructure. FIDC also constructed North-South corridor in Kathmandu and Nepal trying to connect the royal capital with different cities in these countries. Way back in 1956 in India, after the five-year planning process was unleashed in the country, the idea was that CSOs would mobilise public resources not from the government but from the public to supplement government plans, expenditure and would deliver through their own resource mobilisation. It was an achievement.

But the situation changed soon and now they are dependent on the government. Within a few years India's development cooperation started, it was of course on from 1946 even before the British government was off from the Indian administration. That partnership continued and it was in 1946 that the Indian Technical Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme started with 48 people in 1947 and today we provide training to more than 15,000 people every year. Now during the pandemic, the number has gone up to 34,000 in the ITEC programmes. This is a huge bandwidth that we have covered over the years. The expenditure has expanded, the commitment has gone up and many more ministries have come in the scene. Partnerships have also emerged across the country and the sectors.

Speaking of the changing contours, he said that the definition of ODA is evolving, and the new definition covers the concessional character of loans. In terms of engagements, the flows of ODA from Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries and their disbursement have gone up. There is a need to identify the DAC members' support to CSOs. In 2018, DAC members provided \$21 billion to CSOs which is 15% of total bilateral ODA. According to the OECD estimates, 93% of funding to CSOs within DAC only 7% comes to CSOs in the partner country. This is an important dimension. Only 15% goes to CSOs to support them as independent actors. We need OECD, DAC members to strengthen the institutional and the architecture of civil society organisations. We need to deliberate on how we see CSOs and what kind of institutional ecosystem they need to perform and how can we enable our CSOs to perform. The largest part of ODA support CSOs was dispersed to social infrastructure and services, but this is largely the OECD, DAC assistance that is already taking place. The geographic distribution points out that 27% of assistance goes to Sub-Saharan Africa, 21% to Asia Pacific and 6.6% to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

In India, if we look at the five modalities of development compact – capacity building, trade and investment, development finance, grants and technology, the role of civil society is spread across these pillars. The question is what percentage of Indian development assistance is going to CSOs? The domestic ecosystem is extremely important for the external performance of the CSOs. They require a lot of support. The time has come for us to see the huge development experience that our civil society has accumulated, and we need to explore these possibilities for CSOs to go forward. The idea is to see overall triangular cooperation, now



that India has entered into a very interesting phase of triangular cooperation with several new development paradigms, which are different from the Washington consensus. The indigeneity within this growth model gives us a scope to explore possibilities with countries on similar development initiatives. The idea of bringing in an institutional ecosystem for effective delivery, for sustainability and existing parameters are important in terms of taking partnerships forward. We need to explore what kind of triangular cooperation is needed and how they can be addressed not only through OECD member and their participation but also with the participation of the government.

India is now trying to do what Brazil, Germany and Japan did in the last decade for triangular cooperation. Civil society can play an extremely important constructive engaging role in terms of transforming the landscape. In taking it beyond G20 and addressing our partnership in a very effective manner with new norms and also encourage civil society to do the norm-setting. This is important for developing countries and for South-South cooperation to deliver and take us forward.

Meet our panellists...



[L to R: Dr. Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, Dr. Susana Moorhead, Prof. Sook Jong Lee, Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Dr. Rajesh Tandon and Ms. Anabel Cruz]

Moving on to the next segment of the discussion, **Dr. Tandon** invited the panellists to deliberate on the focus question of the conversation.

**Ms. Anabel Cruz** (Founder Director, Communication and Development Institute (ICD) of Uruguay) spoke particularly in the Latin American context. She said that the story of development cooperation in Latin America was crucial for overcoming the dictatorship. The 1970s- 1980s was a dark period in the history of many countries in Latin America. Development cooperation was crucial in helping Latin America overcome dictatorship. Today, in this post-pandemic scenario, this cooperation is important to confront the recent COVID-19 crisis that has presented in many countries in Latin America and around the world in terms of restriction of civic space, confinements, isolation, inequalities and so on. In this context, the DAC recommendation, adopted in July 2021, is an important instrument for civil society organisations, governments, providers of cooperation and also for the recipients of cooperation.

