

 Global Perspectives

# GERMANY AND THE NEW SOUTH

*VOICES  
INSIGHTS  
EXPECTATIONS*

# PREFACE

The distribution of power in the international system is changing, a number of countries around the world are significantly more influential today than they have ever been. The rise of these nations has resulted in a multipolar world in which there are more competing ideologies and alternatives for partnerships. While the way of life in Western countries remains attractive, other states are becoming selective on issues on which they align with the West. A new international order is on the rise and has yet to be defined.

At the heart of *Global Perspectives*' mission is the mandate to establish and uphold mutual dialogue between international actors and decision makers. Enabling a multi-perspective dialogue on solving global issues is one of *Global Perspectives*' core strengths. Enabling these dialogues in the midst of the geopolitical shifts we are experiencing as a global community is crucial to allow for better understanding and form new partnerships.

In April 2024, *Global Perspectives* initiated an Expert Commission to develop recommendations for Germany's role, credibility and responsibilities in a changing, complex and contested world. To prepare for the Commission's work, *Global Perspectives* interviewed 10 experts from countries in the Global South - from *India* and *Pakistan*, to *Ghana*, *Cameroon*, *Senegal*, *Mauritius* to *Brazil* and *Ecuador* - to get their insight into what the perception of Germany is in their respective countries. In interviews conducted from April to June 2024 the experts were asked about the areas in which German development policy is viewed particularly positively or negatively as well as the challenges and opportunities they see in future cooperation with Germany.

This paper will capture the views that were expressed by the experts as well as key messages and insights for a new strategic engagement of Germany with countries in the Global South. It makes no claim to completeness or full representation. On the contrary, the sometimes contradictory answers or differing perspectives once again illustrate the great diversity and complexity among the countries of the Global South. It is not possible - and the paper does not try to do so - to speak of a homogeneous block of countries; it rather aims at highlighting that future international relations between Germany and other countries of the West will have to take a more sensitive and more precise look at the particularities and positions of the individual countries. We thank our interview partners for providing us with insights into their respective countries, and for their time and effort to share their expertise with us.

Gregor Darmer & Rhoda Berger  
CEOs, Global Perspectives Initiative

# ***CONTENT***

## **Partners in Conversation**

### **A Changing World: Multipolarity and Shifting Global Partnerships**

**8**

Who is the Global South?

**14**

Perspectives of the Global South on Germany's  
Development Cooperation and Beyond

**20**

### **Insights for Shaping the Future of German International Cooperation**

**28**

### **Conclusion: Prospects for Collaborative Success in a Multipolar World**

**44**

## **Imprint**

## PARTNERS IN CONVERSATION



**Alice Amorim**  
Partnerships &  
Communications Director,  
Institute for Climate and  
Society (Brazil)



**Elhadj As-Sy**  
Chairman, Kofi Annan  
Foundation (Senegal)



**Acha Leke**  
Senior Partner &  
Chairman, McKinsey &  
Company, Africa  
(Cameroon)



**Filipe Nasser**  
Senior Advisor to the  
Foreign Minister of Brazil  
(Brazil)



**Andrea Ordóñez Llanos**  
Senior Research Fellow,  
Southern Voice (Ecuador)



**Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi**  
President & CEO, African  
Center for Economic  
Transformation (Ghana)



**Vera Songwe**  
Chairwoman & Founder,  
Liquidity and Sustainability  
Facility (Cameroon)



**Teddy Y. Soobramanien**  
CEO, Comesa Business  
Council (Mauritius)



**Ambika Vishwanath**  
Co-Founder & Director,  
Kubernein Initiative (India)



**Syed Akbar Zaidi**  
Executive Director, Institute  
of Business Administration  
(Pakistan)

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Acha Leke

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Filipe Nasser

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Syed Akbar Zaidi

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**A  
CHANGING  
WORLD**

## MULTIPOLARITY AND SHIFTING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

In the context of the current geopolitical shifts the interview series showed that there is renewed momentum for sovereignty particularly in Africa but also in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. One of the experts notes that this new push came because of the lack of international solidarity countries in the Global South experienced during the pandemic.

