

INDIA DAY @ UNGA

September 25, 2024 | New York

On the 25th September 2024, Reliance Foundation (RF), Observer Research Foundation (ORF), and UN in India came together to host two events as the world gathered for the 79th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

With the overarching theme ‘India Day @ UNGA’, these events brought together over 200 delegates, including global leaders, policymakers, corporate executives, and representatives from civil society, to engage in discussions on India’s role in shaping global development and the future of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The morning session, **India Day @ UNGA**, took place in the Consulate General of India. The event focused on India’s leadership in fostering inclusive growth, building resilience, and ensuring sustainable progress to craft a collective South-led vision for sustainable development beyond 2030. The event included four panel discussions, each addressing a

theme related to the next stage of development, including experiences from India and the Global South; the role of technology in accelerating inclusive growth; the importance of women’s leadership in global development, and the concepts of sustainable lifestyles, resource efficiency, and circular economy.

The evening session, titled **A Tiger’s Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm**, served as a high-level dialogue exploring India’s growing role as a leader in the Global South and its potential to set new benchmarks in global development.

At the heart of the discussions was the launch of the publication **The Next Frontier: Charting the Contours of the Post-2030 Development Agenda**, conceived in recognition that within the challenges ahead lies an opportunity to set our sights even higher in how we approach global development after 2030.

India Day @ UNGA

The day started with welcome remarks by **Binaya Srikanta Pradhan, Consul General of India to New York**. This was followed by opening remarks by **B. Srinivasan, Member of the Board, ORF**, after being introduced by the event host, **Dr Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation**.

On this occasion, the publication “**The Next Frontier: Charting the Contours of the Post-2030 Development Agenda**”, developed by Reliance Foundation and Observer Research Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations Office in India, was officially launched.

This publication explores the strategies, innovations, and leadership required to forge a new global development agenda beyond 2030. The publication features 27 essays organised around three themes: Inclusive Transformations, Resilient Progress, and Sustainable Evolutions. It addresses themes like inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability, and outlines pathways for bridging global divides, fostering social inclusion, and leveraging technology. The volume provides a forward-looking blueprint for development, with India’s leadership and innovations serving as exemplars for global transformation.

The panel for session 1, titled “**To the Lighthouse: Promises and Pathways for the Rising South**” was moderated by **Dhruva Jaishankar**, Executive Director, ORF-America. Panellists **Daniel Seymour**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, UN Women, **Gargee Ghosh**, President, Global Policy & Advocacy, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **Udaibir Saran Das**, Distinguished Fellow, ORF-America, and **Aude Darnal**, Research Analyst and Project Manager, Stimson Center, discussed the challenges of global governance and the opportunities for collaboration in achieving the SDGs.

The session focused on the Global South’s demographic dividend and the role of digital transformation in driving growth and development. Panellists discussed how India’s innovation journey, with lighthouse initiatives, has the potential to inspire other Southern nations. The discussion highlighted how these best practices could be adapted and replicated across diverse geographies. The potential for South-South cooperation was explored.

Session 2, titled “**Technology Transforming Lives: Accelerating Towards and Inclusive Digital Ecosystem**” was moderated by Dr **Vanita Sharma**, Advisor - Strategic Initiatives, Reliance Foundation. Panellists **Richard Hawkes**, Chief Executive, The British Asian Trust, **Michael Wiegand**, Director, Inclusive Financial Systems, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **Claire Sibthorpe**, Head of Digital Inclusion, M4D at GSMA, **Keyzom Ndopu Massally**, Head of Digital & AI Programmes, UNDP, and Christopher “Chris” Burns, Chief Digital Development Officer and Director of the Technology, USAID, shared insights on the role of technology in fostering inclusive growth.

The panel focused on how the digital revolution is creating new opportunities for inclusive development, particularly in the Global South. Panellists discussed the potential of digital technologies to address language barriers, improve education, and strengthen governance. The session also explored how cross-learning across geographies can help countries harness digital solutions to drive economic growth and sustainable development.



B. Srinivasan, Member of the Board, Observer Research Foundation



Dhruva Jaishankar, Executive Director, Observer Research Foundation America



Dr Vanita Sharma, Advisor – Strategic Initiatives, Reliance Foundation

Session 3 was named “**Power of Women-Led Development: Femme Forward for the Future**”, which highlighted the crucial role of women in shaping sustainable development. Moderated by **Sarah Hendriks**, Director, Policy, Programme & Intergovernmental Division, UN Women, panellists **Archna Vyas**, Director, Program Advocacy and Communications, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **Pritha Venkatachalam**, Partner and Co-Head, Asia and Africa, The Bridgespan Group, **Ajaita Shah**, Founder & CEO, Frontier Markets, and **Jessica Posner Odede**, CEO, Girl Effect, emphasized the transformative impact of women’s leadership on global development.

