India - African Union Relations

Background

The African Union is an international organisation consisting of 54 African member states (excluding Morocco but including Saharwi ADR). It was founded in Durban on July 10, 2002, replacing the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

In 1999, the Heads of State / Government of the OAU issued the Sirte Declaration calling for establishing an African Union to accelerate the process of integration in the African Continent. The Lome Summit of 2000 adopted the Constitutive Act and the Lusaka Summit of 2001 drew the roadmap for implementation of the African Union. Its headquarters is located in Addis Ababa. The birth of the AU is a legacy of the Pan-African movement towards creating institutions to achieve the objectives of peace, political stability, democracy, economic integration and good governance. The Regional Economic Communities like Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA), The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) are contributing to the progress of integration.

India is a member of the AU Partners Group (AUPG), which meets periodically in Addis Ababa.

Summits

Since the inception of the African Union, India has been regularly participating in its various Summits.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, MoS for External Affairs, participated in the 14th Ordinary Summit of The African Union from 25th January to 2nd February, 2010, whose theme was “Information and Communication Technologies in Africa: Prospects and Challenges for Development”. He attended the opening ceremony of the Executive Council, called on the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Foreign Ministers of a number of African states and Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of AUC and discussed a number of matters of mutual interest. During the visit, he also inaugurated the Tele-medicine facility at the African Union Clinic which received wide publicity.

Shri Vivek Katju, Secretary(West) participated in the Ministerial segment of the 15th Ordinary Summit of the African Union Commission which took place in Kampala from July 21-24, 2010.

Smt. Preneet Kaur, MOS (PK), visited Addis Ababa and participated in the Ministerial segment of the 16th Ordinary Summit of the African Union which was held in Addis Ababa between January 26-28, 2011. During her
stay, she addressed the 18th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, on January 27, 2011. MOS(PK) met Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Jean Ping and also held bilateral meetings with many Ministers from African countries such as South Africa, Swaziland, Mauritania, Mauritius, and Executive Secretary of IGAD. She also called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia. Shri M. Ganapathi, Secretary (West) attended the 19th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in January 2012.

India-Africa Forum Summit

The first ever India-Africa Forum Summit, attended by the countries representing AU and the Regional Economic Communities of Africa, was held in New Delhi on 8-9 April, 2008. Leaders of 14 African counties and the African Union Commission participated. It represented a turning point in the India- AU relations.

The Summit adopted the Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation, which constituted the blueprint for cooperation between India and Africa in the 21st century.

India announced unilateral duty free and preferential market access for exports from all Least Developed Countries, 34 of which are in Africa. The scheme covers 94% of India’s total tariff lines with preferential market access on tariff lines that comprise 92.55 of global exports of all Least Developed Countries. Products of immediate interest to Africa include cotton, cocoa, aluminium ores, copper ores, cashew nuts, cane sugar, ready-made garments, fish fillets and non-industrial diamonds. India was to double its quantum of credit to USD 5.4 billion from the present USD 2.15 billion over next five years.

In order to enhance opportunities for African Students to pursue higher studies in India, the Government of India doubled long-term scholarships for undergraduates, postgraduates and higher courses and increased the number of training slots under our technical assistance programmes from 1100 to 1600 every year. Prime Minister also proposed to enhance Indian aid to Africa by expanded concessional lines of credit and undertaking projects against grants in excess of USD 500 million over the next five to six years, focusing on human resource development and capacity building. India will strengthen local capabilities by creating regional and pan –African institutions of higher education, especially in pure sciences, information technology and vocational education. India also committed to make investments in research and development in renewable forms of energy and agricultural development, through these institutions.

Several outreach events took place before or concurrent with the Summit. These were(i) the first ever India-Africa Editors Conference;(ii) joint performances by Indian and African cultural troupes; (iii) a seminar of intellectuals from Africa and India on India-Africa Partnership on the 21st century(vi) a programme for youth and women from Africa; and (v) a business conclave.
**Follow-up of India-Africa Forum Summit**

Following visit of a high level delegation from AUC to New Delhi, a Joint Action Plan, with a view to implementing the decisions of the IAFS 2008, was launched on 10\textsuperscript{th} March 2010 between the Government of India and the African Union. More than 40 scholars have already joined Indian universities subsequent to the award 300 Ph.D and masters scholarships in the field of Agriculture over a period of four years. Under the CV Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers, 85 African researchers have already been availed of the scholarship last year and for the second edition applications have already reached FICCI. These are short-term, fully-funded scholarships. FICCI has been designated as the coordinating partner for this fellowship programme. Under capacity building initiatives various short-term courses were organised for some 432 African experts on subjects such as economic offences and cyber crimes, food quality and safety, disaster risk management, infrastructure development, entrepreneur development, combating desertification and the like. (62 of the 432 have been from Ethiopia). After the decisions taken during the AIFS-II, new courses have already begun.

