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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE

INDIA AND AFRICA: OLD PARTNERS, NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

20-21 JANUARY 2023



Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence



SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

SYMBIOSIS SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE



INDIA AND AFRICA:

**OLD PARTNERS,
NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR'S DESK



Symbiosis was established in 1971 as a 'home away from home' for foreign students. Our endeavour of establishing 'international relations' through our personal concern for the welfare of these foreign students has indeed come a full circle with the establishment of the Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) and the annual International Relations Conference (IRC).

The first seven editions of the IRC titled 'India and Development Partnerships in Asia and Africa: Towards New Paradigm' in 2013, 'India's Look East- Act East Policy: A Bridge to the Asian Neighbourhood' in 2014, 'Link West: India and the Gulf' in 2015, 'India and the Indian Ocean: Sustainability, Security and Development' in 2016, 'India-EU: Enhancing Strategic Partnerships' in 2017, 'Shaping a new Strategic Culture for India' in 2018, and 'Competition, Convergence and Multi alignment: Shaping India's Foreign Policy for the Next Decade' in 2021 were well attended and well-received by high-level policy-makers, business leaders, members of academia and media from India and abroad.

It gives me great pleasure to see that Symbiosis, true to its motto - Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, contributes to the nation's endeavours to foster good international relations. I am particularly pleased to see that SSIS is launching a Master's programme in African Studies with a focus on geo-economics and foreign policy. Our ties with Africa go back a very long time and we have the privilege to host a number of African students at our various institutes. The theme for IRC 2023 is 'India and Africa: Old Partners, New Challenges and Opportunities'. I hope that the deliberations flowing from this conference will contribute to the evolving contours of India's foreign policy.

Dr. S.B. Mujumdar

MESSAGE FROM THE PRO CHANCELLOR'S DESK



It is indeed a matter of great pride and pleasure to announce that the Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) under the aegis of Symbiosis International (Deemed University), is hosting its eighth International Relations Conference (IRC). This edition of the conference will focus on India-Africa relations. Incidentally, this corresponds with the launch of the new Master's programme in African Studies, with a focus on geo-economics and foreign policy.

Over a span of six years, SSIS has been instrumental in creating an impact by developing a dynamic and focused academic curriculum and organizing symposia and conferences. The annual International Relations Conference is a case in point.

The IRC provides a platform for deliberations on topics relevant to the discipline of International Relations, security and defense, culture and identity, trade and investment, and climate change mitigation, among others. I am happy to share that the previous IRCs were well attended and well received by a large number of stakeholders, which included policy-makers, bureaucrats, corporate leaders, media professionals, NGOs, academics, faculty, and students.

The eighth edition of the IRC titled 'India and Africa: Old Partners, New Challenges and Opportunities' will bring together experts from India and abroad to discuss and recommend steps to reinforce India's relations with its African counterparts.

I wish the International Relations Conference all the success!

Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S DESK



The success of the first seven editions of the International Relations Conference (IRC) which were held between 2013 to 2021 is a reflection of Symbiosis International (Deemed University)'s objective to engage with various stakeholders across the globe.

The IRC 2023, themed 'India and Africa: Old Partners, New Challenges and Opportunities' will receive high-level participation from India and abroad and contribute to the visibility of the newly launched Master's programme in African Studies at SSIS.

The conference will discuss core areas of diplomatic engagement for India and its African partners in the area of security, trade, and management of the global commons and recommend the future course of action with regard to India's relations with Africa. This exercise will also help in creating future prospects for research collaborations as well as provide an excellent platform to network and build relationships that will take the University's objective of internationalization forward.

Dr. Rajani Gupte



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ABOUT

SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

Symbiosis is a family of 48 academic Institutions across campuses located in Pune, Nasik, Bengaluru, NOIDA, Hyderabad, and Nagpur imparting quality education for over 50 years. Dr. S B Mujumdar established Symbiosis on the principles of Vedic thought of the "World as One Family" and is resplendent in the activities and students of several countries. The University was established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, and offers over a hundred programmes at Diploma, Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Doctoral levels under the faculties of Law, Management, Computer Studies, Health and Biomedical Sciences, Media & Communication, Humanities and Social Sciences, Engineering and Architecture & Design. The Symbiosis International University was given "Deemed to be University" status by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2002.

