

# INDIA-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP: A CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE



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**Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)**

# **India-Africa Partnership: A Civil Society Perspective**

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## Preface

India and Africa share close political and cultural linkages forged by a long history of trade relations and colonialism. In recent years, India and Africa have cooperated closely on the international stage, establishing common positions on challenges such as piracy, terrorism and climate change, and calling for a more equitable and fair global political economy.

A defining aspect of the renewed India-Africa relationship is bilateral development cooperation, which has been expanding both in volume and scope; facilitated by India's unprecedented economic growth and Africa's promising resurgence.

The India-Africa Forum Summit was established in 2008 with the aim of institutionalising this partnership and providing a platform where the governments of India and African countries could identify new areas of cooperation and outline their priorities. It has thus, emerged as one of the key drivers of India-Africa engagement.

The third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS III) was held on October 26-29, 2015 in New Delhi. The summit was larger in scale and intention than the previous two summits and reaffirmed India and Africa's commitment towards a future of shared prosperity based on the values of South-South Cooperation. The Summit outcomes were closely aligned to the aspirations articulated in Africa's Agenda 2063 as well as India's development goals.

As a follow up to this government led process, VANI organised an International Meeting to formulate a Civil Society Response to the Summit on December 07-08, 2015 in New Delhi. The seminar was organised in collaboration with Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC) and brought together civil society representatives of India and Africa from various nongovernmental organisations, universities and think tanks.

The objective of the meeting was to reflect on the expectations and promises of the outcome documents of the IAFS and discuss civil societies' possible contribution to upholding the spirit of India-Africa partnership and achieving the transformational change it envisions. In addition, the meeting provided a forum

for bringing the national NGO platforms of Africa and India together to have a dialogue on current challenges and opportunities, and share their learnings and experiences.

The present publication provides an overview of the enriching deliberations and significant outcomes of the meeting. It also includes submissions by representatives of African civil society which provide invaluable insights and ideas for charting future strategies for civil society engagement.

I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors and to other participants at the meeting for their suggestions and inputs. I hope that this initiative can be further nurtured and sustained as increased civil society partnership between India and Africa is essential for attaining inclusive and sustainable development in our two regions.

Harsh Jaitli  
Chief Executive Officer

## Civil Society Response to India-Africa Summit Conference Report (Extract)

### Introduction

Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) organised the **International Meeting on Civil Society Response to India-Africa Summit** on December 07-08, 2015 at India International Centre, New Delhi. The meeting was organised in collaboration with Forum for Indian Development Cooperation (FIDC) and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and was intended as a follow up to the Third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS III), held in New Delhi from 26-29 October, 2015.

At the IAFS III there were comprehensive discussions on how India and African countries can cooperate on a host of issues, but similar reflections from the civil society were limited. Given this context, the objective of the meeting was twofold: first, to provide African and Indian civil societies a forum for discussing similar challenges and opportunities and learning from each other; second, to initiate a conversation on how civil societies can contribute to achieving transformational change by strengthening people to people linkages between the two regions. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have an important role in ensuring that the spirit of the IAFS forum is upheld and the expectations and promises made in the outcome documents are met.

### Inaugural Session

The Inaugural Panel included Dr Axel Harneit-Sievers, Heinrich Boll Foundation (HBF), Dr Sabyasachi Saha, RIS, Ms Ruchita Beri, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and Dr Bashabi Gupta, Organisation for Diaspora Initiatives (ODI). The session was moderated by Dr Axel Harneit-Sievers.

## Highlights

1. *The global relevance of the India-Africa partnership was at display at the IAFS-III as heads of states of over forty African countries and India came together to renew their commitment to collaboration cutting across development issues and traditional and non-traditional security threats.*
2. *The summit reaffirmed that development cooperation is the cornerstone of India-Africa partnership; this was even reflected in the theme of the summit- “Partners in Progress: Towards a Dynamic and Transformative Development Agenda”. Today, India’s presence in Africa extends beyond aid volumes and perceived economic gains to collaboration across development sectors, forging solidarity for SSC and sharing of knowledge and ideas.*
3. *At the IAFS-III, the Indian government has offered USD 10 billion concessional credit over the next five years and grant assistance of USD 600 million, which will include an India-Africa Development Fund of USD 100 million and an India-Africa Health Fund of USD 10 million. The summit also envisaged greater cooperation in the fields of agriculture, renewable energy, blue ocean economy, education and skill building, and peace and security.*
4. *The governments lay a lot of emphasis on people to people contacts. There is a need to recognise that civil societies form an integral part of any such process and develop it further.*
5. *India’s development cooperation is based on the tenet of demand driven interventions. The civil society can contribute by providing information about the nature and urgency of these demands. Furthermore, India’s development partnership works as a development compact encompassing trade and investment, technology, skill up gradation, lines of credit (LOCs) and concessional grants. CSOs can also play an important role here in tailoring appropriate developmental interventions to fill the huge development gaps that African countries face.*



## Session 1: India-Africa Engagement: Contemporary Reflections

The session was moderated by Ms Ruchita Beri, IDSA and the panel comprised of Mr Steve Lalande, Fundamentals, Dr Gowtam Raj, AU ECOSOCC and Dr Bashabi Gupta, ODI.

### Highlights

- 1. India and Africa have much in common; they were both colonised, their resources were exploited and they were both allies in the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). The India-Africa story now holds immense promise for the future as the two regions share young populations, abundant natural resources and strong ties and both are currently legitimately looking for a permanent seat in the Security Council.*
- 2. India's partnership with Africa has so far been led by governments and by private businesses. In fact, India's economic partnership with Africa has been vibrant, extending beyond trade and investments to knowledge sharing, skills building and technology transfers. But for enhanced trade and cultural exchanges, people to people connections need to be improved.*
- 3. India can offer a very comprehensive partnership to Africa based on cultural exchanges, tourism, technology exchanges, blue economy, maritime connectivity, clean energy, sustainable habitats and climate change adaptation and mitigation techniques.*
- 4. Indian diaspora in Africa can be an indispensable human agency for channelling wealth, information, innovative ideas, skills and creative business practices to Africa while engaging in advocacy and awareness building.*
- 5. The potential for Indian diaspora playing a catalysing role in Indo-Africa relations has so far been undermined by the focus on institutional exchanges between states, universities and business forums. Since India seeks to build horizontal, sustainable relationships for development cooperation which are based on the priorities of the recipient partner, the Indian diaspora needs to be engaged for facilitating negotiations and informing the Indian government of local interests and needs.*

## Session 2: Contribution of voluntary organisations to the development landscape in Africa

The session was moderated by Mr Harsh Jaitli, VANI. The panelists included Dr Gowtam Raj, AU ECOSOCC and Dr Soumen Maity, Development Alternatives

### Highlights

1. *Indian collaboration with the AU ECOSOCC could lead to engagement with the whole of Africa as ECOSOCC has an elected mandate to represent CSOs from all African countries. This would have a far reaching political impact in furthering the India-Africa developmental relationship.*
2. *Many Indian CSOs work in Africa through a triangular model whereby their projects are supported by Northern donors and they transfer technology to local African CSOs. The model entails adaptation to the country's requirements through market assessments and using the available natural resources as raw materials.*

## Session 3: Role of Indian Civil Society in Africa

The panelists for the session were Ms Joy Mugambi, Trocaire and Mr Kshitiz Sharma, CUTS International. The session was moderated by Mr Steve Lalande.

