

India and Japan launch Asian and Africa growth corridor plan

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The Asian Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) vision. ANDUALEM SISAY | NATION MEDIA GROUP
 ANDUALEM SISAY in Ahmedabad, India Thursday, May 25 2017 at 13:37 comment

India and Japan on Wednesday launched the Asian Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), a vision document, which aims to link the two continents through multiple sectors.

“The idea is that India and Japan, with other willing partners, would explore joint initiatives in skills, health infrastructure, manufacturing and connectivity,” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said at the 52nd African Development Bank (AfDB) meeting his country is hosting.

The document, produced jointly by Indian and Japan’s research institutions, is a result of the discussions between Mr Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzō Abe.

Mr Modi visited Tokyo last year, during which the two leaders stressed the need for a partnership for sustainable and innovative development for Asia and Africa.

“In our joint declaration, we mentioned an Asia Africa Growth Corridor and proposed further conversations with our brothers and sisters from Africa,” said Mr Modi.

Development roadmap

The AAGC document is produced by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) of India, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the Eastern Asia (ERIA) of Indonesia and the Institute of Developing Economies Japan External Trade organisation (IDE-JETRO).

“AAGC is growth and development roadmap for Africa with back and forth linkages with Asia,” said, Ms Anita Prakash, the Director General of the Policy Development at ERIA, during the launch of the 30-page document.

“It is more than economic connectivity; it is about social connectivity having people at the centre,” she said, indicating that the full study, with projects and impacts on people at local level, may be ready by late 2018.

Commenting on the difference of the envisioned connectivity between Africa and Asia with China's Belt Road initiative, Prof Sachin Chaturvedi, the Director General of RIS, said AAGC was more of all-inclusive, beyond infrastructure and recalled his prime minister's objections to the China plan.

Core concerns

China hosted the Belt and Road Forum in mid-May, bringing together the leaders from around 35 countries.

"No country can accept a project that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity," the India Foreign ministry said on May 13 on why Delhi refused to be part of China's plan.

It is not yet clear if AAGC was a response to China's One Belt one Road plan and which offer Africa would take.