The University has a vibrant, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural environment and state-of-the-art infrastructure that attracts students from all states of India and over 85 countries. It also has MOUs with several renowned universities of the world and encourages students & faculty to participate in its programmes. With collaborative networks with several universities from different parts of the world, SIU provides a very conducive, interactive, and inspiring environment to create true global citizens.



ABOUT

SYMBIOSIS SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES


In the contemporary scenario, India's interest in the world, as well as the world's interest in India, is visibly at its highest. Therefore, it becomes imperative that Indian scholarship on global issues should respond to the opportunities that this presents. To this end, the Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) endeavours to provide a platform for teaching and research in international relations, with an emphasis on India and its role in global affairs.

Set up in consonance with the broader vision of Symbiosis Society, which is "to integrate with the world", SSIS strives to constantly engage in scholarly pursuits in an environment of intellectual fellowship, aimed at the academic enrichment of the entire community. SSIS offers two Master's degree programmes: M.A. (International Studies) and the recently launched M.A. (African Studies), both of which aim to equip students with knowledge and skills pertinent to address the 21st-century global challenges. The M.A. (African Studies) Programme is developed with an emphasis on the African continent's economic, geopolitical, and socio-cultural relevance to India, allowing students to explore the opportunities and future prospects in the region. The holistic nature of courses offered under both programmes, provides students with the lens to critically examine, analyse and understand contemporary issues based on a multi-disciplinary approach.

The specialisation offered under the course on Area Studies fosters scholarship of the region informed by a deeper understanding of an interconnected and interdependent world. The students are also offered a choice of foreign language as part of the Area Studies course (Arabic/ French/ Spanish/ Chinese).

The curriculum includes a mandatory internship in the third semester that prepares students for careers with CSOs, NGOs, international organisations, think tanks, civil services, media, academia, consultancies and financial institutions.

Our faculty members are a good blend of prominent academicians, active researchers and practitioners, attesting to the belief that the best pedagogy comes from a mix of theory and praxis. The students benefit from the contributions of different types of practitioners of international relations, whether they are from diplomacy, corporates, think tanks or international organisations. The diverse background of both the faculty and the postgraduate students makes for a cosmopolitan and enriching environment.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE 2023

CONCEPT NOTE



RATIONALE

Africa is fast emerging as a region whose geo-economics and geostrategic relevance have gained considerable significance, regionally and internationally. This is a continent that was once considered the ‘forgotten continent’, often associated with chaos, ethnic conflict, endemic poverty, and less significant in terms of its strategic values. But since the onset of the millennium, several external powers, including the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), France, Russia, India, China, Japan, and, lately, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Turkey, have begun to intensify their engagements with the African region in the political, economic and military spheres. During the last few years, some of these mentioned countries have begun to build military bases, technological parks, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), deploy peacekeepers, and even signed important military-security partnership agreements. This is a clear indication that the region is no longer marginalized, as it has been in the past.

Abundant natural resources, steady economic growth, an improved environment of trade and investment, progression towards democracy and political stability, and an overall upswing development trajectory are some of the attributing factors for the increasing attention being given to Africa by the regional and extra-regional actors. For instance, the continent alone accounts for 10 percent of global oil reserves, and 8 percent of gas reserves. 90 percent of the world’s chromium and the largest reserves of uranium are also found here. Therefore, the energy sector is expected to see certain competition between external powers in the near future.

Gradually, steps are being taken by both regional and external players towards ensuring that the rising inflows of economic assistance and investments become a force multiplier for further economic growth and stability in the region. In recent years, the strategic importance of the eastern African region, especially the Horn of Africa, has increased immensely. It is primarily because the region is located in the southwest of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which is alongside some of the major international maritime trade sea lanes and land routes that provide important connectivity with European and Asian continents. Its close proximity to the oil-energy-rich Gulf region has further added to its importance. In all likelihood, the emerging politico-security and geo-economic developments in the wider African region will have a bearing on the fast-evolving world order.

