ISSN 2394 - 4358

AFRICAN CURRENTS

Volume 41 No. 2 2023

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

University of Mumbai

ISSN 2394-4358

African Currents

Volume 41 No. 2 2023

Centre for African Studies
University of Mumbai
Area Studies Building,
Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E),
Mumbai – 400 098
Email : director@cas.mu.ac.in

Vol. 41 No. 2 2023 African Currents ISSN 2394 – 4358

CONTENTS

Editorial

India-Africa relations have become extremely dynamic under the Modi government and have been touching new heights in the last decade. Mr. Jaishankar, the Minister of External Affairs, Government of India has successfully navigated the relationship with his vast experience in handling the critical global issues. The inclusion of the African Union in G20 is a masterpiece of India's diplomacy in Africa. India with the inclusion highlighted Africa's growing influence and importance in the present world order. India along with Africa also highlighted that the international diplomatic architecture built in the post war years has to recognise the voice from the South. It cannot be overlooked and running such a global order without African representation will be incomplete. The present issue of African Currents covers the important development that took place in the second half of 2023. Several official high-level visits took place between India and the countries of Africa are duly covered in the volume.

There are multiple initiatives taken during the second half of 2023 in the India-Africa relations. India has set few objectives in the middle term perspective for India-Africa relations like to closely work with African countries to bring reforms in global multilateral forums and financial institutions. India also likes to achieve some goals like securing a permanent membership of the United Nations, similarly to secure India's energy security and import of strategic raw materials. The initiatives were taken in different fields like in the defence and security sphere there was an increase in the defence missions in Africa. India extended maritime collaboration with many littoral countries in Africa. Above all, India slowly facilitated defence exports to many countries in Africa. In the field of economic initiatives the Lines of Credit extended by the EXIM Bank is a good example. Similarly, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) run by the MEA, Government of India is a popular programme among African countries. These initiatives taken by the Indian government will strengthen India-Africa relations and work in mutual interest for decades time to come.

Editor – Dr. Manendra Sahu, Director, Centre for African Studies
Sub-editor – Dr. Sheetal Hadkar
Research Team – Mr. Bhushan Pawar

India, Germany to support development projects in Ethiopia, Madagascar

Livemint / 22 December 2023

India and Germany's trilateral partnership for developing countries is set to expand into the African states of Ethiopia and Madagascar, said Chaman Dhanda, India Head for Trilateral Cooperation at GIZ, Germany's official technical assistance agency.

The existing projects range from promoting agri-business among women in Malawi to potato production in Cameroon through agri-tech.

"The objective would be to build on individual strengths and experiences in development cooperation and offer sustainable, viable and inclusive projects to third countries in addressing development challenges and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG-related climate targets, including through multilateral institutions where India and Germany are members, such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA)," the two sides said in a joint declaration of intent released in May 2022.

The two sides are also considering expanding their collaboration into Madagascar and Ethiopia, Dhanda told Mint.

While the India-Germany cooperation in these countries has been focused on climate and sustainability, Germany is interested in expanding the programme to include healthcare projects and sponsoring health-related research and development in Africa, said Jochen Flasbarth, state secretary in Germany's federal ministry for economic cooperation and development, in a press interaction in New Delhi.

A press query mailed by Mint to the ministry of external affairs remained unanswered.

In addition, the two countries are also open to considering projects in Asia, given that the focus this far has been on Africa and Latin America.

India also undertaken a number of trilateral cooperation partnerships with countries like the United States and France, as it looks to leverage the technical capabilities and financial resources of trusted partners in strategically important regions. For example, Mint had earlier reported that India is considering cooperation with America, Australia and France in the Pacific Islands.

India is exploring a similar proposal with the United Kingdom under the Global Innovation Partnership to harness innovation in India to deliver development in strategic third countries. Mint reported that a list of target countries under this programme will be finalized by early next year and possible cooperation on renewable power projects in Sri Lanka are being discussed as part of this.

While trilateral cooperation has been pushed through with considerable backing from India and its chosen partners, they are also understood to come with coordination challenges. While India is willing to work with a number of developed country partners to shore up its strategic position in its neighbourhood, it retains a preference for bilateral development projects that can be implemented quickly with few bureaucratic delays.

https://www.livemint.com/news/india-germany-to-support-development-projects-in-ethiopia-madagascar-11703238015898.html

Benin Foreign Minister wraps up visit, discusses mutual interests with India

Republic World / 19 December 2023

The visit of Benin's foreign minister, Olusegun Adjadi Bakari, to India, concluded as the leaders of the two countries exchanged views on various views.

The visit of Benin's foreign minister, Olusegun Adjadi Bakari, to India, concluded as the leaders of the two countries exchanged views on various regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. The minister notably visited India for two days from December 16-18, according to an official press release from the Ministry of External Affairs. Taking to X, formerly known as Twitter, EAM Jaishankar shared about his meeting saying, "Delighted to welcome FM @shegunbakari of Benin today. Discussed growing our political, economic and development partnership. Spoke about collaboration in agriculture, education, textiles and defence. Exchanged views on global issues and UN reform."

Jaishankar meets Olushegun to discuss economic and development partnership Here are the highlights of the discussion between the two leaders: Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Benin, paid an official visit to India from December 16-18, 2023, accompanied by H.E. Gaston Cossi Dossouhoui, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and other senior officials. During the visit, the Beninese Foreign Minister met with India's External Affairs Minister, discussing bilateral relations and exchanging views on various regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. The Beninese side appreciated the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20. The visiting dignitary also met with Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and the delegation had meetings with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to deepen trade and investment links. The visit provided further impetus to the existing bilateral relations, as stated in the release by the Ministry of External Affairs. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar discussed UN reforms and global issues with Benin counterpart Olushegun Adjadi Bakari in New Delhi.

Discussions focused on enhancing political, economic, and development partnerships. Jaishankar, along with Union Minister of State (MEA) V Muraleedharan, engaged in talks with the Benin Foreign Minister. PM Narendra Modi, during the G20 Leaders Summit in Delhi, emphasized the need for reforms in global systems to align with present realities. PM Modi highlighted the disparity in the composition of the UN Security Council and called for necessary changes.

Source: https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/indian-foreign-policy/benin-foreign-minister-wraps-up-visit-discusses-mutual-interests-with-india-latest-world-news/

India-Madagascar ties: Focus on trade, economy and maritime security

Financial Express / 18 December 2023

There is a distinct increase in China's interest in enhancing defence ties with Madagascar, marked by the appointment of Colonel Wang Tao as the first Defence Attaché in 2020. In contrast, India lacks a Defence Attaché in Madagascar, with the nearest one stationed in South Africa without formal accreditation to Madagascar.

India and Madagascar discussed ways to further enhance trade-economic cooperation during the recently concluded visit of Dammu Ravi, Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

During his visit to Antananarivo, Madagascar from Dec 15-17 2023, he interacted with prominent Malagasy business leaders to identify ways to deepen cooperation in the trade and economic sectors.

According to an official statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs on Dec 18, 2023, the Secretary (ER) represented Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Investiture Ceremony of the President of Madagascar, Andry Rajoelina.

On Dec 16, he also made a courtesy call to President Andry Rajoelina and conveyed the best wishes of Prime Minister Modi for a successful second tenure of the President and further strengthening of the India-Madagascar partnership and Vision SAGAR.

He was welcomed at Antananarivo Airport by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar Tahirimiakadaza Ratsimandao on Dec 15.

Later, on the sidelines of the Investiture Ceremony, in his brief interaction with the President of Comoros and current Chairperson of the African Union, Azali Assoumani. Dammu Ravi conveyed greetings of Prime Minister Modi for a stronger India-Africa Partnership.

Later he took part in an Indian Community reception hosted by the Embassy of India in Antananarivo. Secretary (ER) spoke about the ongoing India's economic transformation under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and encouraged the local Indian Diaspora to contribute towards stronger trade-economic cooperation and people-to-people linkages between India and Madagascar.

Why is Madagascar important for India?

It is a developing nation in the Indian Ocean Region and India remains its committed reliable partner, situated in the southwest Indian Ocean, has expressed a keen interest in strengthening strategic ties with India. Despite historically maintaining warm relations, the focus has primarily been on trade, commerce, and cultural exchanges. However, recent developments highlight a shift towards greater emphasis on defence and security aspects in India's bilateral relationship with Madagascar.

Notably, Madagascar is part of China's One-Belt-One-Road (OBOR) Initiative, envisioned as a key hub in the Maritime Silk Route connecting Africa. There is a distinct increase in China's interest in enhancing defence ties with Madagascar, marked by the appointment of Colonel Wang Tao as the first Defence Attaché in 2020. In contrast, India lacks a Defence Attaché in Madagascar, with the nearest one stationed in South Africa without formal accreditation to Madagascar.

China's involvement extends to donating patrol vessels to the Malagasy Navy and providing various training courses to Malagasy Defence personnel. This growing presence has led to speculation about China establishing a military logistics presence, akin to Djibouti, in Madagascar or possibly Comoros. Madagascar's natural harbours and deep-water ports make it a more suitable location for such facilities compared to Comoros.

The prospect of a Chinese military base in Madagascar, potentially including exclusive port and aviation facilities, raises concerns in New Delhi. India views the southwest Indian Ocean as part of its extended neighbourhood, with strong ties to nations like Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, Comoros, and France. China's influence in the maritime security landscape poses challenges for India, especially regarding the safety of its sea trade routes in the region.

Recognizing their common interest in Indian Ocean security, India stands to benefit significantly from enhancing defence and security ties with Madagascar. Both countries are members of the Indian Ocean Regional Association and the Indian Ocean

Commission, reinforcing their shared commitment to safeguarding the region's security and stability.

Source: https://www.financialexpress.com/business/defence-india-madagascar-ties-focus-on-trade-economy-and-maritime-security-3341633/

Joint Statement during the State Visit of the President of Kenya to India (December 04-06, 2023)

Ministry of External Affairs / 05December 2023

1. At the invitation of the President of India H.E. Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Hon. William Samoei Ruto, PhD, CGH, made a State Visit to India from 4 – 6 December, 2023. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Cabinet Secretaries, senior Government officials and private sector representatives.

2. President Ruto was accorded the ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on 5th December 2023. He also visited Rajghat to pay his respects to Mahatma Gandhi. President Droupadi Murmu will hold bilateral talks and host a banquet dinner in honour of President Ruto.

3. President William Ruto and H. E. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held official bilateral talks in a warm and cordial atmosphere. The two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation covering a wide range of areas of mutual interest. Both sides noted with satisfaction the existing level of close and friendly relations between the two countries. The leaders agreed that there is room for further deepening and strengthening of relations in strategic areas of common interest. Views were also exchanged on current regional and international issues of mutual interest.

4. President Ruto congratulated Prime Minister Modi for hosting a successful and historic G-20 Summit in Delhi. President Ruto thanked Prime Minister Modi for his leadership and support of the Indian Government for inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member of the G-20.

5. Prime Minister Modi appreciated Kenya’s participation in both the editions of the Voice of Global South Summit, in particular President Ruto’s address in the inaugural Leaders’ Session in the second edition. The two editions were hosted by India in January and November 2023.

6. Prime Minister Modi also commended Kenya for the leadership on the issues of climate change and the successful hosting of the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi in September, 2023.

7. The leaders agreed to strengthen bilateral relations. In pursuit of this goal, both leaders affirmed their commitment to work very closely in order to open up new areas of cooperation in various sectors for mutual benefit.

8. Recognizing the salience of maritime cooperation in India-Kenya relations and especially in the Indian Ocean, India and Kenya unveiled a "Joint Vision Statement on Maritime Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region- BAHARI (Ocean in Swahili)" as a blueprint for scaling up maritime engagement between the two countries.

Political relations

9. Both sides noted with satisfaction the existing solid and warm bilateral relations, including political engagement at the highest level, as well as convergences of views on regional and global issues.

10. It was noted that India and Kenya are maritime neighbours with a long history of trade and people-to-people linkages, thereby making Kenya a key partner in maritime security and blue economy matters which are part of India's vision of Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR) as well as Kenya's Vision 2030.

11. Both sides agreed to continue high-level political dialogue through the Joint Commission mechanism at the Foreign Ministers' level and bilateral meetings between Leaders.

Trade and Investment

12. Acknowledging the vibrant and long-standing economic partnership between both countries, Prime Minister Modi and President Ruto recognized that there is potential for further upscaling of bilateral economic engagements. The two leaders resolved to enhance trade and investment ties and directed the bilateral Joint Trade Committee to convene at the earliest to discuss expansion of bilateral trade and investment, including impediments to market access, and elimination of non-tariff barriers.

13. The two Leaders welcomed the opening of the Indian market to Kenyan avocados as a positive step, and reaffirmed that greater access to products from both countries would diversify the bilateral trade basket. Both countries committed to discuss and facilitate trade between the two countries.

14. In furtherance of investment into Kenya, President Ruto invited Indian companies to take advantage of the conducive and attractive environment to invest in Kenya, especially in agriculture and value addition, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, health, ICT, green energy and green mobility, affordable housing, Water sectors, among others. President Ruto briefed Prime Minister Modi on Kenya's national development priorities, as espoused in the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which includes some of the above sectors.

15. Considering that healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors represent important areas of bilateral trade, both leaders discussed the possibility of facilitating increased Indian investments into Kenya in these sectors, including for development of health infrastructure and medical equipment production. This would greatly augment access to affordable healthcare for Kenyans.

16. President Ruto also discussed medical travel to India by Kenyans. It was agreed that a framework be discussed among relevant agencies from both sides in order for Kenyan patients to benefit from hospital treatment and outpatient care, including patients under critical care, access to specialized doctors' reviews and access to medicines in a practical and sustainable manner.

17. The Kenyan side provided assurance to consider India's request to recognize Indian Pharmacopeia as a supportive step in forging closer healthcare cooperation.

18. President Ruto will attend the India-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum on 5th December 2023 wherein he will deliver a keynote address. During the two-day visit, President Ruto will also meet with select business leaders of Indian companies.

Developmental Partnership

19. The Kenyan side thanked the Government of India for extending concessional Lines of Credit (LOC)for projects in sectors such as Energy and textiles, and in particular, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs).

20. In supporting agriculture, one of the key pillars of the bilateral partnership, India agreed to extend a new LOC of USD 250 million to Government of Kenya for Agricultural Mechanization Projects in line with Kenya's national development priorities.

21. In order to enhance bilateral trade and investment as well as development partnership projects' financing, the two leaders discussed the need to use local currencies. To this end, the leaders directed relevant institutions to engage and conclude necessary instruments with a view to working towards development cooperation / project financing between India and Kenya in Indian Rupees.

22. The two sides agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture. In this respect, Kenya offered, in line with Kenyan laws, to provide land to Indian companies and institutions for cultivation of crops, including millets, in Kenya. The Government of India undertook to encourage Indian companies for investment in the sector, including in equipment and technology on mutually agreed terms. Both sides noted that enhancing bilateral agricultural cooperation would increase bilateral trade and contribute to food security in Kenya.

23. Both leaders exchanged views on the transformative potential of technology for people-centric delivery of services and the ensuing enhanced quality of life. The Kenyan side expressed interest to learn from India's experience in Digital Public Infrastructure for realizing this potential, which is also aligned with BETA. The Indian side offered to share expertise with Kenya, as per Kenya's needs, in sectors such as health, education, ICT and digital governance.

Capacity-Building and Education

24. Both leaders noted with satisfaction that in the last ten years, over 2000 people from Kenya have benefitted from India's training and capacity-building programmes, including short courses and scholarships for civil servants, students and other professionals to study in premier institutions of India.

25. The Indian side announced the increase in slots of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships for higher education in India across all disciplines from 48 to 80 annually.

26. Both sides welcomed the collaboration between Indira Gandhi National Open University(IGNOU) and the newly established Open University of Kenya (OUK) to promote distance learning and technology applications in the field of education in Kenya.

Space Cooperation

27. Responding to Kenya's interest in learning from India's experience in space technology for peaceful purposes, Indian side agreed to share expertise with Kenya on space-based applications, including through specialized capacity-building and developing a geo-spatial information portal for Kenya with India's remote sensing data sets and thematic layers.

Defence and Security Cooperation:

28. The two leaders noted with appreciation the increasing momentum in defence cooperation and affirmed their intention to further bolster it pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation concluded in 2016. The leaders also directed the bilateral Joint Defence Coordination Committee to convene at an early date. India also welcomed regular Kenyan participation in events and exhibitions such as the India-Africa Defence Dialogue, Aero-India and DEFEXPO.

29. The two sides also agreed to continue working towards expanding training exchanges, including deputation of Indian experts, in Kenyan defence institutions. Both sides also called for increasing cooperation between the defence industries, ship visits and periodic exchange of high-level visits from both sides.

30. Both sides also concurred on strengthening security cooperation, information and intelligence sharing and joint efforts in areas of counterterrorism, cyber security, and anti-money laundering, small arms and light weapons, drugs and human trafficking.

31. The two leaders also noted with appreciation the recently concluded MoU between Goa Shipyard Ltd and Kenya Shipyard Ltd that will pave the way for mutually beneficial commercial ventures and also support Kenyan interest in developing shipbuilding, repair, and maintenance capacities.

Maritime Cooperation

32. Acknowledging that both the countries have common interests in the Indian Ocean, both sides expressed satisfaction at their cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and agreed to further enhance it to ensure a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Indian Ocean Region. The two leaders also agreed to developing a bilateral framework agreement in Blue Economy.

33. The leaders also agreed to the importance of enhancing maritime domain awareness through cooperation between Kenya maritime agencies and India's IFC-IOR for collective security in the Indian Ocean Region.

34. Both sides also agreed to enhance cooperation in maritime security and to operationalize the sharing of white shipping information. India welcomed the regular participation of Kenya in maritime events and exercises in India, including its forthcoming participation in the next edition of the MILAN Exercise in 2024.

Environment, Climate Change & Renewable Energy

35. Both the leaders acknowledged that developing countries are the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, and agreed to work together in this area of common interest as a matter of priority. Both leaders agreed that the consensus arrived at the COP 28 Summit in UAE should be implemented.

36. India offered to support training and capacity-building in the areas of clean and renewable energy transmission, grid integration and management, and energy efficiency. Both sides agreed to conclude, at the earliest, a bilateral framework of cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

37. India welcomed Kenya's decision to join the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance. The Indian side also looked forward to Kenya's membership of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

38. As founding members of the International Big Cat Alliance, both sides agreed to work together to save and conserve the critical species of the endangered cats.

Global Issues and Multilateral Cooperation

39. Both leaders underscored that there are convergences between the two countries in international fora. The two leaders appreciated the close consultations and cooperation between India and Kenya in international fora on areas of common interest, including peace, security and development. Both sides also agreed to continue collaborating on the pressing need for reformed multilateralism.

40. Both sides expressed satisfaction with the coordination between the two sides in the UN Security Council in 2021-2022, when both countries served as non-permanent

members of the UNSC, as well as at the mutual commitment in supporting each other's candidatures in multilateral institutions.

41. President Ruto briefed Prime Minister Modi on regional peace and security especially the ongoing initiatives, including in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Ethiopia) and the Great Lakes Region where Kenya is involved. India agreed to support efforts to promote regional peace and security.

42. Both sides emphasized the urgent need for reform of the United Nations Security Council, in both permanent and non-permanent membership categories, to reflect the current realities and to make it credible, representative and effective. Both sides acknowledged the convergence of positions on the issue of UN Security Council reforms between the L.69 group and the African Union's Committee of 10, including L.69 group's support to the Common African Position as enshrined in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. They agreed that close coordination between the L.69 group and Committee of 10, of which India and Kenya are members respectively, would amplify the voice of the Global South on this pressing issue.

43. Both sides noted that India and Kenya have been victims of international terrorism, which poses one of the biggest challenges for the world and requires all countries to join hands in overcoming this scourge. The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whenever, wherever, and by whom-so-ever committed and the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism. They agreed that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to global peace, security and stability and must seriously be addressed. To this end, both leaders agreed that the two countries conclude a bilateral cooperation framework to enable security agencies to work together on terrorism matters and transnational organized crime issues.

44. On United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON), India agreed to support the United Nations Secretary General Proposals to increase UNON's budgetary allocation for modernization and rehabilitation of the facilities to be at par with other United Nations Offices in Europe and America and equally ensure UNON hosts meetings / activities like the other UN Offices.

People-to-People Contacts

45. Both sides noted that people-to-people contacts, which date back centuries, provide foundational strength to the historic India-Kenya ties. Both sides noted with appreciation the role of the Indian-origin Kenyan community in the society and economy of Kenya and in further reinforcing the friendship between the two countries.

46. Both sides appreciated the renewal of the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for 2023-27 which will facilitate thriving cultural exchanges.

47. President Ruto expressed his gratitude to the President and Prime Minister of India for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him and his delegation. He also extended an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Kenya at mutual convenience.

48. Prime Minister Modi thanked President Ruto and his delegation for visiting India and wished him good health and prosperity for the friendly people of the Republic of Kenya.

Source: https://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?37340/Joint+Statement+during+the+State+Visit+of+the+President+of+Kenya+to+India+December+0406+2023

India, Egypt, South Africa stress on meeting developing country needs in WTO reform process

Caution against making the dispute settlement system more onerous for resource-poor countries

Hindu Business Line / 28 November 2023

To ensure that developing country interests are not sidelined in the on-going discussions on reforming the WTO's dispute settlement system, India, Egypt and South Africa have submitted a joint communication underlining the need to recognise that developing countries, including LDCs, face challenges, such as capacity constraints, resource limitations and limited access to legal expertise.

"At the heart of the outcome on dispute settlement reform is the need to restore the functioning of the Appellate Body as an integral part of the two-tiered multilateral dispute settlement system," per the joint communication titled 'Reflections on the reform of the WTO Dispute Settlement System' introduced by India at the Dispute Settlement Body meeting on November 27.

The US, which has blocked the appointment of new judges to the WTO's Appellate Body for almost three years due to its unhappiness with "judicial activism" at the WTO and concerns over its sovereignty, refused to relent on the matter at the latest DSB meeting, per a Geneva-based trade official.

A common concern

Guatemala, speaking on behalf of 130 members, introduced for the 69th time the group's proposal to start the selection processes for filling vacancies on the Appellate Body, reflecting the common concern of almost four-fifth of the WTO membership. The WTO's dispute settlement mechanism is in the midst of a crisis as in the absence of a functioning Appellate Body disputes are remaining unresolved.

The US repeated that it does not support re-starting of appointment of Appellate Body members. It said it would support the experimentation of members in finding alternative means to resolve their disputes, such as the increased adoption of panel reports, including through agreements to adopt that have been reached prior to circulation of a panel's report; arrangements between specific members to permit review of a report; and intensified discussions to find solutions to disputes, the official said.

While the current informal discussions are a continuation of the US-initiated and led informal delegate level discussions, the reform process and the changes it brings about, should not make the dispute settlement system more onerous, in practice, for developing countries including LDCs, the joint communication from India, Egypt and South Africa noted.

Evolving discussions

“The themes being discussed at present under the ‘informal discussions’ were not intended to be a comprehensive listing of concerns of the whole membership. They were a prioritisation, for further discussion, of some of the interests that had been raised during the US-led process. For instance, Special and Differential Treatment, which had been raised as an interest by several countries was not listed as a theme for further discussion,” it stated.

The discussion process on reforms should enable all delegations to have their concerns addressed as the discussions evolve, the submission said. “They should remain rooted in consensus-based decision making, and be facilitated by multilaterally mandated chairs or co-chairs as is the current practice in the WTO. The methods of work should facilitate the participation of developing countries including LDCs, and delegations with limited resources,” it added.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-egypt-south-africa-stress-on-meeting-developing-country-needs-in-wto-reform-process/article67583823.ece

Seychelles and India to further collaboration in priority areas

Africa.com / 24 November 2023

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Mr. Sylvestre Radegonde, was received on Thursday 23rd November 2023, by the Minister for External Affairs of India, Honourable Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi.

Discussions between the two Ministers focused on the further strengthening of the bilateral relations between Seychelles and India, as well as regional and international issues of interest to both countries. During the meeting, the two sides signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), one for grant financing by India for the implementation of high impact community development projects for the total amount of SR 42 million, and an MOU for Cooperation in the field of Youth and Sports.

The Seychelles Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism and his delegation, which consists of Mrs. Lalatiana Accouche, Seychelles High Commissioner to India, and officials of the Foreign Affairs Department, also visited the Lalit Suri Hospitality School where discussions were held with Mr. Vivek Shukla, Chief Executive Officer, on future collaboration in the tourism field.

Minister Radegonde also had fruitful interactions with the three Seychelles Honorary Consuls in India, namely Mr. Sesha Sai from Chennai, Mr. Reddy Vasu Venkate from Bengaluru and Mr. Nandu Belani from Kolkata.

The visit of Minister Radegonde to India will pave the way to consolidate further the ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Source: https://www.africa.com/seychelles-and-india-to-further-collaboration-in-priority-areas/

Somalia officially joins East Africa trade bloc

Aljazeera / 24 November 2023

Somalia, which has been seeking to join the regional trade bloc since 2012, becomes its eight member

Somalia was admitted into the East African Community (EAC) on Friday as the eighth member of the bloc as it seeks to expand free trade across the region.

The entry of the fragile Horn of Africa nation, which has a population of 17 million, will boost the EAC market to more than 300 million people.

“We have decided to admit the Federal Republic of Somalia under the treaty of accession,” outgoing EAC chair, Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye, said at a summit of the grouping in Tanzania.

Somalia – whose President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was at the summit – joined Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda in the regional bloc.

“Let us all embrace this new chapter in our history,” Mohamud’s chief economic adviser said on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. “This moment is not just a culmination of our aspirations but a beacon of hope for a future full with possibilities and opportunities.”

The EAC, based in the Tanzanian town of Arusha where the summit was taking place, was founded in 2000 and works to encourage trade by removing customs duties between member states. It established a common market in 2010.

Excluding Somalia, combined EAC countries covered a land area of 4.8 million sq kilometres (1.8 million sq miles) and had a combined gross domestic product of $305bn, according to the bloc’s website. Total EAC trade was $78.75bn in 2022, it said.

The last member the group admitted before Somalia was the DRC, in April 2022.

Challenges

The admission of Somalia could portend more security challenges for the bloc as the country is struggling to stem a deadly rebellion by the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabab group.

After making significant progress, Somalia's offensive against the armed group has stalled for months and raised concerns about the government's capacity to crush the 16-year rebellion.

EAC members Kenya and Uganda contribute troops to an African Union force which was first deployed to Somalia in 2007 to crush al-Shabab.

In November last year, the EAC also sent troops into the restive east of the DRC, which had joined the bloc last year, after the resurgence of the M23 rebel group.

Mogadishu-based think tank Heritage Institute for Policy Studies said the entry of Somalia – which has been seeking to join the bloc since 2012 – was a "pivotal leap" in the EAC's expansion across East Africa.

But it said in a report before the summit that Somalia's "poor track record in governance, human rights and the rule of law" could hinder its smooth integration into the bloc.

The country has also been embroiled in disputes with its neighbours – Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya – sometimes leading to a breakdown in diplomatic relations. However, it has taken steps in recent years to repair regional ties.

Source: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/24/somalia-officially-joins-east-africa-trade-bloc

Kenya: MoS Muraleedharan interacts with Indian community, appreciates their contribution

ANI News / 23 November 2023

Union Minister of State for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan interacted with the Indian community in Kenya and appreciated their contribution in strengthening the ties between New Delhi and Nairobi. MoS Muraleedharan is on an official visit to Kenya from November 22-23.

