

Call for Papers

India- Africa Enduring Partnership: Emerging Areas of Co-operation

At the India-Africa Forum Summit, New Delhi, hosted by India in April 2008 and attended by the heads of state of 14 countries and representatives from the African Union (AU), two agreements were adopted. These were the Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Co-operation. Both agreements offer a direction to Indo-African relations in the coming years, and provide a framework for the establishment of a new-type, long-term and stable partnership of equality and mutual benefit between India and Africa, as well as a blueprint for India-Africa co-operation in political, economic, social development and other fields in future. The Summit marked the culmination of India's renewed focus on Africa. It was spurred largely by India's desire to change the world's perception of it - away from being a recipient to being a donor - in order to boost its global-political position. The Framework for Co-operation lists several areas (and sub-areas) for co-operation such as economic co-operation, political co-operation, science, technology and research, social development, tourism, and infrastructure, and energy and environment. It lists a number of focus areas therein, for instance, agriculture, trade, regional integration, peace and security, ICT, and culture.

Certainly India's attractiveness as an alternative development partner in Africa has been widely noted. The strength of India's relations with African countries and the source of much of its soft power are derived from more than just its recent growth in trade and investment. Throughout its history of co-operation with African nations, India has emphasized that it has "given what it could" in terms of financial aid and technical support and it continues to do so even as its ability to promote relations through economic incentives - primarily trade, tourism, and investment - has grown. India has actively pursued capacity building and a development agenda in Africa.

India has also taken an active interest in the debt relief of certain highly indebted African countries. It is also using military aid and promoting softer ties with the African countries with increased emphasis on education, science, culture, health and social aspects to cement its relationship with these countries. These relationship building measures have been quite successful and also had major spillover effects on India's investment scenario as well.

One of the defining features of India's policy towards Africa is the introduction of the Focus Africa Program. Foreign policy observers often attribute this program and also its growing engagement in Africa and other parts of the world, to its use of "soft power" - diplomacy, foreign assistance, trade, and investment, and the view of India as a vast, potential market. Moreover, India's interest in obtaining supplies of energy and raw materials is the driving force behind its growing involvement in the economic expansion of African countries.

At present, about a quarter of India's crude oil imports are being sourced from Africa. Increased access to Africa's oil resources was profitably negotiated with the aforementioned countries for India's state owned enterprises for exploration rights and stakes in offshore blocks. Two way trades also impressively rose.

Trade encourages investment. Africa accounted for 16% of India's FDI and there are significant Indian private sector investments in various African countries. Traditionally, Indian investments in Africa have been small to medium scale. But lately it has been observed that there is a growing interest of Indian MNCs in the African countries. Although most of the FDIs are in oil and gas sector, a large proportion of Indian FDI has also gone into the infrastructure, engineering, chemicals, services, banking and finance and IT and telecommunication sector in Africa. Indian pharmaceutical companies were also able to make major inroads in Africa.

Moreover, the Indian diaspora plays a very significant role in promoting India-Africa relations. In East and Southern Africa, the large Indian diaspora, whose members have business ties with India and a good knowledge of Africa has played a significant role in attracting new investments from India to the African continent. This is especially true, given that India is flush with foreign currency reserves, and the government has lifted regulations and controls, to allow firms to go abroad.

Against this backdrop, Centre for African Studies, University of Mumbai jointly with African Studies Association of India would like to organize an international seminar on India- Africa Enduring Partnership: Emerging Areas of Co-operation between India and the African Countries, between 2nd and 4th March, in Mumbai. The international seminar aims to facilitate a better understanding of the scope of co-operation in the emerging sectors of mutual interest.

The proposed seminar will therefore focus on the following sub-themes, though it will not necessarily be confined to them:

- 1) Issues Involved in India- Africa Economic and Political Relations in the post cold war period.**
- 2) Capacity Building Activities between India and the African countries.**
- 3) The scope of cooperation on the emerging sectors of the areas of mutual interests between India and African countries like— Energy, Agro-based Industry, Pharmaceutical Industry and health care, Tourism, ICT, Education, Water resources, Science and Technology.**
- 4) Indian Diaspora as a determining factor in India- Africa Relations.**

Please send the abstract of your paper (200 words) within 31st January and completed paper (5000 words) by February 20th.

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