Notwithstanding the potential for overall growth and development of Africa, the region continues to face multifaceted security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional, which have become more diverse and complex over the last couple of decades. Of late, security threats have become hybridized, ranging from sea piracy to the expansion of transnational criminal networks, and the continuing scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. Today, the changing patterns of climate have a direct impact on humans, food, water, and climate security, which also threaten the socio-economic development activities in Africa. Given the relationship between resources and terrorism in Africa, these non-traditional security threats cannot be ignored for they could aggravate insecurity in the region.

With this rationale, the Symbiosis School of International Studies is organizing the 8th edition of the **International Relations Conference** titled: **India and Africa: Old Partners, New challenges and Opportunities** on **20-21 January 2023**. The four sessions will provide a platform for strategists/analysts/academia/corporates to deliberate upon the geostrategic, geo-economic, and socio-cultural importance of the African region. The conference will also discuss how India can re-energize and further strengthen its partnerships with African countries.

SPECIAL SESSION: G20 AND INDIA-AFRICA CONNECT

The G20's agenda has also come to embrace Africa more closely over the past decade. With India at the helm of the G-20 presidency and her commitment to making “consensus more relevant through wider consultation”, it is the opportune moment to adopt an inclusive approach to emerging G20-Africa cooperation. External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar's statement: “India believes that Africa’s growth and progress are intrinsic to global rebalancing”, stands testimony to India's position with regard to the assimilation of African interests in the multilateral forum. India’s stated G-20 priorities include Green Development, Climate Finance & LiFE, Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth, accelerating progress on SDGs, Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure, Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century, and Women-led development. All of these focus areas fall within the purview of forging an effective G20-Africa collaboration.

SESSION I

CULTURE, ETHNICITY, AND SHIFTING IDENTITIES

Globally believed to be “the cradle of humankind”, the African continent was the first to experience human civilization and movement. It would be safe to say that even today, cultural and ethnic roots play a significant role in the evolving African landscape. The continent has over 3,000 different ethnic groups. Traditionally, the African communities and states functioned based on the system of tribes, clans, and ethnic groups which were gradually reorganized into the modern nation-states of Africa. Exploitation by colonizers over a sustained period of time had a negative influence on the cultural and ethnic identity of Africans. The post-colonial African continent is governed by new institutions, frameworks, law, and order causing further divisions among the people.

The non-inclusive political system, decades of marginalization and neglect, exclusion, and lack of democratic mechanisms pushed the states into unending ethnic conflicts, civil wars, genocide, and chronic social unrest. The last few decades have seen an exponential increase in forced migrations, internal displacement, and humanitarian emergencies in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, South Africa, and Eritrea, among others. This has led to a refugee crisis in neighboring countries, Europe and the US. As of 2018, conflict in Africa has amounted to over 30 million refugees and asylum seekers. These migrations have resulted in racial and religious discrimination against refugees, a rise in extremist ring-wing parties in Europe, isolationist policies, socio-economic unrest, and political instability. Efforts towards integration and inclusion in the labour market and European society have forced refugees to adopt different layers of identity, leading to internal clashes and identity crises.

Which brings us to the question, what is it to be African? People from various parts of the continent could be physically, ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally very different from one another and could still be “African”. Various layers of identity have been adopted and have undergone an evolution. Since the end of the 20th century, there has been a real attempt to overcome the destructive impact of colonialism on the socio-cultural fabric of the African people and collectively seek the African identity to minimize the conflict. But corruption, autocratic leadership, national borders, and political agendas of various countries involved have fuelled the struggle. The conference is an attempt to initiate deliberations on the question of shifting African identity and its impact on global politics.

SESSION II

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Africa, which is considered to be the world's youngest continent, with an average age in the 20s, is rapidly emerging as one of the newest destinations for international trade, investment, and also a key market for goods and services. The continent has been endowed richly with natural resources, including large untapped reserves of natural gas and oil and unexploited hydroelectric power. It is also a region consisting of more than half of the world's fastest-growing economies in the world.