"Great pleasure to engage with Indian community in Kenya. Their historic and outstanding contributions have strengthened the bond between India and Kenya," Muraleedharan posted on X

Earlier on Wednesday, he also inaugurated an exhibition to commemorate the role of Indian soldiers in East Africa during the World War 1 at Kenya Museum in Nairobi. He also released a book titled 'The Indian Army in East Africa':1914-18.He held a meeting with Rebecca Miano, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Trade and discussed various topics aimed at advancing trade and investment opportunities, highlighting the "significant untapped potential between India and Kenya". He also chaired the India-Kenya Business Forum in Nairobi along with Rebecca Miano and launched India-Kenya Business Council."Had a fruitful meeting with Hon'ble Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investment, Trade & Industry, Ms Rebecca Miano in Nairobi. Discussed various topics aimed at advancing trade & investment opportunities, highlighting the significant untapped potential between India and Kenya," Muraleedharan posted on X.

Earlier, the MoS also visited BAPS Swaminarayan temple in Nairobi.

"Blessed to visit BAPS Swaminarayan temple in Nairobi. Prayed forthe enduring friendship between people of India and Kenya," he posted on X.

Muraleedharan paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at University ofNairobi and visit Mahatma Gandhi Library, supported under India's development partnership. He also interacted with the Indian Alumni in Kenya.

Earlier, MoS Muraleedharan concluded a successful visit to theUnited Republic of Tanzania from November 20-21, a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said. During his visit, he called on the President of Zanzibar, Hussein AliMwinyi and conveyed his appreciation for his continued support in strengthening bilateral relations and for his invaluable patronage towards IIT Madras Zanzibar campus.

The MoS also visited IIT Madras Zanzibar campus with Minister of Education & Vocational Training of Zanzibar Lela Muhamed Mussaand interacted with students and faculty. He also visited the site allocated by Government of Zanzibar for upcoming permanent campus of IIT Madras Zanzibar.

Minister Muraleedharan addressed Indian community in an event organized at High Commission. He appreciated their contribution to building strong ties between India and Tanzania, their contribution to nation building in Tanzania and encouraged them to play a greater role in India's growth story. According to the MEA, the visit reinforced the strong relationship between India and Tanzania while giving a fresh impetus to joint endeavours and commitments towards building a successful lIndia-Tanzania Strategic Partnership.

Source: https://www.aninews.in/news/world/others/kenya-mos-muraleedharan-interacts-with-indian-community-appreciates-their-contribution20231123130003/

G20 more inclusive with African Union in it: Amitabh Kant

Times of India / 16 November 2023

India played a significant role in making the G20 more inclusive by ensuring the African Union's permanent membership during its presidency, according to G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant. He described this achievement as a victory for developing countries. Kant also mentioned that India stood firm on including the African Union, despite other countries wanting different regional groupings to be part of the G20. The inclusion of Africa adds 1.3 billion people and a GDP of $3 trillion to the G20, strengthening global economic governance.

India has played a pivotal role in turning the G20 into a more inclusive organisation by ensuring the African Union's induction as a permanent member during its presidency, said G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant. He described the G20 New Delhi leaders' declaration as a very hard-fought victory for the Global South as it reflected the aspirations of the developing countries.

"One of the lasting images that will carry on forever in my mind of India's G20 presidency is the image of the prime minister hugging the president of Comoros and welcoming the African Union as a permanent member of the G20," Kant said. "With that one stroke, India ensured that the G20 became a far more inclusive institution," he added. Kant was speaking at a conference organised by India Writes Network Centre, Centre for Global IndiaInsights (CGII), a think tank focused on global affairs, and the School of International Relations, JNU.

Kant also said many countries wanted ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to be part of G20 while some others wanted some other regional groupings to be made part of the bloc. "However, India stood firm (on African Union's membership)," he said.

Kant’s remarks were endorsed by South Africa’s High Commissioner Joel Sibusiso Ndebele who underlined that the inclusion of Africa as a permanent member of the G20 adds a further 1.3 billion people and the GDP of $3 trillion to the G20.

“That's the realization by India that the world would not have become one family if 1.3 billion people had continued to be left out of the G20. We are fully convinced that the participation of the AU will strengthen global economic governance and allow African countries to own and influence decisions on key issues," said the South African envoy.

"This will further add weight to the course by developing countries in the G20 for the reform of global financial institutions and institutions of global governance," added the envoy.

Kant also said that Global South is important because this particular year, 80% of the growth is coming from the Global South.

"According to the IMF and World Bank, 70% of the growth in the next two decades is going to come from emerging markets. So, if growth is going to come from emerging markets for the next two decades, then you need to realign the multilateral financial institutions and the multilateral development banks to ensure that this growth gets accelerated," he said, adding that these institutions are outdated as they were designed in the post-World War II era and the post-Bretton Woods period, and were not designed to tackle contemporary challenges such as climate action and Sustainable Development Goals.

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/g20-more-inclusive-with-african-union-in-it-amitabh-kant/articleshow/105254903.cms

Trade with Africa in excess of $100 billion, is fairly evenly balanced: EAM

Business Standard / 11 November 2023

The EAM said that in the last decade, a bulk of Indian embassies have also opened in Africa

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar has said India's trade with Africa today is in excess of USD 100 billion and is fairly evenly balanced.

"Our trade with Africa today is in excess of USD 100 billion and it's actually fairly evenly balanced. It's not just trade, India is among the top five investors in Africa. Our estimated capital today is in excess of USD 80 billion," EAM Jaishankar said while addressing an event marking the significance of the African Union's membership of the G20.

The EAM said that in the last decade, a bulk of Indian embassies have also opened in Africa.

"And not just Embassies, the first Indian Institute of Technology abroad opened in Africa. The first Forensic Sciences University abroad opened in Africa. So I don't need to stress to you today what is the importance that we attach, not just to our relationship but to the promise of those ties that we are actually betting on your future as well. And we see in our relationship actually a very, very powerful force that would rebalance the global polity, which in our view has been skewed over the last two centuries," he said.

On the African Union's permanent membership in the G20, Jaishankar said, "This is something that has been deliberated for many years. This was not the first G20 when it came up for discussion, but we were very determined that unlike previous G20s, this will not end with a discussion, that we were very clear we will have an outcome, and as G20 chair, we took that lead, very confident that once somebody determinedly takes that lead and puts it firmly before the international community, it is something that was bound to happen, and we were glad we were proved right."

EAM Jaishankar on Friday welcomed ambassadors from Africa to the Yashobhoomi convention centre and emphasised India's commitment to sharing its transformative Digital Public Infrastructure experience.

Jaishankar also highlighted the pivotal recognition of this effort by the G20, foreseeing a substantial boost in collaborative efforts for a digitalised future.

"Delighted to host the Ambassadors of Africa in Yashobhoomi today. Our gathering marked the significance of the African Union's Membership of the G20," posted Jaishankar on X.

https://www.business-standard.com/economy/news/trade-with-africa-in-excess-of-100-billion-is-fairly-evenly-balanced-eam-123111100037_1.html

African nations, Mongolia on Mines Ministry’s radar for search of critical minerals

Hindu Business Line / 10 November 2023

While Congo is a market where the Ministry is keen to look into for both cobalt and copper, Zimbabwe is mostly for platinum group elements, chrome, lithium, among others

India’s Mines Ministry is tapping into overseas markets across Africa and Mongolia in its search for critical minerals primarily cobalt and copper.

While Congo is a market where the Ministry is keen to look into for both cobalt and copper, Zimbabwe is mostly for platinum group elements (PGE), chrome, lithium, among others. Mongolia is mostly for interests in copper (and coal).

Cobalt is an essential mineral used for batteries in electric cars, computers, and cell phones. Incidentally, not all copper deposits contain cobalt, but nearly all cobalt in Congo is sourced from copper deposits.

Some of these critical minerals, the list of which was identified by the Ministry earlier this year, are the cornerstone for India’s switch to green mobility and transition towards a lower carbon footprint. The list of these 30-odd minerals include antimony, beryllium, bismuth, cobalt, copper, gallium, germanium, graphite, hafnium, indium, lithium, molybdenum, niobium, nickel, PGE, phosphorous, potash, rare earth elements (REE), rhenium, silicon, strontium, tantalum, tellurium, tin, titanium, tungsten, vanadium, zirconium, selenium and cadmium.

Officials aware of the discussions told businessline that instead of making direct investments at a G2G (government-to-government level), the pitch is primarily to facilitate investment by private players or government-backed and government-owned companies. Industry associations are being tapped into to bring in their members and explore investment opportunities across “mineral-rich” African nations, while also tap into Mongolia appropriately.

Exploring investments

The Ministry also has been planning to tap into Mongolia and there have been discussions to send a delegation to the Central Asian nation to explore investment possibilities.

“So the government will not be making direct investments this time. But we would look at facilitating investments from private companies, CPSEs, or even government-backed companies. Industry associations have been asked to bring their members on-board and check interest in investing in these countries,” said an official, who has been a part of the discussions.

For instance, a major CPSE had agreed to tap into Mongolia for copper resources – investment in mining activities and other options including ownership – and has been planning to visit the country.

In another case, a company where the Centre has a minority stake, was looking into the possibility of getting into Zimbabwe. “Something concrete is yet to materialise there,” said an official.

Industry associations were reportedly asked to check out for interest in investment in cobalt and copper resources of Congo. More than 70 per cent of the world’s cobalt is produced in the African nation, and 15 to 30 per cent of the cobalt is produced by artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM). Copper mining in Congo takes place in the Katanga province.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/african-nations-on-mines-ministrys-radar-for-search-of-critical-minerals/article67513438.ece

FarMart to export food items from Africa to India, other global regions

Hindu Business Line / 17 October 2023

The Airbnb in food sector ships chana from Africa to Singapore

Agritech and agri food supply firm FarMart has expanded its operations to Africa, from where it has plans to export food products to India and other parts of the world, the company's CEO and Co-Founder Alekh Sanghera has said. "As a business, food security is an international issue and it can only be solved through global operations. So, Africa is one of the regions where we have set up operations now to start importing back to India and other different regions," Sanghera said in an online interaction with businessline.

No more India story

FarMart wants to be an integrated global value chain across multiple countries. From an "ambition perspective", it is just not an "India story anymore". The company is using the technology it has built, he said.

FarMart, which is basically an Airbnb in the food sector that operates like Amazon, has already completed shipping a consignment of chana (gram) from Africa to an Indian-based firm in Singapore through its Dubai office. "Eventually, we will start shipping to India. Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Benin are four markets where we have our own people now," the FarMart co-founder said.

"They (FarMart staff) are setting up small sourcing operations. Then we are looking at Myanmar and Vietnam. We are already exporting to Nepal," he said.

The quality of its first consignment to Singapore was found to be good and since the Indian and African seasons do not clash, FarMart is looking at sourcing these for India during the non-peak season. "Over the last 2-3 years, India has been importing more pulses," Sanghera said.

Biryani basket

At least 90 per cent of FarMart exports from India are basmati and non-basmati rice with spices making up the rest. "We are taking spices to the Middle-East in view of the huge briyani consumption there. They (consumers) want a whole package — cardamom, cinnamon, chilli and other ingredients as a package," he said.

FarMart, which is trying to build this portfolio — Biryani basket — aimed at the Gulf region. On the other hand, non-basmati rice, mainly parboiled, goes to Africa.

FarMart is basically a digital platform — "an intelligent food supply chain" — connecting farming communities to food businesses globally. "We actually take the onus of doing a first-mile pickup, quality and delivery. We are actually responsible for the fulfilment (of the order) and even before the buyer pays us, we pay 90 per cent for the produce to the farmer to ensure that he does not suffer," said the FarMart founder.

FarMart gets clients who look for direct sustainable sourcing.

Raises $43 m in equity

"We build software solutions for village level entrepreneurs to do their day-to-day business more efficiently. So whether it's connecting with farmers, giving them information or even marketing their store or whatever business they do, they use that product for their own use," said Sanghera.

For FarMart, which has 400 employees spread across three offices including one in Dubai, the Gulf region is the biggest followed by Africa, Nepal and some parts of South-East Asia.

The company, which has raised $43 million in equity including venture capital investors such as General Catalyst, Omidyar Network and Matrix Partners, has raised $22 million as working capital from banks such as ICIC, HDFC, Kotal Access, SBI and a couple of others for its supply chain financial solutions.

One of the advantages that FarMart enjoys is that it has no assets or warehousing. "We give last-mile logistic support, which is a full truckload from the pickup to delivery," he said.

1st on ONDC platform

The company has 2.5 lakh partners across 23 States in the country and these partners have, in turn, brought in over 35 lakh farmers' data on the platform. "Essentially, we have linked produce of more than $300 million over the past two years directly to companies. We sell to over 2,700 buyers. Domestically, we sell to about 2,200 buyers and internationally to about 600 buyers across six countries," the FarMart co-founder said.

Overall, the company, the first food firm to be on the ONDC platform, offers 21 commodities on its platform with greens making up 60 per cent, oilseeds 25 per cent, pulses 15 per cent and fruits and vegetables the rest.

"In pulses, we do 2-3 categories. In oilseeds, we do almost everything. In grains, we trade in wheat, paddy, maize, bajra and millets," he said.

Farm-to-factory

Overall, FarMart has moved 8 lakh tonnes of food. "Over the last two quarters, we have progressed from just a raw materials marketplace to a processed foods marketplace also. So 75 per cent of our business is raw material from farm to factory processing units," said Sanghera. The company works with processing partners to process the agri raw material. It is also into business-to-business (B2B) packaging, where it sells to enterprises such as bread or biscuit manufacturers, beverage companies or general traders and horeca (hotels, restaurants and caterers).

FarMart, which was launched seven-and-a-half years ago, also has its own rice and oil brand, both B2B categories, which it has taken upstream to the export market. These brands are sold to retail clients, airlines such as Etihad Airways or Emirates and to distributors.

The company spent its first few years functioning like Uber offering tractor services. Besides, it offered other services such as finance and inputs before it realised the best way forward was to pivot the business to the software plus market linkage.

Project with UP

FarMart is working with the Uttar Pradesh government, which has made the company the linkage partner to procure from 5,000 farmer producer companies (FPCs). "Now, the State has allowed us to sell inputs through our platform," he said.

