

THE FLETCHER FORUM of WORLD AFFAIRS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

“Development” is one of those ubiquitous words in international relations that evades definition, yet whose impact is tangibly felt. It conjures images of skyscrapers sprouting from what were once rice paddies; of first-generation college students cheered on by blue-collar families; of villages lit for the first time by electricity. Too often, development is seen as synonymous with aid and as something brought by the Global North to the Global South.

In this issue, *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* challenges these assumptions, examining the ways in which development is being redefined in the context of both unprecedented global stress and fresh visions of prosperity. Development is no longer seen purely as economic growth, but is viewed through numerous lenses such as human rights, climate change, and gender. Its success is measured by its sustainability—social, environmental, and economic. But, daunting challenges remain: according to the World Bank’s conservative estimate, 648 million people live in extreme poverty in an era of crippling debt distress for developing nations brought on by the climate crisis, the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ripple effects of multiple armed conflicts across borders.

The Forum brings together works by fourteen authors who show us that by expanding our idea of what development is and how it can be achieved, we can realize sustainable prosperity for all. **TEDDY RUGE** introduces a more sustainable model of financing agriculture in Uganda that avoids burdening farmers with debt. **ABED AL ABWAH** and **PATRICK SCHENA** explore the potential of sovereign wealth funds to empower countries to design and fund their own development agendas, using the Palestine Investment Fund as a case study.

Development is no longer the exclusive realm of states and multilateral development banks: **MARTIN PALMER** details the rise of faith-based investing, while **CHIDI ODINKALU** makes a case for the important role

that sport can play in social development and conceptions of nationhood and identity.

There are, of course, myriad barriers to development. **MAXIM KRUPSKIY** explains the devastating impacts of the Russian “foreign agents” laws on the development of civil society. In an interview, **VICTORIA NYANJURA** and **EMMA OKELLO** discuss the challenge of moving from basic survival to development in the context of post-conflict reconstruction. And **WALTER FERNANDES** draws attention to the plight of the millions impacted by development-induced displacement in India.

Digitalization presents a new set of tools for development, something **ANATOLY MOTKIN** discusses with regard to the promise of Eurasia in particular. **SHOUVIK KUMAR GUHA** and **AMAN GUPTA** write about the potential for increasing financial inclusion using digital tools in India. **AMEYA ASHOK NAIK** walks through the many challenges associated with realizing the benefits of digitalization for development.

Finally, in an interview, **MICHAEL KUGELMAN** discusses the many ongoing political and economic developments in South Asia, from reformed diplomatic alliances to upcoming elections.

It is our hope that, in true *Forum* form, this issue sparks conversation about what development can mean beyond economic growth and how we can create a more inclusive vision of what prosperity might entail. We strive to bring perspectives from all around the world—from Palestine to Uganda, India to Russia—to lay the foundations for productive and informed dialogue on this topic.

We are, as always, deeply grateful to the authors for trusting us with their work. It is bittersweet to be publishing my final edition of *The Forum* as Editor-in-Chief, but I am left with immense gratitude for, and pride in, my team. I know that each one of them will go on to contribute to addressing the very challenges discussed in these pages. And it is with great excitement that I hand over the reins to Aarushi Aggarwal.

We look forward to hearing your reactions to these pieces and to the content we produce on all manner of foreign affairs issues on our website (fletcherforum.org) and podcast. Thank you for engaging with us.

LILY HARTZELL
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF