

## India, Africa review progress made since New Delhi summit

Substantial progress has been made in India's efforts to aid in Africa's development following the India-Africa Forum Summit held in [New Delhi](#) earlier this year, Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma said here Monday.

The minister, who was on his way back to India after attending the foreign ministers' level meeting ahead of the African Union summit in Egypt, said he and other African leaders reviewed the progress made since the Delhi summit three months ago. The main summit got under way in the Egyptian resort of Sharm Al Sheikh Monday.

He said his visit to Egypt provided him and the African leaders an opportunity to review the progress made since the India-Africa Forum Summit in April this year. He added that during his trip to Egypt he also got to meet the new chairman of the African Union Commission Jean Ping.

'We reviewed the progress made in various areas based on the two important documents signed during the (Delhi) summit.'

The two documents - the Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation - adopted at the end of the April summit laid down the blueprint for India-Africa engagement in the 21st century.

Observing that both sides understood each other's challenges, the minister said: 'We identified various areas in which India can aid in Africa's development efforts. For example, in terms of labour development, we can share India's experience and expertise with African countries, particularly with sub-Saharan Africa.'

He said food security and health were also critical areas.

'Availability of medicines - particularly life-saving medicines - at affordable prices is of high priority.'

'Apart from food security and health, energy security and global climate changes are critical areas for engagement between India and Africa,' the minister stated.

Discussing the progress made since the summit in New Delhi, he said: 'India's primary focus has been on capacity building. Under the ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) programme, we have substantially increased the number of scholarships to African countries.'

Under ITEC and its corollary Special Commonwealth Assistance for Africa Programme (SCAAP), 156 countries in Asia, East Europe, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America get to share the Indian developmental experience acquired since independence.

The key components of this programme are: training in India of nominees of ITEC partner countries; projects and project-related activities such as feasibility studies and consultancy services; deputation of Indian experts abroad; study tours; and aid for disaster relief.

The minister also said India has increased its lines of credit to African countries.

'The prime minister (Manmohan Singh) recently announced the doubling of lines of credit, which will help in key development projects in Africa. We are engaging with groups like NEPAD (New partnership for Africa's Development), SADEC (Southern Africa Development Community) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) in this regard,' he said.

According to Sharma, the pan-African e-networking project was another project that had made substantial progress.

'India had gifted a dedicated Indian satellite for e-networking in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Under this project, six African and 12 Indian universities are already linked. Similarly, several hospitals in Africa and India have been linked.'

He added that a pilot project had been launched out of Ethiopia under this project and a satellite hub was also set to be operational in Senegal.

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