*“We saw an egocentrism, which was very unusual. And it was felt in the Global South as almost a kind of a betrayal.”*

Elhadj As-Sy (Senegal)

As the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap between the global North and South had further widened. Having the advantage of wealth and technological resources, rich countries were able to shield themselves from the worst of the pandemic’s economic consequences but low-income and developing countries - many of whom were vulnerable before the crisis - suffered major setbacks which saw decades of socioeconomic development gains reversed. It is not just inequality that grew, distrust did too. Resentment still lingers in the Global South over the West’s hoarding of vaccines, and its opposition to vaccine waivers. But the expert points out that this experience has reignited the aspiration in Africa to build and scale up local capacities particularly in the health sector. The expert states that a number of efforts have been accelerated in this regard and that there is an opportunity for Germany to come on board as a partner. Western double standards were also brought up in the discussion on shifting geopolitics. It was mentioned how the response to the war in Ukraine, including the welcoming given to Ukrainian refugees, has been an exception. At the same time, the war in Gaza is also cited as an example of the perceived double standards by the West.

On the world being multipolar experts convey that this is seen as an opportunity in the Global South. In reference to calls for more and fair representation in the world, one of the interviewees says a multipolar world could be a more democratic one. The view among the experts is that there is a chance for the Global South to put forward its own interests and for countries to forge alternative partnerships that will advance their domestic agendas. One expert says it is good that Germany seems to be accepting this logic. Another brings up the aspect of vacuums, stating that the practice of imposing sanctions and isolating countries as a means of punishment may prove costly in that any gaps created now are being filled by other interested parties.

The expert gives the example of Mali where military leaders have cut ties with the West and have taken sides with Russia since seizing power in a coup. The culmination of events like these have questioned Western international engagement once again and demand a new approach of dealing and partnering with the countries of the Global South.

*“We saw an egocentrism,  
which was very unusual.  
And it was felt in the Global South  
as almost a kind of a betrayal.”*

*ELHADJ AS-SY*

*Chairman, Kofi Annan Foundation*



**WHO IS THE  
GLOBAL SOUTH?**



## WHO IS THE GLOBAL SOUTH?

The term 'Global South', first coined in 1969, has become shorthand to refer to a group of about 130 postcolonial and developing countries who advocate for their collective economic interests to enhance their negotiating capacity in international structures. In 1974 the *United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)* was established to respond to the needs of these nations and to promote and coordinate their cooperation globally and within the UN system.

In the course of the interviews we asked the experts about the use of the term Global South. The relevance of the term has been brought into question by some who are of the view that the label does not address the cultural, economic, and political diversity between the countries. On the use of the term Global South most of the experts we interviewed for this paper acknowledge the limitations the terminology may have but they do not find the term to be inappropriate or offensive. Some explicitly say they are not opposed to the term Global South and find it to be useful for clarity purposes because it is a widely used term in diplomatic speech and people know what it means. However, one interviewee also fully rejected the use of the term and suggested to rather use "emerging markets" or "emerging societies" instead.

In regards to the limitations of the term it was further mentioned that there is no longer a cross-cutting definition of Global South and to make the point one expert adds that while most countries in the Global South are former colonies, a country like South Korea is not. If the definition was based on a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator, some former colonies would have to be left out because they are performing better economically and some Eastern European countries may then qualify. This expert has a preference for using geographical groupings instead, such as Indo Pacific for example. Another expert says even though there are inequalities in the Global South, between countries and within countries, the term is accepted because it is used in the perspective of finding common positions and solidarity.

*"We use it as a term of solidarity and finding common ground among countries in the regions that have been traditionally left out from discussions at the global level."*

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos (Ecuador)

While the term serves as a connecting element between countries one of the experts highlights that many countries in the Global South do not cooperate or collaborate with each other underlining the aspect that there is no such thing as a common and unified position of the Global South. An example of this is the war in Ukraine. When the *UN General Assembly* voted on a resolution demanding Russia's withdrawal from Ukraine in February 2022, the Global South was split. More than half of the group sided with Ukraine while a third abstained from the vote. The following paper aims to shed light on the broad variety of current perceptions by global actors on Germany while also trying to find common ground among them and in cooperation with Germany.

