



## Third India-Africa Forum Summit: Priorities, Proposals and Prospects

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The third India-Africa Forum Summit held from 26-29 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 54 African countries, including heads of state/government from 41 countries and the African Union (AU). In the previous Summits, according to the Banjul Formula, only 14-15 leaders attended the Summit, including the five founding members of NEPAD, the Chairs and Executive Secretaries of the eight regional communities, the current and previous Chair of the AU and the AU Commission. Given the wider representation, this time the Summit was for four days, unlike the past summits which were of two days duration.

As the biggest outreach to Africa, the four-day India Africa Forum Summit saw an 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 the current times. It was rare a congruence of political will and shared vision to promote international systemic reform and advance development partnership for mutual prosperity.

The timing of the Summit was very significant in shaping the focus and discourse of the Summit process and the overall relationship. It took place at the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the UN, during which the MDGs were substituted with the SDGs, as part of the broader 2030

Agenda; two years after the AU adopted Agenda 2063; and a month ahead of the COP 21 Paris Climate Change Conference and 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Meeting at Nairobi.

Keeping in tune with the current developments, the attempt was made to work towards a development agenda that has the potential of transforming the lives of over 2.3 billion people who live in India and Africa. The message was very clear that India and Africa wanted to intensify the collaboration by focusing on more concrete and implementable areas of cooperation that would impact positively on the people of Africa and India.

The two documents -*Delhi Declaration 2015* and *India- Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation*- that were adopted on the closing day of the four day Summit, reflected on the political, security and socio-economic issues. This issue brief attempts to review the deliberations and the two documents that have emerged from the Summit. It examines the priorities and proposals that have been spelt out in the documents and analyzes the future prospects.

### **Significance of the Documents**

The *Delhi Declaration 2015* being the political document identifies issues of bilateral, regional and international interests and priorities to India and Africa, spelling out the common vision, aspirations, expectations, and the in initiatives. The Declaration comprises 34 points and unlike the *Declarations* in the previous Summits, covers a range of areas of cooperation that both regions should work together.

The *India- Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation* delineates in detail the shared core priorities and challenges relating to general and specific areas of cooperation and the proposals agreed to address those. It outlines a number of new initiatives to intensify cooperation in the existing areas of cooperation and also identifies some new areas of collaboration which holds tremendous potential for future.

## **Priorities**

The Summit focused on connecting the priorities being pursued by Government of India with the priorities and concerns of the African countries for mutual benefit and growth. The Documents as well as the speeches by Prime Minister Modi and the African leaders, give priority to issues such as the UN Security Council Reforms, climate change, defence & security, balanced trade relations, renewable energy, blue economy, technology & innovation, health and education. These are explained in greater detail below.

### 1. Climate Change

India and Africa look forward to enhancing cooperation and coordination in finalizing an ambitious and comprehensive climate change agreement during the forthcoming COP21 negotiations, which will be held in Paris on 30 November 2015. Prime Minister Modi called for a global public partnership that provides the developing countries with access to finance, technology and capacity building support, to enable them to address the impact of climate change. He wanted the African leaders to join an alliance of solar-rich countries at the forthcoming Paris Climate change Meet, in order to make solar energy an integral part of their life. It was also pointed out that both sides need to partner in renewable energy.

### 2. UNSC Reforms

In the speeches given by the leaders, in the bilateral meetings, and in the declaration document, a firm pitch has been made by India and Africa to prioritize the agenda of comprehensive reform of United Nations. As far as text is concerned it remains same as the previous documents, wherein both note each other's aspirations to become permanent members with full rights in an expanded UN Security Council. One additional line which this document specifies is the need for an early implementation of the UNGA Decision 69/560, so as to make a decisive push for achieving concrete outcomes on the UNSC reform agenda, particularly in this 70th anniversary year of the United Nations.

