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Our Common Agenda: Building legitimacy for resilient futures in the Global South

Navam Niles

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**Our Common Agenda:
Building legitimacy for resilient
futures in the Global South**

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Preface

In September 2021, the United Nations Secretary-General presented his report "Our Common Agenda". The report responds to a member states' request part of the Declaration commemorating the United Nations' 75th anniversary in 2020. It identifies 12 areas for cooperation around three pillars: a renewal of our social contract, greater solidarity with young people and future generations, and a new global deal.

Southern Voice supported the process of drafting said report with input from African, Asian, and Latin American scholars. We tapped into our network's collective knowledge, synthesised in our COVID-19 Digital Knowledge Hub. It collects and classifies almost one thousand resources (publications, articles, videos, and podcasts) from the Global South. Bringing together this expertise, we ensure that southern perspectives are part of the global discussion on the future of the multilateral system.

This synthesis paper brings together the ample research produced by researchers that are part of Southern Voice. It informs on how to advance Our Common Agenda. After a thorough review of the knowledge produced, the author, Mr Navam Niles from CEPA-Sri Lanka, proposes a key goal to increase resilience. To do so, we should place special emphasis on increasing the legitimacy of national governments and of the multilateral system.

We hope that in the years to come, this synthesis guides some of the key global policy moments that are proposed by the Secretary-General, including the Transforming Education Summit, the Summit of the Future and the World Social Summit.

Rose Ngugi

Chair, Southern Voice

and

Executive Director, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)

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Abstract

In his call for global solidarity within societies and in the multilateral system, the Secretary-General of the United Nations acknowledged the reality of resilience in the world: no single individual, household, community, or country can hope to adequately respond to global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic; conversely, the multilateral system cannot support resilience unless its constituent units—especially states—are able to contribute to the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons. To achieve solidarity, and thereby resilience, the Secretary-General has proposed a renewed social contract within societies and a new global deal for the multilateral system. Fundamentally, both these proposals seek to strengthen the legitimacy of states and the various institutions of the multilateral system. The need for legitimacy—through inputs such as elections and outputs such as the provision of public goods—is critical both within societies and within the multilateral system. The absence of legitimacy makes it difficult for governments and international organisations to prepare for global shocks or cope with their consequences. Moreover, both types of legitimacy reinforce each other; trying to substitute one with the other is not a sustainable option. This study presents various practical recommendations, extracted from the collective research experience of Southern Voice think tanks, which could enhance both input and output legitimacy, and thereby contribute to the renewed social contract and the new global deal.

Author

Navam Niles is a researcher studying global governance and the provision of global public goods. He works as a research consultant at the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) on topics including 4IR, climate change, and sustainable development.



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Acronyms and abbreviations

ASIES	Association for Research and Social Studies
CIPPEC	Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth
GRADE	Group for the Analysis of Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
OCA	Our Common Agenda
UN	United Nations

A review of Southern Voice research for Our Common Agenda

Navam Niles

Introduction

In 2020, the United Nations (UN) marked 75 years at the centre of global governance. Since its inception, the organisation has grown from 51 to 193 members; it helped navigate the world through decolonisation and the Cold War; and has helped guide global action on emerging threats. However, 75 years of experience may be insufficient to address the challenges of an increasingly complex world. Nevertheless, to its credit, the UN has not yielded itself to complacency. Instead, to mark its anniversary, member states agreed on 12 areas of action in a commemorative declaration¹ to

reinvigorate the role of the United Nations henceforth (United Nations, 2021a). As mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, the Secretary-General prepared the report titled "Our Common Agenda – Report of the Secretary-General" with a framework and steps to materialise these commitments. Southern Voice was invited to become a 'knowledge partner' in the preparation of the report and highlight the perspectives from the Global South. To this end, Southern Voice members prepared diverse background notes on key issues based upon ongoing research and discussions and deliberations among experts in the Global South.

The Secretary-General's report is a first step towards accomplishing the 12 commitments of the UN75 Declaration. This occasional paper compiles insights from extensive research produced by Southern Voice-member think tanks by identifying priority areas and actions related to the UN75 Declaration and the OCA report. This synthesis



Solidarity is vital because no individual community or country has the sufficient capabilities to respond to global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹The declaration can be found at <https://www.un.org/pga/74/wp-content/uploads/sites/99/2020/06/200625-UN75-highlight.pdf>

of the perspectives of the Global South is based primarily on the various knowledge products compiled in the Southern Voice COVID-19 Digital Knowledge Hub (Southern Voice, 2020).

The study is organised into three sections. The first section presents the OCA report proposal. The second section outlines a framework in response to this proposal: only an improvement in legitimacy can result in a renewed social contract and a new global deal, which are not ends in themselves, but a means to resilience. Section three outlines the key recommendations to build legitimacy—both within member countries and global institutions—using the ideas and proposals produced by Global South think tanks, and members of the Southern Voice network.

Table 1. Glossary of terms

Legitimacy	Citizens' acceptance of a government or global governance institutions. Legitimacy depends on both the consent and performance.
Input legitimacy	The legitimacy resulting from the consent of individuals within the state and global stakeholders—including states—within international institutions.
Output legitimacy	The legitimacy resulting from performance, such as the actual provision of public goods and services by states and international institutions.
Renewed social contract	The result of improving both input and output legitimacy of states. According to OCA there are three foundations of a renewed social contract: first, trust; second, the inclusion, protection, and participation of individuals; third, measuring what is of value to humanity and the planet.
New global deal	An agreement for collaboration among states. According to OCA, there are two foundations of a new global deal: first, a protection of the global commons; second, the provision of global public goods.
Resilience	Within a country, resilience is the ability of individual, households, and communities within a country to recover from shocks like COVID-19 while maintaining or improving the 'meaningful choices' available. This depends on the input and output legitimacy of states. Within the multilateral system, resilience is the ability of countries to recover from global shocks, while maintaining or improving the 'meaningful choices' available to governments.

Sources: Elaborated by the author, based on World Bank (2013), United Nations (2021), and Strebel, Kübler, & Marcinkowski (2019).