**Second Africa-India Forum Summit**

The Second Africa-India Forum Summit took place in Addis Ababa from May 20-25, 2011. The AIFS-II, saw the first ever State visit of the Prime Minister of India to Ethiopia. The PM inaugurated the IAFS-II in Addis Ababa in on 24-25 May 2011, which was attended, in addition to India and the African Union Commission, by HOS/HOGs of 15 African Countries or their representatives. The Prime Minister announced a new credit line of US $300 million for Djibouti-Ethiopia Railway line as regional integration component of the decisions taken under the Summits. Two documents, namely 1. the Framework for enhanced cooperation and 2. The Addis Ababa Declaration were adopted during the summit. The PM hosted a lunch over the Retreat at the Sheraton Hotel. On 25\textsuperscript{th} May 2011, the Summit concluded with the release of a book namely “A Billion Dreams”, a commemorative stamp and a special edition of the Africa Quarterly. On the 24\textsuperscript{th} May 2011 the PM held a series of bilateral meetings with various African leaders and the AU Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping. The Ethiopian PM and Chairperson of the AUC, Dr. Jean Ping called on PM on May 23, 2011 at the Sheraton hotel.

Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Anand Sharma inaugurated India Africa Trade Ministers meet on May 21, 2011. Trade Ministers from 17 African Countries participated. A Joint statement was issued at the end of the Trade Ministers’ meet. The Trade Ministers also met a group of Indian and African CEOs and the Minister of Commerce and industry held a press conference after the meet. This event has been announced to be a regular one in the future It has also been decided to establish an India Africa Business Council for which preparations have already begun with the Indian side having decided on the co-chair and membership. The African side has
also submitted names of 27 members. The name of the co-chair from the African side is expected soon.

Apart from these major high level visits, there were a series of side events organized alongside the AIFS-II. The first ever Academic symposium captioned “Africa & India : Partnership for Enhancing Development & Growth” was organized from 11-12 May 2011, which saw a participation of academicians from different parts of Africa and adoption of a document which was presented at the ministerial level meeting at the AUC on 24th May 2011. The cultural show named “Rhythm of Life” was inaugurated by the First Lady H.E. Mrs. Azeb Mesfin and the Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Anand Sharma from 20-22 May 2011. The cultural show saw the fusion of some of the African dance and music with the Indian dance and music and was well appreciated. A multi-media exhibition held from May 20-22, 2011 and named “From Tradition to Innovation” was also inaugurated by Shri Anand Sharma and the First Lady H.E. Mrs. Azeb Mesfin on May 20, 2011.

The Trade Exhibition called “India Show” was inaugurated by Shri Anand Sharma and his Ethiopian counterpart Mr. Abdurhman Sheikh Mohammed, Minister for Trade and Mr. Mekonnen Manyazewal Minister for Industry and the Mr. Tadesse Haile State Minister for Industry, and the African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson, Mr. Erastus Mwencha from 20 – 22 May 2011. A “Handcrafting Hope” exhibition, also held between 20–22 May 2011 saw the participation of some of the African craftswomen and their Indian counterparts who displayed some of the common features amongst them. A Film Festival captioned “Come, Fall in Love with the Magic of Bollywood” show was inaugurated during the same time by the Culture Minister of Ethiopia and Secretary (West) and AU Commissioner for Social affairs, and saw a huge turnout of people for viewing the films from 20 – 27 May, 2011. The India Africa Media Partnership Symposium called “Building Bridges” was held on 21 May 2011. From the African Union, AU commissioner for Rural economy and Agriculture Ms. Tumusime Rhoda Peace attended the inauguration.

The Foreign Ministers of the 15 African States and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission met and were addressed by EAM, Mr. S.M.Krishna on May 22, 2011. During the meet, 4 MOUs to establish 14 capacity building institutions were signed by the EAM and the AUC Chairperson, Dr. Jean Ping. EAM also placed before the meeting two reports which emerged out of the India-Africa Academic Symposium and the India-Africa Partnership Summit.

