

**Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations**

**New York**

**Press Release**

**Women-led Development and South-South Cooperation –  
Success Stories from the IBSA Fund**

During the ongoing 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70), the Permanent Missions of India, Brazil and South Africa convened an event on 12 March 2026, showcasing the lasting impact of multilateral and South-South cooperation on development and empowerment of women. The event titled “Women-led Development and South-South Cooperation – Success Stories from the IBSA Fund” presented tangible and operational instances of Global South coming together to address women’s empowerment.

Speaking at the gathering, Hon’ble Minister of State for Women and Child Development of India, Smt. Savitri Thakur, underscored that the IBSA Fund's emphasis on women's empowerment is a deliberate choice — one that mirrors India's own vision of women-led development and its commitment to placing women at the heart of the country's economic growth story. Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities of South Africa, H.E. Sindisiwe Chikunga, highlighted the tangible impact of IBSA projects across the African continent, citing initiatives in Malawi, Benin, Guinea-Bissau and Gambia that are addressing child marriage, improving access to education, expanding electrification, and fostering agri-entrepreneurship. Vice Minister of Women of Brazil, H.E. Eutália Barbosa Rodrigues Naves, described the IBSA Fund as a living embodiment of South-South solidarity, and championed women-led development as a pathway to economic autonomy, resilient democratic institutions and meaningful transformation within communities.

The Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, in his remarks, outlined the vision behind establishing the IBSA Fund – a trustworthy, demand driven model that demonstrates the effectiveness of South-South solidarity for development in a world where traditional aid architectures are under strain and development assistance increasingly fragmented.

Minister of Gambia H.E. Fatou Kinteh, Acting Permanent Secretary for Women, Children and Social Protection of Fiji H.E. Selina Kuruleca and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Liberia, Ambassador Baba Sillah, shared their experience on how the projects implemented through the IBSA fund have changed the lives and livelihoods of women in their communities. Mr. Alexander De Croo, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — the implementing agency of the IBSA Fund — expressed pride in UNDP's role in bringing the

Fund's vision to life. He shared his perspectives on how women's empowerment serves as a powerful catalyst for economic growth and development, and underscored that gender equality is not an ancillary concern but an integral dimension of development projects within the framework of South-South cooperation.

The event spotlighted several projects implemented through the IBSA Fund that place women at the centre of development. These included upscaling of the Rocket Stove initiative in Fiji that created new livelihood opportunities for rural women through skills training and enterprise, the training programme for Women Legislators in Liberia promoting their voice, leadership and gender responsive governance framework, a project to improve food security and household income for rural communities in Gambia through solar-powered irrigation and training in processing/packaging to reduce post-harvest losses.

The IBSA Fund was established in 2004 and operationalized in 2006 by India, Brazil and South Africa pioneering the implementation of South-South cooperation. The purpose of the Fund is to identify replicable and scalable projects that can be disseminated to developing countries as examples of good practices in combating poverty and hunger. Spanning themes from food security to education, entrepreneurship and health, the Fund emphasizes knowledge transfer and sustainability. As of December 2025, India, Brazil and South Africa have collectively contributed over USD 55 million, supporting over 50 projects across 40 countries, in partnership with UN entities including UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO, UNESCO and IFAD.

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