



[SESSION PAPER:]

GSEF Series by COGGS

Session I: Navigating Multipolarity: Global South's Strategic Role

The decision to thematize the session *Navigating Multipolarity: Global South's Strategic Role* at Global South Economic Forum 2025 is driven by tectonic shifts in the global order and the increasing agency of the Global South in shaping international dynamics. This topic is both timely and essential and these are the reasons why we opted the theme:

Shifting Economic Power in a Multipolar World

The global system is transitioning from the period of unipolarity, dominated by the West, to a more fragmented multipolar order, where emerging economies—primarily from the Global South—are gaining significant influence. By 2050, the economic power balance between developed and emerging economies is projected to be equal, and by 2075, emerging economies are expected to surpass the developed world. This shift is not just economic but also political, as Global South increasingly asserts its own perspectives as well as interests in global governance.

Diverse Development and Pragmatic Economic Focus

Global South nations are united by a pragmatic focus on economic growth, poverty alleviation, and value creation, though their strategies are diverse and rooted in local contexts. Several nations are moving up the value chain, modernizing industries, and leveraging technology and innovation to drive development. This relentless pursuit of growth is strengthening domestic ecosystems and making Global South economies more resilient and competitive.

Strategic Multi-Alignment and Geopolitical Agency

Global South is no longer a passive bloc. But an active participant in global affairs, balancing relationships with major powers such as the US, China, and the European nations for own interest. Countries like India, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa are leveraging their geopolitical and economic clout to achieve strategic objectives, often through multi-alignment and participation in forums like BRICS+ and ASEAN. Such

move allows these nations to maximize national interests, secure technology transfers, and attract investment while maintaining distance from great power rivalries.

Navigating Great Power Competition

The intensifying strategic competition between the US and China is creating both opportunities and challenges for Global South. While these dynamics offer chances to increase international influence and attract investment, they also risk importing external rivalries and divisions into their regions. Global South must therefore develop strategies to navigate this rivalry, strengthen regional institutions, and ensure that cooperation is rooted in local needs and priorities.

Shaping a More Inclusive Global Order

There is growing discontent in Global South regarding perceived double standards and the legacy of colonialism in the current international system. The session in fact offers a platform to articulate a Global South agenda that promotes multipolarity, inclusivity, and fairness in global governance, moving beyond dominance by any single power. By uniting and empowering diverse voices and strengthening South-South cooperation, Global South can bridge North-South divides and advance shared development objectives.

The session *Navigating Multipolarity: Global South's Strategic Role* is justified by the urgent need to address the complexities and opportunities of the emerging multipolar world. It recognizes Global South's increasing economic weight, strategic agency, and the imperative to shape a global order that reflects its interests and values. The forum aims to convene dialogue, share best practices, and develop strategies that empower Global South to navigate and influence the evolving geoeconomic order.

Session II: New Technologies and the Global South: Leveraging Innovation for Cooperative Development

The rapid evolution of technology is reshaping societies worldwide, yet its benefits remain unevenly distributed. In Global South, this transformation presents both urgent challenges and unparalleled opportunities. This session argues for convening a high-level conference to chart a cooperative, inclusive, and strategic path forward-anchored in data, local innovation, and South-South collaboration. The moment is perfect for stakeholders to align technological progress with sustainable development goals, especially in energy, data governance, digital sovereignty, and climate resilience.

1. Rapid Technological Transformation in Global South

Emerging technologies are reshaping the global research and development. However, Global South—home to over 85% of the world’s population—receives just 10% of global R&D funding (UNESCO). As digital infrastructure expands rapidly (for example internet penetration in Sub-Saharan Africa grew from 26% in 2019 to 43% in 2023), the region is positioned to harness innovation for development—but strategic coordination is needed to ensure equity and inclusion.

2. Urgent Need for Energy Access and Sustainability

More than 750 million people, predominantly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, still lack access to electricity. Innovative, decentralized energy solutions - such as mini-grids and solar-powered irrigation—could connect over 500 million people by 2030, directly addressing poverty and climate vulnerability.