The company will be offering inputs such as fertilizers only since the Uttar Pradesh government has asked it. Otherwise, it has taken a pledge not to enter the chemicals category. "From the sustainability standpoint if there is an alternative input like a biofertilizer or other sustainable fertilisers as well as inputs we enable them," said Sanghera.

Farmers are keen to experiment with new technologies, but they lack the appetite for risk, he said. However, when they find someone else doing well with such risks, they adopt it.

The company carries out quality inspections on consignments that have been delivered through 140 inspectors across 190 districts. "We have created an offline model where these quality inspectors, once they receive a confirmation from our partner, go and carry out quality checks," said the FarMart co-founder.

The inspectors confirm the quality is good and the specified quantity is available for truckload transportation. The company also has about 5 million images to help the quality inspector carry out inspections.

FarMart has an internal data science team which digitises quality at the first mile. The accuracy is now 86 per cent, he said. In the long-term, the company will capture the image using its smartphone app and try to ratify the quality.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/farmart-to-export-food-items-from-africa-to-india-other-global-regions/article67427998.ece

Africa and India push rich nations to phase out fossil fuels faster

Climate Change News / 16 October 2023

At Cop28, developed nations will face calls to quit fossil fuels faster than developing countries, who did less to cause the climate crisis

Six weeks ahead of the Cop28 climate talks, negotiators from Africa and India have set out separate plans to push developed countries to do more to move away from fossil fuels.

The African Group of negotiators want rich countries to stop greenlighting new fossil fuel production projects by 2030 while India is calling on them to go beyond net zero and start sucking carbon out of the atmosphere by 2050.

The proposals play on a key principle of United Nations climate talks, “common but differentiated responsibilities”, where the wealthy countries who are most responsible for causing climate change take a lead in tackling it.

But rich nations like the European Union are focused on promoting global goals, like a tripling of renewable energy capacity by 2030 and a global phase out of fossil fuels “well ahead of 2050”.

Fossil fuel production

While many developed countries have restricted support for fossil fuel production projects abroad, major nations like the US, UK, Australia and Norway have continued to approve oil and gas pumping at home and have not set end dates for fossil fuel production.

To challenge this, the African Group of Negotiators has called for “differentiated pathways for countries in the pursuit of net zero and fossil fuel phasedown”.

In a submission to the UN global stocktake, the African Group said that these pathways should include “where no further exploration of fossil fuels in developed countries is targeted well ahead of 2030, whilst affording developing countries the opportunity to close the global supply gap in the short term”.

The submission was included in the United Nations’ 65-page list of “elements” which government negotiators will debate ahead of and at Cop28. While Cop decisions are not binding, agreement would heap moral pressure on rich countries to stop producing fossil fuels.

No supply gap

Despite the African Group’s claims of a fossil fuel supply gap, a 2021 UN report found that the world’s governments plan to produce more than twice as much fossil fuels in 2030 than would be compatible with limiting global warming to 1.5C.

Most of this production growth comes from developing – but not African – nations like Saudi Arabia, Russia and India. The US, Canada and Australia also plan to produce more oil and gas.

While production is set to fall in the UK and Norway, the Unep report says this is more because they are running out of oil and gas than because of intentionally aligning production with a decarbonised future.

A small group of nations led by Denmark and Costa Rica have formed the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, promising to stop producing those two two fossil fuels.

Thuli Makama, an African climate campaigner from Oil Change International, told Climate Home that "no new fossil fuel extraction projects should be approved in Africa or anywhere".

She said that fossil fuels do not bring development and that African fossil fuels will block development of the continent's renewable energy and green economy sectors while mainly benefitting companies from wealthy countries.

The African Group has also called for rich nations to agree to give more money to developing countries to help them tackle and adapt to climate change and address the loss and damage it causes.

The group told the UN it wanted Cop28 to agree that rich nations would provide by 2030 $200-400 billion a year for loss and damage and $400 billion a year for adapting to climate change on top of funding to reduce emissions.

Net negative by 2050

India's submission to the UN stocktake says that "developed countries should have already peaked their emissions and must be on their way to becoming net negative, with peaking to come later for developing countries".

Two anonymous Indian government officials fleshed this proposal out, telling Reuters that developed countries should be net negative by 2050. One said this would "enable the world to achieve the target of global net-zero by that year while allowing developing nations to use the available natural resources for growth".

Avantika Goswami, climate change manager at the Centre for Science and Environment think tank, told Climate Home that India's demand "seems reasonable".

"There is no doubt that developed countries have overstayed their welcome in using the remaining carbon budget," she said.

She added: "We are likely to blow past 1.5C soon, and that will not be the fault of the developing world, many parts of which are still struggling to overcome historical inequalities and meet basic citizen needs."

India's call is similar to that made in March by the head of the UN, Antonio Guterres, who said that developed nations should reach net zero by 2040. Most developed nations plan to reach that target by 2050.

But Guterres said too that developing nations should reach net zero by 2050. Countries like China, Russia and Saudi Arabia aim to reach that target by 2060 while India targets 2070. His proposal was largely ignored by both developed and developing nations.

Source: https://www.climatechangenews.com/2023/10/16/africa-and-india-cop28-positions-fossil-fuel-phase-out/

India and Tanzania upgrade ties to strategic partnership

The Wire / 10 October 2023

This was decided after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his guest, Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's first woman president.

India and Tanzania on Monday, October 9, upgraded their ties to a strategic partnership, announced a five year roadmap to expand defence cooperation and decided to work on an agreement increase trade in local currencies.

This was decided after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his guest, Samia Suluhu Hassan, Tanzania's first woman president.

Following the discussions, the two side signed six agreements ranging from cooperation in white shipping information sharing, maritime industries, digital domain, culture and sports.

In his opening statement at the joint media appearance, Indian PM Modi described Tanzania as an important partner in the Indo-Pacific and closest development partner in Africa.

"Today is a historic day in the relations between India and Tanzania. Today, we are tying our age-old friendship into a strategic partnership," he said.

In his media statement after the talks, Modi said both countries are working on an agreement to increase trade in local currencies. Further, he noted that they had agreed to a five-year roadmap for cooperation in areas like military training, and also in the maritime sphere and defence industries.

As per the joint statement, the five-year roadmap was the result of the second meeting of the Joint Defence Cooperation committee in June 2023.

The two countries also agreed to enhance cooperation in maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. "They expressed satisfaction over the first ever India-Tanzania Joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance exercise conducted in July 2023 when the Indian Naval Ship Trishul visited Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam".

The joint statement also noted that Tanzania had appreciated the hydrographic surveys of major Tanzanian ports done by India in recent years and “agreed to continue cooperation in this area”.

The prime minister also noted that India and Tanzania are “unanimous” that terrorism is the “most serious security threat to humanity”.

“We have decided to increase mutual cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism,” he said.

“The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whenever, wherever, and by whom-so-ever committed and the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism. They agreed that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to global peace, security and stability and must seriously be addressed,” said the joint statement.

Source: https://thewire.in/diplomacy/india-tanzania-strategic-partnership-samia-suluhu-hassan

Joint Statement during the State Visit of the President of Tanzania to India and launch of Strategic Partnership between India and Tanzania (8-10 October 2023)

Ministry of External Affairs / 09 October 2023

1. At the invitation of Smt. Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India, Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania undertook a State Visit to the Republic of India from 8-10 October 2023. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accompanied by a high-level delegation including the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation Hon. January Makamba (MP), and other members from different sectors, Senior Government Officials as well as members of the Tanzania Business Community.

2. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accorded a ceremonial welcome on 9 October 2023, at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. She also visited Rajghat to pay her respect to Mahatma Gandhi. H.E. President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu will hold bilateral talks and also host a State Banquet in honour of H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

3. President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held official bilateral talks in a warm and cordial atmosphere and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The two leaders commended the existing close, cordial and cooperative relations and noted that India and Tanzania are time-tested partners bound by a long history of shared values and ideals spanning many years. They both acknowledged that the bilateral relations were further deepened by the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tanzania in July 2016, giving a significant boost to development cooperation.

4. The leaders recalled the recent visits of External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Co-chair the 10th Joint Commission on Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation and the Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri. Om Birla to Tanzania. In addition, similar visits by several Tanzanian Ministers were held this year. The two leaders agreed that such high-level visits have reinforced the strong relations existing between Tanzania and India.

5. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan will also attend the India-Tanzania Business and Investment Forum on October 10, 2023, where she will deliver the keynote address to the Indian and Tanzanian business communities. She will also hold one-on-one meetings (B2B) with key Indian Business Leaders.

6. With a view to further strengthen the bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across various sectors, the two leaders announced the elevation of Indo-Tanzania relationship to the level of ‘Strategic Partnership’. Both sides noted that the strategic partnership will help the two countries to jointly work on issues like Maritime Security, Defence Cooperation, Development Partnership, Trade and Investment among others.

7. During the visit, MoUs covering a wide range of sectors were signed. List is enclosed as Annexure A.

Political Relations

8. Both sides noted with satisfaction, an increasing level of bilateral political engagement and strategic dialogue on regional and global issues including the vision for the Indo-Pacific and implementation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association's Outlook on the lndo-Pacific. It was noted that India and Tanzania are maritime neighbours with a long history of trade and people to people linkages therefore Tanzania has an important place in India’s vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region). Both sides encouraged cooperation on the Indo-Pacific noting that the AU vision for peace and security in Africa with focus on development of Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth coincides with SAGAR vision. They also welcomed Tanzania’s participation in the annual Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief (HADR) exercises in India for sharing of experiences to undertake rescue and relief operations during major natural calamities.

9. Both sides agreed to continue with high-level political dialogue through the Joint Commission mechanism at the Foreign Ministers’ level and bilateral meetings between Leaders. Both sides agreed to initiate a Policy Planning Dialogue between their Foreign Ministries.

Defence Cooperation

10. The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the successful 2nd Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting held in Arusha on 28th and 29th June 2023 resulting in a five-year Roadmap for Defence Cooperation between the two countries.

11. Both sides recalled the successful visits of Defence Ministers of Tanzania to India in August 2022 and February 2023, during which both sides agreed to expand scope of defence cooperation. The Tanzanian side appreciated the deployment of the Indian Military Training Team (IMTT) at the Command and Staff College in Duluti.

12. Considering the successful hosting of the Defence Expos twice in Dar es Salaam on 31st May 2022 and 2nd October 2023 which saw participation of several Indian defence companies; both sides expressed interests in expanding cooperation in the area of Defence industry. The two leaders also expressed pleasure at the progress of cooperation between the two sides towards the capacity building of the Tanzanian forces as well as industry.

Maritime security

13. Acknowledging that India and Tanzania are maritime neighbours who face common maritime security challenges, the two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. They expressed satisfaction over the first ever India-Tanzania Joint Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance exercise conducted in July 2023 when the Indian Naval Ship Trishul visited Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. They also noted that India and Tanzania held bilateral maritime exercise in October 2022 during the visit of the Indian Naval Ship Tarkash.

14. The Tanzanian side appreciated the hydrographic surveys of Tanzanian major ports done by India in recent years. Thus, the two sides agreed to continue cooperation in this area.

15. Both leaders looked forward to increased interoperability between their Armed Forces. They noted the regular port calls by the Indian ships to Tanzanian ports and appreciated the conduct of the maiden trilateral maritime exercise involving India, Tanzania and Mozambique in the Mozambique Channel during the visit of the Indian Naval Ship Tarkash in October 2022.

16. The two leaders commended the signing of the Technical Agreement on sharing White Shipping Information between India and Tanzania.

Blue Economy

17. The Tanzanian side expressed interest to cooperate with the Government of India in the field of Blue economy including tourism, maritime trade, services and infrastructure, marine scientific research, capacity in seabed mining, ocean conservation and maritime safety and security. India and Tanzania agreed to cooperate under the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to ensure a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Indian Ocean Region.

Trade and Investment

18. The two sides expressed commitment to increase bilateral trade volumes and towards this end, directed the respective Officials to explore new areas of trade. It was further agreed that both sides should harmonise trade volume data and take initiatives to further enhance bilateral trade volumes by organizing visits of business delegations, business exhibitions and interaction with business communities.

19. The Tanzanian side acknowledged that India is amongst the top five investment sources for Tanzania whereby 630 investment projects worth USD 3.74 billion have been registered and thus creating 60,000 new jobs. Both sides welcomed recent trends of renewed interest among Indian businesspersons for investment in Tanzania. Both sides agreed to explore the possibility of setting up of an Investment Park in Tanzania, Tanzanian side assured full support in this regard.

20. The two leaders expressed desire to expand bilateral trade using Local currencies. They noted that Reserve Bank of India (Indian Central Bank) has cleared the way for trade using local currencies i.e. Indian Rupee (INR) & Tanzanian Shilling by allowing the authorized banks in India to open Special Rupee Vostro Accounts (SRVA) of correspondent banks of Tanzania and that transactions using this mechanism have already materialised. The two sides agreed to continue with the consultations in order to address any concerns so as to ensure sustainability of this arrangement.

21. Both sides recognised that agriculture sector cooperation remains a strong pillar in the relations whereby 98% of product lines from Tanzania are imported tariff-free

using India’s Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme. India remains a major destination for Tanzanian cashew nuts, pigeon peas, spices, avocado and other agricultural commodities. Both sides agreed to further revitalise cooperation in this sector.

Development Partnership

22. Tanzania appreciated India’s development partnership assistance in the areas of Water, Health, Education, Capacity Building, Scholarships and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among others.

23. The two sides also expressed satisfaction on Lines of Credits (LoCs) extended by India to Tanzania that amount to over USD 1.1 billion covering fields of drinking water infrastructure, agriculture and defence. It was specifically noted that Water Projects in 24 towns of Tanzania worth USD 500 Million through a Line of Credit scheme are presently being implemented. Once completed, it would provide easy access to safe drinking water to about 6 million residents of these regions.

24. The Tanzanian side appreciated that the Indian scholarship and capacity building program has tremendously contributed to its Human Resource development. India offers 450 Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships for capacity building and 70 Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships for long term programmes in 2023-24. The Indian side announced the decision to increase the number of Long term scholarships (ICCR) from 70 to 85 for the year 2023-24. As part of its commitment to the Global South, India also announced 1000 additional ITEC slots for Tanzania to be used over a 5-year period in new and emergent fields like Smart Ports, Space, Biotechnology, Artificial Intelligence, Aviation Management, etc.