A report by the World Economic Forum states that “by 2030, over 40% of Africans will belong to the middle or upper classes, and there will be a higher demand for goods and services.” This is likely to open further opportunities for trade and investment in the region. While there still exist challenges pertaining to infrastructural development activities and security-related issues in a few countries, the region largely remains unexplored, particularly in terms of its economic potential. As a result, in recent years, significant steps have been taken up by several African countries to enhance intra-regional economic cooperation as well as to expand their partnerships with external actors. For instance, in 2018, the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) was signed by 54 African states (except for Eritrea) to “create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments.”

With the rapid growth of the population, which is likely to take over both India and China in the next couple of decades, the African continent is going to be the world's next emerging economy. In order to translate its economic gains into sustainable growth, both the African public and private sectors have gradually begun to work collectively for shared prosperity. Countries, namely Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Djibouti, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia are likely to attract more foreign companies. These countries as well as others from the region, therefore, are making serious efforts towards boosting their economic partnerships with major powers, including the US, the UK, France, EU countries, Russia, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China, India, Japan, and South Korea. China, for example, works unrelentingly towards forging strategic partnerships and has emerged as Africa's biggest trading partner as well as investor. In the next couple of decades, the sectors which can be expected to grow include education, transportation (air, maritime, and land), housing, consumer goods, food, hospitality, healthcare, financial services, and telecommunications.

Owing to the rising economic profile of the continent, emerging Asian economies like India should find greater synergy for cooperation, including trade and investment, with the African region. Not only India is the second largest market for African products, but it is also an important source of investment. India-Africa trade increased from US\$51.7 billion in 2010-2011 to a whopping US\$66.7 billion in 2019-2020.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit developing economies severely worldwide, African states would strive to improve their economic ties with their regional and extra-regional partners, and also increase the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which saw a decline in 2020-2021 due to this persistent health crisis.

SESSION III

SECURITY PARADIGM IN AFRICA: TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

It is certain that the strategic importance of the African continent in the world is going to increase in the coming decades, and its security will have a direct or indirect impact on global security. While there is visible economic growth and efforts being undertaken by countries towards establishing lasting peace, security, and socio-economic progress, the region continues to face security challenges – traditional and non-traditional – due to factors, including resource extraction (land & water), fragile governance, political violence, economic inequality, violent extremism, ethnic conflict, environment, etc. The security situation in a few African countries has not seen any marked improvement as a result of these factors, which have also acted as catalysts for persistent instability in the region. The recent clash between the Ethiopian government and rebel Tigray forces is an instance that could have plummeted into a civil war.

Limited approaches of the regional countries as well as the international actors, including the US, France, and the UK, to guarantee sustainable security, to an extent, provide a fertile ground for the non-state actors, who are involved in violent conflicts, to thrive. This is a common phenomenon that is discernible in countries like Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Lately, what has become a worrisome trend are the increasing

activities of religious extremists who contribute to the escalation of conflict in the region. Extremist groups like Boko Haram (in Nigeria), al-Shabab (in Somalia), and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (mostly in the northern African region) are infamous for their terror activities. Most of the security threats in the year 2021, particularly in East, West, and Southern Africa, came from such local extremist organizations that have also succeeded in establishing linkages with international terror outfits. Nonetheless, as more countries (including India, China, Japan, France, etc.) are strengthening their military-security cooperation with key African countries, serious collective efforts should be taken up to combat these security menaces.

Alongside the aforementioned scenario, the African region is simultaneously grappling with challenges that emanate from non-traditional security sectors. As it is a global phenomenon, several people and communities in the African continent are being affected by climate change and disruption. Speaking at the United Nations in early 2021, Secretary-General António Guterres mentioned that, “Where climate change dries up rivers, reduces harvests, destroys critical infrastructure, and displaces communities [including in the Horn of Africa, Darfur, the Sahel and elsewhere], it exacerbates the risks of instability and conflict.” Similarly, the region has been hit by the COVID-19 global pandemic, paralyzing the regional economy, and leading to more economic distress as well as food and health insecurity. These non-traditional security issues, including environmental and human insecurity, could be exploited by non-state armed groups, which have the potential to incite violence and chaos in the region. Such a scenario will be undesirable for a region that is carving a path of economic growth and development.