3. Digital Sovereignty and Artificial Intelligence at a Crossroads

Artificial intelligence and data-driven tools are influencing global power structures. Without strategic investment, Global South risks falling into patterns of technological dependency. Countries like India, Brazil, and South Africa are already engaging in

global debates on AI ethics and digital rights, signaling a timely opportunity to shape governance frameworks that reflect their priorities.

4. South-South Technological Collaboration Is Growing but Under-leveraged

Trade between developing countries grew from 41% in 1995 to 55% in 2010, demonstrating increased interdependence. However, only 25% of official development assistance projects involve South-South cooperation (OECD), indicating untapped potential for technology transfer, shared R&D, and mutual capacity-building.

5. Innovation Driving Climate and Economic Resilience

Grassroots technology solutions are already delivering results. Peer-to-peer solar microgrids in Bangladesh and solar-powered farming systems in India have boosted incomes, improved energy access, and reduced carbon emissions. These community-driven innovations are scalable across Global South.

6. Data Governance and Local Representation Are Advancing

For the first time, Global South nations are producing their own data for SDG monitoring, responding to longstanding gaps in data sovereignty and representation. Several global south countries have requested support to standardize data systems, indicating a rising demand for infrastructure and capacity in evidence-based policymaking.

7. Youth Demographics and Entrepreneurial Growth

By 2030, 42% of the world's youth will live in Africa, the prosperous continent. Coupled with the boom in tech entrepreneurship—such as the \$4.8 billion raised by African startups in 2022—this generation represents a tech-savvy, ambitious cohort ready to shape future economies. Supporting their innovation efforts is essential for long-term development.

8. Fintech and Digital Public Goods Offer Scalable Models

Sub-Saharan Africa leads globally in mobile money adoption, accounting for 70% of all such transactions (GSMA 2023). At the same time, open-source digital platforms like DHIS2 and OpenSRP have been deployed in over 80 countries, proving the scalability and utility of digital public goods in health, education, and governance.

9. Policy and Infrastructure Gaps Persist

Despite progress, inadequate infrastructure, financing constraints, and technical capacity gaps continue to limit the deployment and scaling of technology in many Global South contexts. International collaboration and targeted investments are needed to address these systemic barriers.

10. Global South Must Shape the Global Technological Narrative

With its growing digital capacity, entrepreneurial energy, and demographic weight, Global South is increasingly recognized as a key player in shaping global technological futures. Hosting a high-level, multistakeholder conference now will ensure these regions help define global standards for innovation, ethical tech, and equitable development.

Why the Session Relevant?

Assembling the policymakers, practitioners, tech-entrepreneurs, and community leaders from across Global South and beyond will enable collaborative action on technology-driven development. This session aims to:

Strategize for equitable R&D investment and innovation capacity in Global South.

Showcase and scale successful models of community-based technology solutions in Global South.

Build coalitions to close the energy, data, and infrastructure gaps. Establish inclusive norms and standards for AI, digital rights, and data governance. Align technological progress with the Sustainable Development Goals. The stakes are high—but so is the

potential. A coordinated, cooperative approach to technology can redefine the trajectory of development for billions.

Session III: Decolonising Media Narratives: Empowering Voices and Perspectives

In an era defined by uncertainty, complexity, and opportunity, narrative power is as vital as economic power. Global South Economic Forum's (GSEF 2025) commitment to decolonising media narratives is a testament to its broader vision: a world in which Global South is not only heard, but heeded; not only seen, but respected; not only present, but leading the way toward a more just, balanced, and inclusive global order.

At the heart of the inaugural Global South Economic Forum (GSEF 2025) lies a transformative ambition: to reimagine not only economic frameworks, but also the very narratives that shape perceptions, policies, and destinies of Global South. The 3rd session *Decolonising Media Narratives: Empowering Voices and Perspectives* stands as a cornerstone of this vision, recognizing that narrative power is inseparable from economic and political agency. To appreciate the urgency and scope of this session, GSEF seeks to examine the historical forces that have shaped global media, the theories that explain their influence, and the lived realities and aspirations of Global South.