Education, Skill Development and Development of ICT

25. The Indian side offered collaboration in areas of space technologies and digital public infrastructure under India Stack including Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Digital Unique Identity (Aadhar).

26. The Tanzanian side welcomed Indian support for establishing a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Pemba, Zanzibar and designing courses based on the demands of the local market. The Indian side offered to set up vocational training institutions on the

lines of Vocational Skilling Centres of India to provide training and skill enhancement to the Tanzanian youth.

27. Tanzania commended the decision by India to set up two ICT Centres at Dar es Salaam Institute of Technology and at Nelson Mandela African Institute for Science & Technology (NMAIST) in Arusha. Tanzanian side also express its appreciation to India for upgrading the ICT centre in NM-AIST.

Indian Institute of Technology Madras Campus in Zanzibar

28. Both leaders affirmed the significance of establishing the first overseas campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras in Zanzibar. They also agreed that IIT in Zanzibar has the potential to become the premier centre for technical education in the African continent. They noted that classes for the first batch are scheduled to begin this month. Tanzanian side appreciated India's commitment in this regard and assured of its full support to the growth and sustainability of IIT in Zanzibar.

Space Cooperation

29. Tanzanian side congratulated the Indian side on the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 lander on the surface of the moon on 23 August, 2023.

30. The Indian side offered collaboration in area of space technologies to Tanzania, which was welcomed by the Tanzanian side.

Health

31. Both sides reaffirmed the excellent cooperation in the health sector, noting the recent visit of Hon. Ummy Mwalimu (MP), Minister for Health of Tanzania to India in July 2023 and the visit of a joint delegation from India and UAE that visited Tanzania in August 2022 to scout for opportunities. Both sides agreed to work for further collaboration in the health sector.

32. Tanzanian side appreciated the donation of 10 ambulances by the Government of India aimed at assisting in the provision of prompt medical care to patients and support to hospital infrastructure.

33. Both sides also highlighted the excellent track record of bilateral cooperation in the implementation of grant projects including donation of radiation therapy machine,

"Bhabhatron II", essential medicines, an artificial limbs fitment camp organized in 2019 which benefited 520 Tanzanian patients among others.

People to People Relations and Cultural Exchanges

34. Both leaders underscored the importance of strong people-to-people contacts, cultural exchanges, academic linkages and tourism between the two countries. They appreciated the contribution of the large Indian diaspora in Tanzania who have acted as a bridge between the two nations and made significant contribution to the Tanzanian economy and society.

35. Both sides agreed to heighten cooperation in cultural exchanges and appreciated the signing of the Cultural Exchange Program for the 2023-27 periods. The Indian side extended an invitation to Tanzania to be a partner country in the upcoming Surajkund Mela to be held in February 2024 in Surajkund, Faridabad, National Capital Region of Delhi.

36. The two sides noted the ongoing exchange of cultural troupes of both sides and encouraged further cultural exchanges between the two countries.

37. The Tanzanian side thanked the Government of India for the deployment of two Kabaddi Coaches from India considering the rising popularity of the sport in Tanzania.

38. The leaders agreed to a closer collaboration between Universities and Think Tanks of the two countries.

Regional Issues

39. The Indian side congratulated Tanzania for successfully hosting two major Summits, namely, the African Human Capital Heads of State summit and the Africa Food Systems Summit in July and September 2023, respectively.

International Issues

40. Indian side thanked Tanzania for their support in increasing interaction with the East African Community (EAC).

41. Both leaders underscored that there are convergences between the two countries in international forums. It was noted that both sides have active participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations and have contributed towards regional security initiatives.

Both sides noted the contributions made by Tanzania in the peacekeeping operations deployed under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

42. India and Tanzania agreed on the need for reform of the United Nations Security Council through expansion in both categories of membership. Indian side conveyed appreciation to Tanzania for its support during India's term as a non-Permanent member of the UNSC for the period 2021-22 and also for Tanzania's support for the Indian candidature for a non-Permanent membership of UNSC in 2028-29.

43. The Tanzanian side congratulated India on a successful G20 Presidency and the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration adopted at the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023, in which the G20 Leaders welcomed the African Union (AU) as the permanent member of the G20. Indian side appreciated Tanzania's support to India's G20 Presidency and its participation in the Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023. The Tanzanian side noted that AU's entry into the G20 presented a major step in the amplification of Africa's voice in the premier global forum for multilateral economic cooperation, and that Africa would positively gain from this inclusion.

44. The Indian side welcomed Tanzania's decision to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) and the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) and looked forward to Tanzania's membership of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

45. The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whenever, wherever, and by whom-so-ever committed and the use of terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism. They agreed that terrorism is one of the most serious threats to global peace, security and stability and must seriously be addressed.

46. H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan expressed her appreciation to H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the warm reception and hospitality extended to her and her accompanying delegation. H.E. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi thanked H.E. President Samia Suluhu Hassan for visiting India and wished her good health and prosperity for the friendly people of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Source: https://www.mea.gov.in/incoming-visit-detail.htm?37174/Joint+Statement+during+the+State+Visit+of+the+President+of+Tanzania+to+India+and+launch+of+Strategic+Partnership+between+India+and+Tanzania+810+October+2023

Rice-eating West Africa longs for the Indian grain

Hindu Business Line / 03 October 2023

Following New Delhi's curbs on the cereal's exports, prices up by 30% in Cote d'Ivoire

If you chance upon a random person in a conference or in a hotel in Abidjan, the capital of Cote d'Ivoire (which is also known as Ivory Coast), and introduce yourself as someone visiting from India, the first question that confronts you will be – "when is your country lifting the ban on rice exports?"

There is a reason for their anticipation. Prices of rice in the country with a population of 29 million have shot up by 25-30 per cent ever since India curbed rice exports a few months ago. Though it is predominantly an agricultural country, its focus is entirely on cocoa, rubber and coffee, with rice being grown only in 6 per cent of the country's arable land.

While India banned exports of white rice on July 20, it imposed a 20 per cent export duty on parboiled rice from August 26.

4th largest importer

"It is not just about Cote d'Ivoire; it holds good for all of the West African bloc and some other African countries. We hope we get Indian rice sooner," a person involved in agricultural trade said.

The rice-eating Cote d'Ivoire, like some of its African peers, depends on rice imports, mainly parboiled, to meet its domestic demand. That Cote d'Ivoire is the fourth largest importer of Indian rice shows how dependent it is on India. It contributed to 6.6 per cent of India's total non-basmati rice export of 18 million tonnes in 2022-23. The aggregate value of its rice imports from India was $420 million.

"The increase in rice prices in the city is as high as 30 per cent after the ban (on white rice). A 25-kg bag is being sold at 19,000CFA francs (XOF in currency market) against 14,000 francs before theban on exports early this year," Isabelle (name changed), a homemaker, said. (One Indian rupee fetches you around 7.5 local francs.)

Used to Indian rice

“We eat it three times a day and we don’t produce rice. It’s cheaper for us to import it rather than growing it here. Though there are other alternatives such as China, Thailand and Vietnam for importing rice and substitute the imports from India, we are hooked to the taste of Indian rice,” said.

The US Department of Agriculture in its mid-September 2023 said the sharp increase in rice prices (following India’s export ban) “is expected to disproportionately impact countries in import-dependent Sub-Saharan Africa”.

Three of the top five India’s export markets are in Sub-Saharan Africa – Benin, Senegal, and Cote d’Ivoire – with each receiving more than one million tonnes of Indian rice in 2022. India is, by far, the largest supplier to these countries and many others in the region. Cote d’Ivoire imported 1.2 million tonnes from India in 2022-23.

According to an IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) blog, India’s rice market share in 2022 exceeded 80 per cent for several African countries, reflecting the heavy dependence on Indian rice.

N’Khoh Abroise, a cocoa farmer from Abey Benigni village, which is a two-hour drive from the country’s capital, said Indian rice is popular in Cote d’Ivoire. “It’s costlier growing rice here than getting it imported from outside. The northern and western parts of the country consume rice,” he said.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/rice-eating-west-africa-longs-for-rice-from-india/article67371485.ece

Africa CDC & Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance host the First Manufacturers Marketplace for Vaccine Manufacturing African Union Member States

Africacdc / 01 October 2023

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance hosted by the Kingdom of Morocco opened the First Manufacturers Marketplace for Vaccine Manufacturing African Union Member States. The meeting saw the participation of Ministers of Health or Representatives, Heads of National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) of the 13 African Union (AU) Member states signatories of the Communiqué of the Video- Teleconference (VTC) Meeting of the Bureau of the Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government extended to African Vaccine Manufacturing Countries held in May 2022, representatives from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), stakeholders such as UNICEF, AfCFTA Secretariat and African vaccine manufacturers.

The meeting aimed at:

- Gathering African vaccine manufacturers, their Health and Finance Ministers and National Regulatory Authorities, to identify the best modalities for achieving the success and the sustainability of the on-going manufacturing projects;
- Creating awareness among participating member states about the importance of their commitments to select and procure from African manufacturers;
- Creating a platform for manufacturers to present their current vaccine capacity and expansion plans, and discuss how these could help direct/build on market shaping activities;
- Exchanging views on the design of Gavi's proposed African Vaccine Market Accelerator (AVMA) an instrument seeking approximately US $1 billion of financing, which aims to support sustainable vaccine manufacturing in Africa by offsetting initial costs and enabling competitive entry into the market. The potential AVMA will be considered by the Gavi Board later this year; and
- Sharing best practices for a strengthened private – public partnership.

Opening the meeting, H.E., Pr Khalid Aït Taleb, Minister of Health and Social Protection of Morocco stated “It is an honor for the Kingdom of Morocco to host this meeting of the first marketplace of African vaccine manufacturers. Under the leadership and strategic direction of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco adopted the public-private partnership approach to support the local manufacturing of vaccines and biotechnologies, with a strong commitment of the Government to support the development of the entire value chain of the local manufacturing of vaccines and biotechnologies products, in order to achieve the Moroccan and continental vaccine sovereignty.” He further added that: “Under the leadership of His Majesty, the King Mohammed VI, the kingdom of Morocco is strongly committed to collaborate and support the Africa CDC efforts, in order to achieve the goal of 60% of Africa’s vaccine needs produced on the continent by 2040.”

Delivering his remarks, H.E. Dr. Jean Kaseya, Director General, Africa CDC said: “The meeting is a testament of the commitment of the member states to see through the ambitious goal of the Partnerships for African Vaccine manufacturing (PAVM).” He further added:” To achieve that ambition, public-private partnerships will be a key to unlock not only a commercial potential but also the health security that we all aspire that requires us (Africa) to have the capacity to manufacture vaccines as well as all other health products we need.”

In a statement, David Marlow, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, noted: “One of the hardest lessons learned from the pandemic is that we can never again allow a situation where vaccine manufacturing is concentrated in an exclusive number of countries and regions. Working in partnership with Africa CDC, Gavi is committed to working with African Union member states, manufacturers, and regulatory agencies to build a thriving, sustainable vaccine manufacturing ecosystem in Africa capable not only of helping the region respond to future health emergencies but contributing to healthy vaccine markets globally.”

The AU through the Africa CDC, in April 2021, established PAVM to steer a bold goal that will enable the African vaccine manufacturing industry to develop, produce, and sustainably increase supply, from less than 1 percent, currently. The AU Bureau of Heads of State and Government further requested Gavi and other partners to procure at least 30% of all vaccines produced by the continent for global consumption. Since

2021, the African vaccine industry has witnessed positive developments with several vaccine manufacturing projects taking shape throughout Africa. Gavi also launched a new 4 pillar regional manufacturing strategy in December 2022 that looks at various aspects such as antigen selection and demand, including how to harness and channel country demand through the Gavi model in support of this effort. Gavi is also currently designing a new financial instrument – the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA) which aims to provide support for sustainable procurement and long-term vaccine manufacturing on the continent, in recognition of the larger initial costs faced by new African vaccine manufacturers.

The 3-day event offered in-depth conversations between AU Member States, NRAs, RECs, African vaccine manufacturers, as well as key partners on how best to address the challenges facing the African vaccine manufacturing, to advance all together towards the bold goal of 60% of Africa's vaccine needs produced on the continent by 2040. This included discussions on ways to best ensure there is sufficient and predictable demand from African countries for vaccines made on the African continent.

The meeting saw the launch of the Platform for Harmonized African Health Products Manufacturing (PHAHM) Ministerial working group with an objective to harmonize health products manufacturing in Africa and frame continental approach to ensure the complementarity of ongoing manufacturing initiatives. This is in line with the Africa New Public Health Order call to action for: "an expanded manufacturing of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics." Amongst its key strategic pillars.

Source: https://africacdc.org/news-item/africa-cdc-gavi-the-vaccine-alliance-host-the-first-manufacturers-marketplace-for-vaccine-manufacturing-african-union-member-states/

Indian companies should step up trade with African countries: Piyush Goyal

Times of India / 13 September 2023

Indian Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, has encouraged Indian companies to invest in Africa and increase trade with the continent. Goyal stated that those who do not take advantage of this opportunity will miss out, and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to ensure the African Union's membership in the G20 will earn goodwill.

Days after India ensured a full membership for African Union (AU) into G20, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said Indian companies should look to invest more in Africa and step up trade with countries in the continent with a population of 1.4 billion, which is as large as India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative to ensure that the African Union becomes a full member will earn a lot of goodwill across the 55 member countries," the minister said, adding that India's G20 presidency has resulted in enormous trust in it, not just in Africa but around the world.

The nudge to Indian companies comes at a time when global trade has slowed down, resulting in a fall in exports from several countries, including India. The government has been seeking to push a focus on newer markets and products to diversify India's trade basket, along with a thrust on services exports. Goyal said India could contribute significantly to Africa offering its digital public infrastructure, as well as in sectors such as railways, electricity systems, road construction and several services.

