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ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

**India and Africa: Forging a
Strategic Partnership**

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INDIA AND AFRICA: FORGING A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In News

- Present circumstances call for a new chapter in India-Africa relations.

India-Africa relations

- India and Africa have a time-honoured partnership based on shared values and the country enjoys considerable goodwill within Africa.
- India's trade with Africa has grown from US\$ 68.5 billion in 2011-12 to US\$ 90.5 billion in 2022-23 and Indian investors have also expanded their footprint in Africa.
- India is now one of the top five investors in Africa .

Developments

- India and Africa have made effective contributions to protect the interests of developing countries at international fora, particularly the **World Trade Organisation (WTO)**.
 - ♦ They moved joint proposals such as the **Agriculture Framework Proposal** and India and South Africa proposed an intellectual property right waiver for **COVID-19 vaccines at the WTO**.
- India used its G20 presidency to solidify its position as the leader of the Global South.
 - ♦ The African Union became a full member of the G-20
- Indian investments in Africa reached \$98 billion in 2023, with trade totalling \$100 billion.
- Indian social enterprises and NGOs are exporting low-cost, scalable solutions, from eco-friendly houses to rural women solar engineers.

Importance

- Africa's significant growth rate of **3.8 per cent** and its young population, with 60 per cent under the age of 25, estimated to reach 1.1 billion people by 2040.
- **Global forums:** Africa's influence in global forums will be important for India's vision for global governance.
 - ♦ As the Global South houses three-fourths of humanity and over 39 per cent of the global GDP.
- **Cooperation in the critical minerals sector:** Africa, with 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, is vital to power the energy transition.
 - ♦ To **build solar panels and batteries necessary for a low-carbon future**, access to minerals classified as "**critical**", "**transition**" or "**green**" is key.
 - ♦ Given the geographical concentration of critical minerals, diversifying sources and fostering strategic partnerships with resource-rich nations are imperative for India's growth and national security.

Challenges

- The **twin shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic** and the **Ukraine-Russia conflict** have dealt heavy blows to African economies and much of the continent is currently reeling under **debt distress and food insecurity**
- **China** has emerged as one of largest trading partners and one of largest investors in the African continent through its steady diplomacy and extensive economic engagement.
- The **inordinate delay** in the **fourth India-Africa Forum Summit**, after three consecutive summits in 2008 (New Delhi), 2011 (Addis Ababa), and 2015 (New Delhi), does not bode well for the partnership.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- In this era of geopolitical competition and realignment, India's multifaceted relationship with African nations is poised for a fundamental transformation.
 - ♦ As India's aspirations for the Global South take shape, leveraging historical partnerships with African countries remains imperative.

- India should actively engage with the AU to hold the India-Africa Forum Summit as soon as possible.
 - ♦ The India-Africa Forum Summit should build on the gains made at the G20 summit and spell out the agenda for the future.
- **Africa's food security and agricultural** transformation should be one of the top priorities for India-Africa engagement in the coming years.
- Given India's longstanding commitment to education and capacity building in Africa, New Delhi could revamp existing collaborations or establish new ones with African technical organisations.
 - ♦ This endeavour would bolster negotiation skills, training in project management, and devising industry-specific technical courses.
- Indian research institutes engaging with Africa's research community can facilitate the creation of solutions to address Global South challenges.

Mains Practice Question

[Q] The most visible aspect of India's cooperation with the Global South is its engagement with Africa. Discuss