An overview of our common agenda (OCA)

Solidarity is the overarching theme of the Secretary-General's report. The objective is to deepen solidarity both within and between societies (United Nations, 2021). Solidarity is vital because no individual community or country has the sufficient capabilities to respond to global shocks like the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

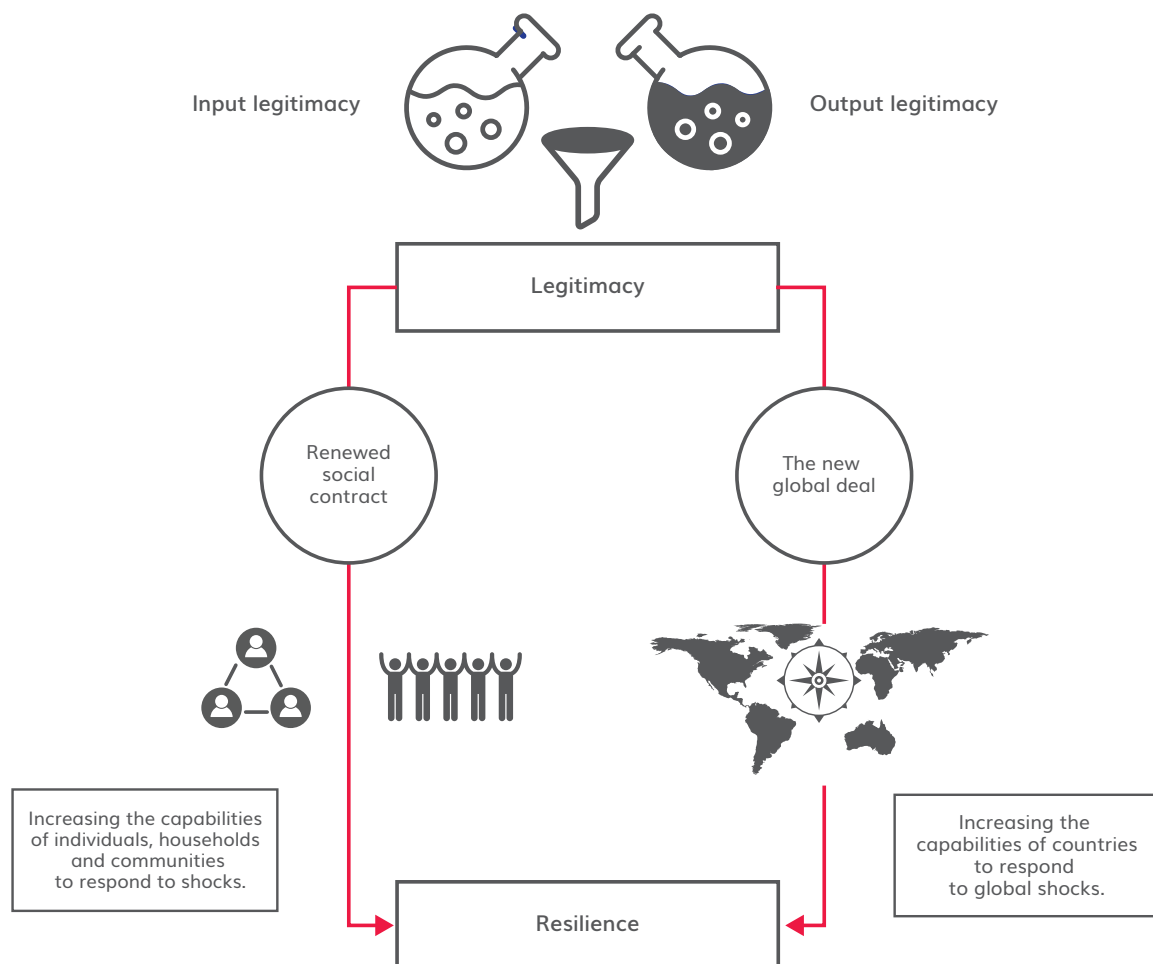
The Secretary-General proposes reinforcing the social contract with global solidarity. Global solidarity between states is determined by the various institutions of the current multilateral system. There are signs that the current institutions are failing to adequately address some of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century including the ongoing global pandemic. Therefore, the Secretary-General has proposed a new global deal to reform the "principles and practices of collective action" (United Nations, 2021). His proposal also envisions a deeper relationship with non-state actors and international governmental organisations. The UN Secretary-General presents the New Global Deal as a response to the broader systemic problems: the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons. The report identifies global commons that need urgent protection such as the high seas, the atmosphere, and Antarctica. The Secretary-General identified seven important global public goods: global health, information, global economy, healthy planet, science, peace, and digital space (or cyberspace) (United Nations, 2021). Moreover, to achieve this deal, the report further recommends the creation of "inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism." The new global deal is the means to achieving solidarity between countries.

Through a renewed social contract and a new global deal, global solidarity must also extend to a third part of OCA: youth and future generations. This is not merely a courtesy; it is a requirement of justice because the actions of current generations will invariably impact the future. Solidarity with younger generations will require societies to increase youth inclusion and participation within countries and multilateral institutions. Youth will also require better education and sustainable jobs (United Nations, 2021). Solidarity would also require long-term thinking and the consideration of youth interests when making decisions about the design of global public goods. The extension of solidarity to youth and future generations will also compliment the renewal of the social contract and reinforce the legitimacy of any new global deal.

A perspective from the Global South: building resilience through legitimacy

A common agenda should not be understood as an end in itself. Instead, the Secretary-General's call for global solidarity should be seen as a means to a greater end. Reviewing the priorities of research across the Southern Voice network it emerges that a new social contract and global deal should be the means to put societies on the pathway to resilience.