The minister was all praise for the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration issued on Saturday over the issue of the . "In a way, it is the importance of multilateralism that has been strengthened because India could come up with a consensus... It will strengthen the multilateral trading system and a rules-based global order, which will be particularly beneficial for developing and least developed countries since the principle of WTO is to provide special carve-outs for developing and least developed countries," he said.

While backing reforms of WTO, G20 leaders had warned against protectionism. "We reiterate the need to pursue WTO reforms to improve all its functions through an inclusive member-driven process, and remain committed to conducting discussions with a view to having a fully and well functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all members by 2024. We commit to work constructively to ensure positive outcomes at WTO's Thirteenth Ministerial Conference," the Declaration said.

Pointing to last year's WTO ministerial meeting, Goyal said India had played a constructive role and will do so at the next meeting in Abu Dhabi next year. He said as the leading voice of the Global South, India will pursue issues that are of interest of developing and least developed nations.

Source: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/indian-companiess-should-step-up-trade-with-african-countries-piyush-goyal/articleshow/103617445.cms?from=mdr

African Union's inclusion in G20: Who is helping whom?

India Today / 12 September 2023

The African Union joined the world's elite group of G20 nations on September 9. The inter-governmental organisation comprises 55 member states located on the African continent and seeks to build "an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens".

The inclusion, while widely welcomed, has also led many to speculate about whether G20 took the decision to uplift the African continent or does the group now recognise the vast potential that lies in the region.

Africa has vast reserves of critical minerals, including aluminium, cobalt, copper, lithium and manganese. These minerals are essential for high-tech and green products like smartphones and solar panels. "Expanding energy supply chains into Africa is also an opportunity to accelerate climate action.

The continent has at least a fifth of the world's reserves in a dozen metals critical for the energy transition — including about 19 per cent of those needed for electric cars," the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development said in a report.

Nearly all countries in Africa are unique in their own way, heavily laden with minerals. South Africa is rich in coal, Libya is rich in petroleum, Mali has gold reserves, Morocco has phosphates, Burkina Faso has zinc, Kenya has titanium and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has cobalt and copper.

In fact, Africa has 90 per cent of the world's chromium and platinum reserves, 48 per cent of cobalt and manganese reserves, 40 per cent of gold reserves, and 22 per cent of global graphite reserves.

Manganese is widely used as a battery material in the electric vehicle industry and cobalt is an essential component for lithium-ion batteries used in many electronic devices such as smartphones. Manganese reserves in Africa rose from 230 million tonnes in 2018 to 640 million tonnes in 2023. Also, Africa has 3.5 million tonnes of cobalt out of the 7.6 million tonnes of cobalt that the world has.

It is not that the world has recently explored the vast opportunities in Africa. Many African countries are registering economic growth much higher than advanced and emerging nations in other regions.

The International Monetary Fund's April projections for real GDP growth for 2023 estimated Libya to grow at 17.5 per cent year-on-year, Senegal at 8.3 per cent, Congo at 6.3 per cent, and Ivory Coast and Rwanda at 6.2 per cent each in 2023.

In the same projection, India was expected to grow at 5.9 per cent, and the US at 1.6 per cent year-on-year.

While Africa has been infamous for poverty, diseases, and malnutrition, its inclusion in the G20 is seen as a significant step for boosting the economies of various nations in the continent and improving living standards.

"Africa's permanent membership of the G20 means it has been recognised as a key player on the world economic landscape. African countries must now leverage this position to accelerate the development of their economies and their young populations," Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia, said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, South Africa has already been a part of the African Union and six Junta-ruled nations in the African Union -- Sudan, Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger and Gabon -- are suspended.

Source: https://www.indiatoday.in/diu/story/african-unions-inclusion-in-g20-summit-who-is-helping-whom-2434750-2023-09-12

G20 Summit: African Union becomes permanent member of G20 under India's presidency

Livemint / 09 September 2023

During the inaugural session of the two-day G20 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the African Union (AU) had been granted permanent membership in the Group of 20 largest economies (G20) worldwide.

As reported by PTI, this announcement marked the AU's accession as a new member of this prominent global organization, consisting of 55 nations.

Shortly after the announcement, Union of Comoros President and AU chairperson Azali Assoumani took the seat as a full member of the G20.

“In keeping with the sentiment of sabka saath (with everyone), India had proposed that the African Union should be given permanent membership of the G20. I believe we all are in agreement on this proposal. With your agreement (he banged the gavel thrice)," Modi said.

"Before we start our work, I invite the AU president as a permanent member to take his position," he said.

Over the past few years, India has actively established itself as a prominent advocate, highlighting the issues, difficulties, and aspirations of the Global South, particularly the African continent. Prime Minister Modi has been at the forefront of these efforts, especially in advocating for the African Union's inclusion as a member of the G20. In June, Modi took the initiative by writing to the leaders of the G20 nations, urging them to grant full membership to the AU during the New Delhi summit.

A few weeks later, the proposal found its way into the official draft communique for the summit. This inclusion occurred during the third G20 Sherpas meeting, which convened in Hampi, Karnataka, in July.

The African Union (AU) is a significant organization consisting of 55 member states, collectively representing the nations across the African continent.

In an exclusive interview to PTI earlier this month, Modi said Africa is a "top priority" for India and that it works for the inclusion of those in global affairs who feel their voices are not being heard.

The G20 was established in 1999 as a response to various global economic crises.

The G20 member nations collectively account for approximately 85 percent of the world's GDP, more than 75 percent of global trade, and roughly two-thirds of the global population.

In addition to the recent addition, the G20 is made up of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union (EU).

Source: https://www.livemint.com/news/world/g20-summit-african-union-becomes-permanent-member-of-g20-under-indias-presidency-11694239471281.html

Permanent G20 member status to African Union could give fillip to healthcare in the region, say experts

Livemint / 09 September 2023

This could potentially translate into increased attention and support for healthcare initiatives and challenges specific to the African continent during G20 meetings.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of granting permanent member status to the African Union within the Group of 20 top world economies on Saturday is expected to bring about a significant impact on the healthcare landscape in the region, health experts have indicated.

Public health policy experts have said that with permanent membership, African countries will have a more influential voice in global economic discussions. This could potentially translate into increased attention and support for healthcare initiatives and challenges specific to the African continent during G20 meetings.

African countries might have improved access to financial and technical resources from G20 nations. This could be utilized to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, improve healthcare delivery, and address critical health issues such as infectious diseases, maternal and child health, and non-communicable diseases, said the experts.

“African Union's entry into the G20 gives a boost to the voice of the Global South on the international stage. Specifically, in the healthcare space, while this will pave the way for improved trade relationships with its 55 member states, it will also help strengthen the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA),” said Himanshu Sikka, Lead - Health, Nutrition and WASH, IPE Global, an international development consulting firm.

“Concerning the GHSA, the African continent has often found itself at the receiving end of decisions set and driven by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries. African Union's entry into the G20 provides the continent with an opportunity to have a say and ensure its own priorities are considered in global forums,” he said.

The African Union, the experts indicated, could advocate for policies and actions within the G20 that promote global health equity. “This might involve pushing for fair access to vaccines and medicines, addressing health inequalities, and supporting initiatives to strengthen health systems in low-income countries,” said

Dr Naveen Thacker, President at International Pediatrics Association (IPA), which has 40 countries in Africa with its member societies.

A compendium by Observer Research Foundation titled, Accelerating Global Health: Pathways to Health Equity for the G20 has also talked about the state of public health in G20 countries and explores current initiatives being undertaken to bring the world closer to achieving health equity.

Aurélia Nguyen, Chief Programme Officer at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in her report titled-- Ensuring equitable supply and access to critical vaccines during pandemics: The lessons of COVAX, in the compendium—said that the experience during COVID-19 and previous pandemics cries out for increased and geographically diversified vaccine manufacturing, particularly across the African continent.

“Africa has an eighth of the world’s population but only about 0.1 percent of the vaccine manufacturing capacity. There is much work that must and can be done to help those regions establish this essential infrastructure, not just for emergencies but for the production of routine vaccines during non-crisis times. To help regional production take root and grow, there must be support for technology transfer as well as demand-side financing to promote a sustainable diversified manufacturing base,” Nguyen said.

In June, Modi penned a letter to G20 leaders, advocating for the African Union's full membership within the group, a proposal that was subsequently incorporated into the draft communique for the summit during the third G20 Sherpas meeting held in Hampi, Karnataka, in July. Throughout its tenure as G20 president, India has prioritized critical issues, including inclusive growth, digital innovation, climate resilience, and equitable global health access, all aimed at benefiting the Global South, or developing countries.

Source: https://www.businesstoday.in/g20-summit/story/permanent-g20-member-status-to-african-union-could-give-fillip-to-healthcare-in-the-region-say-experts-397652-2023-09-09

India in talks with countries in LatAm, Africa for UPI, RuPay

Livemint / 06 September 2023

In August, Mint reported that India was holding discussions with Namibia, Mozambique and Kenya to enter into commercial partnerships for launching UPI in the markets.

India is in talks with several South American and African nations for introducing Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and RuPay cards, in its efforts to establish the payment platforms internationally, a senior government official said.

This initiative is being pursued by the National Payments Corp of India (NPCI), which developed the UPI platform as well as Rupay, and the RBI.

"The discussions are primarily on with high commissions embassies, and are at various stages of negotiations, as India looks to internationalise these platforms," the official said.

In August, Mint reported that India was holding discussions with Namibia, Mozambique and Kenya to enter into commercial partnerships for launching UPI in the markets.

"We have specific objectives for popularising and internationalising Rupay and UPI," he added. Ritesh Shukla, the international chief executive of NPCI, recently said the number of countries using UPI will double in 12-18 months. The official said that RBI is also planning to launch wholesale central bank digital currency (CBDC) in the interbank borrowing market, especially call money market.

Interbank borrowing facilitates banks to borrow money from other banks to maintain sufficient liquidity for immediate needs, and is typically a short-term arrangement.

Interbank call money market is a short-term money market allowing financial institutions like banks, mutual funds, and corporations, to lend and borrow money at interbank rates. "The purpose of wholesale CBDCs has been to try out different technologies. Going forward, we will try other technologies, like using CBDCs as tokens for call money settlements," he added. "Experimenting with technology is relatively easier for wholesale CBDC pilots," he said.

RBI had started piloting CBDCs last year for both retail and wholesale segments. It is aiming to scale the number of CBDC transactions to one million per day by 2023-end. “We are confident of achieving the target within December 2023. We had seen over 25,000 CBDC transactions till July. The purposes of CBDC pilots are to understand the benefits, risks, and impact that we may have on bank deposits, monetary policy, among others," the official said.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/industry/infrastructure/india-in-talks-with-south-american-and-african-nations-for-upi-and-rupay-cards-expansion-senior-government-official-11693938353930.html

India, Africa can strengthen agri-business ties

Hindu Business Line / 28 August 2023

Farm R&D, building and modernising agri infra, processing and value addition are areas where India can contribute

The world recognises Africa's immense potential in terms of its enormous natural resource endowments (energy, minerals and agriculture) and large population. . India has enjoyed strong relationship with many of the nations in Africa (there are now 54 countries) for centuries.

Africa-India trade is currently valued at about $90 billion, but the potential for growth is huge. In particular, trade in agricultural commodities has been on a strong footing for years. Indian entrepreneurs have made investments in some of the African countries, helping create jobs and incomes there. Yet, considering the potential for growth, the business opportunities are rather under-explored.

There are several common features and challenges Africa and India face. Ensuring food and nutrition security to their large populations is the primary issue. Global warming and climate change are proving to be a formidable challenge for both. There is enormous scope for collaboration in building resilience against climate change.

There are many common issues as far as agriculture is concerned, and these include smallholder cultivation, low level of input usage, low productivity, inadequate mechanisation and inefficient supply chain. Agricultural infrastructure too needs rapid modernisation and investment so as to build supply chain efficiency.

Talking specifically of agri-business, India has a strong bilateral trade in agricultural commodities with many of the African countries. The major commodities India exports to Africa include rice, sugar, meat, dairy products, confectionery and beverages. From Africa, India imports pulses, oilseeds, spices, coffee, cotton and raw cashew. India enjoys strong trade ties with Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Ivory Coast among others.

To meet the domestic shortfall in pulses, India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mozambique and Malawi for import of pigeon pea (tur/arhar). Interestingly, import from many of the African origins is allowed duty-free in India given their Least Developed Country (LDC) status. This helps promote trade and support Africa's smallholders.

In a major development last year, India signed rupee payment agreements with as many as 18 countries around the world. Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Botswana figure in the list. As a result, invoicing and payment will be in rupees. The RBI issued a circular to that effect on July 11, 2022.

India has its own strengths in the agriculture sector and has made noteworthy progress in recent decades. Our farm R&D is arguably among the best in the world. Indian scientists' domain expertise and skills can be utilised to strengthen African agriculture and related activities like livestock and fisheries.

Joint research in agricultural inputs — seeds, agrochemicals, fertiliser and water — to build higher levels of efficiency in input delivery and input utilisation is the need of the hour. Digitisation will help.

While two-way trade in agricultural commodities will continue, Africa and India can set up joint working groups to examine investment opportunities in processing and value addition. Investment in building agri-infrastructure — storage, logistics, electronic markets — is an area that provides opportunities.

Closer engagement between Africa and India will deliver benefits for stakeholders on both sides — growers, processors, consumers, traders and service providers.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/india-africa-can-strengthen-agri-business-ties/article67245768.ece

Why India should lead Africa's integration with the global economy

Livemint / 17 August 2023

The country's approach to soft power is non-intrusive and based on partnership, which aligns well with the aspirations of African nations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the United States in June made headlines on several accounts. One of them was US President Joe Biden's endorsement of the idea of making the African Union (AU) a permanent member of the G20 – to form the G21. This initiative of African integration represents a core element of India's 2023 G20 legacy and exemplifies its commitment to the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family). Having been widely accepted by several G20 leaders, the initiative has paved the way for discourse on what exactly this means for both Africa and the rest of the world, and how India is the right partner to help build bridges for global integration.