### Highlights

1. *During the IAFS-III, the leaders of India and Kenya pushed to work closely on transfer of skills to strengthen Kenya's capacity in the provision of specialized health services to lower the burden for the increased number of Kenyans seeking treatment abroad. This includes setting up of specialized medical facilities by Indian companies in Kenya which will reduce the cost of medical services and make it convenient for those requiring these services.*

2. *In addition to welcoming this move to encourage closer cooperation on health services, civil society should be vigilant on the issue of medical tourism and also conduct research on what are the facilitating factors which encourage Kenyans to seek medical aid in India.*
3. *The trilateral model of development cooperation is most cost efficient as the resources and the methods of executing projects that emerging economies have developed are cheaper; it is widely held that a dollar or a euro spent by an implementing agency of the south is more cost effective. In addition, the learning experience of a developing country CSO is much closer to the experiences of CSOs of other developing countries or LDCs.*
4. *While engaging abroad, Indian CSOs need to realise that the engagement needs to be long term as it takes at least two to three years for project impact to show. It is essential to have local partners and build local capacities so that projects can be continuously evaluated according to their needs and experiences.*
5. *The Indian government has been willing to provide support to projects that are demand driven, where Indian CSOs can show that either African governments or the AU has expressed interest in their project.*

## Session 4: Coordinating Interventions across Sectors

The session was moderated by Dr Gowtam Raj, AU ECOSOCC and the panel comprised of Mr Pranav Kumar, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Mr Sujeet Kumar Singh, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Mr Manish Chand, India Writes Network and Dr Sabyasachi Saha, RIS.

## Highlights

1. *There are several possible areas of cooperation between industries and CSOs in development partnerships. Indian businesses face problems of asymmetrical information. CSOs can provide critical information regarding development gaps and community needs. Another challenge is translating economic growth to inclusive development in the face of ineffective governance. CSOs can help in ensuring transparent institutions and better channelling of aid which facilitates business.*

2. *The government believes that India's core strength or competency lies in capacity building and skill development and CSOs have much to contribute in these sectors. While government and business led infrastructure investments have had visible impacts on the lives of Africans by raising income levels and purchasing power parity, additional infrastructure related to education, health etc. remain deficient. CSOs can also help in creating these ancillary benefits.*
3. *Africa has traditionally been described as a resource rich continent but it should not be seen as a chess board for neo-imperialist powers any longer. It is a people rich continent with a large young population and the world needs to acknowledge that if Africa prospers, it will create opportunities and benefits for everyone. India's engagement with Africa should also be people-centric.*
4. *CSOs' role in maintaining transparency and conducting socio-economic impact assessments are very important for effective development cooperation. Also, the government itself is struggling with data on the utilisation and impact of projects as well as timely delivery of many programmes; engagement of local communities through CSOs could prove invaluable to tackle these issues.*
5. *With respect to issues of international economic governance such as illicit financial flows and tax evasion, CSOs in India and Africa need to conduct advocacy in domestic policy spaces and also work together to push for reformation of global institutions.*

## Session 5: Concluding Session

The panelists for this session were Dr Kaustuv Bandyopadhyay, PRIA, Mr Steve Lalande, Fundamentals, Dr Gowtam Raj, AU ECOSOCC and Mr Manish Chand, India Writes Network. The session was moderated by Dr Mrs Jyotsna Mohan Singh, VANI.

## Highlights

1. *Indian CSOs' involvement in development cooperation is justified because they have been providing services and humanitarian assistance to marginalised and excluded groups within their own constituencies for decades. They have also adopted a participatory approach and scaled up innovations in several instances. Additionally, they have the experience of collaborating internationally to influence global policies and address international development issues.*
2. *The original three C's namely, Chaos, Conflict and Catastrophe used to refer to Africa should be supplanted by a new trinity of Culture, Communication and Creativity along with Civil Society.*
3. *There is a huge knowledge and information deficit among peoples of both India and Africa. Although the historical and cultural similarities between Indian and African civilisations are much talked about by academics and leaders, they do not resonate with people. In addition, there is very little cultural or tourist exchange between the two regions. The media and the Civil Society can play a huge role in rectifying this situation.*
4. *There is a need for formal spaces for civil society participation from both Africa and India in the planning of IAFS 2020; AU ECOSOCC and a VANI led Coalition of Indian CSOs could establish a formal collaborative space, primarily to monitor progress over IAFS III and provide inputs in the lead up to IAFS IV.*
5. *Indian and African civil society platforms should engage on a systematic profiling of CSOs in their respective regions and publish a thematic database of CSOs and enhance exchange of information and collaboration between CSOs of both regions.*

## Outcomes

1. *During the meeting, there were presentations both from Indian CSOs and African NGOs cutting across myriad development issues such as access to health services, effects of climate change on local communities and socio-ecological impacts of development cooperation. This was critical to providing insights into possible avenues of collaboration between Indian and African civil societies.*
2. *The need for institutionalising dialogue between Indian and Africa CSOs was a recurring theme at the meeting. As a result, the formal space for interaction as envisioned in the AU ECSOSOCC-VANI draft communique was welcomed. It was also proposed that networks such as VANI coordinate with regional networks in Africa and at the level of Regional Economic Communities (RECs).*
3. *The meeting saw much deliberation on building collaboration across sectors for effective development cooperation. Perspectives from representatives of think tanks, media, government and industry provided civil society practitioners from India and Africa with a road map for future strategies.*

## AFRICAN UNION ECOSOCC – A Symbol of the New African Renaissance

— Dr G.Raj CHINTARAM, AU ECOSOCC

### Introducing Africa

Africa is known as the land which gave birth to the human species. Egypt, Sahel and Magreb are all meaningful references while studying the early human civilizations. Africa is the world's second largest continent covering over 30 million square kilometers; such is the immensity of the continent that even the Sahara desert is as big if not bigger than continental United States of America. There are 54 countries in Africa and the Western Sahara is a non-self-governing territory. Africa has approximately 30% of the earth's remaining mineral resources. The continent has the largest reserves of precious metals with over 40% of the total gold reserves, over 60% of the cobalt, and 90% of the total platinum reserves. Colonialism did much harm in Africa and in the early 1960s, the need for a specialized body to facilitate and co-ordinate continent-wide economic programmes and to provide a mechanism for economic assistance among African nations was felt and eventually this led to the establishment of the OAU.

