



RIS
Research and Information System
for Developing Countries
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



SIS
ESTABLISHED - 1955
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY

International Seminar on **India-Africa Partnership for Sustainable Development: Advancing Cooperation in Trade, Investment, and Health**

9:30 AM | Tuesday, 26 May 2026

Silver Oak, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi

Concept Note

Africa is emerging as one of the most important regions in the evolving global economic and strategic landscape. With a rapidly growing population, expanding consumer markets, increasing urbanisation, abundant natural resources, and ongoing regional integration efforts under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the continent is expected to play a defining role in shaping future global growth and development. At the same time, African countries continue to face important developmental challenges relating to healthcare access, industrialisation, food security, infrastructure gaps, and employment generation. These realities underline the importance of stronger and development-oriented international partnerships.

India and Africa share historically rooted ties based on solidarity, mutual respect, anti-colonial cooperation, and South-South partnership. Over the years, India-Africa relations have evolved into a broad-based and multidimensional engagement covering trade and investment, development cooperation, capacity building, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, education, digitalisation, agriculture, and technology partnerships. India has emerged as a trusted and reliable development partner for African countries through demand-driven initiatives, affordable technologies, concessional financing, and people-centric cooperation programmes.

The forthcoming India-Africa Forum Summit provides an important opportunity to reimagine India-Africa cooperation in light of evolving global realities. In an increasingly uncertain global environment marked by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, healthcare vulnerabilities, and the growing search for resilient and sustainable development pathways, India and Africa have strong complementarities that can support deeper strategic and economic cooperation. Trade and investment remain central pillars of India-Africa engagement. Bilateral trade has expanded substantially over the last two decades, with cooperation spanning sectors such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, automobiles, energy, digital technologies, and services. However, the full potential of economic cooperation remains underutilised. There is significant scope for strengthening regional value chains,

MSME partnerships, investment facilitation, digital connectivity, and industrial collaboration, particularly in the context of AfCFTA and evolving global production networks.

Healthcare and health innovation have emerged as important pillars of future India-Africa cooperation. India's experience in affordable telemedicine, digital public infrastructure for health, and economical medical innovation offers significant potential for supporting Africa's evolving healthcare priorities. Initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and eSanjeevani demonstrate how scalable and cost-effective digital health solutions can strengthen healthcare accessibility, service delivery, and system efficiency. At the same time, India's traditional systems of medicine, alongside Africa's rich indigenous medicinal knowledge systems, provide a strong foundation for collaboration in preventive healthcare, wellness, research, capacity building, and sustainable healthcare practices. Strengthening cooperation in healthcare innovation, digital health, and traditional medicine can contribute significantly towards building resilient, inclusive, and people-centred health systems across African countries while advancing broader South-South cooperation in health and development.

Against this backdrop, the proposed International Seminar seeks to provide a platform for policymakers, scholars, industry representatives, healthcare experts, and practitioners from India and Africa to deliberate on emerging opportunities and practical pathways for strengthening cooperation. The seminar aims to contribute to policy discussions leading up to the India-Africa Forum Summit and generate actionable recommendations for advancing India-Africa partnership in trade, health, and innovation. Specifically, seminar will have following technical sessions.

Session I: Deepening India-Africa Trade and Investment Partnership

This session will examine the evolving landscape of India-Africa economic relations and explore strategies for enhancing trade and investment cooperation. Discussions will focus on trade diversification, regional and global value chains, MSME partnerships, digital trade, infrastructure and connectivity, investment facilitation, and opportunities emerging from AfCFTA. The session will also deliberate on ways to address existing bottlenecks and strengthen institutional and business-to-business engagement between India and Africa.

Session II: Exploring Areas of Cooperation in Digital and Preventive Healthcare

This session aims to strengthen India-Africa cooperation in health through dialogue, knowledge exchange, and identification of practical collaboration opportunities. The session will focus on scalable and affordable healthcare innovations relevant to the Global South, particularly in areas such as digital public infrastructure, telemedicine, preventive healthcare, and traditional systems of medicine. Drawing on India's experience with initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and eSanjeevani, the conference seeks to facilitate discussions on strengthening resilient and inclusive health systems across Africa. It will also assess the interest, institutional readiness, and priority areas of participating African countries for future collaboration, technical assistance, capacity building, and policy partnerships in the health sector.