The subject of Africa's integration journey is a bi-dimensional one tethered to diplomatic and economic integration. Diplomatic integration entails giving the AU a larger voice on the world stage. Global governance architecture has had its foundation in representation through sheer economic size, thus spearheaded for long by developed nations, or the 'Global North.' Representing about 85% of the world's population, the 'Global South' has been working towards presenting a united front, pushing for reforms in governance and wider representation of the interests of developing economies.

Economic integration of the continent is critical for the world in myriad ways. More than 50% of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 (8 billion to 9.7 billion) will originate solely from Sub-Saharan African nations, underscoring the pivotal role that Africa's youth, workforce and economy will assume in the time to come.

There are only seven years left to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This brings the subject of African integration to the forefront, given that the continent is home to 33 of the world's 46 least developed countries. While progress on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) continues, Africa remains geographically, logistically and economically fragmented. Bringing the AU into the G20 is an ideal first step towards strengthening both diplomatic and economic integration, and a giant leap forward in reinstalling multilateral trust.

The AU can make its voice heard not only on matters of geopolitical significance, but also on high-priority subjects ranging from climate finance and a just energy transition to the need for reforms in the Bretton Woods institutions, among others, which directly affect the continent’s interests.

India's successful journey in driving socio-economic development for its citizens, especially through harnessing the power of digital technologies, presents a valuable blueprint that could be leveraged to empower African nations, fostering inclusive growth and sustainable progress across the continent. India's approach to soft power is non-intrusive and based on partnership, which aligns well with the aspirations of African nations. These factors lay down the case for India being the ideal partner in Africa’s larger integration journey.

The creation of a dedicated Action Council on African Economic Integration under the Business20 (B20) engagement group by India’s 2023 presidency has been another noteworthy initiative. While encouraging the global business community to address the need and potential of Africa’s integration, this paves the way to strengthening the voice of Africa’s businesses on the global scene. Complemented by recent initiatives like the African Business Leaders Coalition (ABLC), which is the first pan-Africa partnership of CEOs, this would allow African interests to play a steering role in discourse across forums, around modern-day priorities.

That being said, one must acknowledge that the integration journey will have its challenges. AU member states will have to accord due flexibility and agility to the AU Secretariat to present a united front on pressing global matters, despite the prevalence of differing opinions. The AU will also have to strike the right balance between continental priorities (under Agenda 2063) and global priorities that may not always be perfectly aligned. It will also need to strategically strengthen diplomatic relations with individual G20 nations, to receive support and endorsement on critical priorities.

However, the benefits of African Integration far outweigh any potential challenges. Embracing potential is not just Africa's opportunity, but a collective global imperative to nurture a continent that holds the key to a brighter future for us all. Through forums like the G20 and B20, the world can show its commitment to enabling the continent's transformation by building and strengthening bridges of integration.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/opinion/first-person/why-india-should-lead-africa-s-integration-with-the-global-economy-11691922923344.html

As tur dal scarcity hits India, Mozambique turns opportunistic

Hindu Business Line / 17 August 2023

The African nation is trying to impose a floor price on exports, which could impact the lentil's prices

Even as tomato prices have started cooling, daal mein kuch kala hai (as the Hindi phrase goes) as tur prices may well shoot up further.

Mozambique, a major producer of tur in East Africa, is trying to take advantage of the scarce situation of the pulses availability in India by imposing a floor price on exports.

The new tur crop is set to be harvested in the coming days in Mozambique and India is looking forward to supplies from there as well as Malawi, Tanzania and Sudan to meet part of its growing demand, given the shortfall in domestic production. India's tur consumption is estimated at around 45 lakh tonnes, while the domestic output last year was 34.3 lakh tonnes last year. More imports have made pulses expensive, fuelling food inflation, and now with Mozambique's minimum price imposition they could get costlier.

Minimum export price

"We got the news yesterday that Mozambique has imposed a minimum export price (MEP) of $850-900 on tur FOB (free on board) basis for different quality. That means they are looking at the prevailing Indian prices and fixing the MEP, which is not fair on their part, because they are trying to take advantage of our situation," said Bimal Kothari, Chairman, India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA).

The reasonable price of tur in Mozambique is $600-700 per tonne, Kothari said. The landed price of African tur in Mumbai is around ₹92 per kg.

India is looking to import over 7.5 lakh tonnes of tur in the upcoming harvest season from African producers, of which Mozambique is expected to ship over 5 lakh tonnes. Mozambique has overtaken Myanmar as the largest exporter of tur a few years ago. "We have urged the government to impress upon Mozambique to not initiate such steps in view of the current situation in India," Kothari said.

Recently, the Indian High Commission in Maputo had told exporters in Mozambique that India would import tur and urad without any quantity restrictions till March 2024.

Tur prices up

Trade sources said tur prices in Mozambique, which hovered around $825 per tonne about a month ago, have now moved up to $950 levels. “Everyone knows that India needs tur and is trying to take advantage of the situation,” said Rahul Chauhan of IGrain India, adding that prices can go up further.

In Myanmar, tur prices for the lemon variety, which has better colour and taste over the African tur and suits the Indian palate, is at $1310 per tonne. The landed price of lemon tur in Chennai on Thursday was ₹10,600 per quintal, Chauhan said.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/as-tur-dal-scarcity-hits-india-mozambique-turns-opportunistic/article67206420.ece

Trade, economic relations discussed in 1st India-Angola Foreign Office Consultations

DD News / 14 August 2023

Trade between India and Angola has experienced a notable healthy growth trend over the last three years. The trade volume surged from US$ 2.14 billion during 2020-21 to US$ 4.22 billion in 2022-23.

The inaugural Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Angola which was held on 11 August 2023 marked a significant step towards enhancing their diplomatic relationship. The consultations saw the participation of Shri Sevala Naik Mude, Additional Secretary (Central & West Africa Division), leading the Indian delegation, and Ambassador Esmeralda Bravo Conde Da Silva Mendonca, Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leading the Angolan delegation.

During the discussions, both sides conducted an in-depth review of their existing bilateral relations. Their focus extended across several key sectors, with a mutual commitment to bolster cooperation in trade and economic relations, defence, energy, agriculture, development partnership, health and pharmaceuticals, science & technology, culture, and people-to-people ties. The dialogue also encompassed shared perspectives on regional and global concerns of joint interest. These topics ranged from cooperation in the United Nations and other multilateral forums, climate change, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to sustainable development.

India and Angola relations are based on shared values and common vision. The high-level engagements continue to strengthen the bilateral ties between the two nations. In September 2020, the First Joint Commission Meeting that was co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of India and Angola, had provided fresh impetus to the bilateral relations of the two countries. Both sides are keen to explore new avenues of cooperation. This meeting strengthened the bilateral relations, inspiring both sides to explore novel avenues of cooperation.

Trade between India and Angola has experienced a notable healthy growth trend over the last three years. The trade volume surged from US$ 2.14 billion during 2020-21 to US$ 4.22 billion in 2022-23. Notably, India holds the distinction of being Angola's third-largest trading partner, accounting for approximately 10% of Angola's external trade. India's import from Angola is primarily driven by crude oil, which constitutes 3% of its global oil imports. Detailed deliberations took place regarding prospects for enhancing collaboration in the areas of rough diamonds trade, agriculture, food processing, and defence cooperation. Government of India's offer of a Line of Credit (LOC) worth US$ 100 million to Angola for defence procurement was also discussed.

Both delegations agreed on the next round of consultations, which will be held in New Delhi on a mutually agreed date. Additionally, on the sidelines of the FOC, Shri Sevala Naik Mude, Additional Secretary (Central & West Africa Division), extended a courtesy call to H.E. Mr. Tete Antonio, Minister of External Relations of Angola. During this, they engaged in meaningful discussions on bilateral issues of mutual interest.

Source: https://ddnews.gov.in/international/trade-economic-relations-discussed-1st-india-angola-foreign-office-consultations

India and Cameroon hold 3rd round of Foreign Office Consultations

India News Network / 09 August 2023

The 3rd round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Cameroon was held on August 7, 2023, in Yaounde, Cameroon. It was co-chaired by the Additional Secretary (C&WA) of India, Sevala Naik Mude, and the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Relations of Cameroon Oumarou Chinmoun.

The two reviewed bilateral relations, regarding politics, economy and commerce, investment, defence and security, development partnership, capacity building, cultural and people-to-people linkages, and ways to further strengthen ties between India and Cameroon, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

They exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, and agreed to enhance cooperation in multilateral fora.

India and Cameroon have warm and friendly relations since before Cameroon’s independence. Bilateral relations have received further impetus with the opening of India's resident Mission in Yaounde in 2019.

Their bilateral trade has been growing steadily and it reached to US$ 1.1 billion during FY 2022-23 from US$ 523 million in 2018-19. India had extended two Lines of Credit (LoCs) worth US$ 79.65 million to Republic of Cameroon for Rice, Maize and Cassava plantation projects.

India has also been supporting Cameroon in capacity building by providing training to Cameroon officials in various areas under ITEC as well as scholarships/ fellowships under ICCR. Both sides agreed to hold the next consultations at New Delhi, India at a mutually convenient date.

During the visit, Mude also paid a courtesy call on Minister of External Relations of Cameroon Mbella Mbella Lejeune and discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest.

Source: https://www.indianewsnetwork.com/20230809/india-and-cameroon-hold-3rd-round-of-foreign-office-consultations

India and Malawi agree to bolster cooperation in defence, agriculture, trade and commerce

India News Network / 05 August 2023

Enjoying cordial relations, India and Malawi have decided to further strengthen bilateral relations

India and Malawi, a southeastern African country have agreed to strengthen their bilateral relationship by bolstering cooperation in the areas of development partnership, defence, trade and commerce, agriculture, education, and several other sectors.

A decision to this regard was taken during the second India-Malawi Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Lilongwe, the capital of the southeastern African nation on August 4.

During the FOC, both sides reviewed their wide- ranging bilateral relationship, covering political exchanges, development partnership, defence cooperation, trade and economic matters, consular issues and cooperation in areas such as agriculture, education, health, mines and minerals, digital technology, renewable energy, art and culture, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Both sides agreed to further diversify cooperation in various areas to further strengthen their relationship, the MEA added.

India and Malawi also discussed multilateral issues of mutual interest, including UN Security Council reforms, peace and security in Southern Africa, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and South African Development Community (SADC).

The two sides also agreed to continue high level political exchanges and regular meetings of the joint institutional mechanisms to keep the partnership vibrant and mutually beneficial, the MEA added.

At the FOC, the Indian side was led by Puneet R Kundal, Joint Secretary (East and Southern Africa), while the Malawi side was represented by Bernard H Sande, Principal Secretary in the southeastern Africa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Indian side invited Malawi to join the Coalition for Disaster, Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).

It was agreed to hold the next round of Consultations at mutually convenient dates in 2024 in New Delhi.

India and Malawi enjoy cordial and friendly relations.

Earlier, on July 31, a parliamentary delegation from Malawi, led by the Speaker of the African country's National Assembly, Catherine Gotani Hara called on President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

Welcoming the delegation, the President said that India and Malawi share long-standing cordial and friendly relations, and there is immense scope for adding greater depth to our ties.

She stated "Our common faith in democratic values and pluralism makes India and Malawi natural partners." the MEA said.

The President noted that India has been one of the largest trade and private investment partners of Malawi, and is also a preferred destination of Malawian nationals for health and education, the MEA added.

She was happy to note that India has a strong development partnership programme with Malawi and a number of projects have been implemented in Malawi in the areas such as infrastructure, health, water resources, capacity building and education, the MEA said.

Source: https://www.indianewsnetwork.com/20230805/india-and-malawi-agree-to-bolster-cooperation-in-defence-agriculture-trade-and-commerce

India, Malawi share long-standing friendly relations: President Droupadi Murmu

ANI News / 01 August 2023

A parliamentary delegation from Malawi called on President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Monday, the Ministry of External Affairs Welcoming the delegation to the national capital, the President said that both India and Malawi share cordial relations and there is immense scope for adding greater depth to the ties between the two nations.

Welcoming the delegation, the President said that India and Malawi share longstanding cordial and friendly relations, and there is immense scope for adding greater depth to our ties," the MEA release said. "She stated that our common faith in democratic values and pluralism makes India and Malawi natural partners," it added.

Malawi's parliamentary delegation was led by the country's National Assembly Speaker Catherine Gotani Hara.

During the talks with the delegation, President Murmu noted that India has been one of the largest trade and private investment partners of Malawi, and is also a preferred destination of Malawian nationals for health and education. "She was happy to note that India has a strong development partnership programme with Malawi and a number of projects have been implemented in Malawi in the areas such as infrastructure, health, water resources, capacity building and education," the MEA release said.

Earlier on Monday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla welcomed the Malawi delegation in Parliament and said such bilateral parliamentary dialogue will strengthen India's multifaceted cooperation with the African country. Observing that India and Malawi enjoy cordial and friendly relations, Birla recalled that bilateral relations between the two countries have taken a new direction under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Malawi President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera.

Lauding the peaceful transfer of power following the June 2020 presidential elections in Malawi, the Speaker hoped that it would strengthen constitutional bodies within Malawi. The Speaker also noted that the two Parliaments represent the expectations and aspirations of their citizens, and mentioned that realizing the expectations of a new India, India has constructed a new building of its Parliament. Assuring India's support for Malawi's economic development, Birla stressed the need to encourage trade in agricultural products, especially cotton products.

Source: https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/india-malawi-share-long-standing-friendly-relations-president-droupadi-murmu20230801032057/

India is not 'extractive economy' and is not pursuing 'narrow economic activities' in Africa: Jaishankar

Hindu / 07 July 2023

Tanzania is India’s largest African partner in training and capacity building

In a veiled attack on China, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said that, unlike some other countries, India is not "an extractive economy" and it was not pursuing "narrow economic activities" in the resource-rich African continent.

Mr. Jaishankar, who arrived here on Thursday after visiting Zanzibar, made these remarks while addressing the Indian community in Dar-es-Salaam city of Tanzania.

