

***BANDUNG SPIRIT AND THE ROLE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH***

***Celebrating Bandung at 70***

**Bandung Day Symposium 24 April 2025**

**A programme of seminar, Cultural Programme and Photo Exhibition**

Jointly organised by

Council for Social Development and India International Centre

Venue: India International Centre, New Delhi

The year 2025 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bandung Conference. At this historical moment the world was facing three critical challenges of peace, good living and sustainability. When leaders of 29 Asian and African nations met at Bandung, Indonesia and after much deliberations adopted the famous Bandung Declaration on 24 April 1955, it was hoped that the problems of poverty, underdevelopment, inequalities, social tensions and wars which were produced or accentuated by colonialism would be gradually tackled by the newly independent nations. Many liberation struggles such as in Palestine and South Africa were still going on at the time and the Bandung Declaration called for their successful conclusion at the earliest.

As we look back after seventy years, indeed some successes and much progress had been achieved on decolonisation, socio-economic development and many other fronts. Apartheid had ended in South Africa and poverty had been considerably reduced. Many former colonies achieved impressive degrees of progress in people's lives. But people of Palestine were still struggling for liberation. Hunger and food insecurity still haunted many areas in the world. Cases of social tensions, and violent conflicts have risen in number and intensity. Most strikingly, climate change and environmental crisis continue to pose increasing challenge. These are only symptoms of the kind of critical conjuncture that the contemporary world was going through.

Bandung Conference had presented a vision for the global future- one of equality and solidarity of independent nations and peoples, dignity and mutuality of all cultures and races, religions and

languages in the world with peace and disarmament at the core facilitating steady social development for all regions and communities.

As the historical experience with the dominant path of industrial development unfolded globally in the recent decades many serious problems came to the fore. The depletion of natural resources, pollution of air, water and soil and global warming affecting all aspects of life became a central concern. Social inequalities with class, gender, caste, race, region and other dimensions, many of them cumulatively, with disturbing magnitude were astounding. All this demanded fresh attention in theory, policy and action. Technology moved forward from one generation to another and in the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution with AI in the lead, new dependencies and monopolies took firm hold. The multilateral system that was set up with the United Nations at the centre in 1945, was first crippled by a bipolar confrontation during the Cold War followed by a protracted transition to a New Cold War that was unfolding in dangerous directions in the recent years. The wars with mass killings and destruction in Ukraine and Palestine represent the nature of the new arenas of confrontation. Acts of violence, terrorist and counter-terrorist, individual and collective, of many kinds continue to occur with increasing frequency.

Thus the present moment may look gloomy and depressing for the Bandung visionaries who had aspired to continue the struggle for realising Swaraj in its fullness in every realm. But struggles are still on in what is now called the Global South advancing the Bandung spirit to pursue the goals of peace and cooperation among nations, good living fulfilling basic material and cultural needs of people and sustainable development that maintains harmony between humans and nature. Visions of the liberation struggles that had inspired the Bandung Conference were still motivating global forces to achieve those goals.

Keeping these issues in mind, the annual CSD-IIC Bandung Day Symposium on 24 April 2025 celebrating the seventieth anniversary of the Bandung Conference has been planned on the theme, *BANDUNG SPIRIT AND THE ROLE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH*. This year the plan is to address key challenges facing the Global South in two broad areas, namely, social development and peace and security with an examination of the growing trends in global political economy, climate change and world affairs and point out concrete tasks for researchers, social workers and policy makers.