

Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV): Enduring Partnership-Shared Vision

IA spirit for India-Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience and Inclusive Transformation

by Raj Kamal, Ambassador of India to the State of Eritrea

The **India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)** is more than just a diplomatic gathering; it is the cornerstone of a transformative partnership between the world's most populous democracy and the world's fastest-growing continent. As the Government of India prepares to host the 4th Edition of IAFS from May 28 to 31, 2026, the mechanism stands as a global gold standard for South-South Cooperation.

A Legacy of Shared Growth: 2008–2015 - The IAFS mechanism was established to move beyond sporadic bilateralism into a structured, multi-layered engagement at the Pan-African, regional, and bilateral levels.

- **2008 (New Delhi):** The inaugural Summit launched the 'Delhi Declaration', establishing a framework for cooperation based on mutual respect and shared developmental challenges. The key outcome included India's commitment of US$ 500 million in grants, US$ 5.4 billion in Lines of Credit (LOC) and the Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme, providing African Least Developed Countries (LDCs) access to the Indian market.

- **2011 (Addis Ababa):** The second Summit increased the LOC commitment to US$ 5 billion and focused on capacity building, with India pledging to establish over 80 training institutes across Africa in sectors like information technology, foreign trade, diamond processing, educational planning, etc.

- **2015 (New Delhi):** The third Summit was a historic scale-up, with participation of representatives from all 54 African nations including 41 Heads of State. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a US$10 billion LOCs, US$ 600 million in grant assistance, and 50,000 scholarships over five years. It prioritized renewable energy under International Solar Alliance, the "Blue Economy," and healthcare.

IAFS-IV: "IA SPIRIT" (May 2026) - The 4th Edition, themed "IA SPIRIT: India-Africa Strategic Partnership for Innovation, Resilience, and Inclusive Transformation," aims to modernize the relationship for the digital age. Expected outcomes may include:

- **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** Sharing India's "India Stack" (Fintech, Aadhaar, UPI) to accelerate African digital governance.
- **Strategic Resilience:** Cooperation in food and health security, including joint vaccine production and agricultural technology transfers.
- **Innovation Ecosystems:** Fostering startups and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) to translate the demographic dividend of both regions into economic growth.
- **Health Security:** Transitioning from "Pharmacy of the world" to "Manufacturer for the world" by establishing local pharmaceutical hubs in Africa.
- **Green Energy:** Expanding the Global Biofuels Alliance and the ISA to ensure energy justice.

The Eritrea Opportunity - a Strategic Bond: For Eritrea, IAFS-IV offers a critical platform to advance its national development goals. Bilateral relations have deepened recently, evidenced by the 3rd Foreign Office Consultations held in Asmara in December 2025. The key sectors for Eritrea's growth include:

- **Digital Governance:** India has committed to supporting Eritrea's digital architecture, facilitating more efficient public service delivery.
- **Human Resource Development:** Eritrea is a major beneficiary of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program and ICCR scholarships, with around 150 Indian teachers currently serving in Eritrean colleges and schools.
- **Mining & Energy:** With Eritrea's vast reserves of potash, copper, and gold, IAFS-IV can facilitate investment from Indian mining giants like VPR Mining Infrastructure.
- **Health & Food Security:** Beyond historical food aid, the Summit provides opportunities for specialized medical training and agricultural partnerships to boost inland fisheries and aquaculture.
- **Blue Economy and Infrastructure:** With its long Red Sea Coastline and the ports of Massawa and Assab, Eritrea is a vital maritime player. India's expertise in port management and maritime security can help Eritrea transform into a regional logistics hub.

As the global order shifts, the 'India-Africa Partnership' represents a move toward a more equitable, multipolar world. For Eritrea, the 2026 Summit is not just an event; it is a gateway to the technology, capital, and expertise needed to secure its long-term social and economic prosperity.

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