Figure 1. Framework: Legitimacy for resilience



Sources: Elaborated by the author, based on World Bank (2013), United Nations (2021),

Ultimate goal: Resilience

The renewed social contract and the new global deal must contribute to resilience. The resilience of people and countries should determine the success of both initiatives. Resilience refers to the “ability of people, societies, and countries to recover from negative shocks, while retaining or improving their ability to function” (World Bank, 2014). The resilience of any unit—ranging from individuals to entire countries—depends on exposure to shocks, the existing internal conditions, and the risk-management systems put in place to prepare for shocks and cope with its outcomes (Brown, 2015; World Bank, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates that reducing exposure to shocks is not an option for most societies. In this context, the most sustainable and far-sighted approach should continually strengthen risk-management systems across all countries, thereby enhancing resilience. For example, no government can create an economy with only remote-work opportunities, but every government can invest in healthcare and education, which are effective risk-management systems, and thereby enhance resilience of entire populations. Similarly, no country can completely remove itself from the global system of trade, investment, and migration. But that interdependence need not result in disaster if countries invest in prudent global public goods like disease eradication and financial stability, which would reduce the risk of systemic threats to international society.

Resilience of individuals, families, and communities

The renewed social contract should be a mechanism to improving the resilience of individuals, families, and communities, by strengthening their capabilities to manage risks. When capabilities increase, the range of choices in life—ranging from nutrition to employment—increase for individuals. Thus, resilience could be measured by comparing the choices that are personally meaningful (Sen, 2001) or that are chosen voluntarily by individuals after a shock. For example, in response to a lockdown, the choices available to low-skilled workers were fewer and inferior to the choices available to wealthier high-skilled workers who could work from home (Stanton & Tiwari, 2021).

When individuals, the state, and civil society are effective partners in the social contract, the result is a significant increase in risk-management capabilities. In contrast, where the state or other partners are missing or ineffective, people must try to self-produce public goods or look to market alternatives (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2020). In the face of the pandemic, the reality is that a large proportion of the population in the Global South is left to support themselves and navigate through uncoordinated and ill-defined responses (Charvet, 2021; Gutiérrez, Martín & Ñopo, 2020; Nanayakkara, 2020; Palansuriya, 2020). Therefore, a renewed social contract should strengthen the capabilities of individuals, families, and communities to manage risks. This should be done by expanding the pool

of collective resources and assisting people to convert those resources into meaningful outcomes, thereby increasing resilience. But in response to global systemic shocks, each person's resilience is connected to the resilience of larger aggregations of their society – extending to the state, and beyond, to the global governance system.

Resilience of countries and regions

A new global deal can improve the resilience of countries. Global resilience should be measured by comparing the 'meaningful choices' available to governments before and after shocks. For example, in response to the pandemic, while some countries were able to quickly recover from the economic repercussions, others have been presented with difficult choices between enduring economic damage to control the pandemic or resuming economic activity and risk overwhelming their health systems (Gavi Vaccine Alliance, 2020; The Economist, 2021c). The current global institutions have a direct impact on the resilience of countries because they determine the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons, both of which are critical to a government's ability to manage shocks. While the current global governance institutions—including the UN, World Bank, World Trade Organisation, and the World Health Organisation—have helped maintain international peace and contributed to economic growth and development, they have struggled with the challenges of this century (Deudney & Ikenberry, 2018; Stein, 2008). In the last two decades alone, these institutions have struggled to produce global public goods like disease surveillance, and a stable global economic system (e.g., global financial crisis of 2008-2009). These institutions have also struggled to protect the global commons, especially the climate and atmosphere (Falkner et al., 2021; Nordhaus, 2015). These failures risk the long-term security and stability of all countries, especially in the Global South, which is more exposed and less capable of responding to shocks. In response, the new global deal should strengthen the capabilities of governments to manage shocks, thereby increasing their resilience and, by extension, the resilience of individuals.

Resilience requires legitimacy

From a southern perspective, each part of OCA is unified by a common theme: legitimacy. It is the improvement in legitimacy that results in a renewed social contract and a new global deal, which in turn improve resilience. Without an improvement in legitimacy, it would be impossible to make a sincere claim of a renewed social contract or new global deal. Legitimacy can take two broad forms: i) input legitimacy, which refers to legitimacy that results from consent and democratic participation; and ii) output legitimacy, which results from the performance or quality of outputs – in this case, an improvement in resilience (Schmidt & Wood, 2019; Strebel et al., 2019). Both forms of

legitimacy complement each other. While governments and international agencies could attempt to make superficial changes to give an illusion of input legitimacy, it would be difficult to feign output legitimacy.

The renewed social contract: The legitimacy of the state

The legitimacy of a social contract is anchored in the legitimacy of the state, which should produce public goods and services. A state is considered legitimate because its citizens accept the legal order that justifies the state's existence (Schmidt & Wood, 2019). A state enjoys input legitimacy when citizens accept a legal order because they have consented to that order, usually through a democratic process (Schmidt & Wood, 2019). In contrast, a state enjoys output or performance legitimacy when citizens accept the legal order because it produces benefits for citizens (Schmidt & Wood, 2019; Strebel et al., 2019). Many wealthy liberal democracies can claim both input and output legitimacy (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021). Therefore, these states are more likely to be trusted and better equipped to create the public goods that can enhance an individual's own capabilities to contribute to national resilience. While poorer democracies may enjoy input legitimacy, they struggle with output legitimacy. In the long term, the consistent failure to enhance individual capabilities leads to a decline of input resilience, resulting in the growth of political apathy or even emigration (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021). Separately, there are authoritarian governments that seem to succeed with output legitimacy, but then struggle to govern effectively because they lack input legitimacy (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; The Economist, 2021a). The risk is that while such countries can effectively produce public goods and therefore enhance individual capabilities, the lack of public participation and trust may lead to inefficiencies (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Banerjee & Duflo, 2020) and even partial reversals of development gains. For the Global South, the most dangerous combination is the lack of input legitimacy and output legitimacy (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2020). In these countries, citizens hardly accept the legal order of the state and are often unwilling to trust and engage with the state. Meanwhile, governments are hardly willing to provide the minimum public goods and services necessary for building individual capabilities and therefore the resilience of their citizens (Messner De Latour, 2020; The Economist, 2021e). The diverse levels of legitimacy

 **The success of a new global deal will depend on the 'meaningful choices' a state can make in response to global shocks.**

across the Global South requires carefully designed interventions that must be tailored to each country's experience. Our research highlights some approaches that could support the call for a renewed social contract.

