Contents

List of Tables ix
List of Figures x
List of Abbreviations xi
Acknowledgements xix
Foreword xxii
Notes on Contributors xxiii

1. Introduction 1
   Renu Modi

Part I The Concept, History and Moving Forward

2. South–South Development Cooperation:
   A Contemporary Perspective 19
   Francisco Simplicio

   New Bandung Consensus? 42
   Fantu Cheru

4. Traces of the Past, Fragments for the Future: South–South
   Cooperation in the Indian Ocean 61
   Ned Bertz

Part II Economic Dimensions of South–South Cooperation

5. Food Security and South–South Cooperation 75
   Ayodele Aderinwale and Abiola Sanusi

6. The BRICs and Africa: Emerging Markets and South–South
   Cooperation 96
   Sanjukta Banerji Bhattacharya

7. Healthcare of Africans in India 116
   Renu Modi
8. Challenges and Opportunities of Regional Trading Agreements in Africa
   Chandrakant Patel
   138

9. India's Economic Engagement with Sudan since the 1990s: Search for Energy Security and Beyond
   Shaji Sadasivan
   154

Part III Socio-Political Context of South–South Cooperation

10. South Africa and India As Regional Leaders in the Global South
    Karen Smith
    171

11. Social Protection Lessons from SADC for the Global South
    Marius Olivier and Avinash Govindjee
    184

12. Civil Society in Africa: Perspectives on the Expanding Engagement with Southern Partners
    Sanusha Naidu
    203

13. India, Africa and the IOR-ARC: Potential for Collaboration
    Seema Shekhawat
    220

Index
   235
1
Introduction

Renu Modi

This compendium is the outcome of an international workshop titled *South–South Cooperation: Africa on the Centre Stage*, organized by the Centre for African Studies, University of Mumbai, in February 2008. At the working sessions several academics agreed that the continent was on centre stage of the emergent global reconfigurations while others were more sceptical and questioned, *Africa on the centre stage?*

This book endeavours to understand the changing political and economic scenario and study the manner in which the traditional North–South development paradigm is giving way to a South–South model of cooperation that complements and positions Africa on centre stage. A brief exposition of the subject of our book is warranted here. The term ‘South’ has been used as a generic concept to classify countries that are in binary opposition to the category of the ‘North’, whereby the former is a group of countries that are underdeveloped while the latter refers to those that are developed, industrialized and have a higher level of economic and financial infrastructure.

South–South Cooperation (SSC) as a concept has its genesis in the post-World War II period when developing countries of Asia and Africa were liberated from the colonial yoke and confronted by an international system balanced unfavourably towards them. The colonial powers established exploitative patterns of trade and commerce, secured easy access to the continent’s abundant natural resources to fuel their manufacturing industries, and obtained protected markets for their manufactured goods. Termed as the ‘Third World’ or ‘developing’ states or the ‘South’ in the language of international politics, these countries shared common historical experiences and faced similar politico-economic challenges.

South–South Cooperation as we understand today needs to be historicized argues Ned Bertz, a historian with a research background on the history of the ‘Indian Ocean world’. He traces collaboration between the shores of South Asia, Arabia and Africa to the pre-colonial period, ‘much before colonialism drove them into the new and tarnished category of countries known as the Third World’ (Bertz, Chapter 4) and asserts that these connections
have been alive all along and ‘the New Asia would seek to revive the old ties and build newer and better forms of relationships’ (Jawaharlal Nehru cited in Chapter 4).

South–South Cooperation as widely understood received considerable attention as a philosophy for development during the 1960s and 1970s, at a time when developing countries were struggling with poverty and under-development. The lack of financial and technological resources and Western apathy at that juncture forced them to look for collective self-reliance as an engine of growth. In the early 1960s they organized themselves for collective action within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). After independence in 1947, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru developed India’s foreign policy, in which anti-racism and decolonization of countries under colonialism figured prominently, thus providing a common ground for developing relations with African countries, both individually and as a group to work together on common platforms in international bodies like the UN. Soon after decolonization in Africa countries became members of the Organization of the African Union (OAU) and affiliated themselves with the NAM. This was followed by the formation of the Group of 77 (G-77) in 1964, an association of countries of the South, in which they could be free from further exploitation as well as set up technical-economic collaborations to bail out their beleaguered economies. The 1970s were a decade of increased activism of the NAM and G-77 and resulted in the adoption of a resolution within the UN framework, of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to promote trade among countries of the South. SSC in the above stated context of the NIEO could not take off, inter alia, because all the countries of the South were either underdeveloped or ‘developing’, and at this stage lacked the financial capacity to invest or extend aid to assist other countries of the South (The South Centre, 1993).

The 1980s were a difficult time for the developing world. For Africa, this was a ‘lost decade’ as the countries on the continent were mired in the task of nation-building while facing debts and at times negative growth rates (Ibid., p. 3). At this time the continent was besieged by the development paradigm of the Bretton Woods Institutions, mainly the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that were economic conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, a top-down approach by primary lenders that attempted to reorient the African economies to the free market model. The nascent states of Africa had no choice but to seek financial assistance under these terms and conditions that wreaked havoc on their social and economic fabric. The tenets of the Washington Consensus are understood in common parlance as a term that includes liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), the deregulation and fiscal austerity, that were expected to lay the basis for economic reforms and lead to economic growth and prosperity,
insisted on the introduction of western style multiparty democracy, good governance and human rights in Africa’ (Williamson, 1990).1

To be eligible for funding for development, the World Bank required the borrowing countries to liberalize their economies and integrate themselves within the world economy. Under the Uruguay Round (UR) of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in the period 1986–1994, developing countries were also pushed to make substantial commitments to liberalize their trade policy regimes. However, the African governments did not appreciate the audits, but there was a kind of complacency and an acceptance to this Consensus in the absence of any other major avenues of funding, until the post-Cold War era (Williamson, 1999).