### 3. Defence and Security Cooperation

Immense importance has been attached to the issues of defence and security in the Summit. Besides the document, as a significant shift, the bilateral talks focused on counter-terrorism,

defence cooperation and anti-piracy operations. As mentioned in the MEA media briefings and press releases about 12 African leaders brought up the issue of terrorism and piracy that they are confronted with during the talks. Prime Minister Modi voicing his concern on countering terrorism, urged the international community to cooperate in adopting a Comprehensive Convention on International terrorism, which is also laid down in the document. On conflict resolution, both sides prioritised enhancing capacity for peacekeeping and peace building efforts in Africa. It was emphasized that both India and Africa should have a stronger voice in decisions on UN Peacekeeping Missions.

#### 4. Blue/Ocean Economy

India and Africa having long coastlines and a large number of island territories recognize the importance of the oceans and seas to the livelihoods of their peoples. Given the potential and opportunity in this sector and due to its strategic importance, both regions want to promote cooperation in the Blue/Ocean economy, towards sustainable development. The document also specifies that India would work in the implementation of the AU 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy in accordance with International Maritime Law.

#### 5. Trade, Technology and Infrastructure

High priority has been given to increase trade and investment flows between India and Africa, making trade more balanced and facilitating Africa's access to the Indian market. The document specifies that both regions need to work towards creating conducive environment for trade facilitation in accordance with the WTO Bali Trade Facilitation Agreement and ensuring full and effective implementation of the duty free access extended to 34 countries. Prime Minister Modi also emphasized on seeking a global trading regime that serves their development goals and improves their trade prospects. Importance has also been attached to technology partnership to "transform development, public services, governance, disaster response, resource management and quality of life" as evident from PM Modi's speech. For first time the use of space technologies for enabling long term development plans as well as managing short term emergencies has been stressed.

## 6. Human Resource Development and Healthcare

Cooperation in providing widespread access to quality education and skills development to empower workers through extensive programmes of training, capacity building, setting up of training centres and other institutions has been given primacy. According to Prime Minister Modi “development of human capital in every walk of life will be at the heart of our partnership”. Besides education, providing universal access to primary healthcare and battling diseases has been underlined as urgent priorities keeping in line with the priorities as defined in the Africa Agenda 2063 and SDG 2030

## 7. Agriculture

The document emphasizes on developing Africa’s agriculture sector by improving the productivity of agriculture, with a sustainable and judicious use of inputs to ensure food and nutritional security. Africa’s continental project such as the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) has been appreciated. In his speech Prime Minister Modi noted that Africa has 60 percent of the world’s arable land reserves, and just 10 percent of the global output. Drawing attention to the potential of Agriculture in Africa he said it can drive the continent’s march to prosperity, and also support global food security.

## 8. Monitoring Mechanism

This time the document has given special emphasis on the implementation aspect and a sense of urgency regarding monitoring and reviewing mechanism for addressing the implementation process.

### **New Proposals Initiated**

Considering the priorities, the document reflects a raft of initiatives in various sectors to deepen partnership. Some of the significant proposals initiated for strengthening partnership in different sectors are:

1. On the aspect of trade balance, besides focusing on effective implementation of the duty-free access extended to 34 countries, as a response to African request, India is required to provide technical assistance to the beneficiary countries of the DFTP Scheme and involve in sensitization efforts for creating awareness of the scheme, in

order to further enhance market access of their exports to India and further expand the scheme for greater coverage. In the regional level India will support the establishment of continental Free Trade Area aimed at integrating Africa's markets.

