

# India's Strategic Focus: Centering Africa in the Global South Vision

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## GS Paper-2

### Syllabus: International Relations

#### Source: IE

**Context:** India's relationship with African nations is crucial in its vision for the Global South, especially as it seeks to navigate a changing global landscape.

#### What is India's Global South Vision?

India's Global South Vision emphasizes fostering strategic partnerships with nations in the Southern Hemisphere, aiming for a more equitable and inclusive global order. It focuses on economic cooperation, multilateralism, and solidarity among developing countries to address common challenges and promote sustainable development.

#### Africa's Importance for India's Global South Vision:

1. **Economic Partnerships:** India and Africa boast immense economic potential, with Indian investments exceeding \$98 billion in 2023 and bilateral trade totalling \$100 billion.
2. **Strategic Influence:** Africa's presence in global forums is pivotal for India's vision of rule-based global governance, as demonstrated by India's advocacy for the African Union in the G20 summit.
3. **Energy Security:** Cooperation in the energy sector is crucial, with Africa possessing 30% of the world's critical mineral reserves essential for India's transition to a low-carbon future, particularly in solar panel and battery production.

#### Other aspects of India-Africa Relations:

Aspect	Details
Cultural	India's relations with Africa are deeply rooted in cultural and civilizational ties, reflecting ideologies of <u>"Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam"</u> and <u>"Ubuntu"</u>
Political	India offers assistance in <u>defence capabilities, promoting security cooperation and countering China's military presence</u>  India and Africa cooperate on global issues, advocating for the interests of <u>developing countries and pursuing reforms in global governance institutions</u>

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**Shared Vision** India views Africa as a **foreign policy priority**, offering support without conditionality or a hidden agenda.

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**Hamid Ansari has ives 4 imperatives for cooperation between India and Africa**

1. Common historical experiences and cultural links.
  2. Complementarities in strengths and capabilities.
  3. A common approach in meeting developmental challenges.
  4. Convergence of views of global matters.
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**PM Modi**– *The warmth and depth of the connections between Indian and African countries have been the pillars of India’s foreign policy, leading to a “strong emotional link“.*

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**Development Assistance** India offers **training and capacity-building programs** through the **ITEC** program

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India has worked with Japan to create the **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC)**.

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India has **increased lending to Africa to counter China’s influence**, including \$32 billion in credit across 42 African countries over the past decade.

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**Health Collaboration** Indian **pharmaceutical companies provide affordable generic medicines**

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India deploys medical teams and offers technical assistance to combat diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and Ebola in African countries.

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**Defence Cooperation** India has signed **MoUs with all African nations on the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR)**.

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Hosts the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD)** at the defence ministers’ level

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**Conducts trilateral maritime exercises** to enhance maritime cooperation with countries like Tanzania and Mozambique.

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**Technology and Digital Cooperation** India sets up a **fibre-optic network for satellite connectivity**, telemedicine, and tele-education in Africa under the **Pan African e-Network Project**

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Introduces initiatives like **e-VidyaBharti and e-ArogyaBharti (e-VBAB)** to provide free tele-education and medical education to African students and healthcare professionals.

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**Education and Skill Development** Collaboration between Indian and African educational institutions enhances educational opportunities and skill development, facilitated by programs like ITEC.

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**Renewable Energy and Sustainability**

**Joint initiatives in renewable energy and sustainable development**, such as the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, combat climate change with the participation of 38 African member countries.

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**Peacekeeping and Diplomacy**

India and Africa collaborate in global forums, advocating for peace, stability, and reforms in global institutions like the UN Security Council and the WTO

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India led the proposal for including the **African Union in the G20**.

