

Powering the Global Food and Nutrition Agenda

Leveraging the Frameworks of South-South (SSC) and South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

The world is entering a new era of uncertainty in food and agriculture. Climate change, geopolitical conflicts, supply chain disruptions, trade restrictions, and economic volatility are placing unprecedented pressure on global food systems. Ensuring food and nutrition security for a growing population can no longer be the responsibility of individual nations alone. It demands stronger international collaboration, particularly among developing countries that share similar agricultural realities and development aspirations. In this context, South-South Cooperation (SSC) and South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) are emerging as powerful frameworks for building resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food systems.

The Global South is home to nearly 85 percent of the world's population and accounts for a substantial share of global agricultural production. Countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East face common challenges, including climate vulnerability, fragmented landholdings, water scarcity, post-harvest losses, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to finance and technology. These shared realities make collaboration not only desirable but essential.

Unlike the traditional donor-recipient model, SSC is founded on mutual respect, equality, and the exchange of practical knowledge and successful development experiences. Solutions developed under comparable socio-

economic conditions are often more relevant, affordable, and scalable. Countries such as India, Brazil, Vietnam, and several African nations have demonstrated successful models in agricultural transformation that can be effectively adapted across the Global South.

South-South Triangular Cooperation further strengthens this approach by combining the experience of developing countries with the financial resources, technical expertise, and research capabilities of multilateral institutions and development partners. Organizations such as FAO, IFAD, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, CGIAR, and other UN agencies



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increasingly recognize SSTC as one of the most effective mechanisms for accelerating agricultural innovation and strengthening food systems.

Recent global events have reinforced the urgency of such cooperation. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragility of international supply chains, while the Russia-Ukraine conflict and recent tensions affecting Gulf shipping routes disrupted grain, fertilizer, and energy markets. At the same time, recurring droughts, floods, and extreme weather events continue to threaten agricultural production worldwide. These disruptions have highlighted the risks of excessive dependence on a limited number of suppliers.

Expanding agricultural trade among countries of the Global South presents enormous opportunities. Many developing economies produce complementary commodities and possess comparative advantages that remain underutilized because of regulatory barriers, weak logistics, and limited institutional cooperation. At the same time, rapid advances in digital agriculture, AI, satellite applications, biotechnology, climate-smart farming, and mechanization are transforming agriculture. Structured platforms for sharing these technologies can accelerate agricultural modernization at affordable costs while strengthening resilience to climate change.

An increasingly important dimension of global food security is the emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as strategic partners. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman have placed food security at the centre of their national development strategies. Through investments in overseas agriculture, food processing, logistics, cold chains, controlled-environment farming, and agri-food technologies, they are helping reshape global food value chains. Their capital and long-term investment capacity complement the agricultural resources of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, creating opportunities for sustainable production, resilient supply chains, and greater food security.

The private sector must become a central pillar of SSC and SSTC. Agribusinesses, financial institutions, technology companies, startups, development finance organizations, and impact investors can accelerate technology transfer, investment, value addition, market access, and rural entrepreneurship. Strong public-private partnerships are essential to translating policy dialogue into measurable outcomes for farmers and consumers. Countries like India can offer valuable expertise in dairy, cooperatives, seed systems, climate-resilient farming, millets, and digital agriculture.

Global platforms that convene governments, international organizations, businesses, researchers, universities, and farmers are becoming increasingly important. Beyond policy dialogue, they can facilitate investment partnerships, innovation exchange, trade promotion, and collaborative action. Institutions such as the World Economic Forum, FAO, the World Bank, the African Union, and the World Agriculture Forum can play an important role in strengthening agriculture diplomacy, fostering international partnerships, mobilizing investment, and advancing practical solutions for sustainable food systems.

The future of global food security will depend not only on increasing production but on building resilient partnerships that promote innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity. South-South Cooperation and South-South Triangular Cooperation have evolved beyond development assistance into strategic instruments of global food governance. By combining knowledge, technology, investment, and political commitment, the countries of the Global South can transform common challenges into shared opportunities and build a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable global food system for future generations.