### Establishment of the Organization of African Unity and the African Union

On May 25, 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the 32 African states that had achieved independence at that time agreed to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU's main objectives, as set out in the OAU Charter, were to promote the unity and solidarity of African states; coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States; rid the continent of colonization and apartheid; promote international cooperation within the United Nations framework; and harmonise members' political, diplomatic, economic, educational, cultural, health, welfare, scientific, technical and defence

policies. The OAU operated on the basis of its Charter and the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (known as the Abuja Treaty). During the 1990s, leaders debated upon the need to amend the OAU's structures to reflect the challenges of a changing world. In 1999, the OAU Heads of State and Government issued the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of a new African Union. The vision for the Union was to build on the OAU's work by establishing a body that could accelerate the process of integration in Africa, support the empowerment of African states in the global economy and address the multifaceted social, economic and political problems faced by the continent. Four summits, namely Sirte (1999), Lome (2000), Lusaka (2001) and eventually Durban (2002) led to the creation of the African Union.

### **Establishment of the AU ECOSOCC**

The 'Economic, Social & Cultural Council' (ECOSOCC) is an official organ of the African Union. The Statute of ECOSOCC, adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly in July 2004 defines it as an advisory organ of the African Union composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the African Union [Assembly/AU/Dec.42 (III)]. The first ECOSOCC General Assembly was formally launched on 9 September 2008 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

The organizing principle of the ECOSOCC of the African Union is one in which civil society would organize themselves to work with it. The uniqueness of AU ECOSOCC is that it provides an opportunity for African civil society to play an active role in charting the future of the Continent, organizing itself in partnership with African governments to contribute to the principles, policies and programmes of the Union.

Under article 4 of the ECOSOCC Statutes, the Council is composed of 150 CSOs: 1-2 CSOs from each Member State; 10 CSOs operating at regional level and eight at continental level; 20 CSOs from the African Diaspora covering the continents of the world; and six CSOs, in ex-officio capacity, nominated by the AU Commission and based on special considerations, in consultation with Member States.



## Composition of AU ECOSOCC

AU ECOSOCC is the apex entity representing civil society engagement on the African continent. It encompasses very wide membership, namely CSOs (but not exclusively) from:

- Social groups such as those representing women, children, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities and special needs
- Professional groups such as associations of artists, engineers, health practitioners, social workers, media, teachers, sport associations, legal professionals, social scientists, academia, business organisations, national chambers of commerce, workers, employers, industry and agriculture, as well as other private sector interest groups
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs) and voluntary organisations
- Cultural organisations
- Social and professional organisations in the African Diaspora

## Functions of AU ECOSOCC

- Contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes;
- Undertake studies that are recommended or deemed necessary by any other organ of the Union and submit recommendations accordingly;
- Carry out other studies as it deems necessary and submit recommendations as appropriate;
- Contribute to the sharing of best practices and expertise, and to the popularization, participation and realization of the vision and objectives of the Union;
- Contribute to the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance,

democratic principles, gender equality and child rights;

- Promote and support efforts of institutions engaged in review of the future of Africa and forge Pan-African values in order to enhance an African social model and way of life;
- Foster and consolidate partnership between the Union and CSOs through effective public enlightenment, mobilization and feedback on the activities of the Union;
- Assume such other functions as may be referred to it by any other organ of the Union.

### **AU ECOSOCC Leadership**

Nobel laureate, Late Prof Wangari Maathai was sworn in as the Presiding Officer of the 1st Interim General Assembly of AU ECOSOCC on 30th March 2005 at the AU Headquarters in Addis, Ethiopia. The 1st Permanent General Assembly had a mandate from 2008 to 2012 and in December 2014, the inspirational Dr Joseph Chilengi was unanimously voted as Presiding Officer of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly of AU ECOSOCC. In February 2015, the Standing Committee Members were elected in Cairo, Egypt and thereafter AU ECOSOCC has stepped on the gear to reinvent civil society engagement across Africa at the very finest and highest levels. It is worth highlighting that the Presiding Officer of ECOSOCC has a formal space to address the African Union Summits and thus the voice of AU ECOSOCC reaches directly to Heads of State & Government of the continent.

### **International Engagement**

Since the new Bureau took office in 2014, the AU ECOSOCC leadership has been engaged in key decision-making processes at the continental level. From Human Rights to Women Empowerment; Cluster Chairpersons and members of the Bureau have been solicited all throughout the year around the world. AU ECOSOCC team has a privileged space to discuss Africa-EU Relations (JAES) and ECOSOCC has engaged itself fully in the process. In August 2015, the 4th Forum on China-Africa

Cooperation (FOCAC), saw important participation of the ECOSOCC delegation. The FOCAC was hosted by the China NGO Network for International Exchange (CNIE) and the keynote address was delivered by the Vice-President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Li Yuanchao. For the 1st time, the Forum was co-hosted with AU-ECOSOCC and one of the outcomes of the FOCAC 2015 was an agreement then CNIE and AU ECOSOCC will establish a permanent committee to foster ties between the two regions.

AU-ECOSOCC has also been collaborating with TASAM, a Turkish think-tank organisation. The 10th International Turkish-African Congress was held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2015. Mr Godfrey Selematsela (Chair Trade & Industry) and Dr Raj Chintaram (Chair Infrastructure & Energy) made valuable contributions during the congress which aimed at improved trade & investment between Africa and Turkey.

Dr Chilengi had the foresight to appoint a Special Adviser on the Diaspora at the very start of his tenure and AU ECOSOCC has moved far ahead in harnessing the potentials of the diaspora for the advancement of the continent. On the 6th November 2015, the Pan African-Australasia Diaspora Network (PAADN) was launched in Melbourne, Australia. AU-ECOSOCC also spearheaded the organisation of the AU ECOSOCC Stakeholders Convention on the Diaspora held in Washington DC from 19-22 November 2015.

## ECOSOCC & India Partnership

Africa and India share both geographical and historical ties. The third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) was held at New Delhi from 26th to 29th October 2015. The IAFS III sets the base for a new era in mutual partnership between the two regions, aimed at deepening the spirit of partnership, strengthening international solidarity and expanding cooperation. Following this landmark event, the leadership of AU ECOSOCC welcomed the invitation extended by VANI, a national network of Indian voluntary organisations, to participate in the International Meeting on Civil Society Response to India-Africa Summit. ECOSOCC represents the epitome of civil society on the African continent and it is also planning to embark with the accreditation of CSOs that collaborate with other organs of the

AU and/or are engaged in negotiations related to African issues. Given the solid credentials of VANI, AU ECOSOCC seriously looks forward to collaborating with this organization as a focal point in India for the advancement of the Africa-India partnership. The organization of the 1st Joint Africa-India Civil Society Forum (JAICSF) is proposed for 2017. The JAICSF may serve as a springboard to the preparation of the fourth IAFS.