Joseph Stiglitz, an economist at the Bank until 1999, has been one of the harshest critics of the Washington Consensus. He opines that the Consensus is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for development, as exemplified by the growth and development of countries in Asia, like India and China. ‘In the last two decades China followed some prescriptions of the Washington Consensus such as macro stability, but did not follow the standard precepts such as privatization and liberalization. There were other countries that followed the prescriptions but did not attain economic growth’ (Stiglitz, 2000).

The issue of SSC appeared on the agenda as a result of the developmental challenges that the process of economic recovery posed in the subsequent years, in the 1990s, largely as a consequence of the structural adjustment programmes (The South Centre, 1993, pp. 3–5). Rajni Kothari, one of the architects of the South Commission Report, states, ‘Today the only thing that holds the nations of the South together is the common debt trap in which they are all engulfed – hardly a condition for collective action. The “South” is fast becoming more a myth than a reality’ (Kothari, 1993, pp. 90–91).

The poor economic standing of developing countries was further aggravated by proxy wars and the flow of arms and military aid funded by the East and West block in the context of the Cold War, as the two power constellations vied for influence in regions of strategic interest on the continent. This led to the militarization of the continent through support extended to self-aggrandizing dictators on the one hand, and excessive poverty on the other, as a result of misgovernance (Obasanjo, 1996). V. S Naipaul viewed politics in the Third World as ‘… a quicksand of corruption, decadence and vice. Without liberal democracy, non-western countries only have barbarism ….’ He refers to the link between under-development and Third World cultures in Africa ‘… as a place where the future had come and gone’ (cited in Mittelman and Pasha, 1988, p. 222).

Revisionism in the twenty-first century?

The pessimism about the future of developing countries has slowly given way to a more upbeat scenario in recent years. The above stated pessimism among academics and policy makers reflected in the SSC Report needs to
be revisited in the current context of dramatic changes that have taken place in the recent past on the African continent and worldwide. Two major noteworthy developments among several others are: first, the bipolar world has come to an end since 1989, subsequent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union into its constituent units and given way to a more globalized, inter-dependent and a multipolar international system. The term ‘second world’ that was used to designate the socialist bloc is now being referred to in academic discourse as the new ‘second world’ that comprises a conglomerate of countries in the ‘intermediate layer between the first-world core periphery and the Third World periphery … that is reshaping the world … following the relative decline of the United States and the increasing assertiveness of both the European Union and China …’ (Khanna, 2008, p. 60).²

And second, there has been a dramatic rise in the past decade of countries of the South; Brazil, China, India and several countries in Africa are emerging as ‘new poles of growth’ in the revamped global politico-economic order, ‘... where North and South, East and West, are now points on a compass, not economic destinies …’ (Zoellick, 2010). On the eve of the second BRICs (an acronym that refers to the grouping of the countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China) summit the World Bank president, substantiated with statistical data, that

The developing world’s share of global GDP in purchasing power parity terms has increased from 33.7 percent in 1980 to 43.4 percent in 2010. Developing countries are likely to show robust growth rates over the next five years and beyond. Sub-Saharan Africa could grow by an average of over 6 percent to 2015 while South Asia, where half the world’s poor live, could grow by as much as 7 percent a year over the same period ... Development is no longer just North-South. It is South-South, even South-North, with lessons for all with open minds ... It is a new world where developing countries are not only recipients but providers of aid and expertise

This position of the World Bank is evidenced in the happenings around the world where the countries of the South are reasserting themselves in the global economic and political decision making forums.

The ‘second world’ is shaking up the western order most visibly in economic bodies like the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO), voting rights on the IMF’s board are shifting each year... Both institutions are now just aid and advisory bodies for Africa, since Asian nations have paid off their debts... Brazil and Argentina have accelerated their payment of arrears and washed their hands off the Washington Consensus... and in the UN Security Council reforms-Brazil, India, South Africa and Nigeria are the leading candidates for the new permanent seats. (Khanna, 2008, p. 61)
In addition to China, the largest player in the emergent geopolitical and economic arena, a powerful economic bloc comprised of the foremost emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China are ready to provide developmental assistance like Lines of Credit (LOC), infrastructure and capacity building and loans on easy terms with hardly any strings attached in return for access to Africa’s resources. Most notably, China has been a major player on the continent. Countries in Africa are weary of the sermons on human rights and good governance from the West (a point that was restated in the third Africa–European Union (EU) summit in the Libyan capital of Tripoli in November 2010) and have embraced this emergent opportunity to their advantage. The fact that China has lifted about 300 million people out of poverty (World Bank cited in Ramo, 2004, p. 11, See also Chapter 5, this book) without the Washington Consensus model or any external intervention, offers great hope to Africa. Further, the Indian model of combining democracy with development is one that inspires several African countries.

The continent has traversed a difficult trajectory as detailed above and in the current context, with the radical restructuring of the world economy and the availability of abundance of commercially viable resources, Africa has been on the ascendance in the matrix of SSC initiatives in particular and the global framework in general. Emerging complementarities between the economies of Asia and Africa have contributed to a rapid growth in trade, services, investment and financial flows between them. This development has, potentially, far reaching consequences not only for these two regions but also for the world economy as a whole. Can these trends then signal, for example, the onset of a rupture in the centre-periphery pattern of trade and investment that has historically defined developing countries relations with the North? ‘The dense ties between the countries of the second world are not routed through Washington or Moscow any more. The intensity and complexity of these interactions is beyond the control of any one power’ (Khanna, 2008, p. 60). These South–South engagements have a momentum of their own and it is multiplying at an accelerated pace as highlighted in the chapters of this book.