"Had a lively interaction with members of the Indian community in Dar es Salaam. Stressed the importance of Mission IT (India & Tanzania). Highlighted the strong India-Africa connection, especially our deep links with East Africa; Heart of India and Tanzania ties is the solidarity of spirit and mutuality of interests," Mr. Jaishankar tweeted. "Recognised that the Indian community is an expression, contributor and force of this relationship; Explained how India and Tanzania's friendship is making a difference in the lives of the average Tanzanian. Our water projects will benefit 8 million; With 750 slots annually," he tweeted.

Tanzania is India’s largest African partner in training and capacity building. "The Indian community had historically been a source of strength for the relationship. As our ties expand, so will their role," he tweeted.

While addressing the community, he said, "Today we want to see Africa grow. We want to see African economies grow. And our approach to Africa today is to trade more with Africa, invest in Africa, work with Africa, to create capacities in Africa, so that the rise of Africa also takes place as countries like India are rising in Asia."

"We are not here as an extractive economy. We are not here in the manner in which a lot of other countries are there for very narrow economic objectives. For us, this is a broader, deeper partnership," Jaishankar said, in an apparent reference to China's forays, including those of its military, into Africa.

China established its first overseas military support base in Djibouti in Africa in 2015, as part of Beijing's plan to project its military power beyond the Asia-Pacific. Chinese companies are also actively engaged in exploiting the region's precious mineral resources.

Mr. Jaishankar also added that today the "world sees India as a contributor. World sees India, Indian companies, Indian technologies, Indian capacities as helping to create better lives for them".

He also said that he is here in Tanzania on an 'IT mission' which is an India-Tanzania mission. The mission addresses some of the most important priorities of this country.

On trade, Jaishankar said that "Our trade with Africa is $95 billion. I can predict very confidently that will grow very rapidly in the community and they will grow rapidly in the coming decade for three reasons. One, the Indian economy, Indian businesses are going up more and more."

"That's one reason for demand in Africa. Now, it is up to us to meet that Africa will have a demand. We have to compete, you know, maybe they'll go to China, Europe or Turkey. But if Indian business is more and more competitive if people are willing to go out more and more, I think a large part of the demand will be met," he said.

"Third is technology. Technology is driven in different ways. Automobiles could be healthy. It could be digital, I think that is what India can make. So politically, it's so easy for us really to bond with African governments and believers." He also stressed that the Indian diaspora is a very unique bridge between India and Africa.

"...For us, the bridge that the Indian diaspora represents is something it's a very unique bridge. Very few countries have such a bridge..." He also added that with 750 slots annually, Tanzania is India's largest African partner in training and capacity building.

"As I look across Africa, the largest capacity building and exchange programme we have with any country in Africa is actually with Tanzania," he said, adding, "This year, we are giving to the Tanzanian government for their usage, 450 scholarships under ITEC programme. This is our traditional exchange programme, 240 slots for defence training, and under the education exchanges, 70 scholarships," he said.

He also asked members of the Indian community living in Tanzania, working in Tanzania or visiting Tanzania, to be proud as the friendship between the two countries is making a difference in the lives of the average Tanzanian.

"We would actually be bringing drinking water to 8 million people. So for all of you as members of the Indian community living in Tanzania working in Tanzania, visiting Tanzania, I think you can hold your head high that our friendship, our relationship, our partnership today will make a difference," he added.

"I went to a place called Kidutani in Zanzibar, where there is a water project. And this water project, when...it is completed, will provide drinking water to eight million people," he said.

On Thursday, the Minister attended a deck reception hosted onboard INS Trishul with Zanzibar President Hussein Ali Mwinyi. Tanzania also witnessed the signing of the agreement on setting up of IIT Madras Zanzibar campus.

During the event, Mr. Jaishankar said that it was a great privilege to share with Zanzibar India's experiences in the field of water development. "It's been a very big challenge for us."

"Today, one of our key development programmes has been the 'Jal Jeevan mission'... it's a massive pan-Indian project and for us what we are doing with you is a natural extrapolation of what we are doing in India, and we are very privileged to partner with you in that," Mr. Jaishankar said.

Mr. Jaishankar also visited Stone Town in Zanzibar and experienced its distinctive Gujarat connection. "Blessed to visit the Arya Samaj and Shri Shiv Shakti mandirs there. This time-tested confluence of Africa and India is emerging as a statement of our contemporary partnership," he tweeted.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-is-not-extractive-economy-and-is-not-pursuing-narrow-economic-activities-in-africa-jaishankar/article67052718.ece

Engineering goods exporters want FTAs with Latin America, Africa to expand market

Hindu Business Line / 06 July 2023

In a strategy paper for boosting exports, propose more support for MSMEs, help in global branding, launch of domestic shipping line

Engineering goods exporters have called for the forging of new free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries in Latin America and Africa, schemes to support MSMEs in research and innovation, the launch of a domestic shipping line and help in global branding of Indian products to help reach the export target of $300 billion by 2030.

In a meeting called by Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal this week, top officials from EEPC India discussed various recommendations of the strategy paper drafted by the body to boost India's engineering exports, according to a statement issued by EEPC India on Thursday.

"It is quite crucial for India to explore new markets, especially in Latin American and African countries. Many of our competitors have already established FTAs with these countries and as a result, are having a competitive edge over us. FTAs with these countries can level the playing field, ensure fair market access and expand our exports," EEPC India Chairman Arun Kumar Garodia said.

Engineering goods, among India's top export items, are facing a rough time at the moment, with shipments to key markets such as the US and China continuing to decline. Engineering exports declined by 5.71 per cent to $ 18.28 billion in April-May 2023-24, per government figures. However, exports of engineering products to countries with which India recently signed FTAs, such as the UAE and Australia, increased during the period.

To gain more out of its existing markets, EEPC suggested strengthening its presence in Europe as a priority by implementing the proposed FTA with the EU under negotiations.

The strategy paper also highlighted the financial constraints faced by most MSMEs in the sector and their struggle to secure investments. "It has recommended implementing an aggressive "SME Assistance Programme" to support research and innovation in the MSME sector," the release said.

The paper proposed setting up a domestic shipping line to reduce trade costs, decrease dependence on foreign shipping lines and save foreign exchange.

EEPC also stressed the need for dedicated branding and marketing efforts that were essential for success in specific product categories and markets.

In 2022-23, engineering goods exports slipped to $ 107.04 billion after clocking a record high of $112.16 billion in 2021-22. India's total goods exports in 2022-23 rose 6.03 per cent to $447.46 billion, but it has been posting a fall over the last four months, with exports in May 2023 declining 10.3 per cent to $34.98 billion.

Highlighting the importance of the engineering sector, Garodia pointed out that the industry accounted for 25 per cent of the country's total exports and was the largest foreign exchange earner. MSMEs account for 35-40 per cent of total engineering exports and therefore are crucial job providers.

Source: https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/engineering-goods-exporters-want-ftas-with-latin-america-africa-to-expand-market/article67048613.ece

‘First IIT campus beyond Indian borders finds its home in Tanzania’, says MEA

Livemint / 06 July 2023

India's Ministry of External Affairs has announced that Zanzibar will be home to the first-ever Indian Institute of Technology campus outside of India. An MoU has been signed to establish a campus of IIT Madras in Zanzibar, with plans to launch programmes in October 2023.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced that Tanzania's Zanzibar will be home to the first-ever Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) campus outside of India.

This agreement was inked on Wednesday in the presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Zanzibar's President Hussein Ali Mwinyi. Jaishakar is on a four-day visit to Tanzania.

According to the MEA, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed to establish a campus of IIT Madras in Zanzibar, an archipelago situated off the East African coast and part of Tanzania.

"The first IIT campus to be set up outside India will be in Zanzibar," the MEA said. It said an MoU was signed between the India's education ministry, IIT Madras and Zanzibar's ministry of education and vocational training.

This move signifies a significant expansion of the prestigious IIT system beyond Indian borders, fostering educational collaboration and opportunities in the region.

"This campus is reflective of the longstanding friendship between India and Tanzania and a reminder of the focus India places on building people to people ties across Africa and the Global South," the MEA said.

"Recognising the strategic partnership between Tanzania and India, the relationship of educational partnership has been formalised by signing the document which provides the framework for the parties to detail out the setting up of the proposed campus of IIT Madras in Zanzibar-Tanzania, with plans to launch programmes in October 2023," the MEA said.

It said the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends that "high performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries".

The campus, named IIT Madras at Zanzibar, is set to commence operations in October 2023 and will initially admit 50 undergraduate students and 20 master's students. Zanzibar will become one of three international campuses for IIT, alongside Abu Dhabi and Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier this year, India and Tanzania held the second edition of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, on June 28 and 29. During the meeting, the two countries engaged in discussions aimed at strengthening security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).The Ministry of Defence issued a statement highlighting the focus on enhancing cooperation in this strategic maritime area.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/news/world/first-iit-campus-beyond-indian-borders-finds-its-home-in-tanzania-says-mea-11688619761321.html

EAM S Jaishankar to set off four-day visit to Tanzania today; Here's the agenda

Livemint / 05 July 2023

Indian External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, is set to visit Tanzania for high-level discussions, co-chairing the Joint Commission Meeting, and engaging with key leaders. Additionally, a new IIT campus is set to open in Zanzibar.

The visit aims to facilitate high-level discussions and co-chair the 10th Joint Commission Meeting with his Tanzanian counterpart.

Jaishankar will meet with key leaders of the East African nation and participate in a reception aboard the Indian Naval Ship Trishul. Additionally, he will address the Indian diaspora and inaugurate the bust of Swami Vivekananda during his visit.

"EAM will thereafter visit the Dar-es-Salaam city of Tanzania from 07-08 July 2023, where he will co-chair the 10th India-Tanzania Joint Commission Meeting with his counterpart and call on the country's top leadership, including several Cabinet rank Ministers," the official release said.

Jaishankar will begin by visiting Zanzibar from July 5 to 6. During this time, he will inspect a water supply project that has been funded by the Government of India through a line of credit. He will also hold meetings with prominent leaders in Zanzibar and attend a reception on board the Indian Naval Ship Trishul, which is currently visiting Tanzania.

"During the visit, he will meet with the members of the Parliamentary Friendship Group for India and inaugurate an India-Tanzania business meeting. EAM will also be addressing the Indian diaspora and inaugurating the bust of Swami Vivekananda in Dar es Salaam," the release added.

To further enhance educational cooperation, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) is preparing to establish its inaugural overseas campus in Zanzibar, Tanzania, as reported by The Citizen.

The campus, named IIT Madras at Zanzibar, is set to commence operations in October 2023 and will initially admit 50 undergraduate students and 20 master's students.

Zanzibar will become one of three international campuses for IIT, alongside Abu Dhabi and Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier this year, India and Tanzania held the second edition of the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, on June 28 and 29. During the meeting, the two countries engaged in discussions aimed at strengthening security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

The Ministry of Defence issued a statement highlighting the focus on enhancing cooperation in this strategic maritime area.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/news/world/eam-s-jaishankar-to-set-off-four-day-visit-to-tanzania-today-11688527055892.html

Investment flows to Africa dropped to $45 billion in 2022

UNCTAD / 05 July 2023

According to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2023, international project finance deals targeting Africa showed a decline of 47% in value.

UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2023 published on 5 July shows that foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa declined to $45 billion in 2022 from the record $80 billion set in 2021. They accounted for 3.5% of global FDI.

The number of greenfield project announcements rose by 39% to 766. Six of the top 15 greenfield investment megaprojects (those worth more than $10 billion) announced in 2022 were in Africa.

In North Africa, Egypt saw FDI more than double to $11 billion as a result of increased cross-border merger and acquisition (M&A) sales.

Announced greenfield projects more than doubled in number, to 161. International project finance deals rose in value by two thirds, to $24 billion. Flows to Morocco decreased slightly, by 6%, to $2.1 billion.

In West Africa, Nigeria saw FDI flows turn negative to -$187 million as a result of equity divestments. Announced greenfield projects, however, rose by 24% to $2 billion. Flows to Senegal remained flat at $2.6 billion. FDI flows to Ghana fell by 39% to $1.5 billion.

In East Africa, flows to Ethiopia decreased by 14% to $3.7 billion; the country remained the second largest FDI recipient on the continent. FDI to Uganda grew by 39% to $1.5 billion on investment in extractive industries. FDI to Tanzania increased by 8% to $1.1 billion.

In Central Africa, FDI in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remained flat at $1.8 billion, with investment sustained by flows to offshore oil fields and mining.

In Southern Africa, flows returned to prior levels after the anomalous peak in 2021 caused by a large corporate reconfiguration in South Africa. FDI in South Africa was $9 billion – well below the 2021 level but double the average of the last decade. Cross-border M&A sales in the country reached $4.8 billion from $280 million in 2021. In Zambia, after two years of negative values, FDI rose to $116 million.

Four regional economic groupings see growth

Over the past five years, FDI inflows have risen in four of the regional economic groupings on the continent.

FDI in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa grew by 14% to $22 billion. Flows rose also in the Southern African Development Community (quadrupling, to $10 billion), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (doubling, to $5.2 billion) and the East African Community (up 9%, to $3.8 billion).

Intraregional investment remained relatively small, despite an increase over the past five years. In 2022, intraregional greenfield project announcements represented 15% of all projects in Africa (2% in terms of value), as compared with 13% (2% in value) in 2017.

However, looking at announced projects invested in by only African multinational enterprises, three quarters of their value remained on the continent.

In 2022, the biggest increase in announced greenfield projects was in energy and gas supply (to $120 billion from $24 billion in 2021). Project values in construction and extractive industries also rose, to $24 billion and $21 billion, respectively. The information and communication sector registered the highest number of projects.

International project finance deals targeting Africa showed a decline of 47% in value ($74 billion, down from $140 billion in 2021) but a 15% increase in project numbers, to 157.

European investors remain, by far, the largest holders of FDI stock in Africa, led by the United Kingdom ($60 billion), France ($54 billion) and the Netherlands ($54 billion).

Source: https://unctad.org/news/investment-flows-africa-dropped-45-billion-2022

ISSN 2394 - 4358

AFRICAN CURRENTS

Volume 41 No. 2 2023

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES

University of Mumbai