

Climate Diplomacy in Action: India-Sweden Relations

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Abstract:

Climate change has put the globe in a state of emergency, with its impact beyond transnational borders. Moreover, the disparity between the Global North and Global South has aggravated extreme weather events and climate-related emergencies in the latter. Sweden, as the largest Nordic country in the European Union, has set a target to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2045, while India, emerging as a leader in the Global South, aims to reach this goal by 2070. While imploring the Global North- Global South debate on climate injustice, the study primarily focuses on India and Sweden's bilateral relationship using climate diplomacy as a strategic tool, delving into mutual agreements, policy frameworks, and innovative strategies implemented by both nations. The objective is to investigate and address the functions of climate diplomacy in enhancing bilateral ties between India and Sweden, thereby expediting the achievement of their respective climate objectives. The study explores and elaborates how India and Sweden have supported joint research and development (R&D) projects, collaborative waste management programs, green finance and industrial partnerships in clean energy infrastructure and seeks to enhance global climate initiatives through diplomatic cooperation in promoting sustainable development. Furthermore, the paper aims to shed light on the significance of diplomatic cooperation in advancing sustainable development and facilitating the Nordic countries' access to the Global South.

Keywords: India, Sweden, Climate Diplomacy, Climate Change, Global North-South

1. Introduction

“The Earth will not continue to offer its harvest, except with faithful stewardship. We cannot say we love the land and then take steps to destroy it for use by future generations.”—John Paul II

Nature is imperative for human survival and to sustain life on Earth. Everything in nature, be it mountains, plants, sun, rivers, birds or the wind, teaches us the rules of living in peace and harmony, where there is only equal existence and integral interaction. However, the complex and diverse disposition of growing human activities like pollution, habitat degradation, and climate change are destroying the harmonious identity of nature, as well as personal harmony and cooperation. For the last couple of decades, there has been a common scientific agreement that the nature of our climate has been changing. The motive behind this transformation is the anthropogenic factors, which are the key factors that lead to the emission of human-induced greenhouse gases. The production of GHGs from different activities, which involve energy obtainment from fossil fuels, deforestation, industrial and manufacturing processes and agriculture are the main sources of these gases.

The carbon dioxide (CO₂) released from sources like petroleum, coal, and natural gas contributes to the formation of a layer of blanket around the Earth, which prevents the heat from escaping into the atmosphere. The climate issue is deemed grave in the contemporary era, with major geopolitical implications. A serious temperature rise has been caused by the higher levels of greenhouse gases, and a significant threat is posed by the uncontrollable sea level rise and water scarcity; hence, lives and livelihoods are being put at risk around the globe. We have reached a point, where we are being approached by a significantly warmer planet. Weather emergencies such as flooding, extreme heat, persisting droughts, destructive storms, and unmanageable wildfires are also being experienced more frequently and are considered catastrophic.

There is no planet B and as the climate concern becomes more crucial, an active role by nations must be taken in addressing these challenges through diplomatic channels. This allows for a platform where partnerships towards common goals can be facilitated, cooperation on climate concerns can be developed, sustainable practices can be promoted, and communities at risk can be protected. Climate diplomacy is crucial in dealing with climate change as it acknowledges the relationship between climate policy and geopolitics, which serves as a means to promote multilateralism, provide aid to third-world nations, involve non-state actors, and seek climate security. It can further build trust and promote bilateral relations. In 1972, the world saw the convening of the first-ever international convention on the environment in Stockholm. The Stockholm Conference initiated a series of discussions and negotiations regarding international agreements on environmental matters. Twenty years later, during the Rio Earth Summit held in 1992, nations agreed on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The UNFCCC's first Conference of the Parties (COP) in Berlin in 1995 saw India play a crucial role in forming a coalition with the European Union, aimed at facilitating the negotiation of a protocol to improve climate change provisions. The adoption of the mandate was assisted by the "Green Group" as it faced opposition from OPEC countries regarding measures that would lead to stricter regulation of CO₂ emissions.¹ This laid the foundation for the eventual adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. In contrast, Sweden's climate policy actions are seen as deviating from expected norms. Sweden has chosen a target that is more ambitious than the requirements set out in the Kyoto Protocol, and it is expected that this target will likely be exceeded.

India's population, surpassing 1.4 billion individuals, led to its designation as the world's most populous country in 2023. Despite the significant strides in renewable energy development, India retains its status as the world's third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Consequently, attention must be given by the government to mitigate both poverty and social injustice, alongside efforts to conserve natural resources and safeguard the environment.