Economic partnerships between countries of Africa and the non-traditional partners from the South have given them more policy space for negotiations with its traditional partners from the West as they have a wider range of options to choose from. Africa can negotiate terms not as in a seller’s market but as in a buyer’s market. Khanna summarizes this emergent scenario succinctly and queries, ‘Why align with any one patron when you can play off on all sides and get what you want?’ (Khanna, 2008, p. 60). Africa is on centre stage at the negotiating table as well, as evident from the recent deliberations at the Africa–EU summit of November 2010. The EU is the biggest trading partner for the African continent. ‘In 2009, 36% of total imports to Africa were from Europe as compared to 12.7% for China, 6.2% for the USA and 3.2% for India. In the same year, 37% of exports from Africa went to

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the EU. The USA was the second most important destination with 16.5%, followed by China (10.6%) and India (4.7%) (Africa–EU Summit, 2010). Thus trade with Africa is of immense significance to the EU and collaborative efforts for economic cooperation have been the thrust of the summit.

However, unlike in the past years, African countries are not willing to enhance economic cooperation with political conditionalities. The Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi stated unequivocally at the opening session of the Tripoli summit that Africa could engage with the EU based only on ‘partnership on an equal footing’ and a ‘win–win relationship.’ He referred to the emerging economies of the South and warned that the African countries had various alternatives for sourcing their trade and investment partners (allafrica.com, 30 November). The African countries also rejected the one-sided trade deal offered and the demand made by EU that African countries liberalize their economies to comply with the WTO norms. Representing the African position Gaddafi stated ‘We do not benefit from the WTO and we call for its abolition, as the open borders would kill the national industries in Africa the developing world.’ He also criticized the EU’s practice of linking economic assistance to African countries ‘with respect for human rights and good governance’ (Lowe, 2010).³

The continent is now positioned to dictate the terms of trade and engage on its own terms, though at times this is marred by self-seeking political agendas and corruption of the governments in power. The reasons for the continent moving from the back seat onto the driver’s seat and assuming a pivotal role, at the centre of the emergent SSC development paradigm are varied. Today the continent is on the move and ‘there are many alternatives’ (TAMA) (to use the populist coinage of the World Social Forum) for Africa to fund its economic growth and development (Modi, 2009). There has been a rethinking of the engagement with Africa at the World Bank as well, in that the one-size-fit-all approach is no longer tenable.

Africa on centre stage

A little over a century ago, in 1888, Africa was referred to as the ‘dark continent’ by the Welsh journalist and explorer Henry Morton Stanley in his book *Through the Dark Continent* (1888), and the usage became common parlance in academic discourse of Western scholars to convey mystery and a lack of development about the continent. Western analysts had dubbed Africa as a ‘hopeless continent’ and most African states had been relegated to the margins of the foreign policies of the major powers unless they contained rich mineral resources or were of geo-strategic importance. Today Africa, as compared to the former decades, has moved from the periphery and into the spotlight of the world stage. The climate of Afro-pessimism has been replaced with that of Afro-optimism. We could not have imagined an academic publication with the title *Africa Rising*, for instance, even five years
ago! (Mahajan and Gunther, 2008) The reasons for the repositioning of the continent are both internal and external. The internal factor, inter alia, include the availability of abundant natural resources and a large domestic market, reforms in market regulation and in political institutions that can catalyze a climate for rewarding investments.

However, it must be stated at the outset that the countries of Africa are diverse. They are asymmetrical in terms of size of area and population, geographic positioning, the endowment of natural resources, infrastructure, political framework, and economic and human development. Therefore we cannot paint the vast stretch of the African continent with a single stroke. To illustrate, the total GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in 2009 was US$744 billion of which the economies of South Africa and Nigeria, the former endowed with minerals and an exporter of manufactured goods, and Nigeria, the largest producer of oil on the continent, contributed 56 per cent (World Bank, 2008–2009). Therefore, the assertion ‘Africa on centre stage’ indicates the general trends on the continent that is of an upbeat economic and political environment. To substantiate, 80 per cent of the 50 African countries registered growth in 2009 (Africa Economic Outlook (AEO), 2010). In 10 of the 50 countries, however, output declined while in half of the countries, per capita GDP stagnated and fell. There is a need to adopt fiscal policies, create an attractive investment climate and eliminate bottlenecks for the domestic private sector (Ibid.).

Today Africa is a market with a population of 987 million (Ibid.) that is seen as an opportunity to be tapped by the rest of the world and therefore in academic discourse it is called the ‘new frontier’. It has massive reserves of oil and natural gas that are yet to be explored and utilized. In addition, it has 99 per cent of the world’s chrome resources, 85 per cent of platinum, 70 per cent of tantalite, 68 per cent of its cobalt, and 54 per cent of its gold and other minerals. It also has the largest reserve of gem quality diamonds in the world,’ (Nevin, 2008, p. 18) which are all needed by the emerging economies for their further advancement.

Further, there is a marked evolution – political as well as economic – with a greater degree of democratization and an attempt at better governance in many countries, thus providing the climate for luring global investments. According to the latest report of the AEO (2010), economic governance in Africa registered a marked improvement in its regulatory environment in 2009. Several African countries have introduced new laws and reformed existing ones to improve the business environment. This is corroborated by the World Bank Report as well that states,

Sixty seven regulatory reforms were registered in 29 of the 49 sub-Saharan countries. First time an African country, Rwanda has ranked the top most reformers, Mauritius has also performed well with a ranking of 17 of the 183 countries for the overall ease of doing business. Sierra Leone and
Liberia too have adopted reforms and are rebuilding their economies that were ravaged by war. In addition several other countries such as Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Mozambique among others have made the improvements to make their economies attractive for investments, though some countries lipped below the rankings (Doing Business Survey 2009, cited in AEO, 2010).