Southern Voice members have studied issues related to both forms of legitimacy. The research synthesis demonstrates the scope for increasing input legitimacy by creating more inclusive institutions through a combination of electoral reforms and political participation. The synthesis also explores the means for increasing output legitimacy by improving the capabilities of the state. Most importantly, the research shows it is not possible to substitute one type of legitimacy with the other. Governments that fail to include their citizens and seek their consent will struggle to develop the public goods that are necessary for enhancing individual capabilities, which are necessary for resilience.

The new global deal: The legitimacy of global institutions

The legitimacy of global governance institutions is more complicated than that of a nation state because it is distributed amongst a myriad of international treaties, customs, and organisations. However, there must be an increase in both input and output legitimacy. The call for inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism acknowledges the need for such legitimacy. Developing countries have consistently argued that despite their growing global significance, they are excluded and detached from global governance institutions. The result is a deep decline in the legitimacy of existing institutions, which manifests in the inability to adequately produce the necessary public goods or protect important global commons. To improve input legitimacy, existing institutions must re-examine the rules of membership and behaviour to accommodate the interests of developing countries. Meanwhile, even though states are still primarily responsible for any new global deal, the call to include more non-state actors—especially businesses, think tanks, and civil societies—should be welcomed if it increases diversity and does not overpower the voices of the developing world. Output legitimacy would also need to improve significantly to justify the time and attention that global governance requires from states, civil society, businesses, and others. All countries should be able to benefit from the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons. Global governance institutions are necessary to coordinate the collective action necessary for all member countries (Barnett & Sikkink, 2010; Stein, 2008). However, to be effective and produce tangible results, these institutions need to improve both 'compliance assistance' and 'compliance control' (Beyerlin & Marauhn, 2011). The former is critical to ensure the adequate provision of important 'weakest-link' public goods that may depend on the participation of less developed countries that are willing but unable to participate. Meanwhile, 'compliance control' is necessary to prevent 'free-riders' from undermining the provision of global public goods (Birnie, Boyle & Redgwell, 2009; Nordhaus, 2015; O'Neill, 2015). If, however,

the rules are arbitrarily enforced or if powerful countries routinely disregard the same rules, then the legitimacy of global governance institutions will be significantly damaged (Haas, 2004, 2017). Ultimately, the legitimacy of global governance institutions depends on the willingness of states to pool their sovereignty and participate in good faith.

In conclusion, we believe OCA should be a means to improve resilience. It is the consent and participation of various partners—in a social contract or a global governance institution—that will lead to a renewed social contract and a new global deal. Within societies, it is essential for the state in collaboration with other partners—individuals, families, and communities—to produce the necessary public goods and services that would make it possible for everyone to manage their risks and make 'meaningful choices,' which is the ultimate expression of resilience. Yet, an individual's capability to manage risks depends on the global risk management system that is collectively managed by diverse global governance institutions, which must be the focus of new global deal. The challenge is to increase the opportunities for consent and participation amongst developing countries and various other non-state actors. Meanwhile, states must strengthen their sovereign obligations towards global governance as well as enable the effective provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons. The success of a new global deal will depend on the 'meaningful choices' a state can make in response to global shocks. Global resilience could only be said to improve if it really improves the resilience of all countries, especially the Global South. Their resilience will be reflected in the 'meaningful choices' available to their governments, which do not involve, for instance, a compromise between economic security and the health of their citizens.

Recommendations

Based on the extensive work of scholars from Southern Voice during the pandemic, and the experiences observed across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the following recommendations focus on how to improve the legitimacy of states, particularly those in the Global South, and of global institutions. The perspectives provided by Southern Voices help realise the idea of solidarity within societies and between societies.

This section first introduces recommendations based on research from Southern Voice members that could improve the legitimacy of states, thereby contributing to the renewed social contract. Next, it introduces findings that could improve the legitimacy of global governance institutions, thereby contributing to the new global deal. Both these efforts should be measured by the resilience they produce within and between countries.

The renewed social contract

The following are recommendations that emerge from the research and analysis of Southern Voice scholars that can increase legitimacy at different levels.

Increasing the input legitimacy of states: creating and expanding inclusive partnerships between governments and society

1. Expand voting opportunities and explore alternative voting methods to preserve the electoral process and safeguard voting rights

One of the most important sources of legitimacy is the electoral system (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2020). Without elections, governments lack clear mandates and the legitimacy to implement new policies or reforms. Even amid a global pandemic, governments and civil society need to protect the electoral process and avoid postponing or cancelling elections beyond a reasonable period – usually measured in weeks or months. Governments should examine the space for alternative voting methods that are inclusive, accessible, and compatible with existing health measures. For example, Espacio Público, a Chilean think tank, argues that postal voting systems can produce a safe alternative to in-person voting (Álvarez & Ortiz, 2020). More advanced digital voting systems could be a sensible alternative depending on the infrastructure. But even unsophisticated measures like longer voting periods or more voting stations could support the electoral process.

2. Decentralise power and support local governments to secure consent and improve participation of citizens

Local governments have a more direct link to citizens and civil society as a whole. If local governments are accountable to their communities, they would have a stronger incentive to include and respond to local demands. The need for more local governance was made clear in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia because central governments struggled to coordinate action by themselves (Ahmed, 2020b; Aiyar & Krishnamurthy, 2020; Khan, 2020; Mbabazi, 2020; Raghunandan, 2020). For example, in Uganda, it was noted that local governments have performed a significant role in leading, designing, and deploying community-led initiatives to health crises (Mbabazi, 2020). Oldaeji (2020) argues that in Nigeria, decentralised approach that focuses on the local governments with the highest COVID-19 caseloads would be essential for effective management of the pandemic. Such local initiatives can improve the legitimacy of the state and the willingness of people to trust government responses because there is shorter democratic distance between local

governments and voters. The ability to participate and express consent is important for both trust and accountability.