The Power of Narrative in a Multipolar World

Over decades, the world's narratives have been filtered through a narrow lens. Western media organizations, armed with vast resources, global reach, and editorial authority have not only reported on global events but have also defined which stories matter, how they are told, and whose voices are amplified or silenced. This narrative dominance is not a mere by product of technological prowess - it is rooted in the legacies of colonialism, where control over information was as potent as control over land or resources.

Although only about 20% of the world's population speaks English, English-language media dominates global communication - accounting for over half of all online content and serving as the main language for international news and discourse. This leaves the voices and perspectives of the vast majority—nearly 80% of humanity—underrepresented in the global media landscape.

As Global South steps forward in an era marked by economic ambition, technological innovation, and the urgent pursuit of sustainable development, it is clear that reclaiming narrative sovereignty is as vital as closing the \$4 trillion annual financing gap for development. The GSEF, convening policymakers, experts, and innovators from across Africa, Asia, , and beyond, recognizes that economic transformation cannot occur in a vacuum - it must be accompanied by a transformation in how the world sees, hears, and values Global South.

Theories That Shape Our Understanding

The CNN Effect: When Media Drives Policy

The "CNN Effect" theory describes the phenomenon where real-time, 24-hour news coverage—pioneered by networks like CNN—has the ability to influence public opinion and force governments, especially in the West, to respond rapidly to humanitarian crises and conflicts. During the Somali famine in the early 1990s and the Bosnian war, relentless media coverage galvanized international intervention, at times bypassing traditional diplomatic processes.

For Global South, the CNN Effect is often considered to be double-edged sword. On one hand, it can bring urgent attention to crises that might otherwise be ignored. On the other, it often frames these events through a Western-centric lens, prioritizing stories that resonate with Western audiences and policymakers, while neglecting the underlying complexities or the agency of local actors. This selective spotlight has, at times, reduced nations to sites of tragedy or instability, overshadowing stories of resilience, innovation, and leadership.

Agenda Setting: Who Decides What the World Cares About?

Agenda Setting media theory posits that the media does not tell people what to think, but it tells them what to think about. By choosing which issues to highlight, how prominently, and for how long, media organizations shape public discourse and, by extension, policy priorities. Editorial decisions — what makes the front page, what is relegated to a brief mention, what is ignored altogether — are not neutral; they reflect the values, interests, and biases of those in control. For much of the post-colonial era, the agenda of global news has been set in newsrooms far removed from the realities of Global South. Stories of economic growth, social innovation, and cultural dynamism have often been overshadowed by narratives of crisis, corruption, or dependency. This imbalance not only distorts global understanding but also influences how international institutions, investors, and even local populations perceive the potential and priorities of global south.

The Al Jazeera Effect: The Emergence of Alternative Narratives

The rise of Al Jazeera and other Global South media platforms marks a pivotal shift in the global media landscape. The "Al Jazeera Effect" refers to the ability of these outlets to challenge Western media dominance by providing alternative perspectives, prioritizing stories from Global South, and amplifying voices that have long been marginalized. Al Jazeera's coverage of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia has diversified the global news flow, offering nuanced, context-rich reporting that reflects local realities and aspirations. This has not only empowered audiences in Global South but has also forced Western media to broaden their coverage and reconsider their assumptions. The Al Jazeera Effect demonstrates that narrative sovereignty is possible and that when nations tell their own stories, the world becomes more balanced, more informed, and more just.

The Stakes for the Global South

The stakes for Global South could not be higher. As outlined at the GSEF, developing nations face an unprecedented \$4 trillion annual shortfall in sustainable development financing - a gap that threatens the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the very prospects of equitable, resilient growth. Yet, as much as this is a financial challenge, it is also a narrative one. Too often, Global South is portrayed as a passive recipient of aid, a victim of climate change, or a site of perpetual crisis. These narratives, while sometimes rooted in real challenges, obscure the agency, creativity, and leadership that abound across the region. They also influence how resources are allocated, how partnerships are formed, and how policies are shaped- from climate finance to technology transfer to trade.