These recommendations are based on three pillars:

- The recommendation talks about protecting, respecting, and promoting civic space in line with Rights to Freedom and Rights of Assembly, Association, and Expression. It is very important that civil society and other actors develop clear policy positions on the value of

an inclusive and independent civil society. The civic monitor that tracks the civic space around the world has shown that restrictions have happened in many countries and that civic space is constrained instead of being more open for civil society and for citizens in general.

- The recommendation talks about engaging with civil society. Governments and other actors like the financial institutions, need to work together with civil society and thereby enable them for them to function effectively for the betterment of society.
- The recommendation talks about civil society's effectiveness, transparency and accountability. While governments and other actors can promote and incentivise the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of civil society, civil society organisations must also work in self-regulation mechanisms, embrace standards for accountability which is not static but dynamic. Accountability must not only be in terms of financial reports presented to others, but it should also lay down a set of commitments that other actors come to hold them accountable to. To sum up, civic space, accountability and resources for civil society are the pillars for enabling civil society in the post-pandemic scenario.

**Prof. Sook Jong Lee** (Professor, Sungkyunkwan University and Former President and Senior Fellow of East Asia Institute, South Korea) shared the story of South Korea ODA and the foreign aid from private organisations. South Korea has made a great transformation from being a recipient country to now being a donor country. Post the Korean war (1950- 53), Korea had received tremendous American aid, military aid and also commercial aid for a long time. Eventually, the Korean economy took over. In 1987, the Korean government had formed Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) for promoting economic cooperation between Korea and other developing countries and in 1991 the government formed the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). These two entities have been important pillars of ODA that provides low-interest concessional loans and grant-based aid. The foreign ministry supervises KOICA, and the finance ministry supervises the EDCF. This linkage between grant-based ODA and concessional loan-based ODA often attracts criticism. Therefore, a committee for the International Development Assistance (IDA) was created under the Prime Minister's Office where they try to coordinate the two competing ministries for foreign aid. South Korea entered OECD DAC in 2010 intending to increase the volume of foreign aid, which was around 0.15% of their Gross National Income (GNI). But because of the pandemic, last year their congress increased the budget of ODA. This year they are committed to a \$3.2 billion ODA. Their focus has been Asia, but they are also increasing their support to the African countries. Currently, the proportion of aid to African countries has been increased to around 30%. To ensure aid effectiveness goal, the Korean government has reduced the number of countries that they were allocating the foreign aid to. South Korea through its Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP), implemented by their national think tank- Korea Development Institute, is sharing its development experiences with the other developing countries. Further, KOICA is allocating resources for public institutions to empower the government institutions under the name of good governance. However, there is criticism from Korea's civil society about not supporting enough local NGOs. Aligning the KOICA spending to SDG 16, they tried to assist the developing country's democratisation process. However, they want to avoid intervention into the local politics because they believe it infringes on national sovereignty issues of developing countries. Korea has reservations about the term 'democratic promotion' or 'democracy support'. Their alignment to SDG16 is more under the name of peace and governance in KOICA.

The Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Corporations (KCOC) is an umbrella organisation for the non-governmental civil society organisations that helps developing

countries. There are about 140 NGOs engaged in international development corporations and humanitarian assistance. They rely on less than 3% of the expenditure from Government funding. It signifies that all these private NGOs, that work for International Development, use their own money rather than getting money from the Korean government. They are more flexible in terms of engaging with local NGOs and also humanitarian assistance organisations.

Although the Korean civil society organisations are urging the Korean government to use more money for the public-private partnership, the number is less than 4%. As a result, the Korean government relies on government-to-government corporations, rather than using Korean CSOs or CSOs of developing countries to allocate development assistance. The Korean CSOs are also active in setting agenda, especially during the high-level aid effective conference in Busan. The CSOs pressed for a good rationale for the development assistance. They tried to integrate the development and the foreign aid, thereby, trying to distinguish from the western donors' perspective. At the same time, they tried to act as a bridge between the advanced donors and the developing recipient countries. They came up with development effectiveness and tried to identify the local NGOs in developing countries as a partner organisation to carry out their work.