The most striking example is that of Rwanda, a former Belgian colony that captured international headlines for negative reasons – the breakdown in state structure and ethnic genocide in the 1990s. Today the Rwandan model of development is cited as a good practice case, worthy of emulation and as East Africa’s best destination for investment (Africa Investor, 2010). Rwanda is working hard to brand itself as an attractive destination for investments and shedding the earlier image of a country torn by conflict and ethnic violence and making its presence felt as an active member of the international community. It joined the Commonwealth of Nations as the latest and the fifty-fourth member on 29 November 2009. Rwanda is the second member of the Commonwealth (after Mozambique) that has no colonial or constitutional links with the UK and by virtue of its membership in the Association, the country also made a debut at the 2010 Commonwealth games held in New Delhi in October 2010 (Mugabe, 2010; The Telegraph, 2010).

In addition to internal factors stated above, the external economic and political environment too has been favourable. The two main external factors that have put several countries in Africa on centre stage include the increase in demand for the natural resources globally, mainly hydrocarbons and minerals, and the flow of investments from countries of the South such as the BRICS among others, resulting in the rise in stock of FDI. The most noteworthy development for the continent has been the demand for her natural resources and their imports to the two Asian drivers, namely China and India. This has spurred the prices of primary commodities in Africa and in turn shored the economies of several resource rich African countries that are enmeshed in the global economy through their exports of natural resources. Africa offers the highest rate of return on investment and in this era of globalization, human and financial resources flow to economies that offer greater profits (World Investment Directory (WID), 2008). However, the continent has also borne the brunt for being integrated into the world economy as seen in the recent global economic crisis of 2008. The initial effects were felt due to a fall in commodity prices and a decline in the demand for the same from developed countries. ‘A gradual recovery is predicted to a growth rate of 5.2 in 2011. East Africa has best weathered the crisis and is likely to achieve the highest average growth’ (AEO, 2010, p. 2).

Despite the global economic recession at the turn of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the FDI stock on the continent increased to US$88 billion in 2008 (World Investment Report (WIR), 2008).4 FDIs can be a major
source of growth and the benefits spread to other sectors as well through technological spill over (See Chapter 9).

In the emergent scenario, Africa has space for policy and marketability, wherein it can choose its trade and investment partners, which it has done by endorsing the intra-African economic engagements through the BRICs. In addition to Africa’s traditional trading allies from the West, India and China, two emerging economies are now an integral part of the international market and formidable financial powers with sustained growth rates of about 8–9 per cent helping to fuel development in African countries. The BRICs have also provided alternative models for doing business, which are helping these countries overthrow past patterns of negative growth. There is more genuine cooperation between the BRICs countries and Africa, as the trade is underlined by a spirit of partnership that involves infrastructure development, manpower training, developmental aid, LOC and so on. that are helping the African countries to emerge as players in a globalized world. The BRICs also compete among themselves for good deals in the African continent as well as with other multinationals, and this competition gives options and choice to African countries, for better deals and an upper hand in negotiations. Further, the countries of Next Eleven (N-11), a very diverse grouping that includes Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey and Vietnam. These economies though not as large as the BRICS are expected to have a ‘BRIC like impact’ in the forthcoming decades (Wilson and Stupnytska, 2008; see Chapters 3 and 6, this book). However, it needs to be clarified that the economic and diplomatic engagement of African countries is governed by each partners’ national interest, yet it allows space for the break away from the shackles of trading exclusively with the traditional partners from the West and the rigid IMF conditionality-laden ‘Washington Consensus’ of dominance to the ‘Beijing Consensus’ and beyond.

The structure of the book: an overview

This book is organized into three main thematic parts. The first part entitled ‘The Concept, History and Moving Forward’, sets the tone of the book within a theoretical and historical framework and comprises three chapters (Chapters 2–4). This segment is devoted to the theoretical understanding of the subject in the past and contemporary context. Bertz details that the concept of SSC in the Indian Ocean world has deep-rooted traces in the past and these could extend into the future as well (See Bertz this volume). The authors understand South–South Development Cooperation (SSDC) not so much as aid but rather as economic, technical, and cultural cooperation for mutual benefit. It cannot mirror traditional North–South cooperation: ‘the premises are different, the conditions are different, and the expectations are different,’ and it is important to preserve its uniqueness (See Chapter 2). The
author considers the driving force behind SSC, ‘as the developing countries themselves, regardless of whether such cooperation is bilateral, regional or interregional.’ The waning of American power and the emergence of China and India as powerful players in the global political economy provides an enormous opportunity for constructing a new ‘Bandung II consensus’ and positions developing countries as important players in global affairs, as discussed in this segment. The increased South–South strategic engagements in recent years in the context of the G-20, the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) dialogue, the G-77 and the NAM, are all in response to the inflexibility of the developed countries to democratize the Northern-dominated global economic systems and institutional regime (i.e. the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO) (See Chapter 3). The central question that is raised in this segment is how can African countries (and developing countries in general) harness these new relationships with emerging powers (such as the BRICs, N-11 and others) to construct an alternative counter hegemonic global economic and governance architecture favourable to them.

Though the chapters of this compendium deal with disparate aspects of SSC, the underlying thrust is uniform: it amplifies the fact that such a model, in addition to policy and marketability space, offers a viable and an alternative model of development and economic engagement for the countries of the South.

