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## India's Summit Diplomacy With Africa: Prospects And Challenges

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### Introduction

Promotion of political and economic interests of nation-states and the management of interdependence has been greatly facilitated in recent decades as the world reaps the benefits of revolution in technological and transport communications. In spite of localized differences, of history and culture, resource base and technological capabilities, governance and national ambition, the international interdependence is reflected in the notion of a 'global village'. Diplomacy helps to smooth the processes, supporting and strengthening the convergences, and tries to overcome the divergences in the relationships amongst sovereign states. A useful and robust diplomatic mechanism in the form of *summitry* has emerged to help forward cooperation amongst countries and

minimize the adversarial aspects of relationship.

In 1917, President Woodrow Wilson of the United States had called for jettisoning secret negotiations and voiced his support for "open covenants openly arrived at". Since then, the contours of 'new diplomacy' have added many features including summit meetings at bilateral, regional, multilateral and even at the global level. *Summitry* has become a regular and important mechanism which is widely resorted to by the countries and regional and international organizations. Summit diplomacy is a significant part of what is now referred to as 'new' diplomacy in the democratic age between open and accountable governments. Meetings between heads of governments can be seen by domestic audiences as a good thing in its own right, irrespective of any tangible benefits which may

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## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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result. Summit diplomacy allows different types of actors to interact in order to address and solve global issues.

David Dunn points out that Summit diplomacy is not a new concept. There are various examples of public diplomacy that date back to the fifth century A.D. What has changed is the frequency with which they take place, and the major role they now play in international relations. Its contribution as a new instrument of diplomacy has been both positive and negative but as a subject area, it has remained under-studied for long. The term 'summit' originates from Winston Churchill's constant calls during 1950s for meetings at the highest level of governments to resolve international differences. As the numbers and purpose of high-level meetings increased in the post-war period, the meaning of the term also changed and evolved. "It's an old practice which has acquired a new dimension due to the peculiarities of the world in which we live in" (Melissen, 2003). The development of a transport network that allows delegates to travel from one part of the world to the other in a short span of time has greatly facilitated *summitry*. Moreover, as Heine (2006) states, "there are now global issues that require a global approach to be taken not only by

governments around the world, but also by various other international actors". *Summitry* has evolved from its initial conception of meetings at the 'highest level' implying not only meetings between political leaders, but also meetings between leading states. The key element of *summitry* is executive participation, diplomacy at the highest level. The present multilateral summits are a place where diplomacy at the highest level meets public concerns and where political leaders need to show their commitment to work with non-governmental stakeholders. It is "a part of a wider process of progression towards a more collaborative mode of diplomacy" (Dunn, 1996).

### **Evolution of Summitry with Africa**

In present times, diplomacy has played a crucial role in facilitating engagement between nations. Leaders and statesmen at the world stage- Winston Churchill in 1941, to Barack Obama and David Cameroon at G20 Summit in Tokyo- have come a long way in institutionalizing *summitry* since cold-war years. Major Powers of the world have used multilateral forum summits as a platform to engage with each other, at continental level, regional level and also at bilateral level. Various examples of successful summits can

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

be seen throughout the mid and late twentieth century to recent times. The Non Aligned Movement (NAM), G-20 summit, G-8 summit, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP21, BRICS, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference etc. are some of the examples of successful summits between groups of nations. All these summits have led the nations to engage with one another more frequently and have provided a platform for more constructive engagement in order to solve global issues.

Like other successful summit meetings held worldwide, the big powers have engaged through multilateral forum summits with Africa since long time. France was the first to engage with African continent in the form of summits as early as 1970s. The creation of International Organisation of La Francophonie, representing a group of countries or regions where French is the first or customary language, paved the basis for constructive engagement between France and the African continent. By enabling the heads of state and government to hold a dialogue on all international issues of the day, the summit served to define the policies and goals of 'La

Francophonie' so as to ensure the influence of the organization in the world scene. The development of 'La Francophonie' as an institution was the result of the first Francophonie Summit held in Versailles in 1986. Since the first summit, France and Africa's ties have grown manifold to include diverse fields of engagement and cooperation ranging from democratic governance, establishing peace and security, energy security, combating global terrorism and others. Such engagement will culminate in the 27<sup>th</sup> Africa-France Summit, scheduled to be held in Mali in 2017.