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## Collaboration between Kenya India CSOs in Improving Access to Health for Needy Kenyans: The Case of Non Communicable Disease Burden in Kenya

— Mugambi, K. Joy: Trócaire Kenya

### Introduction

The Busan Partnership agreement called on stakeholders to “implement fully their respective commitments to enable CSOs to exercise their roles as independent development actors, with a particular focus on an enabling environment, consistent with agreed international rights, that maximises the contributions of CSOs to development” (§22a)<sup>1</sup>. At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup>, aimed at combating poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and access to water and sanitation. The progress made on the MDGs, underlines the value of a unifying agenda underpinned by goals and targets. The new SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people.

A 2013 UNDP Report 'A Million Voices'<sup>3</sup> gives an in-depth view of the factors within each country that will support or impede implementation of the SDGs. A set of Dialogues has been exploring these factors and is still capturing ideas around these six topics: Localising the post-2015 development agenda, helping to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/49650173.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/post-2015-development-agenda.html>

<sup>3</sup> 'A Million Voices': <https://www.worldwewant2015.org/bitcache/9158d79561a9de6b34f95568ce8b389989412f16?vid=422422&disposition=inline&op=view>

strengthen capacities and build effective institutions, participatory monitoring for accountability, partnerships with civil society, engaging with the Private Sector, and culture and development. The overarching message is that all these means of implementation will require sufficient investment if the new post-2015 development agenda is to make a real difference to people's lives. In each specific topic of discussion, the issues that keep emerging are **participation, inclusion,** and the need for strengthened **capacities and partnerships.**

### The Role of CSOs in Achieving SDGs

With the shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness, CSOs role is to focus on poverty reduction and factors affecting development such as human rights, participatory democracy, social and environmental justice, sustainability and gender equality. This will be achieved through monitoring the actions of donors and other actors in development and playing the 'watchdog' role; shaping the global agenda of development effectiveness by participating in multi-stakeholder discussions; and by ensuring that actions reflect the internationally agreed principles of development effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> CSOs in Kenya have a vibrant history since the foundation of the state and have played crucial roles in providing social services to the poor (water, health, food security and education); holding government to account, aggregating the political power of the voiceless, and helping to shape public policies. The CSO sector has also spearheaded important democratic, economic and social development policy reforms and transformation. Since colonial times, faith based organisations (FBOs) have been important providers of direct medical services and trainers of middle level medical staff. In Kenya and Malawi, CSOs offer over 40% of medical services, with this percentage being even higher in rural areas. In Kenya, Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK) owns 34% of all medical training facilities.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Development Effectiveness & the Role of Civil Society Organisations*, 2013: <http://hand.org.hu/media/files/1416300900.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> *Contribution of CSOs to Health in Africa*: <http://amref.org/news/news/contribution-of-civil-society-organizations-to-health-in-africa-report-launched/>

## Kenya Context

Kenya holds a strategic economic and geo-political position within a region of largely land-locked and conflict-stricken states in East Africa. The country has the largest, most diversified and innovative economy in the region, predicted to grow at a rate of 5.1% in 2014<sup>6</sup>. Kenya's human capacity, entrepreneurial energy and available capital gives it huge potential to create jobs, reduce poverty among Kenyans and other East Africans, and set trends for other African countries. This potential is reflected in Kenya's Vision 2030, which aspires for a growth rate of 10% and to reach upper middle income status (defined as GNI per capita of \$3,945 with levels at \$860 in 2012<sup>7</sup>). Despite such expanding opportunities **Kenya remains one of the most inequitable countries** in the world with a small group (8,300 people) of the 'super rich' controlling two thirds of the economy<sup>8</sup>. Coupled with this are a rapidly expanding population (currently estimated at 43.2 million and growing at approx. 1 million per year<sup>9</sup>) **a decrease in the average age of the population** (the median age of Kenya is 18 years<sup>10</sup>, **nearly 80% of the population is under 35 and the average life expectancy is 59.7 years**<sup>11</sup>), and **greater urbanization** (24% of the total population lived in urban areas in 2011 and the annual rate of urbanization is estimated to be 4.6% during 2010-15<sup>12</sup>).

The potential for rapid development is stubbornly constrained by **high levels of corruption and impunity** by political, government and business leaders and this corruption permeates every strata of society. **Kenya is ranked 136 out of 177 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index**<sup>13</sup>. Levels of inequality are high with 46% of the population living below the poverty line<sup>14</sup> of \$2 a day and Kenya's gini<sup>15</sup> coefficient is 39% in rural areas and 49% in

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kenya/overview> (2014 data)

<sup>7</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/kenya>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.businessdailyafrica.com/> (February 2014)

<sup>9</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW>

<sup>10</sup> <http://kenyaaid.org/about-us/about-kenya/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/kenya-life-expectancy>. Kenya ranks 153 out of 192 countries.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2212.html>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.transparency.org/country/#KEN> (2013 figures)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.unicef.org/kenya>

<sup>15</sup> The gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of income distribution, the higher the percentage the higher the level of inequality.

urban sites. Kenya's poorest regions, mainly arid rural areas in the north and north east of the country, have twice the relative poverty headcount of its least poor regions. Years of drought in these areas have had a serious impact on the well-being of the most vulnerable with high rates of malnutrition, morbidity and mortality, especially among children. Kenyan cities too present unique vulnerabilities with population growth in slum areas presenting enormous challenges for human dignity and wellbeing. Sixty per cent (60%) of the population of Nairobi live in slum areas where basic services are almost non-existent and where existing vulnerabilities are exaggerated and exploited<sup>16</sup> particularly for women and girls. The World Bank estimates that over half of the Kenyan population (currently 43.2 million, 2012) will live in cities by 2050.

### Non Communicable Disease (NCDs) Burden in Kenya

Globally, over 14 million people die each year from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) between the ages of 30 and 70, of which 85% are in developing countries. The probability of dying from any of the major NCDs between the ages of 30 and 70 ranges from 10% in developed countries to 60% in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>17</sup> While about 80% of deaths from NCDs occur in developing countries such as Kenya, not much is known about the burden of NCDs in slums, which account for about 60% of the residences of the urban population in Kenya<sup>18</sup>. NCDs account for 27% of deaths suffered by Kenyans, equivalent to almost 100,000 people per year. NCDs contribute to over 50% of in-patient admissions and 40% of hospital deaths, which dominates health care budgets in Kenya. The aim is to reduce the vast number of premature deaths for NCDs in Kenya, in line with WHO voluntary global target of a 25% reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2025.