India and African Union Commission are in the process of discussing a Joint Plan of Action subsequent to the AIFS-II. In this regard, the first meeting took place in Addis Ababa in October 2011, when Shri Gurjit Singh, AS (E&SA) visited and led the Indian delegation. The process of discussions is currently on. During the just concluded AU Summit in January 2012, further discussions took place between the Indian delegation led by AS(E&SA) and the AU wherein AU was requested to submit their response by end-February so that the Plan of Action could be signed as soon as possible. AU was also
requested to convey the names of 6 institutions to be set up at continental level.

**Pan-African e-Network Project:**

The proposal for establishing the Pan-African e-Network Project was made by the then President of India at the Pan-African Parliament in 2004 and is being implemented in conjunction with the African Union.

The Project was inaugurated by Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then Minister of External Affairs on February 26, 2009 from the TCIL Centre in New Delhi. The process to implement the project was undertaken by establishing a Steering Committee, which is co-chaired by the Commissioner for Infrastructure and the India’s Permanent Representative to the African Union (the Indian Ambassador to Ethiopia). An agreement between GOI and the African Union was signed in New Delhi in October 2005 and seven meetings of the Steering Committee have so far been held. The meetings are co-chaired by the Ambassador of India, who is also the Permanent Representative of India to AU, with the Commissioner for Infrastructure Development of AU. JS (WA) and representatives from IGNOU, TCIL, and Amity University also participate in the deliberations. The 7th Meeting of the Steering Committee took place in May 2010.

Ethiopia was the first beneficiary of the project under a pilot project, which was completed in 2009 at a cost of US$2.13 million. India has also committed to provide tele-medicine, tele-education and VVIP connectivity facility at AU Commission in Addis Ababa. A tele-medicine Centre was inaugurated by the then MOS (ST), Dr Shashi Tharoor on February 28, 2010 during his visit to Addis Ababa in connection with the 14th Summit of AU. AU thus became the 48th member of the Network.

Pan-African E-network project was inaugurated in February 2009 by the then External Affairs Minister of India. Another inauguration took place on August 16, 2010 when Shri S.M. Krishna, External Affairs Minister of India interacted live with 12 Ministers of African countries. 23 countries have been covered by this network where the project has been fully implemented.

**Visit of Chairperson of AU Commission:**

H.E. Dr. Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of AU Commission paid an official visit to India from 19-21 December 2006. He called on the President, had meetings with the EAM, MOS (AS), and delivered a lecture at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). He also visited TCIL and IGNOU and observed the working of the Pan African tele-education project.

**ITEC:**

India had allocated 13 slots each in the years 2008-2010 under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme to the AU Commission personnel and all the slots were been fully utilized. After the AIFS-II, the slots have been increased to 30.
Defence:

Among the various aspects of engagement with the African Union Commission, their requirement for training and capacity building of their nascent standby brigade, which were to be the building blocks of their peacekeeping activities, are being discussed.

At the request of the AU commission, initial discussions on their structures to be developed and capabilities to be enhanced were undertaken between an Indian military delegation and the peace and security division of the AU Commission in August 2006. The aim was to see how the Indian experience can be shared with the AU’s efforts to enhance its own capacities for peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Commissioner level visits

Commissioner for Political Affairs and Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy participated in the Federalism Conference and India- Africa Hydrocarbon Conference respectively in Nov. 2007. Commissioner for Rural Economy & Agriculture participated in Avian Influenza Conference in Dec. 2007. Commissioner for Economic Affairs of AU participated in the Partnership Summit 2008 in March 2008 and spoke on “Ensuring Growth, Making it Inclusive: The West Asian and African Views.” Deputy Chairperson of AUC, Commissioner for Trade and Industry and Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy participated in the India Africa Forum Summit in April 2008. Commissioner for Infrastructure attended Exim Bank Conclave in Delhi in March, 2009. The Commissioner for Human Resources and Science and Technology visited India in September 2010 and held discussions with Secretary (West) and Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR. He also interacted with FICCI, National University for Educational Planning and Administration and visited TCIL. He is again visiting India as leader of AU delegation for the S&T Ministerial Conference taking place in New Delhi on March 1 & 2, 2012.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission regularly sends messages of greetings as well as condolences as the case may be.

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