Title of side event:
Workshop on The India and Africa Partnership for Sustainability – A side-event of UNEA 4

FOCUS/ BRIEF DESCRIPTION/ MAJOR ISSUES DISCUSSED:

1. Introduction

The workshop on “The India and Africa Partnership for Sustainability” was convened as a side-event of The Fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) in Nairobi on the 15th of March 2019 at the Trademark Hotel in Nairobi Kenya. The Centre for New Economic Diplomacy (CNED), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) and UN Environment, joined forces to convene this workshop. The recommendations and key messages from this event is to be enunciated to inform decision making during UNEA-4.

About 50 participants representing diverse groups of stakeholders from private and public sector, civil society organizations from both India and Africa, academia, multinational development financial institutions, women entrepreneurs and regional economic and integration centers attended the workshop and discussed the way forward in the emotive subject of the India-Africa partnership and how the partnership can contribute towards climate change. The outcome of this discussion and way forward is expected to be presented during UNEA 4.

2. Deliberations during the workshop

The deliberations during the workshop included:

- **Opening remarks**: by representatives from The Centre for New Economic Diplomacy (CNED)
- **Keynote Address**: by Upendra Tripathy, Director General, International Solar Alliance
- **Session 1**: Fostering an India-Africa Partnership for Sustainability
- **Session 2**: Promoting Green Technologies and Sustainable Innovations
- **Session 3**: Financing Green Transitions
- **Closing Remarks**: by Rahul Chhabra, High Commissioner of India to Kenya & Ambassador of India to Somalia and J.M. Mauskar, Advisor, Observer Research Foundation and, Former Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (TBC)

2.1. Opening Remarks

The Opening remarks was done by Mr. Vikrom Mathur, Senior Research Fellow of The Centre for New Economic Diplomacy (CNED) and Head, Climate Change and Development Initiative of the Observer Research Foundation. Mr. Vikrom, reiterated that India’s engagement with Africa is unique and based on mutual benefit, while contributing to Africa’s development objectives through a consultative process. “We do not wish to go and demand certain rights or projects in Africa but we do want to contribute to the achievement of Africa’s development objectives as they have been set by our African partners”, he said.
He then gave a brief overview of The Centre for New Economic Diplomacy (CNED), which was founded by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) and is a policy and research action organization focused on issues and institutions that will be critical to sustainable development in the Global South. CNED aims to build and lead a network of relevant public and private stakeholders in the Africa and the Bay of Bengal Communities, and produce high quality knowledge outputs contributing to a theoretical and practical understanding of sector-specific development and policy implementation issues.

2.2. Key note address

The key note address was done by Mr. Upendra Tripathy, Director General, International Solar Alliance. He talked about climate change as being one of the largest existential threats that the world is facing, and it is imperative that economic growth and development also incorporate a transition away from conventional methods that harm the global ecosystem and move towards sustainability. He stressed on the need therefore to address multiple components, including government institutions, geopolitical affairs, energy sectors, financing systems, and the fostering of technology and innovation, in order to facilitate a sustainable transition for the world.

Lastly he explained that the vision and mission of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) is to provide a dedicated platform for cooperation among solar resource rich countries where the global community, including bilateral and multilateral organizations, corporates, industry, and other stakeholders, can make a positive contribution to assist and help achieve the common goals of increasing the use of solar energy in meeting energy needs of prospective ISA member countries in a safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner.

2.3. Session 1: Fostering an India-Africa Partnership for Sustainability

- The deliberations focused on consolidating the complementarities and exploring the new opportunities for socio-economic cooperation in various focus sectors of Indian and African economies to deepen and broaden the existing framework of engagement between the two sides.
- The delegates appreciated the continued momentum of India-Africa business engagements. As long-standing strategic partners in progress, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to work together with an inclusive and mutually beneficial approach, bearing in mind each other’s development priorities, comparative advantages and shortfalls.
- Indian investment is mainly led by the private sector.
- In its engagement with Africa, India has always rejected the “donor-recipient” model followed by other developed countries. As a corollary to these principles, the Centre for New Economic Diplomacy will help ensure that projects are never thrust upon the African countries. They are mainly demand driven, in the sense that it is the partner countries that choose the projects. Basically countries partnering with Africa must strive for consultative and collaborative process in a mutually accepted basis.