Other major powers of the world including US, China, and Japan are also engaged with Africa through forum summits. During his three nation tour of Africa in 2013, US President Obama announced his plans to host a summit of leaders across Africa. This led to the first US-Africa Leaders' Summit held in Washington DC in 2014. Leaders and heads of states from fifty African nations attended the summit in which the focus was mainly on trade, investment and security of the African continent. The summit also led to the first US-Africa Business Forum with a focus on trade and investment ties between US and African continent. Not only Western powers, but Asian powers have also

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

held forum summits with Africa. The engagement between China and Africa takes place through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The first Ministerial Conference between China and Africa was held in 2000 in Beijing. The second conference took place in December 2003 in Addis Ababa, Nigeria; the third in 2006 in Beijing, fourth conference took place in November 2009 in Egypt, and the fifth took place in Beijing in 2012. The second FOCAC and sixth Ministerial Conference between China and Africa took place on 4-5<sup>th</sup> December, 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa. This has paved the way for China to make inroads into the African continent which has set up industries and infrastructures in diverse fields throughout the continent. China is increasing its forays into the continent and has become the major trading partner and investor in many African nations.

Along with China, other Asian powers such as Japan and India have entered into the African continent through summits. Japan and Africa institutionalized their engagements through the Tokyo International Conference of African development (TICAD). By providing an opportunity for high-level policy dialogue, TICAD became a major global platform through which Asian

and African nations, as well as international stakeholders collaborate to promote Africa's development. It was launched in 1993 and it came at a time when aid fatigue became apparent, thereby becoming a catalyst for refocusing international attention on Africa's development needs. The second TICAD meeting was held in 1998, third in 2003, fourth in 2008, fifth in 2012 and the most recent was held in August 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya. In the past twenty years, TICAD has evolved into a major global, open and multilateral forum for mobilizing and sustaining international support for Africa's development under the principles of African 'ownership' and international 'partnership'. The experiences of these countries in using forum summits to engage with African nations has been a success with a large number of African Heads of states and governments responding and attending these meetings. It has helped to generate mutual trust and generate international awareness regarding Africa's developmental needs. Most of these summit meetings can be seen as success stories as they have led to more open, accountable, diverse and multifaceted engagement between Africa and its partners. The fact that these major powers of the world are using multilateral forum summits to engage with not just the African

continent, but with one another underlies the importance and significance of forum summits as a tool of international diplomacy in order to promote their national interests.

### **India's Summitry with Africa under IAFS**

Although India has been a late entrant, forum summits have become a crucial component in institutionalizing India's relations with Africa. India's relation with Africa had remained at a low key for long time despite the richness of its historical links with the region. From the emphasis on political issues such as support to anti-colonial and anti-racist liberation struggles, working together on same platform under NAM and the Commonwealth, there was a gradual shift to economic issues. The wave of liberalization and globalization marked a decisive shift in India-Africa ties from political issues during cold-war era to economic development and trade in the post-war period. Africa with its abundant natural resources, fast growing economies and a rising youth population attracted India's attention. Since the decade of 2000, new issues, challenges and opportunities presented itself with a multitude of changes in the global arena. This led to a change in India-

Africa engagement in all respects, including in the diplomatic sphere.

Based on historical goodwill and age old relations, India decided to formalize and institutionalize its relations with Africa through the framework of India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in April 2008. This was India's most important step in its outreach to the African continent, and represented India's biggest diplomatic success since India gained independence. The IAFS mechanism was conceived with the objective to lay the foundation of a new architecture for a structured engagement, interaction and cooperation between India and its African partners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century at three tiers; continentally through the African Union, regionally through Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and bilaterally with individual nations. Since its inception, India-Africa engagement has gained momentum and pace. The Government of India has used IAFS as a platform to announce policies and projects directed towards the African continent. Diplomatic high-level visits by Heads of state and government on various different levels have become a regular feature of India-Africa engagement. IAFS is important and significant in the context of evolving development partnership, trade and investment

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

ties and scope for convergences on peace and security issues. There has been a steady increase in the number of Indian resident missions throughout the continent which has subsequently helped to generate goodwill and create awareness among the Indian community in Africa. The launch of the IAFS mechanism has given a new pace, impetus and a new direction in India-Africa relations in our present times.