3. Establish independent oversight mechanisms to improve the transparency and responsiveness of government agencies

The pandemic created the opportunities to tackle institutionalised corruption (Tchintian & Böhmer, 2020). There is a real chance for political parties to leverage this sensitivity to gain an advantage in future elections (Tchintian, 2020). Without such efforts, receiving increased funding and staffing for bureaucracies could be unsuccessful (Público, 2020a). This is because without transparency and accountability, there is little incentive to develop the necessary capabilities—ranging from tax collection to effective bureaucracies—to produce and effectively deploy the public goods. Independent oversight will be an important part of the process and will require, amongst other things, the right to information, an independent judiciary, free press, and an engaged civil society (Público, 2020b). Together, transparency and accountability can improve the legitimacy of the state by making it more responsive to the needs of citizens.

4. Invest in social safety nets and public services that strengthen the capabilities of women

Women are critical to the economy and the social fabric of a society. Yet, they are often systematically excluded from the social contract; therefore, the state rarely allocates resources to strengthening the capabilities of women (International Monetary Fund [IMF], UN Women & United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2021). Around the world, women were at the forefront of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic – they accounted for more than 70% of the health and social care workforce. Yet, the pandemic was more likely to push more women than men into extreme poverty – from 11.7% in 2019 to 12.5% in 2021 (IMF, UN Women & UNDP, 2021). Moreover, women all over the world account for the bulk of unpaid household work and childcare, which exacerbated difficulties to return to employment. The conditions are worse in much of the Global South: in low-income countries, women account for over 80% of the informal workforce, which has less security and safety than formal labour. Women are disproportionately tasked with producing collective goods and services like education, childcare, and healthcare (Dwivedi & Singh, 2020; Gender in Latin America Working Group, 2022). Female participation is limited by formal and informal institutions. This has been exacerbated by the disproportionate economic impact on women: they are often economically secluded or limited to working in the informal sector and disproportionately burdened with unpaid

care work (Sivaraman, 2020). For example, in Bangladesh, the majority of the 4.1 million apparel workers are women, but most of these workers are likely to be in the informal sector (95.4% of women in the labour force in Bangladesh work in the informal sector) (Antara, 2020b; UN Women, 2021). Elsewhere, Southern Voice members noted that the pandemic threatens to further weaken women's economic power because informal work is difficult to perform remotely (Langou, 2020) and because women are leaving the workforce to take care of their families at home (Albrieu, 2020). Their lack of economic power makes it difficult to organise and lobby for political power. Therefore, governments are insensitive or unaware of the demands and expertise women can bring to public policy. It was also noted that the pandemic also exacerbated problems of domestic violence because victims were unable to leave their homes or get assistance from outside (Mahpara, 2020). The loss of economic security for women may have also made it difficult for women to voluntarily leave abuse relationships. Any response to these problems would require empowering women. Enabling feminist activism can give governments the incentives and the information to develop public goods and services that enhance resilience for everyone.

5. Expand partnerships to create inclusive and durable economic reforms

Economic reforms that improve the value added per capita are an important response to global economic shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. Often, such reforms include liberalising markets, encouraging more competition, enabling more capital- and scale-intensive economic activity, and facilitating 'creative destruction' (Banerjee & Duflo, 2020). However, designing effective reforms requires the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders including government agencies, businesses, and civil society. Without their participation, governments may design ineffective reform packages or fail to target its capabilities. For example, the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) noted that agricultural reforms in response to the pandemic have not resulted in the promised outcomes because there had not been adequate consultation with and feedback from stakeholders (Krishnamurthy & Aiyar, 2020; Pohit, 2020). Such failed or ineffective reform efforts threaten to undermine the broader legitimacy of the state and weaken the political support for reform. Stakeholders should be included in the design and deployment of reforms, even if that means implementing 'second-best solutions.'

6. Open the social contract to marginalised communities, particularly those in the informal sector

The existence of an informal sector is evidence of an exclusive social contract, where some people are systematically denied a partnership that produces and distributes

collective benefits. It also means that the state lacks significant input legitimacy. The informal sector often constitutes a large part of the economy in much of the Global South. Southern Voice members in South Asia recorded problems in the apparel (Antara, 2020a; Rahman, 2020; Sultan, Chowdhury, Naim, Hossain, Islam & Huq, 2020), three-wheeler (Silva & Arunatillake, 2020), tea (Dissanayaka, 2020), and tourism (Wickramasinghe & Ratnasiri, 2020), and agriculture sectors (Dissanayaka, 2020), as well as small and medium enterprises in general (Ahmed, 2020a; Javed & Ayaz, 2020). One impediment to increasing their inclusion is the lack of data. The Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), a Southern Voice-member think tank from Sri Lanka, noted how the lack of data resulted in governments struggling to mobilise pandemic relief responses (Munas, 2020). A similar problem was recorded across Latin America. In Peru for instance, the Group for the Analysis of Development's (GRADE) research revealed that a substantial number of self-employed workers already lacked access to public support systems and were particularly vulnerable to the economic disruption caused by the pandemic (Ñopo, 2020). Similarly, in Ecuador (Ortiz & Valencia, 2020) and Guatemala (The Association for Research and Social Studies [ASIES], 2020b), governments struggled to provide support for hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers in sectors with a large informal workforce, such as tourism. In response, Southern Voice-member think tanks noted that governments should partner with non-state actors that have experience working with individuals and entities in the informal sector. These include civil society organisations, businesses groups, trade unions, and others. These entities can help supply information that enhance the state's capabilities to design, develop, and deploy resources that increase resilience, such as in pandemic relief or economic assistance packages.

Improving output legitimacy of states: Enhancing capabilities to manage risks

1. Embrace innovative technology to maintain critical state capabilities

The pandemic has made it difficult, sometimes impossible, for governments and bureaucracies to function normally. However, the state can only maintain its legitimacy if it is constantly functioning. Innovative technologies—ranging from remote work to the digitisation of public services—can enable states to maintain critical functions without exacerbating the impacts of a pandemic. The Center for the Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) studied over 70 countries and found extensive examples of incorporating technology to adapt to a post-Covid reality. Brazil, for instance, resorted to remote work to debate and vote on parliamentary bills (Tchintian & Abdala, 2020). Much of the remote work modalities are enabled by readily available commercial technologies including Zoom, Microsoft

Teams, and Google Workspace. If remote work modalities can be extended to other sectors of state business and the provision of public services, the state can improve its capabilities with extraordinarily little cost.