2.4. Session 2: Promoting Green Technologies and Sustainable Innovations

- Dr. Fhamida Khatun an economist and the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) mentioned that emissions pathways likely to limit warming to below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels require substantial greenhouse gas emission reductions over the next few decades and near zero emissions by the end of the century.
It was recognized that Africa is a Renewable Energy resources supplier. India is one of the emerging countries in the global south demanding a great deal of renewable energy for consumption, and Africa is an alternative source to meet its demand for energy.

R&D programmes are key in fostering climate smart green technological transformations, but results of R&D programmes are uncertain and takes time for an R&D programme to yield results. Due to this, governments often reduce public R&D budgets when faced with budget pressures, and find it difficult to increase these budgets later given competing demands from measures with more certain (short-term) impacts.

To accelerate climate technology innovation, it is important for the government to establish an enabling environment for and stimulate private sector participation in these innovation activities. Achieving this requires a mix of policy and financing instruments.

The delegates agreed that the food-water-energy nexus is essential for sustainable development. Demand for all three is increasing in India and African countries.

Delegates noted that cooperation across India-Africa may lessen the impacts of climate change, prevent worsening of stresses over food security, and help develop the human and technical skills needed to cope with increasing climate change.

Given that both regions have largely agriculture based economies, it is vital that climate smart practices are developed and adaptation in the sector of agriculture is scaled up. Farmers in both regions need to transition from traditional, older practices to modern methods of farming which consider updated climate and weather knowledge and employ new technology to de-risk from climate impacts.

2.3. Session 3: Financing Green Transitions

- Finding the capital needed to achieve the goal of 2 degrees’ Celsius global temperature rise, or to fund the SDGs’ 13, 17 and 7 audacious outcomes, is a task unprecedented in scale. For nations, cities, companies and others to do their part, they’ll need to come up with vast sums of money to enable the transition to sustainability.
- It was noted that official aid and grants are insufficient to meet the burgeoning energy and infrastructure needs of emerging economies in Africa. What is required in Africa are new financial instruments and pipelines to support sustainable development.
- Increasingly, a new breed of financial products and services is being deployed. Green bonds are the best-known Green Finance (GreenFin) instrument, and probably the fastest growing.
- Green bonds aren’t the only GreenFin innovation. There are social impact bonds, which aim to improve positive social outcomes that also result in public-sector savings; sustainable development bonds issued by multilateral institutions, which link returns to the performance of companies advancing global development priorities set out in the SDGs; and green municipal bonds that fund infrastructure such as energy, water and transportation systems.

2.4. Closing Remarks by Rahul Chhabra, High Commissioner of India to Kenya & Ambassador of India to Somalia and J.M. Mauskar, Advisor, Observer Research Foundation and, Former Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (TBC).

Rahul Chhabra, High Commissioner of India to Kenya & Ambassador of India to Somalia

- Trade and investment between India and Africa is hampered by structural and institutional problems ranging from bureaucratic hurdles to limited infrastructure.
- India has introduced the Duty-Free Tariff Preference Scheme, a comprehensive scheme for African least developed countries, but which is underutilized.
- Poor market regional integration has made it difficult to move products across borders. Based on this, India would likely be supportive of any integration efforts on the African continent, as they would result in various advantages, especially with regards to
trade facilitation and the development and upgrading of value chains. Integration would facilitate movement of goods no matter what stage of production the industries are at.

- On the Indian side, suggestions have also been made regarding how the Export-Import Bank of India lines of credit can be better used. As per a study completed by the Observer Research Foundation, the availability of lines of credit is viewed as an important tool for development finance.

**J.M. Mauskar, Advisor, Observer Research Foundation and, Former Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (TBC).**

- J.M. Mauskar addressed another point on how to make development aid from India more focused and therefore more feasible and relevant. This, as noted in the meeting, needs to be done by setting up stronger bilateral ties rather than trying to address the issue at the multilateral level.
- Deepening Africa-India trade and investment partnership the delegates noted the potential of civil society in efforts to encourage more policy dialogue. The scope for diversification is linked to the possibility of increasing the role that small and medium-sized enterprises play. This would include readdressing the framework for private investment on both the Indian and the African side.
- All in all, more collaboration between governments and industry is necessary to enable Africa–India trade to be further galvanized and offer a viable model for enhanced South-South cooperation looking forward.

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