*“We use [Global South] as a term of solidarity and finding common ground among countries in the regions that have been traditionally left out from discussions at the global level.”*

**ANDREA ORDÓÑEZ LLANOS**



*Senior Research Fellow, Southern Voice*

# **PERSPECTIVES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

## PERSPECTIVES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH ON GERMANY'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND BEYOND

On the question of how Germany is viewed in the Global South there is consensus among the experts that Germany has a positive reputation. One expert cites Germany's development work in his home country Pakistan and in other countries in the region as having contributed to this image. However, the interviewee also reports seeing that development cooperation has been reduced over time.

Another expert makes the point that there are often too many regulations and layers of bureaucracy that partner countries no longer want to continue dealing with. It was also pointed out that Germany can improve on the aspect of implementation. Germany is credited for providing resources but at times falls short on seeing the interventions through.

*"You can provide all the technical assistance that you need. But if you don't support the implementation of the ground in the end, you have a limited capacity to change the reality."*

Alice Amorim (Brazil)

One of the experts says the role of the development agency *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz)* in Germany's international cooperation has positively influenced the image of Germany in Brazil and is often highly regarded. Yet, in other contexts the dominant role of *giz* is viewed more critically leading some to question if it is optimal to channel most development assistance through one entity. Experts also report that in some cases there is difficulty distinguishing between the different German agencies and ministries - from the *Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)*, *Federal Foreign Office (FFO)*, *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (giz)*, to *KfW Development Bank*. At times the efforts of the different entities appear to be uncoordinated which adds to the burdensome bureaucracy partners have to go through. Experts report that the German funding system is viewed as too bureaucratic and not fit for the present-day realities on the ground. Calls for application for funding are often communicated with little time ahead so that partners face difficulties in applying for funding. It was also suggested to provide greater decision-making power to the local missions as they have the advantage of proximity to local dynamics.

At the same time, Germany's previous and current governments are also credited for what one expert describes as responding to the political economy, that it tries very hard to respond to the context within which it is operating. In Africa this is seen in how Germany has responded to the need for investment and growth.

*"Very often donors come in and tell you what to do. Germany has a reputation for coming in and having a conversation to find a middle ground. I don't think you should underestimate the power of that reputation on the continent."*

Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi (Ghana)

Overall the engagement with partner countries is another reason Germany is viewed in a positive light. Here one expert explains that the number of visits by German cabinet ministers to Brazil in 2023 was seen as an expression of the importance the German government places on the relationship with Brazil. Yet, there is a call for change in how development assistance is shaped and implemented. German actors involved in international development cooperation as well as partners in the Global South have noticed something has to change in order to continue to create meaningful impact. Long-standing narratives and approaches of international cooperation no longer fulfil their purposes.

The following pages aim to provide an overview of key areas and topics that emerged from the interview series. They provide a starting point and offer an invitation to continue the discussion, expand them further and translate them eventually into political action.

*“Germany has a reputation for coming in and having a conversation to find a middle ground. I don’t think you should underestimate the power of that reputation on the [African] continent.”*

**MAVIS OWUSU-GYAMFI**

President & CEO, African Center for  
Economic Transformation



**INSIGHTS  
FOR SHAPING  
THE FUTURE**



*“If the amounts are spread too thinly on too many different initiatives, there's still impact, but it doesn't scale. And the key issue is scaling.”*

**ACHA LEKE**



*Senior Partner & Chairman, McKinsey & Company, Africa*

## INSIGHTS FOR SHAPING THE FUTURE OF GERMAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The following will highlight key insights from the interviews for the future of international cooperation. The interviewees are clear in relaying the message that the Global South wants to move away from the donor-recipient relationship, which is described as 'outdated'. One of the experts says countries that have been reliant on aid have no freedom to make decisions. They want to see more emphasis being put on establishing and deepening trade. The experts gave input on how Germany can enhance its development cooperation and partnerships with countries in the Global South. We have compiled this input into eight priority areas for action.