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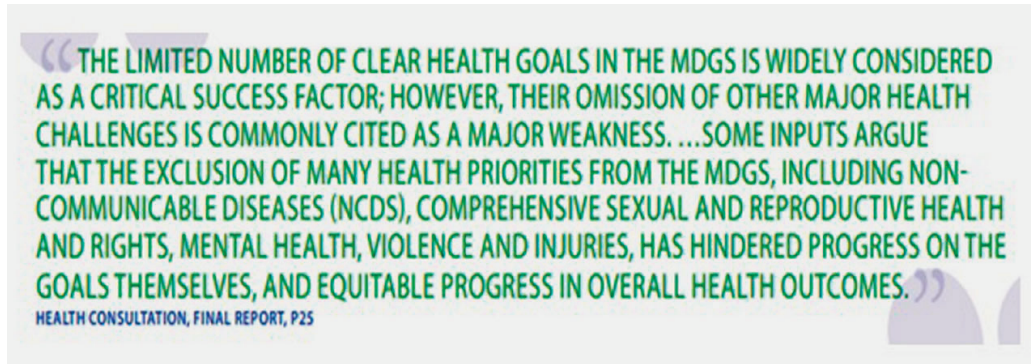
<sup>16</sup> UN-HABITAT and the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme, 2007

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.who.int/nmh/ncd-task-force/unf-kenya/en/>

<sup>18</sup> Trends in non-communicable disease mortality among adult residents in Nairobi's slums, 2003-2011: applying InterVA-4 to verbal autopsy data.



Quote from A Million Voices (UNDP Report):



Approximately 70% of the least developed countries (LDCs) of the world are in Sub-saharan Africa (SSA). While infections and parasitic diseases are still the leading cause of death in Africa, NCDs are coming to the forefront. There is a continuing "brain drain" of healthcare workers (physicians and nurses) from Africa to more affluent regions. **Cancer ranks third among the main causes of death in Kenya** after infections and cardiovascular diseases. It accounts for up to **18,000 deaths** annually, and up to 60% of those who die are in the most productive years of their lives. The five most common malignancies among men in Kenya are oesophagus cancer, prostate cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, liver and stomach cancer. Breast and cervical cancer are the most common cancers among women, with incidence rates of about 19% and 10% respectively.<sup>19</sup> For cancer patients to see a doctor, it takes a painstakingly long period. Many die before they see an oncologist and those who are lucky enough to see one find the cost of treatment forbidding<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> Mulemi, A. Benson: *Cancer crisis in Kenya*;

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/health/article/2000106472/kenyans-with-cancer-find-solace-in-the-east>

### Medical Tourism (Kenya to India)

Kenya is a regional medical hub, with patients from South Sudan, Ethiopia and other East African nations often coming to Nairobi at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) and other private hospitals to seek treatment. Kenyan Hospitals such as Nairobi Hospital, Aga Khan University Hospital, MP Shah and Karen Hospital have invested heavily in heart and cancer centres but the cost of treatment remains a hindrance to many. As such, Kenyans go abroad, and more specifically to India for medical tourism to seek treatment for cancer, heart conditions, renal transplants and orthopaedics. Specialised care like that offered in Apollo's 54 hospitals is also an attraction. These include minimally invasive spinal surgery, X-knife for brain tumours, and cancer technologies like Novalis, PET, MRI and robotic surgery. Ironically, Kenya is also seen as a medical tourism destination. While this option is available for the well off, the cost is out of reach for poor and vulnerable families. Many families sell productive and non-productive household assets, and fundraise for medical bills from friends, family and the general public. Most of the sick die before raising the available funds, or while awaiting long and tedious clearance to get medical visas.

There exist major challenges of lack of data on national prevalence and incidence of NCDs and risk factors, economic burden of disease and costs of NCDs at community/household level, evidence for cost-effectiveness of intervention programmes, health information systems, and disease and risk factors surveillance. The Implications of the Disease Burden are great and far reaching; and can be divided into two types<sup>21</sup>: **Direct costs**, that are costs related to the treatment and management of the diseases (e.g. running of clinics and hospitals, salaries for healthcare personnel, medications, rehabilitation where available, and medical supplies and testing, the patient's time used to seek care); and **Indirect costs** : i.e. loss of income resulting from lost productivity or employment due to major disabilities, such as stroke or heart failure, the loss of future earnings from assets that are sold off for chronic and/or catastrophic care, loss of income from other family members who must provide care; and the future loss of income from children who drop out of school to provide care for sick adult members.

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<sup>21</sup> Yonga G.: *CASE KENYA STUDY:- Non Communicable Disease Situation; Aga Khan University, East Africa*  
<http://iom.nationalacademies.org/~media/DA34535CE93B489E89B7DB450A7790B3.ashx>

## Kenya Health Sector Strategy

The **Health Sector's Strategic** focus in Kenya is guided by the overall **Vision 2030** that aims to transform Kenya into a "globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030" by developing the country from a third world country into an industrialized, middle income country. Its actions are grounded in the principles of the 2010 constitution, specifically aiming to **attain the right to health, and to decentralize health services management** through a devolved system of governance. This strategic focus has been defined in the Kenya Health Policy, which has elaborated the long term policy directions the country intends to achieve in pursuit of the imperatives of the Vision 2030, and the 2010 constitution. The Kenya Health Policy 2012 – 2030 has, as one of its goals, 'attaining the highest possible health standards in a manner responsive to the population needs'. The policy aims to achieve this goal through supporting **provision of equitable, affordable and quality health and related services at the highest attainable standards to all Kenyans. (KHSSP July 2012 – June 2017)**

## The Shrinking CSO Space

The new Public Benefits Organization (PBO) Act (2013) was developed to establish a regulatory and institutional framework for CSOs in Kenya that do public benefit work.<sup>22</sup> The **2013 miscellaneous amendments bill** introduced for the 2013 PBO Act by the government of Kenya, if approved, would have seen significant reduction of Civil Society space in Kenya by giving greater control of the flow of fund's to CSOs; and their registration and/or deregistration to Government. The current CSO sector of over 8,000 NGOs/PBOs<sup>23</sup> suffer from the absence of an overall representative and effective apex body.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.pboact.or.ke/the-pbo-act/about-pbo-act>

<sup>23</sup> *We have chosen to use the terms PBOs/NGOs/CSOs broadly to ensure we do not exclude, given the variety of laws agencies are organized under but the more operational term would be Public Benefits Organizations as defined in the PBO Act.*

The violence of 2008 left Civil Society **fractured along ethnic and political party affiliation lines** and this fracture has yet to be healed. Political elites in their desire to control and benefit from natural resources (e.g. oil, land and water) are seeking to clamp-down on democratic space and silence any opposition to their corruption. CSOs are portrayed by some senior people in Government and some sections of society as dangerous agents of western powers. Some CSO activists who have been elected or nominated into government have taken a back stage from the activism agenda and become spectators in the struggle over civil society space. The dominant narrative in relation to PBOs seems singularly negative and they seem to be losing their platform and moral high-ground as a sector in the public domain. Recent attempts to introduce repressive amendments to the PBO Act could yet significantly restrict the space in which they operate and leave the country without any legitimate alternative voice to that of the Government. Like other civil society agents the Church also lost some ground over the election violence of 2008 and although there were some heroic actions by some Bishops and leaders in the Church, the violence affected their credibility to stand above ethnic lines.