Under the IAFS mechanism, the Government of India has launched a host of initiatives aimed at improving India-Africa engagement in diverse fields. The first IAFS was held in April 2008 in New Delhi and was attended by 14 African heads of state/government. It concluded by declaring an 'Africa-India Framework for Cooperation'- an ambitious set of commitments to advance the breadth and depth of India-Africa partnership formally predicted upon mutual benefit. The second IAFS was held in Addis Ababa in 2011 and produced the 'Addis Ababa Declaration' and the 'Africa-India Framework for Enhanced Cooperation'. The third IAFS, held in New Delhi from 26-29 October 2015, represented India's biggest diplomatic success as 41 African heads of state and government participated. India and its African counterparts rejected the

*Banjul* formula adapted by African Union which limited the number of participants in the earlier two summits. In the third IAFS, the main focus was on enhancing development cooperation. The plan to hold IAFS every three years agreed in IAFS-I, was revised to every five years in IAFS-III. The next edition of IAFS is scheduled to take place in the year 2020.

India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS) are catalysts for reinvigorated relations between India and Africa. The first two summits in 2008 and 2011 was the outcome of a realization for enhancing interaction by boosting business and other cooperative ventures with human resource and infrastructure development, cultural knowledge and academic interactions as important channels. The first forum summit held in 2008 was a modest effort unlike Beijing's Africa foray in 2006. India did not want the two events to be compared or viewed through the same prism. Therefore its invitation list was symbolic, rather than all-inclusive. It was attended by the Presidents of South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Tanzania, Senegal and DRC; the vice-presidents of Nigeria and Zambia; the prime ministers of Burkina Faso and Ethiopia; ministers and special representatives from Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Libya; and the chairperson of

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

the African Union (AU) Commission. India and African nations in the first summit collaborated in human resource, science and technology, industrial growth, including in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and minerals; the health sector; information and communication technology; security and judicial reform. India undertook to grant preferential market access to exports from all Least Developed Countries (LDCs). India also increased its lines of credit to Africa to \$5.4 billion and increased its aid offer to \$500 million by 2012. Moreover in late August in 2008, the eight India-Africa Conclaves on project partnership and trade were held in Dar es Salaam. This event attracted business delegates from India and various African countries. India also announced ambitious plans to establish 100 institutions across the African continent in consultation with African Union (AU). Under IAFS-I, the proposed capacity building institutes included; Indian Institute of Foreign Trade in Uganda, India-Africa Diamond Institute in Botswana, India-Africa Institute for Educational Planning and Administration in Burundi and India-Africa Institute of Information Technology. However, only a few of these institutes are operational at present such as Kofi Annan Center for Excellence at

Ghana in the field of ITC and the India-Africa Institute of Foreign Trade at Kampala in 2014. Moreover, the launch of Cotton Technical Assistance Programme on January 2012 in Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Chad, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda has been successful in training farmers directly in modern equipment to process cotton.

Under IAFS-II held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, various other institutions were proposed such as India-Africa Civil Aviation Academy, India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development etc. Another major contribution in the field of capacity building in Africa has been India's setting up of ten vocational training centers which include Ethiopia and Rwanda in East Africa. It was decided to set up a total of 19 capacity building institutions and 8 vocational institutes throughout the continent. The Government of India also offered a number of scholarships to African students such as ICCR scholarships at Indian Universities, India-Africa Forum Summit Agricultural Scholarships and C.V. Raman Scientific Fellowship. Further, as a follow up to the successful Pan-African E-Network Project initiated in 2004 by former President, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, it was proposed that an India-Africa Virtual University

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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would be established. Some of the other initiatives taken included India-Africa Food Processing Cluster and India-Africa Textile Cluster and others.

