

**High-Level Event on “Alliance for Multilateralism”
Advocating Human Rights in the 21st Century –
building bridges between Geneva and New York**

**Remarks by Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative of India**

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- We thank Germany and France for their initiative of an open-ended architecture to address the challenges to multilateralism in the 21st century.
- India supports the efforts of “Alliance for Multilateralism”.
- We acknowledge that in an increasingly interconnected world, multilateralism has an important role to play in our collective future. It is under stress today, as much from nationalism, as from mercantilism. Also, in times when transactions are as important as norms, it is seen as being unable to deliver operationally. We, therefore, need creative diplomacy to address the trust deficit that multilateralism faces.
- In this context, I will make three general points:

First, the 21st century is in many ways from a human rights paradigm, unlike anything in the past. “We the people” is more than a cliché. New technologies possess the potential to empower individuals in ways like never before. Many among such empowered individuals will be those who may be the first of many generations in their areas to have ever experienced the fruits of change.

In terms of human rights in the 21st century, space needs to be provided for these “newcomers” also. Let me give you an example of who some of these newcomers are likely to be. Every day, if you see the top dozen Twitter trends, in terms of a word cloud, you will find 2/3 themes and names that you may not have heard of, but are exciting young in India. It is because today, there are nearly 400

million who access cyberspace from India. As this century moves forward, those numbers will grow to a billion.

We need to be mindful of their goals, desires, needs, as well as the challenges of these newcomers. If we choose to ignore them, it will not make them less of a reality. If we choose to provide space to accommodate them and their aspirations while crafting an architecture, that will be a more inclusive approach. Geneva and New York are important centres, but they need to be listening and accommodating others too. In short, we need a humane perspective, while addressing issues of the digital space.

Second, if Climate Change is an emergency, then Climate Justice is an imperative.

The path we have followed thus far, in terms of Collective Climate Action,, hardly does justice to this threat. If it is an existential threat, then multilaterally we have been operationally unsatisfactory. It is time to look at being effective operationally. We hope to share some of our own experiences of the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure on some other occasion and look to hear what others are doing to address Climate Justice normatively, as well as operationally.

Third, the 21st century provides opportunities like never before across an array of human rights issues, from achieving greater progress in gender equality and empowerment of women, to harnessing potential of emerging technologies, to make people's lives better, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, the conversation to actualise these requires platforms that are imbued with thinking that is contemporary and desire to effect change.

- Thank you for initiating this discussion and providing us opportunities to listen and share our thoughts in this effort to further our common goals.