The second part of this book, ‘Economic Dimensions of South–South Cooperation’ (Chapters 5–9), deals with areas of collaboration – existing or with tremendous potential – for which there are compelling reasons. These include collaborations between countries of the South, inter- and intra-continental, on issues of achieving food security, BRICs and emerging markets, medical tourism of Africans to India, regional trading arrangements on the continent and the import of natural resources, for example, India’s engagements in Sudan in the hydrocarbon sector. In fact, the BRICs are acting as drivers of growth in Africa and this has led the older actors to reassess their policies as they realize that they too need to offer African countries similar incentives if they wish to retain their earlier market shares in Africa (See Chapter 6). Cooperation among countries of the South for achieving food sovereignty, such as between India and Africa to import the lessons learnt from the Indian ‘green revolution’ or from China’s spectacular poverty alleviation measures through improvements in the agriculture and other sector has been studied in the second part of the book. Reforming the healthcare sector is yet another area of potential cooperation as indicated by the rise in the number of African ‘medical tourists’ to India. Therefore efforts are being made to upgrade the medical facilities in individual countries and set up regional hubs of medical excellence on the continent through collaboration with Indian hospitals such as the Bangalore-based Narayan Hrudalaya and the Apollo Hospitals Group and the Pan African e-network, funded by the Indian External Affairs Ministry under its Aid to Africa Budget programme
though the pace of such endeavours to create regional centres of excellence certainly needs to be augmented (See Chapter 7). Intra-regional cooperation provides new opportunities for development among the countries of the South based on geographical proximity, expertise and availability of complementary financial resources, and a local pool of management and technical skills.

Patel dwells on this aspect and questions if the expanding intra-regional cooperation such as in the domain of trade is more likely to reflect equality and mutuality of interests, unlike the rancour that often characterizes North–South investment and trade relations. There is clearly a growing realization of change here as the African countries are developing collaborations closer home such as regional communities for ‘... developing and implementing harmonized laws, standards, regulations and procedures to ensure the smooth flow of goods and services and to reduce transport costs and promote intra-African trade, that currently represents only about 10 percent of total African exports ...’ (AEO, 2010, p. 3). SSC, at the inter and intra level, is the need of the hour (See Chapter 8). To elucidate, India’s involvement by way of technological cooperation in Sudan accelerated the oil exploration and drilling operations in the country and subsequently led to increase in trade in oil with India, and this technological cooperation had spin offs and expanded to several other sectors such as small and medium-scale enterprises, power, railways, automobiles and communication technology (See Chapter 9).

The third and final part of the book – ‘Socio Political Context of South–South Cooperation’ – studies the concept in the social and political setting centred around the fact of increasing collaboration between the Southern countries in the regional as well as the international arena so that lessons can be learnt and good cases incorporated in the spheres of foreign policy and soft power, social protection measures for humane governance of migration for the alleviation of poverty, maritime collaborations and civil society engagements, all issues that go far beyond trade (Chapters 10–13).

Collaborative endeavours between countries of the South are seen in areas of shared strategic interests as well as in other sectors that have immense potential for cooperation in the near future. This section deals with the challenges faced by policy makers in reconciling conflicting national and regional interests. In claiming to represent regional interests in various multilateral forums, South Africa and India, for example, are recognized as regional leaders by the broader international community, supported by the fact that the two states’ leaders are often invited to platforms of the advanced, industrialized countries (such as the G-8), where they are regarded as spokespersons not only for their individual states, but also for their regions, and the developing world in general. Their acceptance as regional powers by their immediate neighbours has, however, been less than forthcoming and this necessitates the need for harnessing soft power for
improved relations and foreign policy outcomes in their own neighbourhoods, explains Smith (See Chapter 10).

Learning lessons from other states should be an important element of the SSC which must be broadened to include, in addition to issues of foreign policy, viable social protection measures and structures via regional instruments, maritime concerns, and to enable SSC to transcend more than simply official cooperation within areas such as trade (See Chapter 11). Collaborative measures between countries of the South are seen in areas of shared strategic interests as well, an area that has immense potential for cooperation in the near future. For example, the Indian Ocean Rim countries that have relatively recent antecedents within the framework of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), set up in 1995, make a case for the unexplored potential that the platform provides to cooperate bilaterally as well as multilaterally, to play a decisive role in national, regional as well as global stability, economic and other strategic spheres to counter threats such as terrorism and piracy. India’s support to re-energize the IOR-ARC along with its much hyped ‘Focus Africa’ policy can be considered crucial postures towards facilitating a substantive cooperation with the African member countries of the IOR-ARC, thereby boosting the objectives of the Association, prime among which is SSC (See Chapter 13).

There is an increasing polarization of opinion on Africa’s new engagement with its Southern partners that includes the more entrenched actors, from BRICs to N-11- such as India, China, Brazil and countries of the Middle East, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, among others, that have also recognized Africa’s trade, investment and resource opportunities. The underlying question of this entire academic exercise is to comprehend what is ‘new’ in this emergent engagement. There are two competing opinions on the subject that need to be listed, though both convey an oversimplified analysis of the current scenario of SSC in the context of Africa. The first school opines that this emergent cooperation is extractive and exploitative. It concludes that these new actors (more so in the case of China considered as the ‘yellow peril’ in Western academic discourse) are the ‘new imperial’ powers and that such engagement merely perpetuates the continent as a primary exporter of renewable and non-renewable resources. The proponents of the second approach are, however, asserting that the engagement is benign and believe that Africa’s engagements with these Southern partners will assist states in achieving their development objectives (as explained by Naidu in Chapter 12).

‘The schism of the debate masks the nuances inherent in the new actors’ engagement with economies on the African continent, as it sees Africa as a passive actor in this engagement. This appears to contradict the current trajectory of relations between African governments and their Southern counterparts. In so far as the engagement is currently only enabled at the state and market levels without involvement of civil society, African governments do appear to be active participants in the engagement with Southern
partners. However, it is unclear how the relationship with these new actors can be leveraged, as this has fundamental implications for governance and leadership issues for African governments at the domestic level, particularly on the subject of transparency, disclosure on the nature of the deals and most significantly on the issue of accountability towards the common man,’ asserts Naidu (Chapter 12).