The delay by the Kenyan Government to commence the implementation of the PBO Act and the withdrawal of recent amendments (July 2014), and patronage of the National Council of NGOs places the sector at a legal, ideological and administrative crossroads once more. From an **operational perspective** International NGOs (INGOs) will be governed by the 2013 PBO Act, hence there is a need for the legislation to be clear and unambiguous and not to allow unreasonable government control of the sector. The Kenyan Civil Society Reference Group (CSO-RG) is a loose network of CSOs established to facilitate a coordinated CSO voice during the drafting of revised legislation governing CSO's in Kenya that was to become the 'new' 2013 PBO Act. Its role now is to support freedom of association and the establishment of a dynamic and independent Civil Society Sector, and to defend the interests of CSO's in the legislative process.

## Conclusion and Way Forward

**The Naivasha Call for Action on Non communicable Diseases, August 2011**, highlighted the leading causes of deaths due to NCDs in Kenya to be

cardiovascular diseases (13%), cancers (7%) and diabetes (4%); and called for active participation of all sector stakeholders including communities, private for profit and not-for-profit organizations as essential for effective and sustainable prevention, control and management of NCDs including national consensus building on policy and strategy priorities.<sup>24</sup> During the **3rd India-Africa Forum Summit** (Oct 2015) African countries rallied for a shift in the Indo-Africa trade that will see Kenya and other African countries focus on **value addition instead of export of raw materials**. The Forum brought together more than 40 African Heads of State. The Kenya President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks on trade and investment in Kenya, and they pushed for the two countries to work together in the transfer of skills to strengthen Kenya's capacity in provision of specialized health services to lower the burden for the increased number of Kenyans seeking treatment abroad. This will include **setting up of specialized medical facilities** by Indian companies in Kenya to reduce the cost of medical services and make it convenient for those requiring the services, as well as developing the Kenyan pharmaceutical<sup>25</sup> industry.

Other thematic areas that Indian and Kenyan CSOs can partner in are in Capacity Building Opportunities, Health systems strengthening, Support for Vulnerable people to get treatment, Telemedicine: Innovative practices in medical treatment, and Policy and Advocacy on different issues, including protection of CSO space. Cross learning between Indian and African NGOs is essential, and reference to existing International frameworks should be made. South to south partnerships, including technology exchange, scholarships, exchange learning trips and other innovative interventions will be a great way to start. However, there is need for India to identify their niche and strongest areas of interventions if they are to remain relevant in the development arena.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.pboact.or.ke/the-pbo-act/about-pbo-act>

<sup>25</sup> *We have chosen to use the terms PBOs/NGOs/CSOs broadly to ensure we do not exclude, given the variety of laws agencies are organized under but the more operational term would be Public Benefits Organizations as defined in the PBO Act.*

## Discussion Paper on African and Indian Civil Society

— REPONGAC (Réseau des plateformes d'ONG d'Afrique Centrale)

### Introduction to the Central Africa Region

Central Africa is the middle region of the continent which starts from Chad in the north to Angola in the south, DR Congo and Burundi to the East and Sao Tome and Principe in the West. Inside this space are nine different countries namely Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome, Burundi, Chad, Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea. Together, these states cover an area of 640,600 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of 123,933,000 inhabitants.

Central Africa has immense potential, especially abundant agricultural land (approximately 200 million hectares of arable land), of which only less than 1 per cent is exploited. In addition, the Congo basin (3.7 million km<sup>2</sup>) is constituted of the most important water resources of the continent. The hydroelectric potential of the Congo River, the second fastest river in the world (40,000 m/second on average), is considerable with a potential of 100,000 MW of which 44,000 MW is at the Inga site alone. Countries in the central basin benefit from the dense equatorial forest which comprises 4/5th of the African rainforest, or almost 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup>.

Another important asset of the sub region is its waterways which hold immense potential for communication. Central Africa also has navigable inland waterways, both nationally and internationally that could help facilitating regional trade. These include the Congo River and its major tributaries (Kasaï, Oubangui, Sangha and Alima), Ogoué River and Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika. The system of inland waterways including the Congo River and its tributaries on the right bank (Oubangui and Sangha), commonly known as trans-equatorial, has always been a way of physical integration and trade for Central African Republic, Congo, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad (non-riparian countries). It is the same for Lake Tanganyika between DRC and Burundi. The length of the waterways contributes to integration in the sub-region.

In addition, Central Africa has the largest oil resources amongst oil producing countries in sub-Saharan Africa (excluding Nigeria), namely Angola, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Chad and Sao Tome and Principe. The DRC has natural gas reserves in Lake Kivu, while Angola, CAR and DRC are full of various precious minerals (gold, diamonds and copper).

The consideration and concern for proper management of all these assets has generated within the sub-region plans to build a common framework for managing these resources, in this case the Economic Community of States Central Africa (ECCAS).

### Structural Characteristics of the India-Africa Cooperation

In the evolution of Indo- African economic relations, four points are essential:

First: On the commercial side, we see a trend towards geographical diversification of Indian trade, which seems to be still in its First stage. To date, most of the Indo-African trade is with North Africa, including Sudan and Egypt, and East Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. But in recent years, one can observe that India seeks to expand its commercial contacts with Central and West Africa, where she opened trade missions, publishes brochures in French and sends delegations.

The second relates to the nature of the products traded. Traditionally, India imported mainly agricultural products or raw materials (cotton, cashew nuts, and some minerals) and exported mainly textiles and tea. In recent years, she has put emphasis on exports of engineering, electrical equipment, lightweight equipment; in short more sophisticated products with higher value-added than in the past.

The third concerns the conception of Indian trade with Africa. This should, in her view, exceed the strictly commercial framework to integrate trade in a more comprehensive view of the Indo-African cooperation. The first large delegation of Indian industrialists in Africa (1964) clearly notes: India should not develop trade relations with Africa without trying to exceed the limits of these strictly commercial relationships (...). The problems, projects and strategies of African economies must be taken into account in trade policy. The second delegation of the same type (1966) similarly concluded: Increased trade with Africa must go beyond the mere level of trade goods to reach participation and closer development assistance of the African economy.