This paper recognises climate diplomacy as the need of the current geopolitical order and, bases the central theme on the concept of climate diplomacy within the bilateral relationship between India and Sweden, assessing the utilisation of diplomatic channels to promote sustainable practices to tackle climate change. The paper, through official documents and reports, gathers India's environmental and climate collaborations with Sweden in domains such as renewable energy research, sustainable urban planning projects, and technology transfers, showcasing the impact of these partnerships. The study retraces the historical evolution and diplomatic efforts that have paved the way for these partnerships, and the progress achieved thus far and sheds light on both achievements and challenges faced in the pursuit of climate objectives.

2. Global North-South Divide

The debate on the Global North and Global South centres around its history of colonialism and imperialism, which has led to inequality in the distribution of resources between developed countries and developing and under-developing countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania. Global South as a term was first used in 1969 by an American writer, Carl Oglesby, who was also a New Left activist where he referred to the 3rd world countries as the Global South.²

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), comprising low-lying island nations with a population of approximately 65 million, despite being responsible for less than 1% of global GHG emissions, are extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. A significant gap exists between countries that have been the biggest contributors to carbon and GHG emissions and those that bear the brunt of the consequences. This makes us question the ethical responsibility of developed nations to recompense for the heavy damage caused by past emissions during their road to becoming a developed state, as the Global South lacks the financial means to transition their economies to more environmentally sustainable practices.

The climate crisis affects the entire planet, necessitating global cooperation between the Global North and Global South. When a nation's carbon output falls below the anticipated levels of CO₂, relative to its economic activity and developmental stage, it is termed climate credit. According to a study conducted in 2022 by Jason Hickel, the United States with 40%, while the European Union with 29% accounts for a majority of the climate breakdown and surprisingly India accounts for 34% of the total climate credit with 90 billion tonnes of CO₂.³ Keeping in mind climate debt, it is imperative for the Global North to provide financial assistance to the developing nations' transition to greener technologies.

2.1. Globalisation

Globalisation has made the world more competitive, crowded, and disputed. It would not be wrong to say that globalisation has significantly helped India and the European Union emerge as 'natural allies' to tackle collective issues and promote multilateralism. The imperative of collaboration is recognised, with India having been actively engaged with the European Union on various fronts, including combating climate change and terrorism, navigating the complexities of digitisation, and enhancing connectivity infrastructure. This strategic partnership is not only seen to bolster Europe's presence in Asia but also to emphasise the significance of inclusive and collaborative approaches to global governance in an era characterised by rapid globalisation and interdependence.

The challenges of climate change and its disproportionate impact on the Global South are acknowledged by Jeffrey D. Sachs, the University Professor and the Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. A nuanced approach to globalisation is emphasised, integrating climate change with equitable access to green technologies and funds for developing countries, recognising its potential benefits while advocating for actions to bridge the North-South divide.⁴

On the contrary, it is argued by scholars Jason Hickel and Robert Wade that despite the narrative of economic growth and development in the Global South, significant economic improvement is not being experienced. Contradictory to the idea that globalisation is reducing inequality between the North and South, emphasis is placed by these scholars on the increase in inequality. A disproportionately large number of resources, exceeding 240 trillion dollars in 2015, was being extracted from the Global South by Global North countries, resulting in an economic advantage for the North and, consequently, the widening of the gap.⁵

In the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2024, Sweden is positioned 10th globally in terms of its climate policy performance.⁶ Sweden recognises its climate responsibility and advocates for climate justice, emphasising the importance of support for developing countries affected by climate change, thus it funded projects worth SEK 1.9 billion (200 million USD) in developing countries, from 2002 to 2021, mitigating 31.6 million tonnes of CO₂ and has committed 8 billion SEK (800 million USD) for 2022 to 2026.^{7 8} The argument thus points out that a holistic approach is needed, combining the benefits of globalisation for climate mitigation with the recognition of the Global North-South divide for climate adaptation.

