

INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE: NEW HORIZONS OF INDO-AFRICA RELATIONS

BACKGROUND

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a treaty-based organization established with the goal to speed up solar expansion by lowering funding and technical costs. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande launched the ISA Framework Agreement in 2015 which was signed in 2016 and confirmed by 15 nations in 2017. ISA became the first global inter-governmental set-up to have its headquarters in India in 2018. Nations with solar energy capacity between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, as well as UN members, are eligible for membership. The ISA Framework Agreement now has 116 members, with 95 nations presenting appropriate ratification papers. ISA is considered critical in reaching the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement. It collaborates with development banks, commercial and public sector organizations, and other international institutions to implement affordable solar power solutions, notably in LDCs and SIDs.

OBJECTIVES AND ASSEMBLY

The goal of ISA is to create a platform for collaboration among nations with abundant solar resources, allowing the international community to help increase the use and quality of solar energy. ISA intends to eliminate barriers to solar energy scale-up, lower finance and technology costs, collate over \$1,000 billion investments by 2030, and promote novel financing methods. It also intends to increase solar technology applications, support joint research and development operations, and provide a shared cyber platform for member nations to network, cooperate, and exchange ideas. The Assembly of ISA is the highest decision-making body, accountable for crucial issues such as goals, functioning, operational budget approval, and initiative evaluation. The Assembly meets at the ministerial level once a year, with India holding the position of President while France holding the position of Co-President. In 2018, the First Assembly passed an amendment that extended the membership to all the members of United Nations.

5TH REGIONAL MEETING IN RWANDA

ISA convened its 5th regional conference in Kigali, Rwanda in August this year. The programme was attended by 36 nations along with 15 ministers. It featured the launch of 9 solar power demonstration projects across Uganda, Comoros, and Mali. Solarization of rural healthcare institutions and elementary schools is one of the initiatives sponsored by the ISA. 4 projects were installed in Uganda for \$48,835, helping underprivileged regions that had no prior access to energy. 2 rural healthcare clinics in Comoros were solarized for \$49,999, while 3 rural healthcare centers in Mali were solarized for \$49,995. Shri R. K. Singh, ISA President, dedicated these

initiatives to their respective nations, highlighting their significance in improvising the situation of neglected communities and encouraging global alliance.

UNIVERSAL ENERGY ACCESS AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

ISA emphasized the importance of solar energy in attaining universal energy access and a sustainable energy transition. The report "Roadmap of Solar Energy for Universal Energy Access" provides a strategic strategy for addressing global energy access concerns with solar-powered solutions, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa. ISA has conducted demonstration projects in 8 countries, concentrating on topics such as healthcare center solarization, solar irrigation, and institutions solarization. The study presents a systematic approach to addressing global energy access through the use of solar-powered solutions. It focuses on case studies, real-world experiences, and creative solar mini-grid regulations. The report is especially pertinent to Africa, namely the Sub-Saharan region and rural regions, and outlines electrification techniques centered on solar energy, including solar mini-grids and Decentralized Renewable Energy solutions. Promoting these solutions may foster local ideas and commercial models. Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director-General of ISA, underlined the need of collaboration among governments, the business sector, and international organizations in realizing the complete potential of solar energy.

6TH ASSEMBLY OF ISA

ISA convened its Sixth Assembly in New Delhi, with ministers from 20 nations and representatives from 116 member and signatory countries in attendance in October this year. The Assembly voted to raise the viability gap financing for member nations' solar projects from 10% to up to 35%, based on the capability and requirements of the countries and their specific projects. Renewable energy has the ability to supply 65% of global electricity by 2030 and decarbonize 90% of the power sector by 2050. ISA is dedicated to making solar the preferred energy source, creating investment-friendly settings, and assuring adequate energy supply to satisfy global demand. The ISA gives grants of \$150,000 or 10% of the project cost per nation per project through its viability gap funding method. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, France's State Minister for Growth, stressed the relevance of the ISA in encouraging renewable energy growth and combat climate disruptions.

GLOBAL SOLAR FACILITY AND AFRICA

ISA has established a Global Solar Facility (GSF) with payment guarantee, insurance, and investment fund components to accelerate solar investments in various nations throughout the world, beginning with Africa's neglected regions. The GSF's goal is to reduce project risks and give technical help to close regulatory gaps in the solar energy sector. Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General of the ISA, emphasized the critical need to expedite the deployment of solar energy, particularly in developing countries, and applications that impact the everyday lives of individuals who lack access to dependable electricity.

As part of the ISA, coordinated by New Delhi and Paris, India has pledged to support solar energy projects in Africa. The decision to invest \$25 million was made in principle, but formal approval from the Union Cabinet is still pending. The funds will be made available GSF, which was launched on the margins of the UNFCCC conference in November 2022. As part of New Delhi's diplomatic push to the Global South, India has been eager to launch initiatives in Africa. Africa is viewed as a market not just for Indian goods but also for key natural resources.

ISA aims to promote solar energy internationally, and the GSF is a body envisioned under the ISA framework to help with both the "quality" (extending reach to low-income nations) and "quantity" (multiplying global investments) of solar investments. India and ISA members will shortly launch an insurance fund and a payment-guarantee fund to ensure that funds for solar projects reach African countries. The alliance hopes to reassure investors in an environment of political unrest by collaborating with institutions such as the World Bank's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) to provide political risk insurance for projects funded by the facility.

*Views are personal



Author: **Ms. Jyoti Gupta** is a Ph.D. Scholar at the Department of African Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi, Delhi- 110007 (jgupta@as.du.ac.in)



Forwarded By: **Prof. Awungshi Yaruigam** is working as a Professor at the Department of African Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi, Delhi- 110007