The fourth point, finally, is the development of Indian investments in Africa in the form of collaborations (joint ventures). As stated in the report of the Delegation of 1964, "new trading techniques require active participation from us to set up industrial ventures joint in as much extent as possible (...). The trade does not represent the whole of economic relations, which should be extended to other forms of cooperation in investment and technical assistance". In recent years, in fact, these ventures developed in the most diverse areas: paper, textile, razor blades, engineering, equipment for boats, jute factory, tractor assembly, steel works, tiles, etc.

These four trends reveal one of the axes of South-South cooperation as understood officially in India.

Indian private capital in African markets, meanwhile, spurred by liberalization of legislation in taxation regimes, the credit facilities granted by the Industrial Development Bank of India (EXIM Bank), the holding of fairs in Africa (the first Indian trade show took place in Nairobi in 1962), or various aids useful in the promotion of Indian products or services in Africa (for example, patronage of the India- Africa Development Association gathering industrial and Indian businessmen interested in Africa, scholarships for African students, direct or indirect aid to training African technicians).

Besides South Africa, which is home to 800,000 people of Indian origin, the most recent estimates indicate that over 900,000 Indians live in Africa (Mascarene Islands included). On the African continent itself, the four countries leading the way are (besides the already mentioned South Africa) Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique.

The Indian Diaspora is very active in the spheres of trade and small manufacturing. In the countries of Central Africa, there is a sizeable number of Indian nationals who are very active in trade, exploitation of precious materials, ores and in the medical sector. This is certainly the case in the DR Congo (formerly Zaire), Cameroon, Burundi, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Congo and Gabon.

In terms of financing for development, African countries still maintain a special relationship with their former colonial powers, essentially akin to a dominant (donor)-dominated (recipient) relationship. Even seemingly horizontal relationships in this context tend to be tied.



But in the new context of South-South Cooperation (SSC) India appears to have a privileged role. Although the amount of development finance from emerging economies such as India remains limited compared to that of traditional donors, recipient countries give preference to Southern partners for reasons of aid effectiveness.

This difference in attractiveness of development funding to recipient countries can be explained by the different approaches adopted by DAC countries on the one hand, and emerging economies on the other. In the framework of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, the DAC countries' ODA policies are defined on the basis of the "framework approach" of the "Washington consensus" to strengthen macroeconomic stability of recipient countries. In this scenario, the imposition of a rigorous conditionality, particularly in terms of macroeconomic management, compromises the sustainability of aid programs.

The development financing brought by SSC partners moves instead on low budget projects under the supervision of a triangular body composed of the recipient government, local organizations and external development partner, which ensure regular monitoring of projects. The effectiveness of aid at the level of the project is determined on the basis of a local audit and is the basis for the continuation or discontinuation of the particular project.

### Environmental Civil Society in the Countries of Central Africa: Challenges and Opportunities

In the region of Central Africa, there are several organizations of civil society that emerged in the 1990s. Civil society covers voluntary associations of citizens gathered to defend their interests, in particular mass organizations (such as farmers' organizations, women's and pensioners), trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people's organizations, spiritual and religious organizations, the academic sector and non-governmental organizations receiving public funding.

As for the enabling environment for civil society in Central Africa, overall space has narrowed. Relations between the Government and civil society are tainted with suspicion and there are many challenges. The most important of these are:

- The lingering distrust between the actors of civil society and those of government;
- Lack of financial and material resources;
- Lack of leadership among actors in civil society;
- Weaknesses and lack of professionalism in the sector
- Insecurity, wars etc.
- Gap between the value discourse of civil society and actual internal practices;

Although civil society organisations are highly active and significant at the grass roots level, their political influence is rather moderate. In fact, civil society still has the confidence of the public in theory, but the levels of participation in formalized activities have steadily gone down. Most CSOs lack the financial skills, managerial oversight and planning necessary. There is no supporting coordination structure, especially given the lack of means of communication (transport, telephone, internet etc).

Despite all these difficulties, civil society remains a full partner and indispensable part of the States and the private sector. It plays the role of supporting citizen in improving standards of living; and assists the public sector in its obligations to provide good services to the population.

Civil society in Central Africa supports the development, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. It represents the voice of citizens and thus, plays another role as spokesperson of the population. It forces alternative proposals and innovations and facilitates consultation and dialogue among different stakeholders.

The major challenges that the civil society attempts to tackle in Central Africa are:

- Promotion of regional economic integration: free movement of goods and people;
- Strengthening the capacity of farmers and increasing access to agricultural markets;
- Preventing and managing conflicts: two thirds of countries are fragile states
- Ensuring good governance of natural resources: Central Africa is a region with a rich natural environment but very poor population. Food, health, education, drinking water and energy crises are acute.

## Relationship between Indian and African Civil Society

The collaboration between African civil society and Indian civil society is in its infancy. In our view, Africa does not occupy a prominent place in the Indian civil society's work. As for Africa, the least we can say is that it is not sufficiently well informed about the work of Indian civil society in Africa. In our experience, we find that only the Indian private sector is more prominent in Africa.

In this context, we believe that cooperation between India and Africa as defined at the Summit of Heads of States in October is a welcome opportunity to build a strong collaboration between the civil society of India and Central Africa.

This relationship may cover the following areas: food security; social sectors directly affecting the daily lives of people such as health, education, water and energy and of course, capacity building of social actors. For example, exchange visits for sharing of good practices and good governance methodologies, and civic and electoral education could be important components of collaboration.

One of the questions that arise here is what kind of relationship Indian civil society intends to introduce and develop with civil society in Africa- would this relationship be for the mutual benefit of each partner or would Indian civil society adopt an ultimately close outlook to the industrial capitalist countries behaviour?

At the government level, there is considerable progress in establishing contacts between India and Africa but there is a need to develop a complimentary dialogue between civil societies. The summit of Heads of African States and India highlighted a development partnership based on mutual respect. The emphasis was on areas such as urbanization, education, job creation, and fight against poverty; and there is possibility for civil societies of India and Africa to build collaboration in strengthening capacities of civil organizations that work to achieve these objectives.

The India-Africa Summit in October aimed to provide new impetus to the old relations between India and the African continent. The stakes are threefold: economic, industrial and strategic. Africans want to work with Indians because they emphasize frugality of means; technology transfer and decentralization of operations. While energy and mineral resources are of strategic interest for India, African countries are interested in cooperation in infrastructure construction sectors, pharmaceutical, telecommunications and IT.

Furthermore, the priority African countries for India are the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa: Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa and Mauritius. However, partnership with resource rich Central Africa will be in India's interests.