2.2. Climate Adaptation and Climate Mitigation

As the saying goes, prevention is better than cure, nations need to prepare themselves well and proactively adapt to the growing impact of climate change both for the present and the future. The growing economies of the Global South are vigorously adapting to climate change. Climate adaptation measures employ capacity building, disaster management, early warning systems, and infrastructural and technologic resilience in vulnerable regions of socio-economic and political instability. The Bhola Cyclone in 1970, left the coastal region of Bangladesh, (at the time of the incident, East Pakistan), completely wretched with over 300,000 casualties.⁹ To date, over 3,500 cyclone shelters have been constructed under the framework of the Cyclone Preparedness Program initiated by the Government of Bangladesh jointly with the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, to prepare and prevent vulnerable communities during extreme weather emergencies.

In India, 78.48 lakh hectares of land has been covered under the Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) scheme. The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, is one of the key initiatives under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).¹⁰ In 2015, the PDMC scheme was implemented under the ambit of NMSA with an aim to enhance water use efficiency at the farm level through the adoption of micro-irrigation.

The activities that are initiated to reduce and further cease the release of GHGs like CO₂ and Methane come under the spectrum of climate mitigation. By ending coal and gas-based energy, employing renewable sources of energy, complete freedom and no dependency on oil, efficient public transport systems and boosting carbon sequestration, countries can take action towards climate mitigation. These gases are released from a wide range of sources such as industrial production, combustion vehicles, agricultural practices, energy generation and others, which lead to global warming by trapping the heat in the Earth's atmosphere.

The Global South faces the brunt of these processes owing to its growing economy and development, albeit it is the Global North with its excessive CO₂ emissions, making it accountable for \$170 trillion in compensation to the low carbon emitting countries in the Global South by 2050.¹¹ Over 400 million SEK (approximately 46 million USD) has been allocated for climate-resilient infrastructure projects in Southern Africa through the establishment of the Climate Resilient Infrastructure Development Facility (CRIDF), facilitated by collaborative efforts between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the African Development Bank. With their steadfast dedication to climate action, Nordic countries are proponents of climate diplomacy, providing resources to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in the Global South.

The disparities in the international system in terms of climate change responsibilities are caused by the political, economic, and social structures of economies, which result in the economies' invariable ability

to adapt to climate change. On the one hand, developed nations are endowed with technology and economic capacity, but underdeveloped countries are frequently bereft of these resources to meet climate change needs. As a result, collaboration and cooperation between developed and developing countries are required for technology transfer, capacity building, development assistance, financial support for development and implementation, infrastructural growth, knowledge transfer, and further developments.

3. India-Sweden Bilateral Journey

India and Sweden have had longstanding close economic and commercial relations since the 1920s, but it took a few years to establish official diplomatic relations in 1949. The two shared common ideals of democracy, pluralism, and their approach to neutrality during the Cold War. In 1955, Sweden saw the appointment of Alva Myrdal as its inaugural ambassador to India, a move that contributed significantly to the enhancement of diplomatic ties between the two nations. Myrdal and then Prime Minister of India, PM Jawaharlal Nehru, demonstrated a steadfast dedication to social welfare and egalitarian principles. The establishment of a non-aligned, multilateral global framework for preventing future wars through the pursuit of nuclear disarmament was proposed by the leaders. This initiative was widely acknowledged to have significantly strengthened the relationship between India and Sweden.¹²

3.1. The Stockholm Conference

The 1972 Stockholm Conference in Sweden, which paved the way for today's environmental movement, was the first of its kind to raise concerns regarding environmental issues. Among the 113 countries represented, Indira Gandhi, who was serving as the prime minister of India at the time, attended the conference as the only foreign head of state. One of the primary principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is poverty reduction, and it was remarked that her statement at the conference marked a significant development in this area. In her speech, she said, "We have to prove to the disinherited majority of the world that ecology and conservation will not work against their interests but will bring an improvement in their lives."¹³

Congress leader and former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh points out that injustice and inequity were emphasised by her, noting that the majority of natural resources were consumed by countries with a minor portion of the global population, resulting in significantly more environmental degradation compared to the practices of nations such as India.¹⁴ Poverty reduction and development were already major areas of focus for the Global South when the developed countries started working on environmental conservation. On June 16, the Stockholm Conference adopted a declaration, the fourth paragraph of which was nearly completely based on Indira Gandhi's address.

Figure 1: Indira Gandhi's Speech at the Stockholm Conference, 1972

"In developing countries, most of the environmental problems are caused by under-development. Millions continue to live far below the minimum levels required for a decent human existence, deprived of adequate food and clothing, shelter, education, health, and sanitation. Therefore, developing countries must direct their efforts toward development, bearing in mind their priorities and the need to safeguard and improve the environment. For the same purpose, the industrialized countries should make efforts to reduce the gap between themselves and the developing countries. In industrialized countries, environmental problems are generally related to industrialization and technological development".