The third IAFS held in New Delhi in October 2015 marked a milestone in the millennia old relationship, as it enabled consultation at the highest political level between the Indian government and the representatives of African countries, including Heads of state and government from 41 countries and the African Union (AU). This summit saw extensive dialogue process between both sides at various levels, providing an opportunity to reflect upon the past developments and jointly charter the road ahead keeping in tune with present times. It attempted to work towards a development agenda that has the potential of transferring the lives of people in India and Africa. The summit focused on a host of issues such as climate change, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms, Defense and Security cooperation, Blue Economy, Trade, Technology and Infrastructure, Human Resource Development and Healthcare, Agricultural sector and also on a Monitoring and Reviewing mechanism. India extended \$10 billion lines of credit over the next five years and also a grant assistance of \$600 million. As far as

development partnership is concerned, India's approach towards Africa will focus on empowerment, sustainable development and nurturing of human resource development, which are Africa's priorities as outlined in its Agenda 2063. India's focus on Africa's development agenda while charting out the future course of engagement represents India's strong desire to be relevant to Africa's needs and make the partnership more meaningful. Since the first summit, India's blend of development package, technology transfer, human resource development and infrastructure development has contributed to Africa's resurgence. In this respect, India has been recognized as an alternative development partner worldwide.

### **Priorities and Proposals**

The third IAFS's main focus was to find the correct balance between the priorities pursued by Government of India with the priorities and concerns of African countries for mutual benefit and growth. Throughout the entire document and speeches made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and African leaders provide a special focus on issues ranging from UNSC reforms, climate change, defense trade relations, renewable energy, blue economy, health and education



among others. Considering the priorities, the summit document focused on a range of initiatives in various sectors to deepen India-Africa partnership. On the issue of trade balance, besides focusing on effective implementation of duty-free access extended to 34 countries, India is providing technical assistance to the beneficiary countries of the DTFP scheme, and is involved in sensitization efforts for creating awareness for the scheme. At the regional level, India is supporting the establishment of a continental Free Trade Area (FTA) aimed at integrating African markets. In terms of technology partnership, initiatives have been taken to explore the possibilities of collaboration and training in utilizing space technology for remote sensing and natural resource mapping for water, agriculture, mineral and marine resources, disaster management and disaster risk reduction. On peace and security initiatives, a number of initiatives were taken. India and Africa decided to strengthen cooperation in enhancing capacity to contribute to peace building efforts including support to African Standby Force (ASF) through the announcement by India to conduct a training course at Center for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi; and by other Peacekeeping training centers in Africa dedicated

for Training of Trainers from upcoming troop contributing countries from Africa, (Ray, 2015). For Blue Economy, special thrust has been placed on exploring closer collaboration through training, capacity building and joint projects in developing sustainable fisheries, maritime connectivity, developing renewable energy, promoting eco-tourism. Emphasis has been placed on cooperation in port operations and marine transport, addressing illegal and unregulated fishing and hydrographic surveys.

### **Development Cooperation Initiatives**

IAFS is a critical component of India's development cooperation initiatives towards Africa. However, along with IAFS, both public and private players have invested across the continent encompassing diverse fields and sectors. The Indian approach towards development cooperation puts lots of emphasis on technical cooperation and capacity building through the creation of training institutes, up-gradation of existing ones, through scholarships and other programs. India's renewed engagement in Africa began with initiatives such as Focus Africa, TEAM-9, Lines of Credit, Agricultural Development Projects, Pan-African E-Network and India

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

Africa Forum Summits (IAFS) apart from Indian business initiatives and investments in the region. Under Agricultural Development Projects and Food Security Programme, the main focus was put on the previously ignored Francophone West Africa which was supported by India financially and by providing technology. Agricultural Development Projects were undertaken in countries like Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mali. Moreover, the Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (TEAM-9) was launched by India on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004. Its aim was to put the countries in West African region and India together in an economic cooperation framework. The Focus Africa programme was initiated by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Under the programme, the Government of India extended assistance to exporters, export promotion councils etc. to visit these countries, organize trade fairs, and invite African trade delegations to visit India. Another feature was the setting up of the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) which was a new body to govern India's outgoing external assistance and was set up in 2012. Along with these initiatives, various private initiatives were taken such as Conclave of India-Africa Project Partnership launched in 2005. To date, there have been 22 business

conclaves and the investments agreed upon during these conclaves have increased from US\$6 billion in 2005 to \$64 billion in 2013. Another private initiative is the launch of India-Africa Business Council (IABC) on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2012 in New Delhi. The Council's main task is to suggest the way forward on enhancing economic and commercial relations between India and Africa and also identify and address issues which hinder growth of economic partnership between them.