The Role of the GSEF: A Platform for Narrative Transformation

Global South Economic Forum is uniquely positioned to catalyze this transformation. By bringing together ministers, former heads of state, diplomats, experts, and innovators, the GSEF 2025 provides a platform not only for economic dialogue but for the platform for showcasing the potential of Global South. GSEF's agenda explicitly emphasizes the importance of media and narrative-building as tools for empowerment, resilience, and inclusive growth.

At the session *Decolonising Media Narratives: Empowering Voices and Perspectives*, panelists will engage in a critical examination of how media shapes perceptions, influences policy, and either perpetuates or challenges historical injustices. The session will draw on the intellectual insights of media theory, the lived experiences of journalists and storytellers, and the strategic imperatives of policymakers and development leaders.

Why Decolonising Media Narratives Matters

Decolonising media narratives is about more than representation; it is about justice. For centuries, colonial powers controlled not only the land and resources of Global South but also the stories told about its people. These narratives justified exploitation, erased agency, and entrenched stereotypes that persist to this day. By reclaiming the power to

tell their own stories, Global South nations can correct these historical imbalances, challenge inherited biases, and assert their dignity and potential on the world stage.

Empowering Authentic Voices

When media platforms are controlled by external actors, local voices are often marginalized or distorted. Decolonising media narratives means empowering journalists, filmmakers, writers, and community leaders from Global South to set the agenda, frame the issues, and speak in their own voices.

This empowerment is not only a matter of pride; it is essential for effective policymaking, social cohesion, and economic development. Authentic storytelling builds trust, fosters understanding, and mobilizes communities around shared goals.

Influencing Policy and Resource Allocation

As the CNN Effect and Agenda Setting theories demonstrate, media coverage shapes not only public opinion but also the allocation of resources and the direction of policy. When Global South is portrayed primarily as a site of crisis, it attracts emergency aid but not long-term investment. When its innovations and successes are highlighted, it attracts partnerships, investment, and respect. Decolonising media narratives is therefore a strategic imperative for development. It enables nations to define their own priorities, advocate for their interests, and mobilize the resources needed to achieve their goals.

Shaping a Multipolar Media World

The emergence of platforms from Global South signals the possibility of a truly multipolar media world—one in which diverse perspectives are not only present but influential. This is essential in an era of geopolitical complexity, where the rules of the game are being rewritten and the voices of Global South are increasingly central to global governance.

A multipolar media ecosystem forms dialogue, mutual understanding, and cooperation. It challenges the concentration of narrative power and ensures that the stories of Global South are not filtered through external interests but are told by those who live them.

Narrative Sovereignty

GSEF is committed to action. The Forum's emphasis on narrative-building is matched by a focus on practical solutions—whether through supporting the growth of independent media, investing in digital infrastructure, or forming South-South collaboration in storytelling and journalism. By convening this session, GSEF champions the principle of narrative sovereignty: the right and responsibility of nations to define their own stories, set their own agendas, and shape their own futures. This is not a call for isolation or parochialism, but for partnership, mutual respect, and a recognition that the world is richer when every voice is heard.

Toward a New Narrative for Global South

The session *Decolonising Media Narratives: Empowering Voices and Perspectives* at Global South Economic Forum is more than a panel discussion—infact it is a declaration of intent. It signals the emergence of Global South not merely as a subject of global narratives, but as an author, editor, and publisher of its own story. By drawing on the lessons of the CNN Effect, Agenda Setting, and the Al Jazeera Effect, the session offers both a critique of the past and a roadmap for the future. The panel invites participants to challenge inherited biases, empower authentic voices, and aspires to build a media forum that reflects the complexity, creativity, and ambition of Global South.