**Dr. Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay** (Director, PRIA, India) presented a recent study that was done by PRIA with Asia Africa Democracy Forum jointly organised by the Community of Democracy and the Asia Democracy Network from 22nd to 24th November. The study explored the state of civil society engagement in seven regional or cross-regional multilateral institutions. These institutions included a group of G20, G7, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia), Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia- Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). These geopolitical entities are often seen as self-appointed groups of elite countries making decisions on behalf of the rest of the world. Many of these geopolitical formations are outside the framework of the UN. However, these are also vehicles of deepening development cooperation and generating coherent ideas to the global challenges of poverty, exclusion, inequalities and climate change.

Speaking of the platforms that are available to civil society organisations for engaging with all these formations, **Dr. Bandyopadhyay** explained that for G20 the engagement happens through Civil 20 (C20); for G7 the engagement happens through Civic 7 (C7); for BRICS it is the Civil BRICS Forum; for MIKTA there is no formal civil society forum but MIKTA engages quite a lot with the academic institutions and journalists network; for APEC too there is no formal civil society engagement but some engagement happens through APEC study centre/ consortiums<sup>1</sup>; for ASEM the engagement happens through Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF); and for ASEAN it is the Asian Civil Society Conference and ASEAN's People's Forum.

The study tries to explore some of the emerging issues and challenges of civil society engagement.

**First**, it explored the structures and processes of these institutions for civil society engagements –There has been great variation across these entities. In the case of G20 and G7, their mechanism structure and processes, through C20 and C7, were fairly well defined and institutionalised. It signifies that there have been regular meetings and engagements to discuss the emerging issues and concerns. For BRICS, although the Civil BRICS Forum has been taking place regularly since 2015, the processes were not well defined. For MIKTA, the

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<sup>1</sup> These consortiums are about 100 universities where they have established the APEC study centres, and their consortium facilitates the participation of civil society organisations.

engagement is primarily with the academic institution. For ASEM the engagement is through AEPF. AEPF has taken lead in engaging with the ASEM. In the absence of any institutionalised space for engagement between APEC and civil society, it continues to be a concern because so far, no intention has been exhibited from the APEC secretariat or policy support to engage with the civil society. Although the engagement between ASEAN and ASEAN People's Forum is not an official one, both often engage in dialogues and consultations.

**Second**, the study explored if civil society has prior access to information and agenda of the official meetings – this was a mixed experience. For G20 and G7, although the processes are well defined, civil society often did not receive prior information about the official agenda of the meetings. The experiences were almost similar for BRICS and MIKTA. However, it was slightly better in case ASEM and the representatives of AEPF often were invited to various ministry and working group meetings. A structured meeting often took place between ASEAN and AEPF.

**Third**, the study explored how regular was the engagement between ministerial meetings or group meetings and what happens between two summits – the G20 and G7 had some engagement with the C20 and C7 between summits but in the case of BRICS and MIKTA there was hardly any engagement between the summits. The event centricity dominated the engagement with civil society and most of the times government representatives or the ministries, which were responsible for hosting the summit displayed very little intention for regular engagement with the domestic civil societies. In the case of ASEM, some preparatory dialogues had taken place before the actual summit. But for APEC, it was not a priority at all.

**Fourth**, the study looked at how willing the governments were to engage with civil society, not only the constituent governments but intergovernmental agency as a whole – this was a subjective assessment and from the past trajectory one could assess that G20, G7, BRICS, ASEM and ASEAN had a better willingness to engage with civil society groups. However, it was imperative to explore which kind of civil society were they comfortable in engaging. This also brought the question of diversity in the civil society representation in C20, C7 and BRICS forums. This required much attention because most of the time the voices from the global south are missing. One of the primary reasons is the capacity of the civil society groups based in the global south to access resources to participate effectively in these forums. Mostly it is the international NGOs with global outreach and better access to Sherpas and sous Sherpas, who participate in the preparatory meeting of G20 and G7.