Various other initiatives were taken to rope in the Indian Diaspora as well. There is a large presence of Indians throughout the African continent, especially in East Africa. Countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have a large presence of Indian community. Diaspora is also an important factor in India's relation with Western Indian Ocean African states such as Mauritius, Seychelles, and Madagascar. Since early 1990s, there has been a proactive interest of Indian government in the overseas Indians. The government has initiated initiatives like celebration of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas (PBD), mini PBD in Durban, 2010, creation of a separate Ministry for Overseas Indians, Know India Programme, Study India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diasporas, Children

(SPDC) and the other. Moreover, promise of lifetime visas and merger of People of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) schemes were also made. Indian government stands for active and overt association of the PIOs for achieving its foreign policy objectives. India's growing engagement with Africa and the equally growing acceptance of responsibility in Africa represents an important building bloc in India's emergence as a global player. New Delhi has been looked as a collaborator in African development and has made capacity building and skill development as centerpiece of its engagement with African countries rather than focusing only on extracting resources. India's approach at development partnership initiatives remains on the pillars of empowerment, sustainable development and nurturing of human resource development, which are Africa's priorities as mentioned in their Agenda 2063. India has focused on Africa's developmental needs while charting out their future course of engagement which represents India's strong desire to be relevant to Africa's needs and make their partnership more meaningful. Since the first summit, India's focus on development aid, technology transfer, human resource development and infrastructure

development has contributed to Africa's resurgence. This has in turn led to being widely recognized as an alternate development partner of Africa (Ray, 2015).

### **Prospects and Challenges**

Forum summits with African continent have turned into platforms with hopeful international partners lining up to showcase their offers and trade deals. At stake is the hope of winning the big prizes- access to Africa's resources and markets. Indian policy makers have been pushed to compete by their business and military leaders, keen to capitalize on a slowing Chinese economy and the desire of African states to diversify their international partnerships (Vines, 2015).

The development cooperation initiatives mentioned above, along with various initiatives to rope in the Indian Diaspora in the African continent and also security and defense initiatives has ushered in a new momentum, vigor and pace in India- Africa relations. Under the framework of the IAFS, various new avenues have opened up for India-Africa cooperation. However, it is important that both sides keep up the momentum of engagement and interaction during the in-between periods between summits through

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

inter-governmental contacts as well as through regular interaction between other stakeholders, particularly think tanks. Both India and Africa need to work together in order to realize their priority and strategy of mutual benefit and growth. There is no doubt that economic and social growth is instrumental for an economy is vital and agreements signed during the forum summits needs to be implemented properly. India has focused on capacity building, skilled manpower, tele-medicine, tele-education, infrastructure development through various project partnerships etc. and these areas are important for most of the African countries. These pillars of engagement are based on mutual benefit, not exploitative and aimed at deepening the ties.

However, the most important challenge that India faces is to fill up the implementation gaps regarding the projects and policies directed towards African continent under IAFS. The challenge for India remains to follow the outcomes of the summit with measurable progress in investment and partnership, while at the same time advocating effectively for Indian private sectors (Vines, 2015). During the third IAFS meetings, as many African leaders expressed their gratitude for the

Indian assistance for the development projects, there was one consistent refrain expressed by many of them to 'monitor the projects'. At least six African leaders called for "monitoring" and "evaluation" during their speeches at third IAFS. Leaders called for a robust evaluation of projects and programs and asked for an effective and efficient monitoring mechanism. The main issue faced by Indian government and companies is that the schemes were not announced with the basic understanding or background work. There has been lack of feasibility studies conducted before announcement of projects which has led to lack of sense regarding the ground realities. Although in some cases local conditions can play a role in the slow implementation of projects in Africa, the lapses and gaps in the Indian system needs to be rectified. If this is not done, then the bulk of Indian additional Lines of Credit (LOCs) will remain on paper when the fourth edition of IAFS is held in 2020. Moreover, Indian companies such as ONGC Videsh, IOC etc. have not been particularly successful in Africa till date. India failed to win key oil concessions in Nigeria and Angola. Companies such as ONGC Videsh, Oil India and BharatPetroResourcesLtd (BPRL) are facing delays on the issues of exploration and production

