

## THE GLOBAL SOUTH: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO KENYA?

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The nations of Africa, Central and Latin America, and most of Asia are collectively known as the Global South. These nations are also referred to collectively as the poor world, the less-developed world, the non-Western world, and the developing countries. In fact, the Global South is the latest term used to describe the non-Western or developing countries. The term is normally used to mean countries that are faced with social, political and economic challenges – for instance poverty, environmental degradation, human and civil rights abuses, ethnic and regional conflicts, mass displacements of refugees, hunger, and disease.

The terms Global North and Global South clearly divide the world into two halves geographically. Kenya, a country through which the equator passes, could be considered to be part of both the Global North and the Global South, geographically speaking. Despite this divide, however, the term Global South is not commonly known in Kenya, most likely because the donor agencies and development partners refer to Kenya as a “developing country”. The term Third World is not common either, as most people would see it as demeaning.

However, with the current changing world landscape, in which various institutions, both of higher learning and of development, have started to vigorously use the term Global South to enhance their cooperation endeavors it is very likely that this term will start to emerge in Kenya in the near future. For instance, most universities are currently establishing centers for Global South Studies in the Global North countries, and these centers have started to attract attention from the Global South countries. Most of these centers try to capture issues related to social, economic and political development in the Global South, and in my opinion I see that through these centers new international structures and institutions are going to emerge that will create linkages between the Global North and Global South. Most likely the Global North have seen the need to change the terms they use – such as “the poor world”, “the less-developed world”, “the non-Western world”, and “the developing countries” – which they have used for several decades, so as to renew their relationship with the countries collectively termed the Global South economies.

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