Note: A part of Indira Gandhi's speech at the Stockholm Conference, 1972, adopted as the fourth paragraph of the Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment from, in Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, UN Doc. A/RES/2994(XXVII) 1972.

3.2. The Pivot

In 1998, when India launched its second nuclear test at Pokhran, there was a tiff in India's relations with Sweden, who, along with the US, Australia, Canada, Germany, and Japan, placed sanctions on India's nuclear policies, posing a significant threat to regional and global security as well as worldwide nuclear disarmament. While the immense post-economic reform potential of India was being explored by the rest of Europe and the United States, the Swedish leadership continued to ponder the pros and cons of the stance they had adopted.¹⁵ However, in 2000, an investment treaty was signed by the two nations to promote investments and address the strains in bilateral relations.

India and Sweden's relationship has seen ebbs and flows during its course of evolution. It is in recent years that this relationship has witnessed a skyward flight. During his visit in 2015, the then-President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, visited Sweden, and agreements on polar and ocean research were signed. Sweden has endorsed India as a 'natural claimant' for a seat in the UN Security Council and welcomed its membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime, MTCR.¹⁶ The India-Sweden relations saw a new development when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Sweden on 16-17 April 2018. In the presence of PM Modi and PM Löfven, India and Sweden signed the Innovation Partnership for a Sustainable Future and approved a Joint Action Plan. Both prime ministers addressed around 30 CEOs of leading Swedish firms during a round-table discussion.¹⁷ This was the first major partnership between India and Sweden to actively focus on prosperity and work towards global concerns like climate change and sustainable development using innovation employing smart cities, green technology, bio-waste economy, transportation, circular economy, etc.

4. Climate Partnership between India and Sweden

India and Sweden have typically shared similar perspectives on striking a balance between nature and humanity for sustainable development. The major potential areas for collaboration between India and Sweden include sustainable urban development and integrated solid waste management, air and water quality management, clean production and technology, climate change, CDM, and environmental health, which are identified in the November 2009 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Environment.¹⁸ Cleaner technology and zero discharge in the paper and pulp industries, as well as e-waste management, bio-medical waste management, waste-to-energy options, sewage treatment technologies, Centres of Excellence in India, and joint research on climate and air quality monitoring, are also at focus in the MoU.¹⁹

An MoU was signed between India and Sweden in April 2010 to collaborate on renewable energy technologies, including solar, hydrogen cells, small hydro, geothermal, and clean energy.²⁰ The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centre for Science and Environment, India, have collaborated since 2012 towards the goal of providing training to state-level environmental agency officers in India who are involved in bilateral environmental and climate cooperation with strategic nations. The Swedish EPA imparts expertise on subjects including supervision, air pollution, waste management, and lowering industrial emissions through its extensive training programmes.²¹ An MoU on Sustainable Urban Development between India and Sweden was executed on June 1, 2015, with the objective of promoting

sustainable urban development in India and enhancing bilateral relations between the two countries. The focus areas outlined in the MoU encompass sustainable urban planning, development of a sustainable transportation system, management of solid waste, and water and sanitation management.²²

A move towards sustainable living is being promoted by Swedish cities, with their carbon emissions being aggressively cut and strong regulations being supported at the federal, provincial, and local levels. The capital city of Stockholm has included eco-friendly measures like a well-established public transit system that runs on renewable energy sources and a vast network of bike lanes. Exchanging industrial know-how with the Swedish Innovation Agency, Vinnova, and the Swedish Energy Agency, leading the joint call on Smart and Sustainable Cities and Smart Grids in Sweden, the Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA) in India is the implementing partner for smart cities and smart grids and supports research and innovation collaborations between stakeholders from both countries.²³

The Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between India and Sweden, signed on December 9, 2005, in Stockholm, brought into effect the Sweden-India Innovation Partnership for a Sustainable Future on April 17, 2018, in Science, Technology, and Innovation for 2018-2021. In this reference, a Protocol of Cooperation in the fields of Science & Technology between the Department of Science & Technology, India and the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (VINNOVA), Sweden was put into force in October 2018. Funding mechanisms have been created by both governments through which support for joint India-Sweden research and development (R&D) projects and other activities may be sought by companies.