2. Regarding Blue Economy, which is a new area identified, special thrust has been placed on exploring closer collaboration through training, capacity building and joint projects in developing sustainable fisheries, maritime connectivity, managing marine resources, exploring non-marine resources, promoting eco-tourism, developing renewable energy, and disaster risk reduction through modern early warning tools, pollution control and other coastal and ocean studies. Further, initiatives include pursuing cooperation in port operations and marine transport, addressing illegal and unregulated fishing and hydrography surveys.
3. In terms of technology partnership initiative has been taken to explore possibilities of collaboration and training in utilising space technology for remote sensing and natural resource mapping including for water, agriculture, forest cover, mineral and marine resources, weather forecasting and disaster management and disaster risk reduction.
4. To intensify ongoing cooperation in infrastructure areas such road, railway construction and up gradation, water supply management, maritime connectivity, road and railway construction, Lines of Credit of \$10 billion over the next five years in addition to the ongoing credit programme of 7.4 billion and \$1.2 billion in grant since the first India-Africa Summit in 2008 has been announced.
5. For development initiatives related to education, skill development and healthcare a grant assistance of \$600 million to the continent was announced, which would include an India-Africa Development Fund of \$100 million, an India-Africa Health Fund of \$10 million, 50,000 scholarships for African students in India and "support the expansion of the Pan Africa E-Network and institutions of skilling, training and learning across Africa" and the ongoing efforts towards creating 100 capacity-building institutions.

6. On Peace and Security a number of important decisions have been taken and those are:
  - Strengthen cooperation in enhancing capacity to contribute to peacekeeping and peace-building efforts including support to the African Standby Force (ASF) through the recent announcement by India to conduct a new training course at the Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi; and by other Peacekeeping Training Centres in Africa dedicated for Training of Trainers from upcoming Troop Contributing Countries from Africa.
  - Strengthen collaboration for greater involvement of the Troop Contributing Countries in the decision-making process;
  - Enhance cooperation and coordination between Africa and India to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and make concerted efforts for the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
  - Share best practices and experiences in cyber security especially in combating cyber crime and use of internet for terrorist purposes
  
7. To address implementation bottlenecks initiative has been taken to establish a regular formal monitoring mechanism to review the implementation of the agreed areas of cooperation and identified projects by the competent bodies of the partnership.

### **Future Prospects**

The outcome of the Summit as reflected in the documents and deliberations indicates the desire towards bringing in more energy and commitment to this Partnership. It holds out the promise for stepping up the partnership both in terms of global development and India- Africa relationship. As stated by Prime Minister Modi, the goals are ambitious. The realisation of the goals will be evident only in the future. But the proposals laid down in the Framework for Strategic Cooperation will certainly pave the way for deepening and diversifying cooperation in various sectors, including new emerging areas such as blue economy, space technology and recent security threats.

On global issues such as UN permanent membership, it is evident that there is a desire to see each other prosper and find its rightful place on the global stage with legitimate representation in an expanded UN Security Council. India wants to win the support of African

countries for its candidature in the UNSC. Individually, African countries have gone on record to support India's candidature to the reformed UNSC. But as far as document is concerned it reads the same lines as the previous documents. There is no clear support from the Africa Union for India's position. They only note India's candidature. Their position could come out clearly when there are a few contenders from the continent. The AU is yet to make its position clear on suitable candidates to fill the permanent seats. However, given the mutual jealousy and with new emerging African countries putting forth the claim for their candidature, like Senegal as a Francophone country, there are doubts whether they will be able to reach an agreement. So until and unless the AU decides its stand it is difficult to expect any future progress on UNSC reforms.

As far as development partnership is concerned, as evident from the proposals India's approach will broadly remain the same focusing on empowerment, sustainable development and nurturing of human resource development, which are Africa's priorities as mentioned in its Agenda 2063. The fact that India has taken into account Africa's development agenda, while charting the future course of engagement speaks volumes about 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 transfers, human resource development and infrastructure development has contributed to Africa's resurgence. The relationship has come a long way, despite the challenges. As an alternative development partner, India has been widely recognized.

Going forward, the challenge remains in the implementation of the decisions. The positive aspect is that India and Africa have taken note of the constraints they faced in the delivery of the past decisions, for which they have agreed to establish a regular formal monitoring mechanism to review the implementation process in its agreed timeline. The Plan of Action that will be hopefully prepared within three months need to focus on concrete feasible implementable areas, so that the partnership becomes more relevant in the coming decades.

By all accounts, given the outreach and scope of the Summit this time, India –Africa partnership based on mutual interests and mutual empowerment is set to grow stronger in the days to come.

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