### 1. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

In the course of the discussions experts indicated that there was a desire for more and improved communication from Germany. Some of the interviewees mentioned that regular visits by senior government officials would be welcomed as a sign of partnerships being strengthened. The experts also say partner countries in the Global South have long been calling for Germany's voice on the international stage to be more audible. It is a shared view among the experts that Germany has the political capital to make a difference where other Western powers have lost ground. In keeping with this, the interviewees expressed a desire for development policy to be communicated by Germany's top leadership as a means of affirming Berlin's commitment to its partners in the Global South. This would also serve to signal the importance Germany places on these partnerships and commitments.

*"We systematically see situations where giz is doing tremendous work and nobody outside the immediate bubble of people involved knows about it."*

Alice de Moraes Amorim Vogas (Brazil)

Germany is known to be one of the most generous donor countries and interviewees commend Germany for the contribution it is making as a leading provider of development finance, especially when compared to its G7 peers. But experts have the perception that Germany is reluctant to put its mark on its achievements and efforts in development cooperation.

*"One element of German Development cooperation is its consistency on the multilateral front. You have continuously engaged with IDA. IDA's success is Germany's success."*

Vera Songwe (Cameroon)

One of the interviewees gives the example of the *World Bank's* International Development Assistance programme, IDA, which has helped hundreds of millions of people escape poverty - through the creation of jobs, access to clean water, schools, roads, nutrition, electricity, and more. Germany is among the biggest funders of IDA and the expert suggests Germany could take the opportunity to make this, and other commitments in multilateral fora more known. The interviewee further notes that Germany has not hosted IDA meetings and is of the view that doing so would plant Germany's flag on an initiative it has meaningfully supported.

### 2. PRIORITISE AND FOCUS GERMANY'S DEVELOPMENT POLICY

*"If you were to ask everyday practitioners, what is Germany's development policy? You would struggle to get a coherent answer in the sense that the nature of Germany's development policy, it's a lot, but it's a lot of little things."*

Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi (Ghana)

There is broad consensus among the experts that Germany's development cooperation could make a bigger impact if it were more focused. Germany is seen as having too many different small initiatives, especially when compared with China, which has become Africa's biggest bilateral trading partner and has financed large-scale infrastructure projects on the continent.

*"If the amounts are spread too thinly on too many different initiatives, there's still impact, but it doesn't scale. And the key issue is scaling."*

Acha Leke (Cameroon)

The *Compact With Africa (CWA)* was brought up as an example of the flaw in Germany's approach which lacks scale, and experts view CWA as an attempt to do everything while ultimately doing nothing due to its broad approach.



*“The thing that we could do together is reform the norms [...] that reflect the rise of the so-called 'Global South' as a consequential set of actors in an increasingly multipolar world order.”*

**FILIPPE NASSER**



*Senior Advisor to the Foreign Minister of Brazil*

*“Other than the compact with Africa, I cannot point to any major successful bilateral programs.”*

Vera Songwe (Cameroon)

Experts suggest that Germany should focus on fewer areas and double down on investment in those areas as a means to achieve scale. On this point one expert proposes a rethinking and a rebranding of the CWA, making it an ‘Energy Compact’ through which Germany can funnel investments that will result in the scale partners would like to achieve. In the case of Africa, energy is seen as an ideal sector where Germany could make a scalable contribution. According to the World Bank nearly 600 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa live without access to electricity, representing 80% of the world’s unelectrified population. Access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy is an imperative for transforming Africa and unleashing the opportunities, investments, innovations, and new industries that are the engines of jobs, inclusive growth, and shared prosperity for communities and economies.