2. Use the principles of comparative advantage and subsidiarity to delineate the responsibilities of different government levels

The central government may have a comparative advantage in finance and technical capability, but local governments may be in a better position to evaluate the demand and effectively deploy the resources produced at the central level. Taken together, these principles suggest that central governments should avoid creating ad hoc or parallel structures to deploy resources at the local level. In Pakistan, for example, the central government's COVID-19 economic relief packages overlapped the various fiscal initiatives of the

provincial government, raising the risk of duplication and waste (Ahmed, 2020b). Central governments, which have significantly more economic and technical resources than local governments, must support local governments that need additional capabilities. Local governments lack the ability to easily substitute lost revenues or push through support packages that would require national coordination. The need for such support was highlighted in Pakistan (Ahmed, 2020b), India (Aiyar & Krishnamurthy, 2020), Nigeria (Oladeji, 2020), and Uganda (Mbabazi, 2020).

3. Include non-state actors such as civil society groups, think tanks, and businesses in the co-production of public goods and services to strengthen resilience

Many countries lack competent bureaucracies or face challenges that exceed their capabilities. But Southern Voice's research highlights the potential of various non-state actors that can complement a state's capabilities. Including these non-state actors in the design and implementation of policies can also strengthen the legitimacy of government efforts by improving the output of public goods and providing opportunities for marginalised voices to influence public policy (ASIES, 2020a; Group for the Analysis of Development [GRADE], 2020; Jayawardena, 2020;



The potential of various non-state actors can complement a state's capabilities and strengthen its legitimacy.

Kathun, 2020a; Ngubwagye, 2020; Sultan et al., 2020). More importantly, it can raise public awareness to existing government capabilities; the lack of awareness is often due to the large informal sectors and the inability of governments to effectively communicate with recipients (De Mel et al., 2013; Mishra & Das, 2020; Saadat, 2020).

4. Increase awareness of existing government capabilities through civil societies and business groups

Many Southern Voice members observed the lack of knowledge of state capabilities among various target groups: individuals, families, local businesses, immigrants, etc. In Guatemala, for example, even when the government was responding to the pandemic, the potential recipients had little knowledge of available relief measures such as financial assistance or legal protections; some who had knowledge, struggled to access them (GRADE, 2020). The reasons could range from the prevalence of informality to the lack of effective communication mechanisms. However, these gaps can also be overcome by partnering with non-state actors and extending support to local governments. These efforts can help extend awareness of available relief measures and help qualified recipients access those them.

5. Provide economic migrants with access to public goods and services

Migrants can often constitute significant parts of the labour force within countries. In 2017, the Middle East had the highest proportion of migrant workers as a proportion of the total workforce (40.8%), followed by North America (20.6%), and Europe (excluding Eastern Europe – 17.8%) (International Labour Organisation, 2021). However, economic migrants lack the political rights of native citizens; host governments often have little political incentive to provide them with capabilities to manage risks and strengthen their resilience. The consequences can include the disruption of local economies, the loss of livelihoods for migrants, and the unintentional spread of disease as migrants are forced to relocate (Valsecchi & Durante, 2020). In Bangladesh, for example, economic migrants are critical to important economic industries like apparels (Antara, 2020a; Sultan et al., 2020). Moreover, once pandemic response measures like lockdowns were initiated, many economic migrants were unable to afford urban living costs (Singh, 2020). These problems are clearly exacerbated by informality: in Sri Lanka, for example, 89% of temporary workers do not work under a contract (Jayawardena, 2020). Similarly, in Latin America, economic migrants often lack access to formal state support. As economic migrants to urban centres were forced to return home during the COVID-19 pandemic, they often lacked any targeted support from government agencies (Pajita, 2020). If governments start counting, considering, and consulting migrants, they can improve the quality

of public goods and services available. A clearer picture could help governments provide adequate financial and technical resources. It could also help design specific public goods tailored for migrant communities. Conversely, recipients will have a better knowledge of the resources available to increase their resilience.

6. Create public housing and quality jobs to help reduce urban- and rural-poverty

The pandemic has further entrenched urban- and rural-poverty. In South Asia, for example, over 161 million full-time jobs (40-hours per week) were lost (Saadat, 2020) in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Bangladesh, for instance, the pandemic resulted in high unemployment rates for urban slum-dwellers (71%) and rural poor (55%) (Saadat, 2020). In Pakistan, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SPDI), a Southern Voice-member think tank, argued that around 2.5 million poor households (where individual adult expenditure falls below PKR 3,250/USD 17 per month), about one-fifth of the total, lived in rented homes. Moreover, 80% of those households depend on jobs in vulnerable sectors – often characterised by informality and the lack of state support (Javed, 2020). This meant the pandemic was likely to reverse years of progress in reducing poverty levels amongst the urban- and rural-poor (Munas, 2020). Similar challenges were recorded in South American countries. In Peru, GRADE noted over 400,000 new unpaid family workers during the first year of the pandemic (Pajita, 2020). In rural areas, it noted an increase in unpaid work and a return to subsistence employment. Despite these economic problems, governments have struggled to develop the capabilities that can protect these groups from shocks. In Argentina, CIPPEC noted that only selected groups of workers could maintain their capabilities to manage risks. This is because of a combination of human capital, employment opportunities, and access to public infrastructure. For example, in response to a lockdown only some workers could effectively switch to teleworking because they had the right type of jobs and the necessary information communication technology (ICT) at home. Part of the reason is the labour market itself: less than 30% of jobs can be performed remotely (Albrieu, 2021). Most of these jobs by high-skilled workers who have access to in urban areas. These same problems also mean that the urban- and rural-poor are more likely to be unaware of government capabilities or may have a heightened distrust of efforts to help them.

