

## India's G20 Presidency & Focus on Africa

### Why in news?

*India, through the G20 presidency, intends to be remembered as the voice of the Global South at the heart of which is Africa.*

### What is the significance of the African countries?

- Most of the 54 African countries are developing or least developed countries.
- To truly represent the South, it is essential to grasp the mood and changes in Africa, especially in its external partnerships.
- This will determine the contribution India can make to advance the African agenda.

### What are U.S.'s attempts?

- In the recent U.S.-Africa summit 2022 (Washington, U.S.), 49 African countries and the chair of the African Union (AU) participated.
- Several important decisions were taken.
  - The U.S. announced its support for the AU to join the G20 as a permanent member.
  - The U.S. said it “fully supports” reforming the UN Security Council (UNSC) to include permanent representation for Africa.
- The first assurance is implementable immediately, provided the U.S. and India overcome likely resistance from the ASEAN and European Union.
- The U.S. announced new investments and initiatives, including \$21 billion to the International Monetary Fund to provide access to necessary financing for low-and middle-income countries.
- The U.S. administration planned to invest \$55 billion in Africa over the next three years, working closely with the Congress.

### What are China's attempts?

- China has emerged as the largest trading partner and the fourth largest investor in the African continent, through its steady diplomacy and extensive economic engagement.
- In 2021, while U.S.-Africa trade stood at \$44.9 billion, China-Africa trade exchanges stood at \$254 billion.
- The U.S. and other nations can take a cue from the **Forum on China-Africa Cooperation** (FOCAC), established in 2000.
- The FOCAC is composed of ministers and leaders of Africa and China who meet once in 3 years, alternately in Beijing and an African capital.
- China has a full-fledged inter-ministerial mechanism to ensure the timely implementation of FOCAC decisions.
- The last meeting, held in Dakar (2021), expressed support for the Chinese agenda:

One-China Principle, Global Development Initiative, Belt & Road Initiative, and vision of “a community with a shared future.”

- Whatever flaws there may be in China’s economic diplomacy in Africa, its consistent attention to Africa contains a useful lesson.

### **What are the implications for India?**

- India’s equity in Africa is older and richer than that of China and the U.S., but that should not be a source of satisfaction.
- In the past two decades, India has striven hard to strengthen its political and economic partnership with Africa at the continental, regional and bilateral levels.
- During the 2015-19 period, the Indian government created a momentum in arranging high-level exchanges and forging cooperation initiatives.
- Since then, COVID-19, the economic downturn, the war in Ukraine and border conflict with China may have contributed to a slowdown. This should be arrested quickly.
- The G20 presidency is India’s opportunity to ensure that the AU becomes a permanent member of this grouping and to reflect firmly **Africa’s Agenda 2063** for development.
- India and the U.S. should work closer together in Africa.
- Finally, the fourth India-Africa Forum Summit should be held in early 2024, lest the third summit held in 2015 becomes a distant memory.

### **Reference**

1. [The Hindu | Focus on Africa, the heart of the Global South](#)