Regrettably, the economic potential of SSC in the African nations is at times subverted by the unstable political conditions and the development of nascent democratic institutions that are stifled and impeded by corruption, crises of political legitimacy and a weak civil society. To ensure that the ongoing SSC on the continent is of mutual benefit to the Southern partners and is people centred, there is an urgent need to forge alliances and encourage the active participation of civil society, because, ‘until lions learn to write, hunters will tell their story for them’ (Kenyan proverb).

Notes

1 The term ‘Washington Consensus’ was coined in 1989 by economist John Williamson in a background paper for a conference held by the Institute for International Economics where he laid down a set of ten policy recommendation for countries willing to reform their economic policies in the context of Latin America.


4 The trend in the past decade has been upbeat as the FDI into the continent had risen sixfold, from US$6 billion in 1995 to US$36 billion in 2006 (WID, 2008). Post 2008, although the developed countries were the leading sources of FDI in Africa, and their share in the region’s FDI stock has fallen over time, this has been compensated largely due to increased investments from developing countries such as China, India, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan, significant Asian investors to Africa. This increased the FDI stock in the region to US$511 billion (WIR, 2009, p. 15).

References


Index

Abuja, 125
Africa
see also specific countries
in 1980s, 2–3, 99
agriculture in, 81–9
Asia and, 42, 138, 146–9
BRICs and, 96–112
civil society in, 203–18
decolonization in, 2
diversity of, 7
economic growth in, 4, 5, 96, 151–2
economic partnerships in, 5–6
exploitation of, 206, 214–15
green revolution in, 87–9
healthcare sector in, 117–26
India and, 102, 211, 223–5
investment climate in, 107
IOR-ARC and, 220–31
land leases in, 90–2
land reform, 80–1
regional trade agreements in, 138–52
rise of, 6–9, 151–2
U.S. interests in, 107
Africa-European Union (EU) summit, 5
African Command (Africom), 107
African Development Bank (ADB), 24
African Finance Corporation, 53
African National Congress (ANC), 208
African nationalism, 66–8, 70, 204
African People's Dialogue network, 206
African Union (AU), 23, 24, 46, 48, 118, 180, 210
African universities, 23, 37n11
agrarian colonialism, 90–1
agricultural assistance, 85–6
agricultural export market, 76
agricultural growth rates, 76–7
agricultural liberalization, 48
agricultural prices, 75–6, 92n1
agricultural production, 76, 79–83, 86, 87–90, 92, 152
agricultural reform, 81–92
in Africa, 83–9
in China, 78, 80, 82, 90
in India, 82–3
agricultural subsidies, 46, 51, 86–7, 88
agriculture
in Africa, 83–9
in China, 78, 80, 90
FDI in, 90–1
investment in, 77
land leases and, 90–2
aid policy, 24–5, 51–2
aid-trade provisions (ATP), 32
Akram, Munir, 20, 28
Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), 88
Almaty Programme of Action, 35
Andean Development Cooperation, 30
Angola, 96, 102, 103–6
anti-Chinese sentiment, 215, 218n6
anti-debt campaigns, 207
Aravind Eye Hospitals, 133
Argentina, 4, 48, 140
arms trade, 110
ASEAN countries, 139, 144
Asia
see also specific countries
Africa and, 42, 138, 146–9
Australia, 32, 226
Bandung II consensus, 10, 42–58
Bank of the South, 30, 43, 52–3
Beijing Consensus, 9
Bertz, Ned, 1
bio-ethanol, 103
Blair, Tony, 204
Bollywood doctrine, 173–6
Botswana, 100, 125
Braudel, Fernand, 64
Brazil, 4, 24, 42, 47, 48, 172, 208
see also BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)
Africa and, 103
Angola and, 105
235
Brazil – continued
economic growth, 98
economy of, 99
Bretton Woods Institutions, 2
BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China), 4, 5, 8–10, 42–9, 217
see also specific countries
Africa and, 96–112
Angola and, 103–6
competition among, 99, 107
economic indicators, 98
GDP of, 97, 98
Nigeria and, 103–4, 106–8
overview of, 97–9
British East African Protectorate, 221
Brussels Programme of Action, 35
Buddhism, 180
Burkina Faso, 125
Burundi, 125
business, strategic alliances with, 57
business environment, 100
CAADP. See Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme
Cancun, Mexico, 46
Caribbean Community (CARICOM), 46
Charter of Fundamental Social Rights, 187–8, 190–1, 195
Chevron, 159
Chile, 48
China, 24, 48, 140, 208, 211
see also BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)
agricultural reform in, 78, 80, 82, 90
Angola and, 104–5
demand for natural resources in, 8
development in, 3
economic growth, 78, 98, 110
economy of, 99
educational opportunities, 55
influence of, in Africa, 225–6
investment in Africa by, 5, 24–5, 36n3, 90, 101, 108–11
Nigeria and, 107
rise of, 4, 10, 42
Sudan and, 161, 164–5
trade between Africa and, 42, 92
China-Africa Cooperation, 42
chrome, 7
cities, 141
civil society, 12, 13, 27, 34, 35, 45, 57, 203–18
civil society organizations (CSOs), 203–18
class conflicts, 213–14
cobalt, 7
Code on Social Security, 188–90, 191, 195
Cold War, 3, 22, 43, 68, 96, 100, 110, 174, 205, 220
collective farming, 80
Collier, Paul, 37n8
colonialism, 1, 2, 22, 51, 172, 221
Commission for Africa (CFA), 198n1, 204, 217n3
Commission on Global Governance, 50
commodity agreements, 32
commodity prices, 32, 44, 75
Common Fund, 44
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), 144
Commonwealth of Nations, 8
Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), 76, 93n2
concessional assistance, 21, 28, 29
conditional aid, 51–2
Confucius Institute for Business, 33
c consumer price index (CPI), 84, 85
corruption, 13, 126
Daewoo, 91
Darfur crisis, 89
Da Silva, Lula, 103
debt crisis, in 1980s, 44
decolonization, 2, 22, 66–7
Democratic Republic of Congo, 100, 125, 193
democratization, 7, 50
demonstration effect, 143
deregulation, 2
Dervis, Kemal, 34, 38n22
developing countries
see also specific countries
cooperation among, 20
policy space for, 47, 56
renewed optimism toward, 3–6
trade among, 140–1, 144–9
Washington Consensus and, 2–3
Index