**Fifth**, the study explored how well were the suggestions or recommendations from the civil society received by these governments. This varied from year to year, country to country, depending on which country hosts the forum or summit – there were instances where the governments had shown positive responses and certain recommendations from the C20 and C7 had been incorporated in the official declaration. However, in the case of BRICS and MIKTA much as desired. Civil society groups from the global south often lacked their resources, access to the fund, qualified staff and insider knowledge which was required for effective advocacy at the global stage. The civil society groups that are active in the policy work are often based in the global north. Therefore, they have better access to certain kinds of governments and governmental processes. For BRICS, the Civil BRICS Forum in Russia and China was often organised by governmental affiliated think tanks, academic institutions or civil society groups which were close to the government. Unfortunately, in South Africa, Brazil and India, it followed a similar trajectory. The broader civil society engagement was much required if these institutions valued civil society engagement. There were three channels of civil society engagement: **One**, through people's processes. **Two**, the government recognised tracks that are officially recognised. **Three**, the official summit where



engagement was very restricted. The recommendations are seldom featured in the G20 declaration. For that matter, any other formations and civil society are also not engaged meaningfully in working groups.

**Sixth**, the study explored the question – Why should these institutions be engaging with civil society and what are the value additions that civil society can bring? Civil society can bring in its expertise. This expertise will come from their presence on the ground, insights from the grassroots, and how different domestic and international development policies are playing out in people's life – that expertise can be brought in by the civil society organisation. The value addition will be in holding the governmental and intergovernmental agencies accountable. Many times, declarations are made but they are not followed through. Therefore, civil society can play a role to monitor those promises. The value addition can also be in explaining the complex issues in simplified language and being mindful of the fact that most of these formations have a priority concern about the trade and economic issues. Civil society can bring in a lot of collaboration. It can provide a balance between engagement among multi-stakeholders. These entities are quite open to talking to the business and academic sectors. But unfortunately, the civil society engagement vis-à-vis these institutions requires much more attention.

There are a few recommendations that might improve civil society engagement.

- A deeper collaboration is required among the civil society. The [Troika](#) arrangement should be replicated in all these forums to provide continuity from one summit to the next summit. The civil society platform must be able to facilitate more meaningful participation from the Global South (from both – members countries and non-member states), particularly from the low-income countries and states. In doing so, these engagements must be more sustained for them to bring citizens' voices to the table.
- The transparent process of selection and participation of civil society groups must be ensured with an open application process. It should account for sufficient time for preparatory work before the actual forum. In the case of BRICS and MIKTA, most governments have shown a kind of reluctance or some doubts vis-à-vis the engagement of international NGOs. Therefore, there is a need to recalibrate the role of the international NGOs vis-à-vis their relationship with the national government based in the Global South.
- The Sherpas, sous Sherpas and higher officials must meet regularly with domestic civil society throughout the year. It seems that the working group meetings, which are normally organised in various thematic areas could be the preparatory ground for better engagement. One must also look at the mechanisms for formal monitoring and reporting and how to evaluate and hold all these governments accountable for the promises that they make in these summits.
- The most critical point is that an investment must be made to develop further capacities in the civil societies of the Global South. This will enable them to systemise the learning and therefore point out issues that have local and global relevance. Those issues must be communicated effectively not only in the civil society but also to other stakeholders. These engagements cannot be only with the government vis-à-vis these formations, therefore, the capacity to facilitate such multi-stakeholder dialogues must be supported.

In the light of the vaccine problematiques facing the world, **Dr. Tandon** asked the panellists to share the kind of efforts that have been made within their regional civil society organisations. Did civil society talk about gathering a coalition towards this end?

**Ms. Cruz** said that a coalition towards this end is missing. In fact, countries are confining themselves – borders have been closed. We have even accepted all these confinements and

restrictions in the name of health. So far there has not been an alternative proposal from civil society on this front. We have to rethink this in the post pandemics scenario.

**Prof. Lee** said many developing country's leaders have criticised the countries who were monopolising vaccines. There is nationalistic link, even in civil society. As a result, they are not urging their government to share vaccines or to release the patent of pharmaceutical companies to share the technology to make more vaccines. The global civil society has to fight and press the international organisations and pharmaceutical companies to share the technology so we can produce more vaccines and share with many countries.

