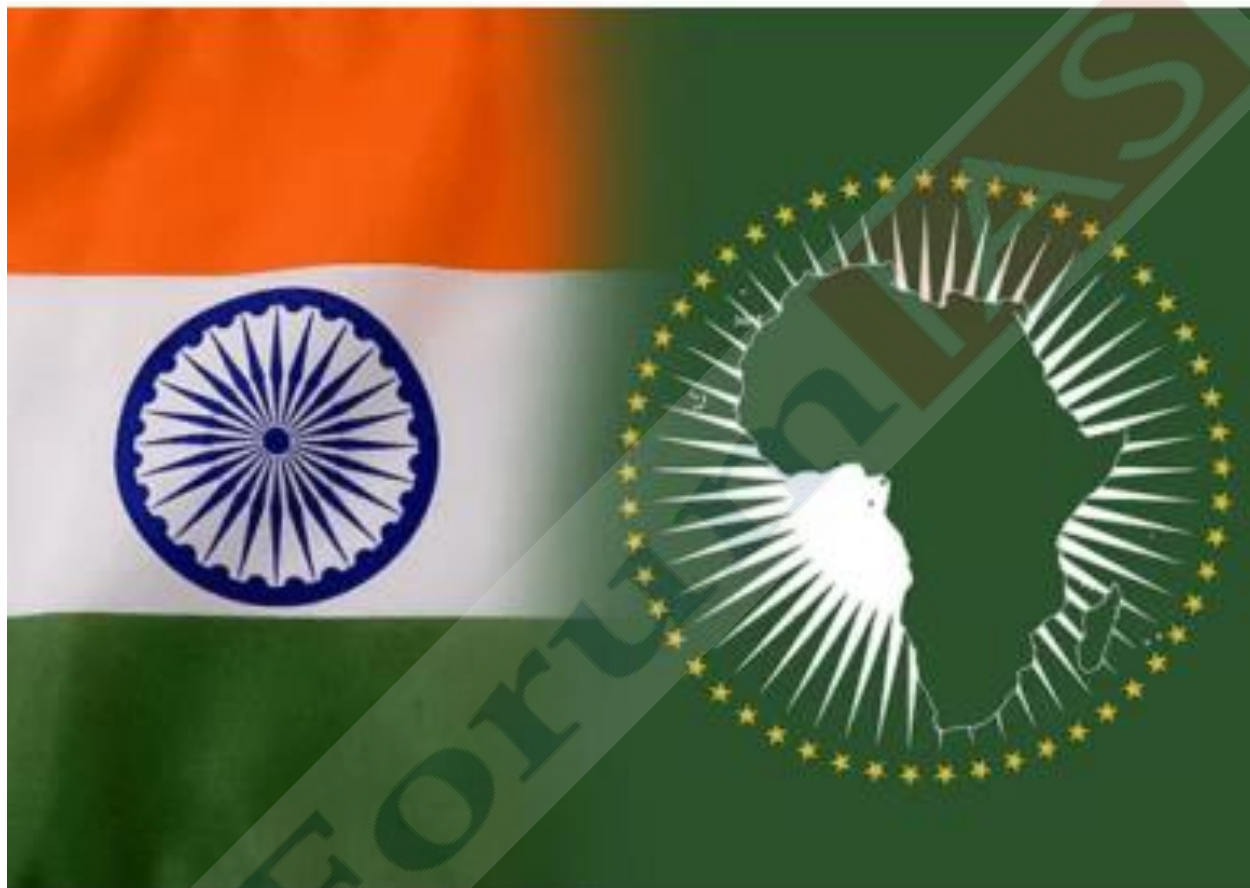


India-Africa Relationship- Explained Pointwise

India's engagement with Africa has grown significantly over the past decade. The **2015 India-Africa Forum Summit**, which brought together all 54 African nations, marked a major diplomatic milestone. Since then, India has opened new missions, expanded **trade beyond \$100 billion**, increased investments, and supported Africa's stronger global role, including its **entry into the G20**. It is now important to review not just the promises made but the solid foundations built for a deeper India-Africa partnership.



Source- ORF

Historical Evolution of India-Africa Relations

Cultural and Trade Links	<p>India-Africa relations date back millennia, with trade between the Indus Valley Civilization and African civilizations.</p> <p>During colonial times, Indian indentured laborers (girmitiyas) in Africa strengthened socio-cultural connections.</p>
Political Ties and Anti-Colonial Solidarity	<p>India and Africa shared struggles against colonialism, exemplified by Gandhi's civil disobedience work in South Africa.</p>

	After independence, India backed African decolonization at the UN and worked with Africa at the 1955 Bandung Conference , helping form the Non-Aligned Movement to advance Global South interests
Technical and Economic Cooperation	<p>The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, launched in 1964, provided technical assistance to African nations.</p> <p>ITEC strengthened people-to-people ties and laid the foundation for long-term India-Africa partnerships.</p>

Areas of Cooperation Between India and Africa

1. Political Cooperation

- **Regional and Global Engagements:** Collaborations through the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), Build Back Better World (B3W), Blue Dot Network, African Development Bank (ADB), and other platforms strengthen South-South cooperation.
- **UNSC Reform and Multilateral Advocacy:** India has actively supported the **Ezulwini Consensus** for African representation at the UN Security Council. Both India and African nations frequently align in BRICS, OIC, and New Development Bank (NDB) forums.
- **Regional Organizations:** Engagement with ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) highlights India's commitment to African integration and regional stability.