In the bilateral relationship between Sweden and India, innovation collaboration is an aspect that continues to be on the rise. The foundation of this partnership rests upon the principles of shared funding, joint development, and collaborative creation for mutual gain, leveraging the complementary strengths of Sweden and India with funds being contributed by both the government and industry, thereby using the 'n+n approach'. Additionally, it explores the opportunities for broadened bilateral cooperation towards common strategic objectives such as advancing future mobility, promoting circular economy practices, and enhancing digital health initiatives. One such innovation is bio-coal, which is prepared from leftover agricultural waste. The Bio-coal greatly helps in reducing emissions by 20 times that of coal and can be utilised in thermal power plants as well as in households, reducing stubble burning and thus improving air quality and soil, capacity building via technological advancement, and creating livelihoods.²⁴

The US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2019, was a great opportunity presented for both nations to take solid collaborative steps towards global warming, restore harmony in ecosystems, and preserve the environment while upholding the objectives and goals of the Paris Agreement established in 2015. In order to align with the targets, set forth in the Paris Agreement, it is deemed necessary to undertake further endeavours aimed at emission reduction. Around 30% of worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are generated by heavy industry. Consequently, the establishment of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) for industrial transformation by Sweden, India and the World Economic Forum at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in 2019 signifies a pivotal initiative. This group consists of entities aspiring to play a leading role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, advocate for the prioritisation of low-carbon pathways across all sectors, and further prompt both governmental and corporate authorities to intensify their endeavours in combating climate change, with the ultimate objective of facilitating the transition towards achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Inspiration for the development of sector-specific roadmaps aimed at transitioning to net zero carbon emissions is

drawn from Sweden's notable experience in leveraging private-public partnerships to formulate such strategies across 13 industries.

A climate policy framework was approved by Sweden's Riksdag, the country's legislative and top decision-making body, in 2017. This framework incorporates climate objectives, regulations, and the formation of a climate policy council. The intention is to bolster long-term climate adaptation endeavours and national, but also to work on international coordination for climate adaptation within the country. At the local level, the monitoring of all municipal actions and their reports for potential climate risks, as well as the formulation of strategies to adapt to escalating climate change, is conducted by Sweden's administrative board. The amiable relations between Sweden and India, stemming from their democratic affinities, have cultivated a cordial connection between the Riksdag and the Election Commission of India, entrusted with overseeing the democratic processes through fair and impartial elections. This synergy serves to strengthen their bond and prompts a mutual endeavour towards the development of greater democratic climate partnerships.

Sweden is one of the first countries to master its waste management system. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency facilitates waste management training in India with its partnership with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), which is further deployed to other national waste management projects throughout the country. The inadequacy of resources within local bodies and municipalities in India poses a significant challenge to proper waste disposal. Furthermore, the success of waste-to-energy plants in India remains elusive. There exists a substantial gap in waste collection by municipalities due to the overwhelming quantity of waste generated. According to a report by the World Bank, India produces 1,50,761 tonnes of waste daily.²⁵ Municipalities often neglect waste segregation at its source, leading to a decline in waste quality and adversely impacting the efficiency of waste-to-energy plants.

The establishment of LeadIT in 2019 exemplifies a strategically conceived partnership between India and Sweden, serving as a global forum for public-private collaboration aimed at facilitating countries and heavy industries in their transition to a green economy through decarbonisation, supported by road mapping through research and analysis. Various Swedish enterprises such as Ericsson, SKF, Volvo, Astra Zeneca, and WIMCO have established their presence in the Indian market for decades, thereby cultivating opportunities for additional companies to invest their technology and expertise in India's burgeoning economy. The India-Sweden Virtual Summit on 5 March 2021, convened by PM Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Löfven, emphasised the commitment to enhancing bilateral trade and echoed the aforementioned objectives.

The launch of the second phase of the partnership, LeadIT 2.0, occurred during COP28 in 2023, focusing on policymaking and promoting an inclusive and environmentally sustainable transition of industries, with particular emphasis on fostering partnerships related to technology transfer, industrial transition, financial support, and collaborative development at the international level. The membership of the partnership comprises 18 countries and 20 companies. This group includes three Nordic nations (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden), renowned for their leadership in the green transition, also, three significant countries, India, South Africa and Ethiopia. The collective expertise of these members positions them to play a pivotal role in disseminating environmentally friendly technologies in the Global South. Moreover, the companies participating in this partnership are primarily Indian and European, which could result in a redistribution of market shares and investments in the economies of the Global South, potentially surpassing their Chinese counterparts, albeit until China joins the initiative, an eventuality considered unlikely. The

successful implementation of this multilateral collaboration holds the potential of narrowing the gap between the Global North and South.