development banks, 21, 30, 33, 36n5
Development Cooperation (DC), 19, 20, 22, 27, 210
see also South-South Development Cooperation (SSDC)
diamonds, 7
diasporas, 34, 66–7, 69, 174
Djibouti, 125
Doha Development Round, 35, 48, 51, 210
dollar, 53, 99
domestic policies, 57–8
donor-recipient relations, 27
Draft Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons, 185
East Africa, 8, 63–4, 66, 68, 108, 130, 131, 134, 146, 221, 229, 230
East African Business Council (EABC), 145
East African Community (EAC), 38n15, 146
East African Marine Cable (TEAMS), 229
East Asia, 51, 57, 145
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 198n1
economic cooperation, 6, 24, 149, 152, 158, 164–5, 186, 221–3, 228–9, 231
see also South–South Cooperation (SSC)
education, 57
coopera
ion in, 55
investment in, 23–4, 33, 37n12
medical, 134
Egypt, 46, 48, 100
Eight Core Conventions, 193
emerging donors, 24, 27, 38n13
emerging markets, 96, 98–9
emerging powers, 206–9, 211–13
see also BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China); specific countries
employment opportunities, 152
Enabling Clause, 142
energy security, 154, 156–7
Eritrea, 100
Essar, 163
Ethiopia, 91
Euro, 53
European Common Market, 146
European Union (EU), 4, 5–6, 32, 51, 148, 215
EXIM Bank, 162, 227–8
Export Processing Zones (EPZ), 186
exports, 5–6, 8, 11, 32, 50–1, 76, 102, 104–5, 110, 139, 139–40, 144–9, 157–8, 162–4, 223–5
extractive industries, 101, 109–10, 209
factor mobility, 141
family protections, 195
Fanon Frantz, 205
Farm Africa, 81–92
farmland, investment in, 90–1
financial infrastructure, 19–20
Flemes, D., 179
food prices, 75–6, 84, 85, 91, 92n1
food production, 87–8
see also agricultural production
food security, 75–93
land reform and, 79–81
policy environment for, 81–92
food sovereignty, 10
foreign direct investment (FDI), 8–9, 13n4, 148
in agriculture, 90
by China, 101, 108–11
intra-South, 31
regulatory framework for, 51
foreign policy, 2, 11–12, 48, 105, 154–5, 165, 171–2, 176, 178–82, 221–2, 228
Fortis Clinique Darne, 132
Forum of Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC), 211, 212
freedom of movement, 185–6, 198n6
free market, 2, 86, 155
free trade, 140–1
free trade areas (FTAs), 146, 148
frontier markets, 39n25
full employment, 141
G-8, 24–6, 177
G-20, 10, 42, 45, 50
G-22, 46
G-33, 46
G-77, 2, 10, 43–5, 49, 138
Gaddafi, Muammar, 6
Gandhi, Indira, 68
General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 3, 44, 45–6, 142, 220
Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), 44
generic drugs, 133, 217
governance, 50–2
Greater Nile Oil Project (GNOP), 159, 166n3
green revolution
in Africa, 87–9
in India, 10, 82–3
Gulf States, 108, 218n7
hard power, 180, 181
healthcare sector, 10–11, 116–35
in Africa, 117–26
in India, 126–31, 133
investment in, 132–4
medical tourism and, 116–17, 126–31
health expenditures, 121–5
health insurance, 127
health workforce, 118–20
heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs), 109
hegemony, 179–80
Heiligendamm Process, 25–6
Hindi films, 68–9
Hindutva movement, 180
HIV/AIDS epidemic, 117, 184
Household Responsibility System (HRS), 80
Hu, Jintao, 225
human development, 7, 22–3, 57, 151, 214
humanitarian assistance, 31
human rights, 3, 5–6, 159, 165, 172, 174, 177, 187, 190, 192, 195, 214
hydrocarbons, 8, 10, 102–3, 107, 154, 156, 160, 165
ILO Conventions, 187, 190–4
imports, 5, 8, 51, 54, 76, 102, 106–7, 140, 147–8, 163, 223–5
import substitution, 139
India, 24, 140, 208, 213
see also BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)
Africa and, 102, 211
agricultural revolution in, 78
Angola and, 105
under colonial rule, 66–7
demand for natural resources in, 8
development model in, 5
economic growth, 78, 98
economic reforms, 155
economy of, 99
educational opportunities, 55
energy security and, 156–7
foreign policy, 2, 48, 165, 172–3, 178–9, 228
globalization and, 154–6
green revolution in, 10, 82–3
healthcare sector in, 118, 121, 126–31, 133
historical understanding of, 63–4
impact of, on world economy, 98
intra-regional trade, 145
investment in Africa by, 24–5
IOR-ARC and, 220–31
land grabs by, 213, 218n7
medical tourism in, 116–17, 126–31, 134–5
Nigeria and, 106–7
as regional leader, 171–82
rise of, 4, 10, 42
soft power and, 173–6, 180–1
South Africa and, 172–3
Sudan and, 11, 154–66
trade between Africa and, 223–5
India-Africa Forum Summit, 90, 211, 212–13, 228
India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) dialogue, 10, 42, 45, 46–8, 172
role of, 48
trade negotiations and, 47–8
Indian Diaspora, 66–7, 69, 174
Indian Ocean, 221
Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), 12, 155, 220–31
creation of, 221–2
economic cooperation and, 223–5
nature and scope of, 222–3
re-energizing, 226–7
Indian Ocean world, 12
South–South Cooperation in, 61–71
Indian Railways, 162–3
