BRICS: SUSTAINABLE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Samir Saran
In the year 2000, 189 nations committed to working towards 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They pledged to achieve outcome based results by 2015. Twelve of a total of eighteen MDG Targets (under the 8 MDGs) are relevant to India. In its latest official assessment (2013), the Government of India has stated that five targets are on track, two are off track and the rest are moderately on track. Achieving the MDGs is a prerequisite to any further goal setting, particularly since the off-track or slow progress pertains to key development concerns.

Some of the most worrying assessments around the progress achieved by India pivot on issues related to poverty and hunger; and concomitantly, well-being. For instance, malnutrition (children) has only decreased by 3 per cent between 1998-99 and 2005-06 and was estimated by National Family Health Survey to be at 40 per cent. In the best case scenario one third of children will be malnourished in 2015. Indeed across BRICS countries, there is enough evidence to show that the central objectives of the MDGs need to be met through sustained efforts by a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

Over 190 countries agreed the conclusions document of the Rio+20 Summit, which emphasized the importance of making progress towards SDGs. More recently, the International Development Committee and the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda have recommended, that the development of the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Goals be carried out jointly. As this seemingly inevitable convergence plays out, BRICS members must collectively work towards an understanding of what the viable way forward may be. They must seek development space and in doing so they must lead the agenda.