

India-Africa forum to strengthen partnership

The fourth India Africa Forum Summit on May 31 in New Delhi comes at an opportune time. The world is facing pressures that are now familiar: uncertain trade flows, food and energy disruptions, climate stress, debt, technology divides and conflicts. For India and Africa, this moment calls for steadier partnerships, practical cooperation and a stronger voice for the Global South.

India's relationship with Africa is old, deep and lived. Across the Indian Ocean, our peoples have exchanged goods, ideas, culture and traditions for centuries. In East Africa, and especially in Kenya, these links are visible in daily life and have endured across generations. This history forms the backbone of our partnership.

For India, Africa is central to the future of global growth and global governance. India and Africa together represent more than one third of humanity. Our young populations, expanding economies and development aspirations will shape the 21st century. Our collective voice must therefore be heard more clearly in global institutions.

India's strong support for the African Union's permanent membership of the G20 during India's presidency in 2023 was a landmark step. It reflected India's belief that Africa must have its rightful place in global decision-making. This same spirit guides India's support for reform of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

The next phase of India-Africa cooperation must be practical and outcome oriented. Economic transformation will be

India and Africa know each other well. We are connected by history, geography, aspiration and the experience of development



Adarsh Swaika |
Cooperation



one of its key pillars. Africa's Continental Free Trade Area is creating new opportunities for regional value chains, industrialisation and market integration. India's strengths in pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, automobiles, textiles, digital services, renewable energy, agro-processing and affordable innovation can support Africa's own priorities for jobs, manufacturing and growth.

Technology is another area where India and Africa can build a partnership of real consequence. India's experience with digital public infrastructure has shown how technology can improve service delivery at population scale. Digital identity, digital payments, direct benefit transfers and secure digital document systems have helped make governance more inclusive and efficient. Kenya brings its own globally recognised experience in mobile money and digital innovation. This makes our cooperation par-

ticularly promising.

Human capital must remain at the centre of the partnership. Since the last summit in 2015, India has offered thousands of scholarships and training opportunities to African students, professionals and officials. Many Kenyans have studied, trained and built life-long bonds in India. This cooperation must now move further into areas that will define the future: artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, public policy, health management, climate smart agriculture, space applications, fintech, logistics, hospitality and advanced manufacturing.

Health cooperation is another strong pillar. India is a trusted healthcare partner for Kenya. More than 10,000 Kenyans travelled to India last year for affordable and high quality treatment across specialties. Indian medicines are widely used in Kenya and across Africa because they are reliable, accessible and cost effective. The future of health cooperation can include public health systems, medical training, vaccine production, disease surveillance, traditional medicine and wellness.

Agriculture is equally important. In both India and Africa, agriculture supports livelihoods, food security and rural development. India's experience in small-holder farming, irrigation, dairy, food self-sufficiency, digital extension services, agro-processing and climate resilient practices can be shared with African partners. Kenya's strengths in tea, coffee, horticulture, dairy and agricultural enterprise offer natural complementarities.

Climate and sustainability will shape every development choice we make. In-

dia and Africa have contributed little historically to global emissions, yet both face severe climate impacts. Our cooperation must therefore focus on renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, water management, biodiversity, clean technologies and sustainable lifestyles. Together, we can make sustainability a driver of development.

The Indian Ocean also gives our partnership a strategic dimension. It connects our economies and our people. It carries trade, energy and food. It supports coastal livelihoods. It also faces challenges such as piracy, trafficking, illegal fishing, maritime crime and disasters. India and Kenya already cooperate in defence training, maritime security, capacity building and peacekeeping. This cooperation will remain important for the security and prosperity of the wider region.

Above all, the India Africa partnership is sustained by people. Kenya's Indian origin community has been a living bridge between our countries for generations. It has contributed to Kenya's economy, public life, education, healthcare, philanthropy, sports and culture, while remaining deeply rooted in Kenyan society.

India and Africa know each other well. We are connected by history, geography, aspiration and the experience of development. As India and Africa prepare for the next chapter, the India-Kenya partnership can show what this wider relationship looks like in practice: trusted, practical, people centred and future focused.

Dr Swaika is the High Commissioner of India to Kenya.

Send your opinion article to: dnopinion@ke.nationmedia.com or write to The Editor, Daily Nation, P. O. Box 49010, Nairobi 00100.