

India a world leader in development cooperation and its assistance is unconditional: Lekhi

RIS report shows India's development cooperation assistance during 1947 to 2022 was \$107 billion, and in the process it trained around 350,000 people from other nations

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India is a world leader in 'development cooperation' as the country's support to the Global South through technology transfer, capacity building, humanitarian aid as well as financial assistance is unconditional and in the spirit of the 'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam ('The World is One Family'), according to the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Ms Meenakshi Lekhi.

Ms Lekhi said this on Monday after launching a report brought out by the New Delhi-based think-tank RIS on India's development cooperation initiatives during last 75 years. A week-long exhibition on the same theme also began after the programme held to commemorate 75 years of Independence and befittingly celebrate the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM). "We (India) are a (global) leader in that sense (in development cooperation), but we are reluctant in claiming that space. The help India provided including during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic through vaccination and medical support, and which is being celebrated through this exhibition, can never be monetized," the Minister said.

According to the RIS report, the quantum of development assistance provided by India from 1947 to 2022 is to the tune of \$107 billion. The country in the process has also trained around 350,000 people from other nations in the developing world through several initiatives including the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). The report found that India, during the period under review, also implemented more than 7000 programmes. The Lines of Credit provided by India is close to \$31 billion, and about half of it was to the neighboring countries. After the COVID-19 outbreak, India has provided vaccines to over 90 countries and \$4 billion in aid and grant to around 100 countries, the Minister said, adding that the report would be useful during India's official engagements with other countries. She said there was a need to make all these information available in public domain to help ensure that transparency in the process.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Mohan Kumar, Chairman, RIS, said India's development cooperation is based on the priorities of the recipient countries and completely demand driven. Professor Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, said the RIS painstakingly compiled information from 1947 to 2022 and that India's assistance was not only in terms of money, but also in the form of concepts such as 'Southern Collective', 'Climate Justice', 'illicit financial flows', 'Technology Facilitation Mechanism', 'Peace Keeping Forces' and 'LIFE' (Lifestyle for the Environment) as stated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help the world attain net-zero status to combat climate change. Prof Chaturvedi also emphasised India helped set up international institutions such as the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. He recalled that the country set up the India Aid Mission in Nepal in

1952 and then decided to rename it Indian Cooperation Mission as it was felt that the principle of giving should be based on development cooperation instead of using the approach of aid.

According to the RIS report our duty foregone by India for granting the poor countries access to Indian markets was to the tune of \$7 billion. The in-kind assistance provided by India, including through distribution of farm equipment, during the period under review was also found to be \$7 billion. RIS houses the Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC), which is a dedicated forum for exploring various facets of development cooperation, seeking to draw upon India's own experience in the backdrop of international development cooperation scenario. FIDC is a tripartite initiative of the Development Partnership Administration of the MEA, academia and civil society organizations. (ENDS)

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