SESSION IV

AFRICA & DEVELOPMENT

In 2017, the African Development Bank published a report stating that Africa is the second fastest-growing economy in the world. Home to one of the youngest populations- 40 percent of people being aged 15 years and younger- there is immense potential for growth and development on the continent in the coming decades.

Despite being rich in natural resources, the countries of Africa lack the financial resources to ensure consistent development. Hence, most countries continue to rely on foreign aid for sustained economic growth. As of 2021, Africa received US\$179.8 billion in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) targeted towards reducing poverty, countering rising terrorism, providing food and livelihood to citizens, and most importantly stimulating economic and social development in the region. Somalia, the Central African Republic, Niger, and Sierra Leone are a few of the highest ODA recipient countries from the last few years.

Apart from foreign aid, African countries are encouraged to participate in the South-South Cooperation initiative, which is a broad framework for collaboration and cooperation between the developing countries of the Global South. The aim is to share knowledge, expertise, and skill in the areas of human rights, health, climate change, and urbanization among others to reach their specific development goals. As the Global South is developing at a fast pace, it is essential to harness opportunities and find sustainable solutions to challenges collectively. Africa is an important part of this cooperation as several countries are investing in the energy and manufacturing sectors to strengthen economic ties along with stimulating development in this particular region of the world.

More recently, triangular cooperation has gathered momentum wherein two developing countries and a developed country or multilateral organization establish a partnership to enhance effectiveness towards economic development. Despite various efforts in place, African countries are witnessing an unstable growth rate due to political instability, ethnic conflict, religious extremism, social unrest, and terrorism all across the continent. Many countries like China, the US, France, Great Britain, the UAE, and Russia are furthering their efforts to mark their footprint on the continent through infrastructure investment, development assistance, foreign direct investment, lines of credit, etc.

Newer emerging powers like Turkey, Brazil, and India, too, are moving away from Europe and tilting toward Africa for opportunities for collaboration. This Scramble for Africa 2.0 is leading to natural resource extraction, exploitation of land increased divisive politics in already strained societies, and human security challenges. The coming decades, therefore, demand strong leadership and policymaking to establish stable growth and ensure sustainable development in the region.

A full moon is visible in the upper right portion of the image, set against a twilight sky. Below the sky, a cityscape is visible, with numerous lights from buildings and streets. A large white rectangular box with a black border is positioned on the left side of the image, containing the text for the conference agenda. A red horizontal bar is located at the bottom of the image, partially overlapping the cityscape.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CONFERENCE 2023

EVENT AGENDA

DAY I
Friday, 20 January 2023

INAUGURAL SESSION

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Keynote Address

**SPECIAL SESSION ON
G20 AND INDIA-AFRICA
CONNECT**

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

SESSION I
**CULTURE, ETHNICITY &
SHIFTING IDENTITIES**

- Identity & Belonging
- Demographic Dividend:
Opportunity or Limitation?
- African Diaspora
- Cinema, Literature & Music

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

COFFEE BREAK

4:00 PM – 4:15 PM

SESSION II
TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Free Trade Agreement &
SEZs
- Infrastructure Development
- Bilateral Economic Ties with
Major Powers

4:15 PM - 6:15 PM

DAY II
Saturday, 21 January 2023

SESSION III
SECURITY PARADIGM IN
AFRICA

- Fragile States and Conflict
- Maritime Security
- Human Security
- Energy Security

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

SESSION IV
AFRICA AND DEVELOPMENT

- Foreign Aid/ ODA
- South-South Cooperation
- Capacity Building
- Contemporary Challenges to Development

2:15 PM - 4:15 PM

COFFEE BREAK

4:15 PM – 4:30 PM

WRAP UP SESSION

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM



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