**Dr. Bandyopadhyay** echoed **Ms. Cruz** and **Prof. Lee's** responses. In addition, he said that in a couple of regional dialogues that have happened this concern has been raised amongst civil society organisations in developing countries like India and other vaccine producing countries. But there has been no concerted effort towards building a network and challenging the vaccine-producing countries. There have been demands to share the technology, the knowledge and remove the patent. There is a need for providing financial support because accessing technology is one thing but producing it at a scale would require a huge amount of financial commitment. Since there is no direct contact with civil society organisations from many parts of Asia, we don't know what kind of discourse has been going on in China or Russian vis-à-vis their ability to cater to a large part of continents.

Following this, **Dr. Tandon** invited **Dr. Susana Moorhead** (Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee) to share her closing reflections on the future of Civil Society Engagement in Development Cooperation.

**Dr. Moorhead** said, '*the key thing in multilateral organisations is evolution not revolution and that the direction of travel is positive*'. She endorsed **Dr. Bandyopadhyay's** comment – *the multilateral architecture is changing*. In this light, she said that the boundaries between formality and informality are becoming increasingly blurred and that creates a huge opportunity for civil society to intervene. Having said that, civil society must also ensure effectiveness, transparency, and accountability. In the context of the pandemic, she said that there is a dangerous trend of countries turning in on themselves in response to the COVID crisis and as a result we have taken our eyes off the global responsibility. Civil society has a huge role to play in making the case for a global society. It is inconceivable to talk about development cooperation in 2021 without talking about civil society. DAC, since 2018, has been engaging with civil society in the form of formal dialogues – it's a work in progress. It is quite difficult to have a coherent dialogue with every member of civil society that is engaged in development cooperation. Southern voices are not represented enough in those dialogues. Therefore, the need is to make it a more balanced dialogue. In DAC's response statement to COVID in April 2020, civil society was prominently featured as DAC members knew that civil society had to be a big part of the response to the COVID crisis. Similarly, in the context of climate declaration, the issue is of adaptation, not mitigation. Adaptation is where civil society is needed to help and to give voice to the poor people who are already living with the consequences of climate change.

She echoed **Ms. Cruz's** comment that DAC's recommendation about respecting, protecting and promoting civic space is more important now than ever, given how some governments have used COVID to restrict the civic spaces. We have also witnessed the rise of authoritarianism in many countries. It is about supporting and engaging with civil society and not just instrumentalising them to deliver programmes. It requires a real shift in the mindset of governments. Civil society organisations need to be incentivised to become more effective,

transparent and accountable. The DAC recommendation is a blueprint for the future of DAC members. The key challenge is to find ways to implement it. We need peer review processes to assess what's working and what's not. A key role in this process would be that of triangular cooperation. There is a need for multilateral reform and how we take forward the emerging architecture that **Dr. Bandyopadhyay** sketched out. How do we make sure that the voices are heard?

Civil society must make the case for global development cooperation and the need to finance it more than ever given the pandemic and its aftermath. They need to be part of the solution not just to critique what governments' do. CSOs need to look at the bigger picture in their response to issues. Civil society is at its most powerful when it demonstrates how things can be done differently and assesses what works and what doesn't, in the endeavour to deliver better development outcomes for people. We need to be mindful of the financial aspect of the process. ODA will never be enough given that the demands on ODA have risen exponentially. There is a need to find other reliable sources of finance. How do we get foundations to pull the resource? How can we think innovatively about using the money that we have? The most persuasive argument is going to be about delivering impact at low cost, which is what local organisations can ensure.

Following **Dr. Moorhead's** presentation, **Dr. Tandon** shared his key takeaways from the discussion.