It was further highlighted that Germany should clearly state its interest when engaging with partners in the development context. When asked what interviewees thought Germany’s current interests are, answers remained rather vague. One expert even explained it as the following:

*“So it’s the absence [of German interests] in some ways, rather than the presence, which sort of defines them.”*

Syed Akbar Zaidi (Pakistan)

### 3. EXPAND LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM AND SUPPORT REQUESTS FOR REFORMS

*“You have a strategic role in this whole environment because you are strategically located in Europe, you have access to partners. You can also make our voice heard.”*

Teddy Y. Soombramanian (Mauritius)

Experts want to see Germany assert its role in the multilateral system because Germany is viewed to have the credentials to support the reforms Global South countries want to see. There is the common view in the Global South that institutional biases in high-level decision-making structures in the *International Monetary Fund (IMF)* and the *United Nations Security Council* have furthered the interests of the Global North at the expense of the Global South.

*“Countries in the Global South do not have an equal saying around decisions in economic multilateral organisations.”*

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos (Ecuador)

On the *IMF* specifically, the weighted quota governance system is viewed as having facilitated a platform for Western economic powers to dictate and impose conditions on previously colonised countries that make up the Global South collective. The experts we interviewed are of the view that Germany has the political capital to champion the reform of the multilateral institutions among other reasons because a substantial portion of Germany’s own engagement with countries in the Global South, especially African countries, has been through the multilateral system.

*“The thing that we could do together is reform the norms, the rules and regulations that preside over decision-making institutions on a global scale in ways that reflect the rise of the so-called ‘Global South’ as a consequential set of actors in an increasingly multipolar world order.”*

Filipe Nasser (Brazil)

According to one of the interviewees, Germany missed an opportunity to fill the void created when the United Kingdom pulled back funding for development cooperation. The expert notes that there was an expectation in the development community to see Germany to step up and provide leadership in the conversations that were taking place on debt management and the allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs).

*“Germany had and still has an enormous opportunity to step up and play an honest broker role amongst geopolitical leaders, in a world that is pretty fractured.”*

Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi (Ghana)

*“More support,  
directly or through other means,  
on climate financing  
is something that we will expect.”*

**AMBIKA VISHWANATH**

*Co-Founder & Director, Kubernein Initiative*



#### 4. SUPPORT REFORMS OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

***“The fact that there are so many countries in debt distress just shows you that there is a gap of public funding.”***

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos (Ecuador)

According to the experts, reforming the International Financial Architecture (IFA) is crucial, especially after COVID-19 where the unequal access to additional funding became even more apparent. Interviewees would like to see Germany play an active role in addressing the financing gap and restructuring the international financial architecture. Debt sustainability is a central pillar to reforming the IFA. The majority of low-income developing countries are considered as being in, or near debt distress by international financial institutions. The G20 has already tried to implement a system for restructuring debt but it seems to be not working because it is a process led by the Global North. Countries of the Global South often do not have an equal say around decisions in international organisations where demands for change become more vocal.

***“What are governments in the Global South supposed to do? They’re put in these difficult circumstances where they either have to get debt and then they’re in a debt crisis. Or they have to print money and then they are in an inflation crisis.”***

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos (Ecuador)

In addition to reforming the international financial system, experts agree that it is also crucial for countries in the Global South to enhance their tax revenue collection and reduce illicit financial flows, which are equivalent to the annual ODA quota. Experts share the understanding that macroeconomic policy planning must strengthen domestic revenue mobilisation which is another pillar for making additional funding for countries in the Global South available. In addition, more resources are needed in the international finance system as the gap to advance the SDG agenda shows a clear deficit.

***“There are not many opportunities for really finding a solution to the financing gap if it is not to put more liquidity in the global system towards the Global South.”***

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos (Ecuador)

Interviewees agree that it is important to continue funding the multilateral system, but experts note that traditionally, only representatives of donor countries have decision-making powers within the system. This is viewed as perpetuating a cycle of inequality within international financial institutions and, by extension, the global financial architecture.