In light of this analysis, we believe that dialogue between the civil society of India and that of Africa and especially Central Africa can be co-organized by VANI AND REPONGAC. This dialogue can aim to bring together member organizations to identify areas of collaboration and provide a space for dialogue with other partners such as the Indian private sector working in these countries and with the Regional Institution integration of Central Africa: ECCAS.

We propose that:

- VANI and REPONGAC (for Central Africa with 10 countries), can identify common areas of interventions and their member organizations to relate.
- VANI AND REPONGAC organise visits, exchanges and studies to identify the real needs of members of either side.
- VANI facilitate coordination between African civil society organisations with Indian CSOs working on agricultural issues and rural technologies such as manufacturing bricks to improve rural habitats, and adaptation and mitigation technologies to fight climate change.

Another possible area of cooperation between REPONGAC and VANI could be conflict prevention and management as the countries of Central Africa are threatened by conflicts and wars, as in the case of the Central African Republic, Burundi and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

- Finally, REPONGAC team can benefit from the support of VANI in its advocacy and fight against inequality and corruption in Central Africa.

The implementation of such cooperation should be consistent with the vision of the African Union contained in Agenda 2063, which aims to "build an integrated Africa, prosperous and peaceful, supported and managed by its own citizens and representing a force dynamic on the world stage."

## African Civil Society Platforms – ECOSOCC and SADC CNGO: Enhancing India-Africa Citizens engagement possibilities

— Steve Lalande, Fundamentals

India shares a historical relationship with Africa but in recent times, India's bilateral partnerships with African countries have been led by governments and by private business interests. India's economic partnership has been quite vibrant and extends beyond mere trade and investments to knowledge sharing, skill building and technology transfers. But for a more holistic relationship marked by enhanced trade and cultural exchanges, people to people contact between the two regions needs to be improved.

In this scenario, the role of civil society actors cannot be undermined. Civil Society platforms that work together across themes such as peace, security, trade and climate awareness can contribute significantly to building closer bilateral relationships and multilateral collaborations.

Civil society platforms exist both in India and Africa to bring together civil society organisations under thematic or similar interest clusters to share information and cooperate. However, the big question is whether these platforms are they talking to each other.

The African Union has made some progress in integrating the voice of African civil society in its work. The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in 2004 as an advisory organ to the AU composed of civil society organisations. The principle of ECOSOCC is for civil society to organise itself to work in partnership with the African Union.

At a regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was established to end colonialism and apartheid in southern Africa. The inter-governmental body evolved from the Frontline States whose goal was liberation across the region. The Frontline States became the SADCC which transformed into

the current body when SADC Treaty was adopted in 1992. The SADC CNGO is a network of civil society platforms within the SADC region which interfaces with SADC.

A similar coalition or national platform like VANI could link up with AU ECOSOCC and regional platforms in Africa such as SADC to pursue a multi-sectoral approach to development in the future. The potential for enhancing the relationship between the people of India and Africa lies in these civil society platforms collaborating across oceans to further civil society global agendas and finding common solutions to similar challenges. Further, both India and Africa have colourful and diverse cultures within their borders. Their respective civil societies should also promote cultural exchanges as they allow understanding and appreciation of each other's countries.

There also needs to be cognizance of the importance of institutional frameworks for civil society interaction. With the objective of creating sustained and effective spaces for collaboration, Indian and African civil society platforms need to think about their strategy and resources as well as the necessary political will to establish them.

Ultimately, the need of the hour is to explore how the relations between India and Africa can go beyond traditional trade practices to building people to people interactions as it is through them that the value of trade links will be enhanced and given a human perspective. Government cannot do it all, and therefore with the growing realization that civil society can add significant value to the work of government in international relations, civil society networks are fundamental linkages to the grassroots in both India and Africa.

## LIST OF VANI PUBLICATIONS

- Civil Society Accountability Principles and Practice (India Tollkit) (English)
- Enabling environment for Voluntary Organizations A Global Campaign (English)
- Model Policies for International Good Governance in Voluntary Organizations
- The Hand Book in Good Governance for the Voluntary Sector
- Status of the Voluntary Sector in India A Report
- Status of the Voluntary Sector in India (Primer) (English & Hindi)
- Civil Society Engagement in Aid Effectiveness Discourse
- Changing Dynamics Between VOs and Private Sector
- Involving Voluntary Organization in Governments Plans and Projects
- India's Global Footprints
- India's Development Assistance: Trends, Challenges and Implications for CSOs
- India's Role in the G20: A Civil Society Approach
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organization Working with Religious Minority A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organisations Working with Women A Primer of the Study report (English & Hindi)
- Role and Contribution of Voluntary Organisations in Health & Nutrition A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Challenges of the Grassroots Voluntary Organisations A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Role and Challenges of Voluntary Organisations on Water & Sanitation A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution and Challenges of Voluntary Organization Working with Details A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Contribution of CSR on Thematic Issues of Education, Health and Nutrition, and water and Sanitation A Primer of the Study Report (English & Hindi)
- Revisiting the National Policy on Voluntary Sector and need for a National Policy on Volunteering (English & Hindi)
- Policy Brief of Revisiting the National Policy on Voluntary Sector and Need for A National Policy on Volunteering (English & Hindi)
- Enabling Environment of the Voluntary Sector in India A Study Report (English & Hindi)





### About Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Stiftung / Foundation (HBF) is the Green Political foundation from Germany, affiliated to the "Greens/Alliance '90" political party represented the Germany's federal parliament. Headquartered in Berlin, and with 30 international office today, hbs conducts and supports civic educational activities and projects worldwide.

HBF understands itself as a green think-tank and international policy network, working with governmental and non-governmental actors and focusing on gender equity, sustainable development, and democracy and human rights.

With a presence in New Delhi since 2002, the HBF India office coordinates the interaction with stakeholders and partners in the country. Its programme focus areas include climate and resource policy, socio-economic policy from a gender perspective, the dynamics of democracy, and India's role in the new global order."

### About VANI



Voluntary Action Network India (VANI) is an apex body of the Voluntary Organisations.

- Founded in 1988 to act as a promoter/Protector and collective voice of the voluntary sector.
- Base of 8000 non-governmental organisations spread in 25 states of India.
- Resource Centre for publications, research work, articles, important documents and information about and related to the voluntary sector.

#### **Objectives:**

- As a platform, to promote voluntarism and create space for voluntary action.
- As a network, attempt to bring about a convergence of common sectoral issues and concerns for building a truly national agenda of voluntary action in India. In addition, facilitate linkages of various efforts and initiatives of the Indian voluntary sector, which succeed in strengthening a united and sustainable movement of change.
- An an association, work towards fostering value based voluntary action and long term sustainability especially amongst our members.

#### **Areas of work**

- Promoting practices of good governance in the voluntary sector.
- Strengthening networks
- Articulating independent voices of the sector.
- Research and advocacy of policies and law effecting the voluntary sector.

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