Session IV: Integrating Markets through Trade, Investment, and Connectivity

Global South Economic Forum (GSEF) 2025 convenes at a thrilling moment in the evolution of multipolarity. As the balance of global growth shifts, the Global South is emerging as a central engine of trade, investment, and innovation. Session IV, *Integrating Markets through Trade, Investment and Connectivity*, is designed in direct response to this transformation, drawing on compelling data, recent trends, and strategic imperatives to foster a more integrated, resilient, and prosperous Global South.

The Data: The Rise of Global South in Trade and Investment

Explosive Trade Growth: In 2024, global trade reached a record \$33 trillion, with developing economies driving much of this expansion. Global South's share of global trade is projected to post a 4.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the next five years, outpacing advanced economies.

South-South Trade Momentum: By 2033, annual Global South trade is expected to approach \$14 trillion, with trade among Global South nations (South-South trade) growing at 3.8% annually—faster than trade within advanced economies (North-North trade).

Rising Economic Weight: Global South, represented by the UN G77 group, now accounts for around 18% of global GDP, and its collective GDP is set to grow at 4.2% annually through 2029—more than double the rate of advanced economies.

Investment Flows: Foreign direct investment (FDI) in ASEAN alone reached \$234 billion in 2023, with the region's trade projected to grow 3.7% annually over the next decade.

Connectivity Initiatives: Regional trade agreements—like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), ASEAN, Mercosur, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—are deepening economic ties, reducing barriers, and fostering cross-border infrastructure and digital connectivity.

Why Integration Matters Now

Download the [Agenda](#). The [Panel and Moderator](#) of GSEF 2025.

Seizing the Moment in a Multipolar World

The world is entering a multipolar era, where economic and geopolitical power is more widely distributed. Global South is leveraging this shift by building new trade and investment bridges, both within the region and with advanced economies. China, for example, is now the top trading partner for over 63 Global South nations, up from 36 in 2013, and South-South trade with China is projected to grow at 5.9% annually through 2033. This diversification strengthens resilience and reduces dependence on any single economic bloc.

Moving Up the Value Chain

Global South economies are no longer content to be mere exporters of raw materials. Countries like Indonesia and Chile are investing in local processing and value-added manufacturing—Indonesia now processes nickel ore domestically for battery production, while Chile has launched a national lithium policy to boost downstream industries. This shift is creating jobs, creating innovation, and building more robust domestic industries.

Navigating Global Uncertainties

Rising protectionism, shifting supply chains, and geopolitical tensions are reshaping global trade. Yet, Global South is responding with pragmatic diplomacy and flexible policies. India and China, despite longstanding border disputes, have resumed direct trade and flights, recognizing the mutual benefits of economic collaboration. Such strategies are crucial for maintaining stability and growth amid global uncertainty.

Unlocking Regional Potential

Regional integration is proving to be a catalyst for growth. ASEAN's experience is instructive: with a 4.7% CAGR in GDP and a pioneering digital economy framework, ASEAN is set to double its digital economy to \$2 trillion by 2030. Similar integration efforts in Africa and Latin America are reducing trade costs, harmonizing regulations, and enabling economies of scale.

Attracting Investment and Technology

As businesses seek alternatives to China-centric supply chains, Global South nations are becoming attractive destinations for investment in manufacturing, technology, and infrastructure. The Belt and Road Initiative and other connectivity projects are enhancing logistics, digital networks, and energy infrastructure, further integrating markets and unlocking new opportunities.

Why This Session Now

Building Resilience and Competitiveness

Integrating markets through trade, investment, and connectivity is essential for building economic resilience, especially as global growth slows and competition intensifies. By deepening regional and South-South ties, Global South nations can diversify export markets, reduce vulnerability to external shocks, and strengthen their bargaining position in the global economy.

Facilitating Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

Integration is not just about economic numbers; it is about people. Enhanced trade and investment create jobs, raise incomes, and drive innovation. Connectivity- physical and digital—bridges divides, empowers small businesses, and ensures that growth benefits are more widely shared.

