

# India-EU Cooperation in Africa: Challenges and Prospects

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European Union (EU) and India have been consistently making a sustained effort in improving their overall cooperation with Africa. With increasing economic engagement, the prospects for EU-Africa and India-Africa cooperation would depend not just on quantitative factors such as trade and investment, but also a strategy that convinces the African people that economically engaging with EU and India would be mutually beneficial.

The research study has outlined issues and challenges Africa has been confronting with and what EU-India cooperation would mean to Africa. EU-India cooperation in Africa will create a positive atmosphere across all dimensions including political, economic, diplomatic and strategic. These will basically be completely independent of China's growing profile in Africa. In addition to these multifaceted dimensions, India and EU together can help improve the overall status of Africa in all the major multilateral institutions. Among the African nations, the East African region has the largest number of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and inter-governmental bodies.

The research paper has made a modest attempt in understanding the complexities of multidimensional problems being confronted by Africa and how EU and India together can help Africa in overcoming the larger issues impacting development. It will also map the areas of cooperation and analyse the emerging trends by taking certain specific country level perspective. An assessment on how India and EU can work together to optimise the tangibles in Africa has also been done.

This research paper also analyses the dynamics, nature and scope of changes taking place in Africa. On the one hand, the essence of the phenomenon of Africa as a prospective market is presented, on the other hand, it is depicted as a continent of challenges and threats. Against this background, the conditions and rationale for India's and the EU's involvement in this continent are assessed and how their cooperation together would help address the issues in Africa. It also examines the main focus of EU and India's engagement towards Africa in terms of development aid and trade cooperation.

The European (EU) and Indian perceptions of the opportunities and threats related to the African continent seem, despite some differences, to converge. However, this does not translate into joint action by both sides in Africa. Each of them realizes their own postulates towards this part of the world. Although political consultations between the EU and India have expanded and deepened considerably over the last few years, African issues have so far been marginal.

The move towards closer EU-India cooperation in Africa is part of the European Commission's and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy's Joint Communication and its objectives, such as "join forces to consolidate the rules-based global order, based on multilateralism with the UN and the WTO at its core; develop a shared approach at the multilateral level



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to address global challenges; seek common responses to security threats and regional issues". The main challenge in EU-India relations in Africa is to ensure synergy and coherence of their activities on the African continent.

### **Recommendations**

- There should be a concerted effort on part of EU and India to work closely and deepen the economic and trade relationship with Africa through investment and job creation;
- Both EU and India should boost investment and also attract private investors, support education and skills development;
- EU and India should work together in Africa to boost the trade and improve the business climate;
- EU and India together need to intensify in enhancing trade cooperation by having improved conditions for more economic partnership agreements. India has offered duty free market access to Africa's LDCs. But, India's trade with Africa remain far below potential;
- Both India and EU should help develop infrastructure in Africa. India and the EU can leverage their soft power potential by improving standards in educational institutions and health facilities;
- India and EU will have to work together for achieving sustainable modernisation in Africa.