The session highlighted the significant progress being made towards gender-responsive development. Panellists discussed how women in executive roles contribute to above-average profitability, while grassroots women leaders drive impactful community change. The session emphasised the resilience and innovation that women bring to leadership roles, with a particular focus on India’s G20 Presidency. During the presidency, India introduced a global lexicon on “women-led development,” reinforcing the potential for gender-driven growth.

Session 4, named “**Exploring a New Development Paradigm: Reference to LiFE Economy**”, was moderated by **Pramod K. Anand**, Visiting Fellow, RIS. Speakers **Ligia Noronha**, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNEP, **Ibrahim MAYAKI**, Special Envoy for Food Systems, African Union, **Rafaela Guedes**, Senior Fellow, CEBRI, **Pamla GOPAUL**, Senior Programme Officer, African Union Development Agency, and **Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD**, Founding Principal, Grand Paris Alliance for Metropolitan Development, explored future development frameworks beyond 2030.

Under India’s G20 Presidency, LiFE gained momentum as a roadmap for sustainability, emphasizing resource efficiency, circular economy principles, and ethical economic practices. The panel discussed the Varanasi Principles, which outline sustainable consumption, infrastructure finance, and the inclusion of marginalised communities in growth processes. Panellists highlighted the need for resilient economic frameworks to address rising inequalities and vulnerabilities. The session concluded by exploring how these principles could guide the post-2030 development agenda globally.



Ajaita Shah, Founder & CEO, Frontier Markets



Jessica Posner Odede, Chief Executive Officer, Girl Effect



Nicolas J.A. BUCHOUD, Founding Principal, Grand Paris Alliance for Metropolitan Development



Rafaela Guedes, Senior Fellow, CEBRI

A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm

The high-level evening event, **A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm**, commenced with welcome remarks by **P. Harish**, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. Following the welcome, the event saw the video launch of the publication "**The Next Frontier: Charting the Contours of the Post-2030 Development Agenda**".

Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Foundation, delivered the keynote address, underscoring the need to rethink development strategies as the world approaches 2030. "This moment is more than just about change – it's about creating a better future together, especially for our youth. The challenges we face are many, but by working together, we can make real progress," she said.

The ministerial panel discussion titled "**A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm**" was hosted by **Samir Saran**, President, ORF. The distinguished panellists included **Hugh Hilton Todd**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guyana, **Baiba Braže**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Latvia; **Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem**, Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DP World, **Børge Brende**, President, World Economic Forum, and **S. Jaishankar**, Minister of External Affairs, India.

During the panel, **Samir Saran** remarked on India's evolving role in global governance, emphasising that

"Continuity, collaboration and connectivity. If you can get these three right, SDGs will have a bright future."

The panel emphasised that emerging economies of the Global South must organise to drive the next decade of development, focusing on people-centric models. Speakers discussed key ideas that should shape the post-2030 agenda, emphasising how countries such as Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa are well-positioned to lead global efforts. The focus was on creating inclusive growth, addressing global challenges, and reinforcing a commitment to human welfare.



P. Harish, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations



Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Foundation, delivers the keynote address



Dr Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation

India's External Affairs Minister **Dr S. Jaishankar** expanded on the importance of the Global South's leadership in global governance, stating that

“Particularly in the UN, there's a sense that India is a country with a heart, that we have that feeling with other countries and other people, which is most vividly expressed by the fact that we've brought the Global South back into the conversation.”

Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guyana, echoed these sentiments and emphasised that the leadership from the South is a reality, adding that

“India is taking leadership not only at home, but they're doing it here in the financial capital of the world. They are demonstrating leadership at the highest level. No country can solve problems on its own now. You have to think global because we are globalized politically, economically, and culturally.”

Baiba Braže, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Latvia, added her perspective on the importance of cooperation, particularly among emerging economies,

“For us, peace and security are an enablement of prosperity. If there is no peace, it's hard to imagine the dreams of your children and grandchildren. We have chosen a particular mode of development: a huge investment in technology. For SDGs, it's what you deliver on the ground in this world where societies are much more decentralized. It's not one way of government, it's more of a decentralized form of governance.”

Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DP World, highlighted the importance of integrating the private sector into these efforts,

“There are so many ways to remove barriers. Our ports are needed for a country to trade.”

B. Srinivasan, Member of the Board, Observer Research Foundation, closed the day with concluding remarks, noting that

“Every fourth young person is an Indian. So, the world's youth is in India. We naturally aspire to be a leader.”



