A New Chapter in India-Africa Ties

Why in news?

Africa Expert Group has released a report titled 'India-Africa Partnership: Achievements, Challenges and Roadmap 2023' which enlisted recommendations to deepen and diversify India-Africa ties.

What is the history of India-Africa relationship?

- **Political Relations** – This was started when M.K.Gandhi started his political career during colonization in South Africa.
- Diplomatic relations between India and Africa were established during *the period of colonialism*.
- During the wake of cold war many African Countries joined *Non-Alignment Movement* pioneered by India, Indonesia, Egypt, Ghana and Yugoslavia.
- ***India-Africa Forum Summit*** is the official platform for the African Indian relations which is held once in every 3 years since 2008.
- **Economic Relations** – India-Africa trade touched $98 billion in FY22–23 which is a positive economic development.
- **Defence** - *India-Africa Defence Dialogue* was held in the sidelines of DefExpo 2022 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ***Gandhinagar Declaration*** was adopted to enhance cooperation in the fields of training & military exercises
- **Cultural relations**- ***Project 'Mausam'*** is an initiative of Ministry of Culture which aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' and promote research on themes related to the study of maritime routes.
- About 39 Indian Ocean countries selected for this project which contains African countries like Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Somalia etc.,
- **Education and Health** -Africa is one of the beneficiaries of India's flagship capacity building programme – *Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC).*
- As per National Education Policy 2020 guidelines, *First IIT Campus to be set outside India is at Zanzibar, Tanzania.*
- India supplied 'Made in India' COVID vaccines to 42 African countries under "*One Earth One Health Mission".*
- **Technology**- **Pan-African e-network** is a joint effort of India and African Union with an aim to provide satellite connectivity, tele-education, and tele-medicine services to the African countries.

What are the key findings of the report?

- **Dynamic Africa-** Africa is undergoing significant changes in its demographics,

economy, politics, and society.

- It is gradually moving towards regional integration and is committed to promoting democracy, peace, and progress.
- Incidents like insurgency, ethnic violence, and terrorism is still a challenging issue in Ethiopia, Sudan, and the Central African Republic.
- **Participation of external partners-** China, Russia, the United States, the European Union, Japan, Turkey, and the UAE are actively competing to strengthen their relations with Africa.
- They aim to secure market access, energy and mineral resources, and enhance their political and economic influence in the region.
- **China's role-** It is *Africa's largest economic partner* since 2000. The report identified China as an infrastructure developer, resource provider, and financier in Africa.
- **India's role -** The report notes that India has a substantive partnership with Africa and a rich fund of goodwill, but it is essential for New Delhi to review its Africa policy periodically.

India is a member of The African Development Bank, which brings together 54 African countries and 28 non-African partners. India has a voting share of 0.265%, 6.7 times lower than the 1.8% held by China.

What are the recommendations?

- **Political and diplomatic cooperation**- Strengthen the cooperation by restoring periodic leaders' summits through India-Africa Forum Summit.
- Enhance the cooperation between India and African Union by launching a new annual strategic dialogue in 2023.
- India should forge AU's entry in G20 as a full member.
- **Defence and security cooperation** - Enhance cooperation in counter-terrorism, cyber security and emerging technologies.
- Expand dialogue on defence issues and widen the footprint of maritime collaboration.
- Expand the lines of credit to facilitate defence expenses.
- **Economic and development-** Promote access to finance through the creation of an *Africa Growth Fund (AGF).*
- A special package of measures to improve exports and build cooperation in the shipping domain.
- A special focus on promoting trilateral cooperation and deepening science and technology cooperation could pay rich dividends.
- **Socio- Cultural Cooperation**- Greater interaction between universities, think tanks, civil society and media organisations in India and selected African countries.
- *Set up a National Centre for African Studies* to promote engagement in education.
- Liberalise visa measures for African students who come to India for higher education.

Roadmap 2030 is a set of nearly 60 policy recommendations to deepen and diversify the India-Africa partnership covering 4 areas.

Quick facts

India- Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

- Aim - To strengthen India's cooperation with Africa in the Global South.
- So far, 3 summits have taken place- 2008, 2011, 2015.
- The IAFS has a three-tier platform of the African Union, the eight regional economic communities of Africa and important bilateral participants.
- First and third summit was held in India while the second summit was held in Addis Ababa, Egypt.
- The first two summits were held under the *Banjul formula* with the participation of 15 African countries and the AU Commission.
- At 3rd Summit, a massive event for all 54 African countries was held.

African Union

- It is a continental body consisting of the ***55 member states*** that make up the countries of the African Continent.
- It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the *Organisation of African Unity.*
- ***Agenda 2063*** calls for greater collaboration for African led initiatives for the achievement of the aspirations of African people.

References

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