#### 5. SCALE UP PARTNERSHIPS IN CLIMATE CHANGE, GREEN TRANSITION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

***“More support, directly or through other means, on climate financing is something that we will expect.”***

Ambika Vishwanath (India)

The experts say there is a need for more funding channels especially for climate financing. Countries of the Global South have been the worst impacted by the climate crisis and there is an expectation that the Global North should help fund the green transition in developing countries because these countries do not have the resources to make the transition on their own. It is still more expensive to borrow money for climate action projects in poor countries than in wealthy countries. Experts would like to see Germany scale up partnerships in climate change, green transition, and renewable energy.

***“But on the global side, we will expect more support from Germany to talk about climate financing, climate and energy, renewables, more increase on access to information pertaining to technology that we are not able to generate on our own and access to innovative technology that might be coming out of Germany.”***

Ambika Vishwanath (India)

Experts are calling for Germany to replicate e.g. the hydrogen partnership with Namibia - they see climate financing as an opportunity for Germany to do something for a partner country that also benefits Germany, a win-win partnership that would move away from the traditional, more hierarchical donor-recipient relationship in international development.

***“Let’s move away from aid to trade.”***

Syed Akbar Zaidi (Pakistan)



*“To grow you have to trade,  
to trade you have to manufacture.”*

**VERA SONGWE**

*Chair & Founder, Liquidity and Sustainability Facility*



Interviewees see an opportunity for cooperation in research and innovation for technologies to fuel the green transition. One expert highlighted the role Germany could play in capacity building for training skilled professionals on the ground. Exchange programmes and scholarships for students to promote the generation and exchange of expert knowledge could be a useful field for collaboration, what one expert dubbed as 'climate ausbildung'. However, one expert warned that Germany must avoid forcing its priorities on partner countries. Instead, a new quality of international cooperation requires listening and taking into account what partner countries aim for.

## 6. SUPPORT THE CREATION OF JOBS AND LOCAL VALUE ADDITION

*"If I can put it bluntly, the world says it is ready for a growing Africa. I don't think the world is ready for a transformed Africa because a transformed Africa, where Africa is producing green energy, taking advantage of solar and water, would mean Germany would have to buy that energy from us. Is Germany ready for that relationship?"*

Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi (Ghana)

Interviewees conveyed the sentiment that countries of the Global South - formerly often referred to as developing countries - no longer want to be viewed as mere raw material suppliers, there is more desire for trade rather than aid in emerging economies. Countries in the Global South want to be able to fund their own development instead of relying on external funding. One expert points to the win-win scenario where German investment can boost private sector development resulting in local job creation and a guaranteed supply for the German market. Interviewees say Germany could make a big impact in helping countries making a shift from reducing the dependency on aid to increasing private sector growth. Experts say there is an opportunity to build regional value chains, from processing and manufacturing raw material to end products for export.

*"Create more value added in Africa."*

Acha Leke (Cameroon)

Experts see Germany as having an understanding of the power of creating regional value chains. In the discussions with experts, pharmaceuticals were singled out as a sector through which Germany - leaning on its expertise - could move the needle in upskilling the local workforce and building local capacity.

Investments in this sector would also support countries in the Global South to be more independent from Western vaccine production when it comes to supplying vaccines for local communities in the scenario of a future pandemic.

## 7. DE-RISK FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

Interviewees would like to see the German government do more in de-risking foreign investments and expanding credit enhancement for the German private sector. Interviewees want to see German companies set up factories in their countries that can supply local and regional markets and export to Germany. As an example, one expert suggests de-risking a German company to set up a pharmaceutical supply chain on the African continent and support the creation of local value addition.

*"We're importing everything from Germany. Our current accounts are in constant deficits. So invariably we're going to go broke. Ideally, we would like to be part of your value chains."*

Vera Songwe (Cameroon)

One expert notes that there is currently a net transfer of resources from the countries of the Global South to industrialised countries amounting to almost USD 5 trillion. This huge imbalance is seen as something that requires urgent attention and adjustments moving forward so as to enable local sustainable development.

