

# **Welcome Remarks**

**by**

**Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia**

Director General, ICWA

**at**

**ICWA - Jindal School of International Affairs Symposium**

**on**

**‘India-Africa in the 21st Century- A Comprehensive Partnership’**

**at**

**Sapru House, New Delhi**

**5<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Indian Council of World Affairs has been very proactive in contributing to a dialogue and debate on a wide spectrum of issues relating to India- Africa relations. It has been organising interactions between academics/ eminent personalities/policy makers of African and India under the aegis of the second India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) initiative. So far it has organised eight conferences, four in Africa and four in India. In continuation of this dialogue process, ICWA is organizing this symposium in collaboration with Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA).

India and Africa relations have reached a decisive stage with the commencement of first India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-I) in the year 2008. The historic IAFS process has not only provided an institutional framework of cooperation at three levels (continental, regional and bilateral), but also has instilled a new momentum to the relations in a comprehensive scale. It has acquired a robust and dynamic character to assume the dimension of a strategic partnership.



*Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA delivering welcome remarks.*

Particularly in the last five years, as a consequence of the IAFS process, this partnership has intensified between the two sides. And as the relationship is intensifying it becomes all the more pertinent to have a realistic assessment of the changing contours of the multifaceted partnership on a range of issues, such as political understanding, security cooperation, economic collaboration, development partnership and regional/ multilateral. This Symposium will dwell upon these issues under its three broad thematic sessions :**(i) Political and Security Concerns: Exploring a Common Ground (ii) Enhancing Economic Relations and Development cooperation, (iii) Regional Issues : Scope for India's Engagement.**

The Indian-African partnership is clearly underpinned by a strong political understanding. Both India and Africa recognize the importance of democratic governance and peace and security for sustainable growth and development. They are trying to increasingly engage in exchanging their respective experiences to look for common ground on political and security issues, which include democratic governance, conflict resolution, counter terrorism, food security, resource security, and maritime security responses. Key questions that need to be addressed are what are the respective experiences of democratic governance in India and Africa? How can they strengthen their partnership in response to the non traditional security challenges including, food security, energy security terrorism and piracy?

India's political support for Africa has been augmented by closer economic cooperation including economic assistance, functional cooperation, capacity building, soft loans and private sector investment. Both sides demonstrate their interest to play a more substantive role in enhancing economic ties and development partnership for mutual growth and development. However some of the significant questions that need to be explored are what are the challenges for sustainable economic engagement and how will both sides address them? How far the training and capacity building measures on the part of India have been relevant to the people's employability, structural transformations of the local economy and the larger needs of institution building?

At the regional level India has been deepening its relationship with the Regional Economic Communities (REC) of Africa in the recent years. The RECs over the decades have

facilitated the regional integration of Africa. This process has a significant bearing on the development of India's trade and investment relations with the African countries. It is important to have an understanding of the regional imperatives in Africa and the scope for India's interface, particularly how has the process of intra-regional integration progressed in Africa? What are the contours and drivers of inter-regional cooperation process in Africa? What are the opportunities and constraints in India's regional engagement with Africa?



*Audience at Inaugural Session.*

The purpose of this symposium is to have a meaningful discussion on these key priority areas for both India and Africa. Hopefully this conference comes out with clear and specific recommendations on the subjects under discussion and provide new and creative ideas to deepen and diversify our relations.

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