The India-Sweden Green Transition Partnership (ISGTP) was launched during the Indian-Sweden Sustainability and Green Transition Day on 23 November 2022 to collaboratively develop local innovations, and disseminate expertise and knowledge pertinent to the green transition with carbon-neutral working and business activities. Prominent Swedish companies like Hitachi Energy, Absortech, KraftPowercon and others recognised for their commitment to green initiatives are a part of this partnership wherein they assist Indian businesses to accelerate the progress of green practices within challenging industrial sectors such as cement, steel, and automotive. The area of renewable energy has witnessed a collaborative endeavour between the Indian Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the Swedish Energy Agency, as well as the Bureau of Energy Efficiency. Complementing this, an initiative titled India Sweden Innovations' Accelerator has been established in conjunction with the Confederation of Indian Industry. The objective of this accelerator is to facilitate the transfer of cutting-edge technologies from innovative Swedish enterprises.²⁶

In 2023, the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Sweden was celebrated, alongside the fifth anniversary of the Sweden-India Joint Declaration on Innovation Partnership for a Sustainable Future. The year also saw remarkable achievement in the strengthening of bilateral ties between India and Sweden, with a dedicated focus on the theme "Accelerating Green Growth", which was commemorated as the 10th India Sweden Innovation Day. In continuation of this collaborative effort, India and Sweden on March 4, 2024, marked the inauguration of India-Sweden Sustainability Day in New Delhi. This event signified a joint commitment to fostering green growth and facilitating the transition towards sustainable industries.

5. Conclusion

An ambitious stance towards mitigating climate change has been adopted by both Sweden and India, which serves to reinforce their diplomatic ties. In the post-COVID era, concerted efforts have been made by the two nations to accelerate their transition towards environmentally sustainable practices. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that a comprehensive re-evaluation and acquisition of knowledge is essential. Strategies that have proven effective in Sweden may not be directly applicable to India due to its growing population, diverse climatic and geographical conditions, resource disparity, and the consumption patterns of its citizens. It is in such circumstances that localised solutions to global challenges become crucial. Sweden has successfully collaborated with India, adopting approaches to address the unique requirements of each nation.

Sweden and China share stable diplomatic relations, characterised by collaborations in capacity building, innovation, and the adoption of green transition technologies. Concurrently, Sweden acknowledges China's status as a developed nation, which contrasts with China's self-proclaimed stance. Sweden is regarded as a trusted ally by India, and their diplomatic bonds are fortified through each partnership, thereby mitigating any sense of apprehension India may harbour regarding Sweden's ties with China. However, with European perception of China becoming negative owing to its growing power in the New World Order, Sweden is seen to be adopting a more hardline outlook towards China over time. Despite the longstanding ties and ongoing trade and economic deals between India and Russia, it has not prevented India from expanding ties with the West. India's non-western and not anti-western stance has transformed

the dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy, thus marking itself as the leader of the Global South since its G20 Presidency in 2023.

At this crucial moment, policymakers are faced with the fundamental question: How can we achieve global climate mitigation, and what collaborative efforts should countries take to progress towards this goal? Climate diplomacy between India and Sweden is perceived not merely as a means for implementing green transitioning and climate adaptation strategies focused on achieving the objectives outlined in the Paris Agreement, but also as a strategic tool for enhancing bilateral relations for mutual trade and business benefits. Within the international realm, this diplomatic engagement is extended to facilitate India's strategic interactions with the Nordic nations, thereby broadening its ties with the EU at large. India's climate diplomacy with Sweden and Denmark presents itself as an avenue for the Nordic countries to establish collaborative initiatives in climate action with smaller economies in the Global South, meanwhile also exploring markets in the Indo-Pacific region.

Climate partnerships are not just perceived as platforms for promoting dialogue and collaboration on climate and sustainability, but also as a major step towards innovation, co-development, economic growth, climate change, public health, and global security. The urgency to take tangible climate actions is driven by the finite window of approximately 30 years remaining to transition to a sustainable economy. The glaring imbalance in resource distribution worsens the challenges being faced by developing nations in pursuing climate action independently. It is through climate diplomacy that this gap is bridged.

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