Another expert raises a different perspective on the aspect of de-risking investment. The expert says a lack of understanding contributes to the perception of risk. Often it is an anticipation of risk due to false understanding of the local realities. Using India as an example, the expert encourages the use of civil society and local organisations who can provide independent and apolitical advice as to where certain investments can be best made. An analogy is given of Germany seeking to build a factory plant in the country but not knowing which state the factory can or should be located in. The expert makes the point that due to the status quo of capital-to-capital engagement, the government effectively decides on the state - the decision will be influenced by political affiliation with the government of the day more likely to choose a state where it has political alignment and this state may not necessarily be the best option from a risk perspective. This is an opportunity for Germany to extend its engagement within partner countries, so it is able to deepen its understanding of the risk environment.

## 8. ENSURE DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT AND AVOID AGENDA-SETTING

The Global South is taking its space, and experts warn that Germany should avoid setting the agenda. This is an echo of longstanding calls which may imply that emerging economies are yet to be given the power they have been asking for to facilitate greater agenda-setting in the global economy. Each country has unique political and economic conditions experts advise Germany to continue to adapt its development cooperation to the local realities.

*“I see a trend in the development world. And it is that you need to go very local to make sure that you have democratic ownership of the transitions and that you have projects that can be sustained over time, regardless of the geopolitical trends and the changes in the federal government.”*

Alice de Moraes Amorim Vogas (Brazil)

An expert also talks of the role Germany could play in fostering South-South cooperation. As an illustration the expert says that if Germany were to be supporting an infrastructure project in Africa, it could source a company from Africa, Asia or Latin America, which will result in reduced costs and indirectly strengthen other regions. This, the expert adds, would be a push in the direction of the shift the Global South wants to see in the current development cooperation paradigm to increase local value added. It was further suggested by one expert to establish more direct partnerships with local actors who are able to get work done faster and more efficiently since they know the local context.

*“You have to listen to your local partners as to what the need is and where that money needs to be.”*

Ambika Vishwanath (India)

# COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

## CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

The experts see more opportunities for the Global South in a multipolar world, they convey a general sentiment of optimism, and a sense that now is the time to strike because the proverbial iron is hot. More emerging power centres around the world offer countries in the Global South more options to choose alliances that best serve their interests.

Interviewees reiterate that the selection criteria for partnerships will be driven by the preference of working with those who are aligned with the ambitions of countries in the Global South and do not seek to push their own agenda. Countries in the Global South need partners to realise their development goals, and Germany - even with a stain from the atrocities it committed in the last century - is seen as a partner with which these ambitions can be shared and achieved. Among Western countries, Germany is viewed with less skepticism because of the strong and trusted ties it has built with partner countries over the decades. But even as partners are willing to embrace continued partnership with Germany, they have high expectations of the engagement and want Germany to pick up the mantle of 'honest geopolitical broker' and to lead its peers in the West on the way forward in shaping new partnerships.

The experts we interviewed are clear in articulating that for Germany to maintain the hard earned trust it has accumulated it must improve its communication with its partners in the Global South, prioritise and focus its development policy, expand its leadership role in the multilateral system, support the Global South's requests for international financial architecture reform, scale up partnerships in climate change, green transition and renewable energy, support local value addition and the creation of jobs, de-risk foreign investments, and deepen its understanding of the local contexts within which it is engaging and not imposing an agenda on partners.

Many examples were presented in the discussions of how partnerships of the future can be mutually beneficial. Throughout the interviews experts communicated the various ways in which Germany could share the reward of the successes of the Global South. This includes the natural resources needed to fuel the green transition and the skilled labour that will be needed to serve the economy of the future. But as the experts assert, this cannot be built on the foundation of the prevailing system in which rich countries pillage the resources they require while leaving little in the places from which those resources are

taken. Countries in the Global South want fairness, and reforming the systems that govern the global community is key to achieving that. As the experts told us, Germany is expected to leverage its political capital and close ties with major powers to push for greater representation and reform of an international system that the Global South sees as outdated and unjust. Development policy will not succeed if it does not adapt in response to the geopolitical context. But if it is done right, the experts say Germany's development cooperation has the potential to steer the realignment of relations with the Global South, to heal the rift with partner countries and provide an update for the future of international cooperation.



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