Shaping the Global Order

With advanced economies experiencing slower growth (projected at just 1.9% annually through 2029), Global South's dynamism positions it as a key architect of the future global order. By championing multi-alignment and pragmatic cooperation—through BRICS+, ASEAN, AfCFTA, and other platforms— Global South is asserting greater influence over global rules, standards, and priorities.

The Case for Session IV

Session IV, *Integrating Markets through Trade, Investment and Connectivity* is not simply a reflection of current trends - it is a strategic response to the opportunities and challenges facing the Global South. The fact is clear: Global South is driving global trade growth, innovating in value chains, and building new bridges of cooperation. The perspective is equally compelling: integration is the pathway to resilience, prosperity, and influence in a rapidly changing world. With this session, the GSEF 2025 affirms its commitment to actionable dialogue, knowledge sharing, and partnership-building — empowering Global South nations to shape their own economic destinies and contribute to a more balanced, connected, and inclusive global economy.

Session V: The UAE as a Catalyst for North-South and South-South Connectivity

The fifth session *The UAE as a Catalyst for North-South and South-South Connectivity* at Global South Economic Forum 2025 is not only timely but essential, as it highlights the UAE's transformative role in bridging continents, accelerating digital transformation, and making inclusive growth across emerging markets. The UAE's trajectory from an energy and logistics dependent economy to a global digital and innovation hub is a compelling case study in how strategic investment, progressive policy, and visionary leadership can enable a nation to serve as a linchpin for connectivity between Global North and South.

The UAE's Digital Transformation: Data and Vision

The UAE's digital market is among the most advanced and fastest-growing globally. In 2025, the UAE's technology services market is projected to reach \$4.79 billion, with a robust compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.24% expected through 2029. This growth is driven by ambitious national strategies, such as the UAE Digital Economy Strategy, which aims to increase the digital economy's share of non-oil GDP from 12% to 20% by 2030. The government has enacted over several digital transformation

strategies at both federal and emirate levels, including the pioneering UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence, which targets global AI leadership by 2031.

The UAE's commitment to digital innovation is reflected in its world-class infrastructure. The country boasts a 99% internet penetration rate and consistently ranks among the top globally for mobile and broadband speeds. In March 2025, it ranked first worldwide for mobile speeds and second for fixed broadband, according to Ookla. The UAE has also led the world for nine consecutive years in fiber-to-the-home network coverage, reaching 99.5% of its total area.

Cloud computing and data center infrastructure are cornerstones of this digital transformation. The UAE is already the largest data center hub in the Middle East, with 38 major facilities and \$1 billion in additional investments projected by 2026. The data center market is expected to grow at a CAGR of nearly 10% over the next five years, reaching AED 9.7 billion by 2029. These investments have attracted global technology giants such as AWS, Google, Microsoft, and Alibaba, further cementing the UAE's status as a regional digital powerhouse.

Enabling North-South and South-South Connectivity

Strategic Geography and Infrastructure

The UAE's geographic location at the intersection of Africa, Asia, and Europe makes it a natural gateway for trade, investment, and digital flows. Its ports, airports, and logistics networks are among the most advanced in the world, facilitating seamless movement of goods and people between continents. The UAE's telecommunication infrastructure is equally impressive, with early adoption of 5G and plans to launch 6G networks by 2026, ensuring the country remains at the forefront of global connectivity.

Driving Regional Digital Transformation

The UAE's influence extends far beyond its borders, particularly in Africa and Asia. Through investments in ports, logistics, renewable energy, and digital infrastructure, the UAE is helping to close critical gaps in emerging markets. For instance, the UAE has committed \$4.5 billion to climate-related projects in Africa and partnered with

Microsoft and G42 to build a \$1 billion geothermal-powered data center in Kenya. This facility will accelerate AI development, cloud capacity, and digital transformation across East Africa, supporting local innovation and the creation of AI models in indigenous languages.