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**Challenges faced by African countries:**

1. **Misgovernance**: Poor governance, corruption, and lack of accountability e.g., countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, and the Central African Republic face insurgency, ethnic violence, and terrorism
2. **Unplanned Development**: Rapid population growth, urbanization, and environmental degradation.
3. **Dominance of Ruling Tribes**: Ethnic and tribal conflicts and monopolization of power.
4. **Inter-Tribal Scrimmage**: Frequent clashes over resources.
5. **Terrorism**: Threats from Islamic extremism and global networks.
6. **Changing Climate**: Vulnerability to climate change impacts.
7. **Runaway Food Inflation**: High food prices affecting millions.
8. **External Interventions**: Military interventions worsen situations.
9. **Return of Military Generals**: Reemergence of military leadership.
10. **Competition and External Players**: Various external actors, including **China, Russia, the US, EU, Japan, Turkey, and UAE**, are actively vying for influence in Africa, seeking market access, resources, and political power.

**How can India help Africa?**

Area	Strategies
<b>Political Support</b>	<b><u>Use diplomatic influence</u></b> to support peace, democracy, and development. Advocate for African interests in global forums. Foster regional cooperation through <b><u>support for African Union initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)</u></b> .
<b>Economic Partnership</b>	Enhance trade and investment ties. <b><u>Provide market access and preferential tariffs</u></b> . Offer Indian innovations and force multipliers  Promote India-Africa trade through the creation of an <b><u>Africa Growth Fund (AGF) to enhance access to finance</u></b>
<b>Security Cooperation</b>	Provide training, equipment, and intelligence to security forces. Contribute to peacekeeping missions. Collaborate in countering terrorism, piracy, and organized crime

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<b>Poverty and Hunger</b>	Adapt Indian <b><u>microfinance and agricultural practices</u></b> to empower communities in Africa. Utilize <b><u>South-South cooperation platforms</u></b> for knowledge exchange
<b>Health and Disease Burden</b>	Provide affordable healthcare solutions using <b><u>expertise in generic drug</u></b> production and telemedicine. <b><u>Joint research efforts</u></b> on infectious and neglected tropical diseases
<b>Inclusiveness of Global South</b>	E.g., India advocated for <b><u>AU's full membership in G20 (accepted under India's G20 Presidency)</u></b>
<b>Piracy and Terror</b>	Conduct joint military exercises. <b><u>Share information and capacity-building programs</u></b>
<b>Climate Action</b>	Collaborate on projects to mitigate climate change impacts. Support initiatives like the <b><u>Great Green Wall</u></b>
<b>UN Reforms</b>	Advocate for equitable representation of Africa in international organizations, including the UN Security Council
<b>Implementing the 'Roadmap 2030'</b>	Form a team led by the MEA's Secretary for Africa and a Deputy National Security Adviser. Following this roadmap will bolster <b><u>India's partnership with Africa, enhancing global stature.</u></b>  The Roadmap 2030 is a set of <b><u>policy recommendations that</u></b> aims to deepen and diversify the relationship between India and Africa.

Several challenges have hindered the realization of India-Africa's potential. One major obstacle is the **lack of a comprehensive and focused African policy** by India, which has led to a lack of strategic direction in its engagement with African countries.

Additionally, **China's dominant presence in Africa has raised concerns about India's limited involvement and competition in the region.** The disparity in investment between India and China, the impact of multilateral treaties on trade, and issues related to **political instability and terrorism** further complicate the relationship.

### **Conclusion**

India's robust ties with Africa present vast **opportunities for economic, political, and social collaboration.** Prioritizing engagement with African nations is crucial for India's leadership in the Global South. Amid global transformations, the synergy between India and Africa promises a mutually beneficial and prosperous future.

In this regard, **PM Modi** has stated that "***Just as India and Africa fought colonialism together, we will work together for a just, representative and democratic global order that has a voice and a role for one-third of humanity that lives in Africa and India.***"

**Insta Links:**

## India-Africa ties

### **Mains Link:**

1. How does India see its place in the economic space of rising natural resource-rich Africa? (UPSC 2014)
1. Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pros and cons. Critically Examine. (UPSC 2015)

### **Prelims Link:**

**Consider the following statements: (UPSC 2016)**

1. The India-Africa Summit
2. held in 2015 was the third such Summit
3. was actually initiated by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: A**