7. Prioritise education to increase resilience and opportunities for decent jobs

The state must develop the capability to produce adequate educational opportunities because a good education is a public good. However, the pandemic has devastated education opportunities for millions of children in the developing world because of the

lack of adequate information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, the slow distribution of vaccines, and inadequate resources for safe learning spaces. Southern Voice-member think tanks have attempted to predict the consequences of this disruption. There is broad consensus—from Latin America to South Asia—that the pandemic threatens to increase the school dropout rate (Cardini, 2020; Jahan, 2020; Ranjan, 2020). Existing inequalities in technology as well as information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure (Jahan, 2020), could further exacerbate inequalities in the future labour force. In most societies in the Global South, these inequalities will be disproportionately felt by women and marginalised groups (Ranjan, 2020). It could also reverse years of progress in reducing child labour and increasing female school enrolment (Ranjan, 2020). Current weaknesses in education also mean that much of the labour force in the Global South cannot work remotely due to a lack of digital skills (Albrieu, 2020). A highly educated workforce is in a better position to participate in the high-skilled services and knowledge sectors of the economy. However, these changes would require investing in capabilities to produce better educational outcomes for everyone (Saadat, 2020). Investing in education has no real disadvantage: children can develop better skills, parents can spend more time working, and the economy can benefit from more educated workers.

8. Prioritise healthcare to prevent, reduce, or control the impacts of global health shocks like COVID-19

Even prior to the pandemic, the Global South spent extraordinarily little on healthcare compared to high-income countries in the Global North. Prior to the pandemic, The Economist (2017) found that the health expenditure of low-income countries was only 0.7% of health expenditures in high-income countries. Comparatively, lower-middle-income countries spent just 1.7%, and upper-middle income countries spent about 10% of what high-income countries spent on healthcare. This means that monitoring, preventing, and reducing the spread of a pandemic in the Global South is challenging. States must develop adequate healthcare capabilities because high life expectancy and low disease burden has positive externalities. However, the pandemic threatens the lives of millions (Eberstadt, 2019). As of May 2021, The Economist estimated that COVID-19 had killed 7-13 million people worldwide (The Economist, 2021b). The lack of state capabilities to produce adequate healthcare solutions was noted by Southern Voice-member think tanks in every region of the Global South. An important widespread problem was the lack of data (Aquilino, 2020; La Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo [FUNDAUNGO], 2020; GRADE, 2020). Many of the countries with large informal sectors and urban slums did not have the adequate data to monitor or control the spread of the disease (GRADE, 2020; Apuuli, 2020; Kathun, 2020b; Kornegay, 2020). As a result, the pandemic disproportionately affected the

most vulnerable (Kathun, 2020b). Another widespread problem was inadequate healthcare spending (Kornegay, 2020). However, it was also noted that governments struggled to mobilise existing resources. In India, for example, less than 60% of the total National Health Mission (NHM) budget was utilised. Hospitals in India utilised less than 40% of the funding available for upgrades (Aiyar, 2020). This may be due to bureaucratic inertia and the absence of political incentives at the local levels, which would further strengthen the case for decentralised healthcare (Kasalirwe, 2020). In response, building good healthcare systems—from community health surveillance to hospitals and vaccines—will produce few regrets for governments. A healthier population will be a more productive population.

9. Create risk management systems to absorb temporary shocks to critical economic sectors

Countries in the Global South should start building effective risk reduction methods by investing in information, protection measures, and insurance schemes to sustain sectors of the economy in times of crisis. The pandemic has negatively affected important industries across the Global South: agriculture (Dissanayaka, 2020; Kornegay, 2020), oil & gas (Lamunu, 2020; Muntaka, 2020; Ngubwagye, 2020), manufacturing (Karanja, 2020; Mera, Karczmarczyk & Petrone, 2020), transportation (Silva & Arunatillake, 2020), and tourism (ASIES, 2020a, 2020b; Ortiz & Valencia, 2020; Wickramasinghe & Ratnasiri, 2020). Some countries, like Nigeria, were particularly vulnerable to shocks because of their high dependence on the oil and gas sector (Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020). All the affected countries have experienced unemployment in these sectors and reduced economic growth (ASIES, 2020a; Ortiz & Valencia, 2020). This illustrates the absence of risk management measures, such as fiscal buffers or emergency funds.

The new global deal

The following are recommendations that could improve the legitimacy of global governance institutions, thereby contributing to a new global deal, which could improve the resilience of countries

Improving input legitimacy of global institutions: inclusive and networked multilateralism

1. Start with a smaller club of countries that are able and willing members before expanding to universal membership

Sometimes, a small group of countries with similar interests and incentives can produce certain public goods. The advantage of producing club goods is that the ambition of the effort does not have to be reduced as much as it would for a universal public good. Moreover, once the benefits of the public good are clear, it may provide incentives for others to join. One use of this approach would be to set a carbon price for emissions (Niles, 2021b). Countries with similar economic development rates could work together to create climate clubs, in which they can maintain a minimum price for carbon in that economic region. Once that price is set, countries can trade emissions based on that price. To prevent 'free-riding,' member countries can also uniformly impose tariffs on non-members. This approach can be used in other domains of governance. However, any such efforts must comply with existing international norms and treaties. There must also be a good faith effort to provide non-members with an opportunity to join such clubs, allowing them to contribute and share in the benefits.

2. Create more inclusive trade networks by liberalising trade and supporting mechanisms that benefit the Global South

International institutions need to liberalise trade and investment in industries where the Global South is competitive. The COVID-19 pandemic has already had a significant and immediate impact on their economic trade (Antara, 2020b; FARO Group, 2020; Ka, 2020). One example is agriculture, which employs large parts of the labour force in Global South economies. It should be noted that the Global North has heavily protected its agricultural sector from competition (World Trade Organisation, 2013). Another area is low value-added manufacturing. Again, firms in the Global South have an advantage, but the increasing risk of protectionism in the Global North threatens to limit opportunities available to firms in the Global South, contributing to premature de-industrialisation (Rodrik, 2016). A third area of interest would be digitisation and the digital economy. Many developing countries can use the digital economy to compete with firms in the Global North (Arambepola, 2020; Palansuriya, 2020). However, risks of protectionism and limitations on technology transfer, threaten potential gains. In response, there is an urgent need to revive international trade negotiations and work to strengthen dispute settlement mechanisms at the World Trade Organisation.