Dr S Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, India



Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guyana



Baiba Braže, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Latvia



Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DP World

Resources



Press Release:

- Post-Event Press Release [click here](#)

Publication:

- Download the book: [click here](#)
- View publication video: [click here](#)

India Day @ UNGA Morning:

- Highlights video: [click here](#)
- Full event videos: [click here](#)

A Tiger's Tale: Crafting a New Development Paradigm Evening:

- Isha Ambani's Keynote Address: [click here](#)
- Highlights video: [click here](#)
- Full event videos: [click here](#)

Publication Overview

The publication, developed by Reliance Foundation and the Observer Research Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations in India, offers a forward-looking exploration of strategies and innovations that can shape the global development agenda beyond 2030. It comprises twenty-seven essays contributed by a range of authors from the development, philanthropy, and think tank sectors, as well as policymakers and other thought leaders, each providing insights into how we can accelerate progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and what the future holds beyond the 2030 deadline.

The volume captures a broad spectrum of perspectives, from multilateral agencies and private sector leaders to local communities and young innovators, uniting diverse voices to craft a global development vision that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable. Each essay reflects on India's leadership in areas like digital transformation, health, education, and gender equality, while also examining how these innovations can be adapted and applied across the Global South and North.

To download the publication: [click here.](#)



Speaker and Attendee Testimonials

- “India is representing a very brilliant future forward. Everything about this day today was that we were around colleagues who learn, understand and do, but also collaborate.” Speaker, **Ajaita Shah**, Founder & CEO, Frontier Markets
- “We need to explore alternative models for development and that goes through SouthxSouth cooperation.” Speaker, **Aude Darnal**, Research Analyst and Project Manager, Stimson Center
- “I found the morning session both enjoyable but also extremely insightful. There is a huge benefit across the range of development and sustainable development goals, through SDG 5.” Speaker, **Daniel Seymour**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, UN Women
- “New objectives of development goals have to be simpler, more measurable metrics, and secondly really focus on finance.” Speaker, **Dhruva Jaishankar**, Executive Director, ORF-America
- “Each country needs its own path to figure out how to achieve food security, water security, nutritional security, climate resilience. There is no one answer. There is a lot of talk, now we have to translate that talk into action.” Attendee, **Dr Ruth DeFries**, professor of ecology and sustainable development at Columbia University and co-founding dean of the Columbia Climate School
- “What I took away from the conversation is... the strength that exists with the continued dialogue among global majority countries... and the opportunities for us to use different types of technological tools and better female engagement through political, business, and civil processes, to try and bridge the [gender digital] divide.” Attendee, **Zachary Kazzaz**, Senior Program Officer, Digital Connectivity, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- “The team has done an excellent job at converging thought-leaders that look at problems from multiple angels.” Attendee
- “We need to have more women in decision making powers. The same goes in investing for women.” Attendee
- “There is a lot of opportunity for youth to make a really big impact. There is a need to listen to youth who are interested in engaging with these topics together.” Attendee

Event Photos



India Day @ UNGA Session 1: To the Lighthouse: Promises and Pathways for the Rising South moderated by Dhruva Jaishankar, with Daniel Seymour, Gargee Ghosh, Udaibir Saran Das and Aude Darnal.



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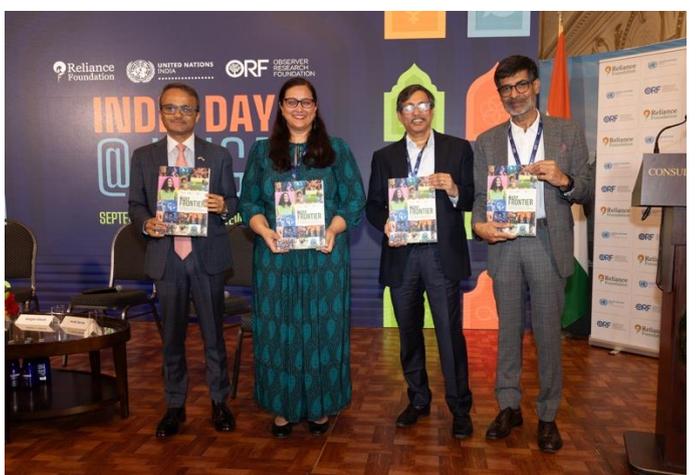
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India Day @ UNGA Session 4: Exploring a New Development Paradigm: Reference to LiFE Economy moderated by Pramod K. Anand, with Ligia Noronha, Ibrahim Mayaki, Rafaela Guedes, Pamela Gopaul and Nicolas J.A. Buchoud



India Day @ UNGA: B. Srinivasan, Member of the Board, ORF, giving the opening remarks



Launch of the publication "The Next Frontier: Charting the Contours of the Post-2030 Development Agenda"



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: Isha Ambani, Director, Reliance Foundation, delivers the keynote address



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: Dr S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, India and Børge Brende, President, World Economic Forum



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: Samir Saran, President, ORF and Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, DP World



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: Panel discussion



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: Delegates watch an introductory video



A Tiger's Tale: Crafting A New Development Paradigm: P. Harish, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations