International development cooperation has been experiencing critical changes with the entrance of rising powers, mostly from the Global South. The rise in scale and scope of South-South Cooperation (SSC) has contributed to the urgent need to revisit development aid and aid effectiveness debates.

The rise of the Global South has also become visible at the United Nations. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda welcome the increased contribution of SSC and recognize its importance for collective efforts to address pressing sustainable development challenges.

The United Nations Development System (UNDS) is the biggest multilateral development actor, with its functions ranging from providing a forum for dialogue, to research, advocacy, technical assistance and humanitarian aid. In the latest reform round, member states from “the North” and “the South” agreed to tackle the UNDS’s fragmentation in order to turn the UNDS into a catalyst for implementing the 2030 Agenda. Yet, the divide between developing and industrialized states remains vivid, member states remained trapped in the traditional North/South roles of financial/aid providers and recipients of aid.

In the proposed panel, the scholars of the International Studies Association (ISA) would like to discuss with UN officials their research on the role of the Global South in UN development and UN reform. The debate will mainly be revolving around three sets of questions:

i. Under which conditions do countries from the global South become more engaged in the UNDS in terms of funding and political ownership? How can they make a difference in implementing the UNDS reforms?

ii. What role does SSC play at the UN, how has this role changed over time? What is the relation of UN-SSC to traditional, multilateral UN development cooperation and the UNDS and how could this relation develop in the future?

iii. How can lessons from SSC be adapted to the way the UNDS engages in development, and what are the advantages and challenges and potential trade-offs in this endeavor?

The discussion is expected to generate helpful and stimulating ideas for strengthening multilateralism in difficult times and open up new horizons for further studies. The results of the panel will be made available to the larger scholarly and policy communities, and contribute to strengthening academic research on the UN.

The panel discussion is co-organized by the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) and the International Studies Association (ISA).
**The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI)** is an initiative that aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations in supporting and contributing to the realization of United Nations goals and mandates, including the promotion and protection of human rights, access to education, sustainability and conflict resolution.

**The International Studies Association (ISA)** is one of the oldest interdisciplinary associations dedicated to understanding international, transnational and global affairs. Founded in 1959, its more than 7,000 members span the globe – comprising academics, practitioners, policy experts, private sector workers and independent researchers, among others. The Association has long served as a central hub for the exchange of ideas and for networking and programmatic initiatives among those involved in the study, teaching and practice of International Studies.

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