**G77, development and global equality**

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Pakistan has just been elected to chair the Group of 77+China, or G77, for 2022. It has also chaired the organisation three times before, and it was a founding member in 1964 when 77 developing countries met in Geneva, in liaison with the United Nations, establishing the largest organisation of developing countries working for more equality in the international economic community. That same year, UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, was also established and it became quite prominent working with the poor developing countries in seeking ways of creating a New International Economic Order, NIEO. Alas, it came to nothing because the rich West did not want to give up privileges, although it would in the long run also have benefitted them, today often called the Global North. It would indeed have made peaceful development in the Global South entirely different from what it has been. Little has changed in the global structural relations since then; rather inequality has grown between and within countries.

[PM Imran Khan summons cabinet meeting on December 14](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2021/pm-imran-khan-summons-cabinet-meeting-on-december-14)

In my article last week, I was quite critical of the World Bank and IMF, stressing that their policies were, and still are, rather politically oriented than development oriented, and in reality they are often not on the side of the recipients of loans, credits and aid. They push capitalist ideologies and relations on the poor countries, emphasising policies of privatisation, giving limited support to public education and health, and no real safety nets for the poor. The development aid that the former colonies and other poor countries have received, have often not been more than token, and again, political. The bilateral donors too have mostly followed the leadership of the development banks and financial institutions. Sometimes, the transfers from donors may seem high in figures, yet, they are still just ‘crumbles from the rich man’s table’, as we used to say when I was young in the 1970s. The transfers were not meant to lead to structural change in international relations, or sustainable development, as we say today.

[Pakistani climber Sirbaz Khan aims to scale all of world's 8,000-meter peaks](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2021/pakistani-climber-sirbaz-khan-aims-to-scale-all-of-world-s-8-000-meter-peaks)

G77 was designed to be a common, non-aligned organisation for developing countries, which should promote its members economic interests and create and enhance negation capacity in the UN and beyond. It played a major role in the abolition of apartheid in South Africa, and it supported socialist-oriented development, which was in the early decades in the interest of the Nonaligned Movement, as its members were encouraged by the Soviet Union and China to follow such development paths. Some did, too, for some time. But it seems the World Bank and IMF won that struggle and few developing countries can today be said to be socialist oriented. In Europe, though, especially in the Nordic countries, Germany and elsewhere, social democratic policies, a form of ‘socialism light’, find support.

When Pakistan’s Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressed digitally the 134 countries of today’s G77, upon having been elected as chair for 2002, he focused on some key aspects of the agenda. He said there are three main crises to handle: the Covid-19 pandemic; challenges to achieve the UN SDG goals by 2030; and the existential threat of a climate catastrophe. In all these areas developing countries need assistance from the rich countries to top up their own efforts. There must be results in debt restructuring, larger concessional financing, mobilisation of climate financing, reduction of elicit transfer of funds from countries in the South to the North, including assets taken without compensation earlier, and the creation of an equitable and open trading system and a fair taxation regime. As for climate change, G77 has in the past not given that high enough priority, and greater focus is needed, as Qureshi said.

[CM Balochistan lauds PM for taking notice of Gwadar fishermen's demands](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2021/cm-balochistan-lauds-pm-for-taking-notice-of-gwadar-fishermen-s-demands)

In our time, multinationals and the private sector companies have become richer than before, sometimes even richer than states. This calls for tougher talks and negotiations between the Global South and the Global North. The latter group of countries have also realised that the very rich multinationals must be pulled in and controlled; their power has gone out of hand, and new tax regimes and ways of paying back to society must be found. Here are possibilities of finding funds in order to increase development aid and other transfers to poor countries, and poor people in all countries. I have criticised the World Bank, IMF and the bilateral donors; aid is not increasing, but decreasing, and refugee and migration tragedies develop as part of the existing inequality and the lack of hope and opportunities for poor people worldwide. G77 has spoken well in the past about alternative development, solidarity, equality, and more. But G77’s voice is today not a loud voice so that we can understand, first, what superstructure the world needs, and, second, ascertain direct, practical change. In order for the tangible changes to happen, the intangible must be clear. It is my hope that G77 can become a major voice in future, in addition to also helping in the concrete steps, or rather in leaps towards greater global equality. The UN, too, and its many agencies, indeed UNCTAD, which still exists, but in some obscurity, it seems, and many other organisations, must join hands and make tangible results be realised—urgently.

[5.6-magnitude quake hits eastern Indonesia](https://nation.com.pk/12-Dec-2021/5-6-magnitude-quake-hits-eastern-indonesia)

G77 must be on the ball during Pakistan’s year as chair of the organisation in 2022, and we must all do what we can, to support and propagate G77’s work, in the coming year and beyond. Let this be part of our New Year’s resolution this year. Each of us must contribute, in small or big ways, to keep and create peace on earth, enhance prosperity and development, and equality for all.