

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS → 03 JULY 2023 → THE HINDU:

A new chapter in India-Africa ties can be written:

- **Introduction:**

- There is a slow-growing understanding that Africa, whose population will increase to 25% by 2050 from its current 17%, needs to be closely examined because India's rise to prominence as a global actor is inextricably linked to the type of cooperation it has with Africa.

- **The Predicament:**

- Over the past 15 years, notably since 2014, relations between India and Africa have significantly improved, while further advancement is still potential.
- Regarding this, the 20-member Africa Expert Group (AEG) of the Vivekananda International Foundation recently presented the VIF Report titled "India-Africa Partnership: Achievements, Challenges, and Roadmap 2023."

- **The transformation of Africa:**

- The research looks at the demographic, economic, political, and social changes happening in Africa.
- This convergence of factors creates a developing continent that is characterised by the pandemic's detrimental impacts and intricate geopolitics.
- Despite the fact that countries like Ethiopia, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and others still suffer with issues caused by terrorism, ethnic violence, and insurgency, the region is progressively advancing towards integration and is devoted to democracy, peace, and advancement.
- Added to this environment is the competition among at least a dozen external partners, including China, Russia, the United States, the European Union, Japan, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, to strengthen their ties with specific African regions in order to gain market access, strengthen their political and economic influence, and guarantee their supply of energy and minerals.

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- Although there is goodwill and a solid relationship between India and Africa, the VIF evaluation finds that New Delhi needs to constantly examine its Africa strategy, stay resilient by making the necessary adjustments, and implement it with a razor-like focus.
- **General recommendations:**
- The primary portion, titled "Roadmap 2030," contains more than 60 policy recommendations targeted at enhancing and extending the partnership between India and Africa. They cover four subjects.
- First, the India-Africa Forum Summit should be used to restart regular summits of world leaders; the most recent summit was in 2015. Political and diplomatic contact will improve as a result.
- Another proposal is to get the G-20 members to agree that the AU should be admitted as a full participant.
- Action is currently being taken as a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent email to G-20 leaders requesting support for this scheme.
- The government must also increase credit lines to support defence exports, increase the number of defence attachés stationed in Africa, extend the discussion of defence issues, and expand the scope of marine cooperation.
- Thirdly, the \$98 billion in trade that took place between India and Africa in FY22–23 is a good sign. This figure might rise if the creation of an Africa Growth Fund (AGF) is guaranteed.
- A special set of measures have been suggested to increase project exports and promote cooperation in the maritime industry.
- Fourth, there should be closer ties between African countries and some Indian institutions, think tanks, civil society organisations, and media organisations.
- There should be a National Centre for African Studies. The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) should name their scholarships after well-known African figures.
- It is crucial to loosen visa requirements for African students going to India for higher education.
- **Moving forward:**

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- A team of officials working under the joint supervision of the Secretary, Africa in the MEA and a designated Deputy National Security Adviser will be most effective in securing this in close coordination between the MEA and the National Security Council Secretariat, according to the paper's other unique framework for implementing the "Roadmap 2030."