*'We must find a way to work together to help operationalise the above-discussed recommendations and triangular cooperation could be a platform or a mechanism where this can happen'*, said **Dr. Rajesh Tandon**. Without building a national and an international ecosystem we're not going to work, and this is a debate that we are having in India through the Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC). Indian civil society has engaged in domestic issues and influenced policy changes in the last 40 years but the same did not necessarily happen when in the context of international cooperation. To do that we need to put in place regulatory and political mechanisms. Further, he said that in this last year, think tanks have displaced grassroots level civil society work. They have emerged as a substitute or a surrogate voice that are more consulted with. In the last 15- 20 years, lots of think tanks have emerged that have been funded by private foundations or business foundations. Consequently, within our countries and sub-region, the mechanism of civil society has become very weak in the last 10- 15 years. We need intermediation mechanisms that can engage with multilateral bodies as well as national platforms.

Nobody wants to consult with the diversity of civil society. When it comes to engaging with policymaking process – which is a multilateral process, then there has to be a synthesis mechanism and this mediation requires think tanks. Academic think tanks, in this space, have done a great job. Perhaps, civil society needs to think about having some sub-regional mechanisms whereby consultative voices are filtered through to avoid parochial agendas entering the space. We need to work together with the private business and private foundations to figure out how some of those resources could be enabled. FIDC secretariat needs to become more independent so that it can undertake independent research and dialogue; right now, it's funded by the government. In the wake of the vaccination crisis, **Dr. Tandon** urges that at a global level civil societies should come together and work towards eliminating the vaccine-related inequities.

The conversation (samvad) ended with a vote of thanks by **Dr. Tandon** (Founder- President, PRIA).

*4.00 pm to 4.15 pm*

Welcome and Introduction to PRIA@40 Programmes and Conversation

Moderator: Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder President, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India

*4.15 pm to 4.40 pm*

Keynote Addresses

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, Research & Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), India

*4.40 pm to 5.20 pm*

Panel Discussion

- Dr Kaustuv Kanti Bandyopadhyay, Director, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India
- Ms Anabel Cruz, Founder Director, Communication and Development Institute (ICD) of Uruguay
- Mr Paul Okumu, Head, Secretariat, Africa Platform
- Prof Sook Jong Lee, Professor, Sungkyunkwan University and Former President and Senior Fellow of East Asia Institute, South Korea

*5.20 pm to 5.35 pm*

Open Discussion

*5.35 pm to 5.55 pm*

Deep Dive Conversation (closing round)

*5.50 pm to 6.58 pm*

Closing **Reflections**

Dr Susana Moorhead, Chair, OECD Development Assistance Committee

*6.58 pm to 7.00 pm*

Key Takeaways, Vote of Thanks and Closure

Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India



DATE	TITLE	THEME
12 August 2021	Youth Participation and Active Citizenship	Citizen Participation
20 August 2021	Planning for Urban Informalities	Sustainable Urban Future
31 August 2021	Accelerating Capacities in Civil Society and Non-Profits	Empowering Civil Society
2 September 2021	Nurturing Civil Society Partnerships in Uncertain Times	Empowering Civil Society
15 September 2021	Redesigning Civil Society Ecosystem: From Local to Global	Empowering Civil Society
28 September 2021	Unlearning Patriarchy: Expanding Impacts of Gender Training	Making the Gender Leap
30 September 2021	Investing in Civil Society Innovations	Empowering Civil Society
01 October 2021	Community-led Adaptations: Water is Life	Decentralised Community Governance
06 October 2021	Inspiring Leadership of Mayors and Councillors for Inclusive Urbanisation	Sustainable Urban Future
12 October 2021	Trajectories of Participation: From Development to Governance	Citizen Participation
20 October 2021	Scaling up Citizen Engagement for Inclusive Urban Governance	Sustainable Urban Future

01 November 2021	Gender Transformational Organisational Renewal: Towards Gender Equality	Making the Gender Leap
17 November 2021	Participation, Representation & Accountability: Strengthening the Movement	Decentralised Community Governance
23 November 2021	Making a difference: Adapting Impact Measurement	Empowering Civil Society
25 November 2021	Young Scientists Learning Open Science	Knowledge Democracy
26 November 2021	Institutionalising Online Citizen Participation in Public Policymaking in India	Citizen Participation
29 November 2021	Changing Contours of Development Cooperation: What Roles for Civil Society?	Empowering Civil Society