3. Strengthen and update the global norms of due diligence and justice for lenders

A serious obstacle to an effective pandemic response is the debt burden. With large debts, countries have had less fiscal space to provide pandemic relief measures including targeted stimulus packages. A prominent example was the EAC-5 countries

(East African Community-5 countries: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda), showing pressures related to high debt (Owino, 2020). The debt servicing obligations have forced these countries to balance their debt-servicing obligations with their COVID-19 relief measures (Ekeruche, 2020). The same problem was also recorded in South Asia (Centre for Poverty Analysis et al., 2021). Many countries in the Global South experienced vast reductions in remittances, tourism, and exports to developed countries, all of which weaken the ability to service debts. In response, Southern Voice-member think tanks noted the absence of norms for sustainable debt management, especially when facing an unprecedented crisis. The risk is that the pandemic can create long-term economic and developmental reversals, ranging from poverty eradication to the development of export industries, which could then undermine global security and development (The Economist, 2021e; World Bank, 2021). The IMF and other institutions need to create new norms for accessing bilateral or multilateral aid. The norms must address perverse incentives, which bestow unsustainable debt to developing countries as well as a lack of technical capabilities to effectively use the debt for long-term economic growth and development.

4. Establish a Global Public Goods Index to monitor the provision of global public goods by individual states

Given the importance of global public goods, an index that tracks the provision of global public goods could produce incentives for good behaviour. A global public goods index would track the provision of public goods in various domains of international governance including environment, health, and security (Niles, 2021a). By measuring the gap between contributions and benefits, it would recognise the contributions of countries and highlight the 'free-riders' or 'weak-links.' This sort of index can help guide investment decisions and provide a basis for negotiations in international organisations. Even a soft power advantage can produce a positive incentive to contribute, or at least avoid undermining, global public goods. Such an index could be developed separately through a partnership of think tanks or institutions from the Global North and the Global South.

Improving output legitimacy of global governance institutions: effective multilateralism is necessary for producing public goods and protecting the global commons

1. Use regional institutions to increase the effectiveness of global public goods

Countries in the same region often have common political and economic interests. This is because the closest interactions—including, identity, and security—are with

immediate neighbours (Best & Christiansen, 2008). These interests provide a strong justification for building institutions that allow countries in a specific region to mobilise collective action and produce regional public goods (Apuuli, 2020). For example, Southern Voice-member think tanks noted the relevance of regional trade and investment systems such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) (Kornegay, 2020). Other regional organisations, such as the West African Health Foundation (WAHF), have been identified as ideal mechanisms to produce regional public goods like disease surveillance and coordinated vaccine logistics (Fenny, 2020). This is because the immediate impacts of a shock are often felt in the immediate geopolitical area; thus, any effective response must also involve collective regional action. Improving regional organisations in response to a shock has a clear precedent. For example, the East African Community (EAC) helped coordinate a response to an Ebola outbreak in the region and this knowledge was used to respond to COVID-19 (Apuuli, 2020).

2. Formalise public-private partnerships involving intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), states, and non-state actors to create an enhanced version of COVAX

Perhaps the best example of international cooperation to produce a global public good is the development of the COVAX programme, a vaccine sharing programme designed for the Global South (Gavi Vaccine alliance, 2020). This initiative shows the possibility of combining various public goods. It combined vaccine research produced in a handful of developed countries with the disease surveillance programmes across the entire world to manage the mutations of the COVID-19 virus. However, the pandemic also showed the limitations of COVAX: it is vulnerable to vaccine nationalism and the efforts of powerful buyers and producers to control the stocks of vaccines (Nwagbo, 2021) (The Economist, 2021c). As of January 2022, low income countries had only received 12 doses per 100 people; in contrast, high-income and upper-middle income countries administered more than 160 doses for every 100 people (The Economist, 2022b). It is also limited by supply problems and claims that intellectual property rights limit the production of vaccines (The Economist, 2021d). An ideal solution would be to formalise and metamorphosise COVAX into an enhanced version: COVAX+. This enhanced version could be used to fund research on vaccine development programmes within COVAX-recipient countries and help produce vaccine breakthroughs, while bypassing the problem of intellectual property rights. By supporting the development of production capabilities in various countries, COVAX+ could also prevent the supply shortages that have led to the unequal distribution of vaccines across the world. Moreover, if more countries are provided with the ability to conduct routine genomic surveillance, the ability to track, identify, and respond to diseases can improve significantly (World Health Organization, 2022).

Conclusion

The Secretary-General's call for a renewed social contract and a new global deal emphasises the reality that no single person, household, community, or country can respond to global shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of such a reality. Yet, renewing a social contract or building a new global deal requires sincere efforts that improve the legitimacy of states and global governance institutions. Without a corresponding improvement in legitimacy, no claim of a renewed social contract or a new global deal can be seriously examined. This is because neither of these efforts are ends in themselves: there is no need to renew the social contract or reform global governance institutions for the sake of renewal and reform. Instead, these efforts should be seen as a means to a greater, tangible, and measurable end: the improvement of resilience. Any improvement in the resilience of individuals, households, and communities within countries depends on the extension of resilience in international society through the provision of global public goods and the protection of the global commons. Resilience at home and abroad complement each other because resilient societies can contribute to a resilient global order. Moreover, a resilient global order can provide Global South societies with enhanced capabilities to narrow the inequality gap with the Global North.

Therefore, the UN must lead global actors in strengthening efforts to improve legitimacy. Within countries, this should involve strengthening democratic norms and assisting governments to effectively produce public goods and services. Meanwhile, all the stakeholders of the global world order—states, intergovernmental organisations, and non-state actors—must seriously work to reform the institutions of global governance. This should involve creating more inclusive rules of membership and empowering global institutions to produce global public goods and protect the global commons.

The Southern Voice network is already contributing to the effort to improve legitimacy, and it will continue to monitor resilience across the Global South. Our work can help renew the social contract across the Global South and create a new global deal that will improve resilience across the globe. We welcome everyone who wants to be part of our efforts.

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