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Initiatives by GOI for Africa, China in Africa and Conclusion India-Africa Relations

Initiatives by GOI for Africa

- India-Africa Forum Summit
- 2nd India-Japan Dialogue on Africa was held in New Delhi in June 2011.
It is an institutionalised event held biannually. Inaugural dialogue in Tokyo was held in 2010.
- IGNOU to establish Indo-Africa Virtual University
The mission of this is to create conditions that ensure special priority to strengthen Indo-African relations by establishing an educational link.
- Team-9 framework for cooperation West Africa

China in Africa

- China long before it became in economic power, successfully implemented the massive TanZam rail project between Tanzania and Zambia
- Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
Started in 2000. Four summits held till now.
- Reducing India's ties with Africa to a rivalry with China is to take a narrow view of history.
Given its realities, it is also meaningless – China's \$ 126bn trade with Africa is way ahead of India's \$ 46 bn.
- India's all-round cooperation with Africa (P2P, G2G and B2B) is what makes India's relations different from China's which is largely a top down G2G relationship
- Should India bother about China's presence in Africa?

- An African leader recently said that, in Africa, China was doing more, but India was doing better.
- From the perspective of Africa, the two countries have core competencies which may actually complement each other in many ways
- The Chinese excel in large infrastructure projects while the Indians have an edge in ICT, capacity building and training and also emerging areas like agriculture and floriculture
- The Indian ability to relate to Africans is also much greater, which is why non-Indian MNCs prefer to use Indians as managers for projects involving interaction with local officials and populations
- The fact that India is a democracy (and a chaotic one at that) may mean Chinese companies steal a march over Indian ones. But India's democratic culture and consultative approach make it an attractive partner for African nations looking to enhance their own skills and capabilities.
- In other words, Africa is looking to do business with both India and China at the same time and there does seem to be more than enough room for both
- At the same time, India should not become complacent. As African economy will emerge in the later part of this century, politics will stabilize and new opportunities will arise, competition for the world will be stiff.
- India is well placed because of the unique set of capabilities it offers. At the same time, it must consciously avoid the path of exploitation other big power before it has taken.

What India Should Do Now?

- Ramp up its diplomatic presence in Africa
 - Indian companies and citizens will be more likely to work in countries where India maintains an embassy.
 - It would help if these embassies were robustly staffed by young diplomats anxious to make a mark rather than by those at the far end of their career who sees duty in Africa as a punishment posting.
- Government to consider establishing a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to pursue strategic investments and business opportunities in Africa, especially in sectors such as mining, infrastructure, and agriculture.
- SPV or some other official entity must pay attention to corporate social responsibility issues connected to all Indian FDI projects in Africa, especially since many of them might be in countries where domestic regulatory frameworks for workers rights and environmental protection are inadequate or dysfunctional
- There must be strict audit of all monies disburses through the Lines of Credit for Africa

- A greater effort should be made to build on the domain knowledge and cultural equity that the Indian diaspora across Africa has in abundance about local business conditions and customs
- The 'commerce of ideas' that Mahatma Gandhi envisaged the future relationship between India and Africa to revolve around should be made a central element of Indian policy

Conclusion (India-Africa Relations)

- < as the FIFA WC has shown, the so-called Dark Continent is now increasingly bright >
- India has twin role to play in Africa
 - As an economic powerhouse India has to help African countries build economic institutions. As the largest democracy we can provide them assistance in setting up democratic structures in countries facing political upheaval
 - India has to further its strategic interests in Africa to boost its own economic growth
- We need to strengthen relationships in three spheres
 - People to people (P2P)
 - Government to Government (G2G)
 - Business to Business (B2B)
- India is firmly committed to the progress and development of Africa. Our economic package of USD 5.7 bn for the African countries, over the next three years, is demonstrative of our time-tested ties and commitment.