

AFRICA IN G- 20: STRENGTHENING INDIA-AFRICA RELATIONS

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It plays a pivotal role in shaping and strengthening global economic governance on all major international economic issues. The G20 was founded in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis as a forum for Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors to discuss global economic and financial issues. The G20 members represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the worldwide trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

The G20 Summit is held annually under the leadership of a rotating Presidency. The G20 initially focused mainly on broad macroeconomic problems, but it has expanded its agenda to various issues, including trade, sustainable development, health, agriculture, energy, environment, climate change, and anti-corruption. To tackle these growing global issues, the G20 uses the Finance Track for finance ministers and central bank governors and the Sherpa Track. These Sherpas are responsible for overseeing the negotiations throughout the year, deliberating on the agenda for the summit, and coordinating the substantive work of the G20. Finance ministers and central bank governors meet to discuss fiscal and monetary policy matters. The Finance Track includes the Framework Working Group, which discusses global macroeconomic issues and policy coordination. Sherpas, or personal envoys of member nation leaders, oversee negotiations, deliberate on the summit agenda, and coordinate the G20's substantive work. The Sherpa Track focuses on socio-economic issues. Both tracks have working groups to address specific themes with representatives from relevant parties. Working groups focus on global priority areas such as green development, climate finance, inclusive growth, digital economy, public infrastructure, technology transformation, and reforms for women's empowerment for socio-economic progress. All these steps are taken to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and secure a better future for future generations.

India, as the fastest-growing economy in the world, plays a vital and influential role in the G20. The relationship between India and Africa has been complex and multifaceted, shaped by historical ties, shared experiences of colonialism, and a common vision for a more equitable global order. The connection between India and the African continent has increased recently

due to Africa's emergence as a centre of economic growth and geopolitical relevance. Both parties are attempting to take advantage of the opportunities provided by this dynamic alliance.

India's interest in Africa can visualize several goals, such as expanding its trade and investment footprint, gaining access to Africa's enormous natural resources, and becoming more influential on the international order. The liberation movements and the postcolonial era built the groundwork for sociopolitical relations between India and African states. India's growing economy, escalating investing power, and leadership in science and technology have further shaped its policy toward Africa. Africa also sees India as an essential friend, able to counterbalance the dominance of the West and the expanding powers of China and Brazil.

In the 18th G20 summit under the presidency of India, the African Union (Consisting of 55 nations) was added as a permanent member of the G20. African Union's inclusion in G20 is now the second largest regional bloc after the European Union. The inclusion of the AU is a significant landmark in south-south cooperation but also backs India's efforts to make a more inclusive global order. It also paves the way for G20, which now represents 80% of the world's population. The declaration has committed to supporting the AU in realizing the aspirations under *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, which is transforming itself into a global powerhouse through industrialization. Africa's growing importance in the global economy has led to its inclusion in key international forums, such as the G20. India, recognizing Africa's potential and the need for stronger ties, has actively engaged in developmental cooperation with African countries. India's engagement with Africa in various sectors, such as trade, investment, infrastructure development, and capacity building.

With robust economic growth and strategic geopolitical positioning, India has emerged as a critical player in this evolving landscape. The strengthening of India-Africa relations within the G-20 context represents a crucial dimension of both countries' foreign policy strategies. The mutual benefits and common interests that underpin this collaboration go beyond straightforward business dealings. They create a favourable environment for cooperative growth, with India's dedication to advancing Africa's development agenda and the continent's strategic significance in international trade and resource allocation. Through these efforts, India aims to strengthen India-Africa relations and contribute to the continent's sustainable development. India and Africa can use the G-20 platform to create a strong alliance supporting their individual development goals while fostering global economic stability and wealth.

***Views are personal**

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About SoAf:

The Department of African Studies has launched an initiative called "Scholars on Africa" with the primary objective of promoting the research ideas of scholars and faculty members on current happenings and contemporary issues related to the African continent. This initiative serves a dual purpose, as it not only facilitates academic exploration but also provides valuable insights to the policymakers of India on matters concerning Africa. By actively engaging with scholars and faculty members, the initiative aims to foster a better understanding and relationship between India and Africa, bridging the gap between the two worlds.

Under the "Scholars on Africa" initiative, Scholars of the Department of African Studies are encouraged to contribute write-ups on various African issues, not exceeding 1000 words in length. It is noteworthy that these write-ups will be forwarded by any faculty members of the Department. These write-ups serve as a platform for scholars to express their personal views and insights on a diverse range of topics, including History, Politics, economics, culture, and social issues prevalent in Africa.

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