2. Economic Cooperation

- **Trade and Investment:** India-Africa bilateral trade reached approximately **\$100 billion in 2024-25**, with India as Africa's **third-largest trading partner**. India's investments in Africa, approximately **\$75 billion**, span **energy, mining, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals**.
- **Financial Initiatives:** EXIM Bank's Focus Africa Programme, India-Africa Partnership projects, and preferential trade agreements with the Southern African Customs Union illustrate India's commitment to African development.
- **FDI and Lines of Credit:** Around 22.5% of India's outward FDI flows target Africa, complemented by concessional Lines of Credit worth \$12.26 billion, enabling infrastructure projects such as irrigation development in Senegal.

3. Security Cooperation

- India collaborates with African countries on maritime security, anti-piracy operations, and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR).
- Key platforms include the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)** and multinational exercises like **MILAN**, **Cutlass Express**, and **Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME)**.

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4. Climate Change and Technology Cooperation

- India and Africa work jointly to tackle climate change through the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- Technology initiatives such as the **Pan-African e-Network** and **India Stack technologies (UPI, RuPay)** support **digital infrastructure, capacity-building, and sustainable development** in Africa.

5. People-to-People (P2P) Cooperation- **India has extended its human resource expertise to Africa through**

- **Technical training and scholarships** via Indian Council for Cultural Relations and ITEC programs.
- Deployment of **Indian engineers, healthcare workers, and digital infrastructure specialists**.
- **Tele-education and telemedicine initiatives** like **e-VidyaBharti** and **e-ArogyaBharti**.

Strategic Significance of Africa for India

- **Economic and Resource Security:** Africa supplies critical minerals essential for India's industrial and green energy transition: **48.1% of global cobalt** and **47.7% of global manganese** come from Africa.
- **Trade and Investment Opportunities:** Africa offers vast markets and resources; the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides the world's largest free trade area, boosting India-Africa trade and investment.
- **Young and Growing Consumer Base:** Africa's rapidly urbanising population presents a large market for Indian IT, banking, financial services, and mobile payment solutions.
- **Geopolitical and Diplomatic Importance:** Africa is a strategic partner in advocating Global South priorities, reforming multilateral institutions (UN, WTO), and promoting international peace. India's support for the African Union's G20 membership highlights this collaboration.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** Engagements through the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), and maritime exercises like MILAN, Cutlass Express, and Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement (AIKEYME) strengthen regional security and protect vital sea lanes.
- **Soft Power, Technology, and Climate Initiatives:** India extends ICCR/ITEC scholarships, e-VidyaBharti/e-ArogyaBharti, and India Stack technologies (UPI/RuPay). It also collaborates on renewable energy through the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Global Solar Facility, and Virtual Green Hydrogen Innovation Centre.

Challenges in India-Africa Relations

- **Geopolitical Contestation:** Africa has become a stage for strategic competition among China, the U.S., EU, Russia, Japan, Türkiye, and UAE, which limits India's influence and bargaining power.
- **Chinese Assertiveness:** China's massive investments, diplomatic outreach, and infrastructure projects often overshadow India's contributions. Between 2007–2023, China hosted 251 African leaders, demonstrating its deep influence.
- **Lack of Clear Strategy:** India's development cooperation model in Africa often lacks the scale, speed, and financial depth that China brings, reducing its competitiveness.

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- **Focus Diversion:** India's strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific and strengthening ties with Western powers sometimes diverts attention from Africa.
- **Social and Perception Concerns:** Incidents of racial attacks on African nationals in India have negatively impacted India's image and soft power in the continent.
- **Operational and Security Challenges:** Procedural delays, funding bottlenecks, and logistical issues slow down India-funded projects. Additionally, terrorism, conflicts, and political unrest in regions like the Sahel and Horn of Africa pose risks to Indian personnel and investments.

Way Forward

- **Political and Diplomatic Cooperation:** Revive regular **India-Africa Forum Summits** and establish a dedicated **Secretary for African Affairs** in the Ministry of External Affairs to ensure consistent engagement.
- **Defence and Security Collaboration:** Increase the number of **defence attachés** in African capitals, strengthen **maritime security partnerships**, and expand **Lines of Credit for defence exports** to enhance strategic ties.
- **Economic and Development Initiatives:** Create an **Africa Growth Fund (AGF)** to boost trade and investment, promote **project exports**, and strengthen cooperation in the **shipping sector**.
- **Socio-Cultural Engagement:** Expand **academic, cultural, and people-to-people exchanges**, rename **ITEC and ICCR scholarships** after notable African figures, and set up a **National Centre for African Studies** in India.
- **Roadmap Implementation and Strategic Vision:** Implement **Roadmap 2030** through collaboration between the MEA and the National Security Council Secretariat, and operationalize **PM Modi's 10 guiding principles** (Kampala Principles) for India-Africa engagement.

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