These initiatives are not isolated: they are part of a broader strategy to form South-South collaboration, knowledge transfer, and skills development. The UAE supports AI training programs, university partnerships, and startup incubation, empowering a new generation of innovators in Global South. In 2024, Dubai supported the establishment and expansion of 1,210 digital startups, a 120% increase from the previous year, underscoring its attractiveness as an entrepreneurial hub.

Public-Private Partnerships and Policy Innovation

The UAE's success is built on a foundation of strong public-private partnerships and forward-thinking regulation. Free trade zones like Dubai Internet City and Dubai Silicon Oasis have attracted international investment and fostered industry clusters for high technology and innovation. The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) established the UAE ICT Fund to support research, development, and education in the ICT sector, further strengthening the talent pipeline.

The UAE's Digital Government Strategy (2021–2025) aims for a 90% satisfaction rate among users of digital services and the full digitization of all government services by 2025. The country leads the Arab world in the UN E-Government Development Index and ranks first regionally in the Government AI Readiness Index by Oxford Insights, reflecting its excellence in government efficiency, technology sector development, and digital infrastructure availability.

Positive Impact and Global Leadership

Economic Diversification and Resilience

The UAE's digital and technological leadership has enabled it to diversify its economy away from oil, creating new engines of growth in ICT, AI, cloud computing, and emerging technologies like blockchain and the Internet of Things. This diversification has made the UAE an international beacon for tech companies and a model for sustainable development in Global South.

A report by PwC estimates that AI will contribute approximately 13.6% to the UAE's GDP, amounting to around \$100 billion by 2030. This economic impact is amplified by the UAE's role in enabling other nations to harness similar technologies for their own development.

Social Inclusion and Human Capital

The UAE's digital transformation is inclusive by design. Women's financial independence is driving e-commerce growth, and targeted efforts are being made to close the digital skills gap through training and education. By 2025, all federal government employees will be digitally enabled, with 10,000 trained in advanced technologies such as AI and blockchain. This focus on human capital ensures that the benefits of digitalization are widely shared and that the UAE's model is replicable across diverse contexts in Global South.

Catalyzing Sustainable Development

The UAE's investments in renewable energy, digital infrastructure, and climate innovation are directly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By leveraging its capital, expertise, and inclusive approach, the UAE demonstrates how North-South and South-South partnerships can unlock new opportunities, drive sustainable growth, and empower emerging markets to shape their own digital and economic futures.

Relevance to Global South Economic Forum

Global South faces a \$4 trillion annual financing gap for sustainable development, alongside persistent challenges in digital infrastructure, skills, and innovation. The UAE's experience offers a blueprint for how emerging economies can leapfrog traditional development pathways and build resilient, future-ready societies.

At Global South Economic Forum 2025, this session serves several critical purposes:

1. **Showcasing Best Practices:** The UAE's journey provides actionable insights into how policy, investment, and innovation can be harnessed to drive connectivity and growth.
2. **Collaboration:** By highlighting successful North-South and South-South partnerships, the session encourages other countries to pursue similar collaborations, leveraging the UAE's experience and networks.
3. **Inspiring Ambition:** The UAE's rapid transformation demonstrates that ambitious goals are achievable with the right mix of vision, investment, and execution.
4. **Driving Policy Dialogue:** The session creates a platform for dialogue on how to replicate and scale the UAE's successes across Global South, addressing local challenges and opportunities.

The UAE as a Catalyst for North-South and South-South Connectivity is the fifth and last session that encapsulates the spirit of Global South Economic Forum: bold, future-oriented, and committed to inclusive progress. The UAE's data-driven, policy-backed, and innovation-led approach has positioned it as a global leader in digital transformation, a bridge between continents, and a source of inspiration for emerging economies worldwide. The relevance of this session is clear: in a rapidly evolving world, the UAE's model offers hope, guidance, and a practical roadmap for nations seeking to harness the power of technology and connectivity for the benefit of all.