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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concession contracts for the giant Rovuma Area 1 off-shore gas field in Mozambique. Indian coal investments have also run into obstacles (Vines, 2015). It is imperative for the Indian government to support its companies better through its 48 embassies throughout the African continent. A well-staffed Indian resident mission is required for constant monitoring of ground situations. There is no substitute to the day-to-day personal contact, reporting, monitoring and pursuit of our national interest by a permanent Indian mission. A total of 29 missions in 54 African countries are not enough. Although we give billions of dollars in LOCs, the proper utilization of the money and ensuring that it brings us goodwill and material returns depends to a large extent on monitoring and trouble-shooting by an alert mission.

### **Conclusion**

The changing nature of diplomatic relationship and engagement has propelled summit meetings to the forefront of international relations and world politics. The ease of communication, technological advancement and forces of globalization, have all contributed to the development of *summitry*. Due to its size, diversity, colonial past and modern aspirations, African

countries have found *summitry* beneficial in the pursuit of their national interests. A larger international forum facilitates easier recognition of the common problems faced by the individual countries of the continent. At the same time, large numbers of African countries involved in a particular summit provides them a better opportunity to negotiate with the major powers. As such, *summitry* has taken off as a grand platform that is suitable to both the major powers as well as the African countries in their mutual dealings. Not only India, but other major powers, US, UK, EU, and Asian powers such as China and Japan are involved in *summitry* with Africa. The experiences of these countries in Africa can be useful for India to comprehend and learn.

Forum summits provide India with a platform for constructive engagement with Africa and are necessary to sustain the success of India's foreign policy in the region. Since its inception, India-Africa engagement has gained pace and momentum. The Government of India has used IAFS as a platform to announce policies and projects directed towards the African continent. Diplomatic high-level visits by heads of state and government on various levels have become a regular feature of India-

## INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

Africa engagement. This is cemented by the fact that after taking office, President Ram Nath Kovind visited the African nations of Ethiopia and Djibouti. Before him, various high-level visits to African countries were undertaken by then Vice President Dr. M. Hamid Ansari as well.

IAFS is important and significant in the context of evolving development partnership, trade and investment ties and maximizing the scope for convergences on peace and security issues. The launch of the IAFS mechanism has given a new pace, impetus and a new direction in India-Africa relations. However, in order to develop a holistic understanding of what IAFS entails for India-Africa cooperation in the future, a thorough and critical analysis of the caveats, pitfalls and implementation gaps is required.

In offering a comparison of the summit declarations and the subsequent plan of action, it can be said that there is more clarity, more specificity, and more relevance that has been attempted by the two sides through their meetings. The three sets of declarations and the subsequent POA and monitoring mechanism are a study in continuity. At the same time, incorporation of new areas of cooperation shows that both sides would look at the summit

outcomes from the standpoint of their felt need and present relevance. They would also need to take into account the changes in the international environment. While overall focus is on sustainable development, development cooperation and general areas of political cooperation, it is important that specific security cooperation areas are finding specific mention, particularly in the latest Delhi Declaration of 2015.

In the past, since the establishment of IAFS, there have been unsuccessful reviewing attempts in the 2011 Plan of Action (POA). This has led to a reconsideration of including a robust monitoring mechanism in 2015. Although this is a welcoming move, a constant and efficient feedback system is essential for ensuring successful implementation of the Summit Framework. Therefore, there is an urgent need to fine tune the implementation and monitoring mechanism.

*Summitry* has emerged as a major instrument to help achieve and enhance convergences, cooperation and collaboration between India and African countries. The overarching nature of summit declarations has ensured that many more areas are added to the cooperative frame that IAFS process has involved and enriched. The mechanism has also

INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA:  
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

---

boosted the bilateral ties that African countries have with India. Overall, the summitry mechanism both as a diplomatic tool as well as a cooperation framework has proved its relevance, value and is expected to be of regular use by both India and African countries. ■

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INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA:  
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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INDIA'S SUMMIT DIPLOMACY WITH AFRICA:  
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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