Indonesia, 46, 108
inequalities, 75, 213–14
infrastructure, 152
development, 33
institutional, 35
investment in, 22–3, 36n7, 37n9, 100, 210
institutional infrastructure, 35
Integrated Programme for Commodities, 44
intellectual property rights, 44
Inter-American Development Bank, 30
Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation, 31
inter-country commodity agreements, 32
international aid, conditionality-driven, 51–2
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IN+BRD), 20
International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes, 20
International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 193
International Crops Research Institute for Semi Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), 90
International Development Association (IDA), 20
International Finance Corporation (IFC), 20
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 29
international law, on social protections, 190–2
International Medical Tourism Association (IMTA), 130–1
International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2, 10, 50, 99
international trade, 44–5, 50–1, 140–2
see also trade
intra-African trade, 11, 144–5
intra-Asian trade, 148
intra-regional cooperation, 11, 178
see also South–South Cooperation (SSC)
investment policies, 54
Japan, 26, 32, 45, 48, 112, 148, 149, 209, 222
Jubilee 2000 Campaign, 204, 217n2
Kaberuka, Donald, 25
Karuturi Global Ltd., 91
KEANS countries, 104
Kenya, 8, 88, 90, 104, 107, 126, 127, 129, 133, 157, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 230
Khor, Martin, 56
Khanna, Parag, 4, 5, 13n2
Korea-Africa Summit, 42
Krugman, Paul, 141
Kunder, James, 24–5
labour laws, 185, 186, 189–91, 193–4, 197
labour markets, 185, 191, 197
labour migration, 185–6, 198n7
land acquisitions, 90–1, 213, 218n7
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), 19, 21, 35
land reform, 79–81
land tenure policies, 80–1
Land Use Act, 79–80
Latin America, 42–3, 144–5, 165
Latin American Caribbean Group (GRULAC), 46
Least Developed Countries (LDCs), 19, 21, 35, 46
liberalization, 3, 45, 155
agricultural, 48
trade, 86
liberalization, privatization, globalization (LPG), 2
Lines of Credit (LOC), 5, 102
‘lost decade’, 1980s as, 2–3, 99
macroeconomic policies, 54, 56
Madagascar, 91, 121, 130–1, 222, 225, 231
Malawi, 86–8, 121, 191
Malaysia, 12, 86, 108, 158–61, 165, 222
malnourishment, 75–6
Mandela, Nelson, 172
Manning, Richard, 24
manufactured goods, 1, 7, 97, 101, 109, 140, 148, 155, 157
marine cables, 229–31
maritime cooperation, 229–31
market access, 209–10
marketing, of Indian healthcare sector, 129–31
Mauritania, 100
Mauritius, 7, 35, 117, 128, 132, 198n4, 222, 224–5, 227, 229, 231
Mauritius Strategy, 35
MAVINS countries, 106
medical tourism, 10, 69, 116–17, 126–31, 134–5
Melkert, Ad, 27
MERCOSUR, 47
Mexico, 24, 48, 108
micro-credit industry, 39n28
middle income countries, 21, 36n6, 38n22, 46–7
migration, 185–6, 198n7
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 22–3, 26, 151, 198n1
minerals, 7, 8
mobility, 64–5, 185–6, 198n6
monetary union, 53–4
Most Favoured Nation (MFN), 142
movement freedom of, 185
Mozambique, 100, 221, 224
Mugabe, Robert, 116
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), 20, 31, 39n25
multilateralism, 29–30, 44, 143–4, 149–50, 158, 172, 177, 223
multilateral trade negotiations, 45–8, 50–1
multinational companies, 97–8, 112, 217
multipolar system, 4
Naipaul, V. S., 3
Namibia, 102, 215
nationalism, 62, 66, 67, 68, 70, 204
nation states, 63
natural gas, 7, 101–2, 104, 106
natural resources, 7, 8, 90, 112, 154, 209, 214–15
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 2, 67, 70, 174, 176, 222
neoliberalism, 45, 56, 155, 166n1, 207, 214
New International Economic Order (NIEO), 2, 43
New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), 35, 48, 102
Next Eleven (N-11), 9, 43, 96
Nigeria, 4, 46, 48, 100, 102, 103–4, 106–8, 178, 215
agriculture, 83–4, 87, 89
economy of, 7
land reform, 79–80
Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), 2, 10, 43, 45, 99, 138, 155, 172, 174, 205, 208, 227
non-concessional assistance, 21, 23, 26, 29–30
non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 207–18
non-tariff barriers, 54–5, 145
North, defined, 1
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), 144
North-South Cooperation, 20–1, 28, 207
North-South development paradigm, 1
North-South trade, 148
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 177
Official Development Assistance (ODA), 19, 20, 22–4, 29, 32
oil, 7, 11, 104–7, 154, 156–61, 165
oil companies, 106–7, 159
Ol’ Rim Initiative, 222
O’Neill, Jim, 97
1+6 countries, 220–31
ONGC Videsh (OVL), 105–6, 157, 159–60, 165
Organization of the African Union (OAU), 2
Outreach-5 (O-5), 24–6
Pakistan, 48
Pan African e-network, 133–4, 217n4, 228
Petrobras, 103
Panitchpakdi, Supachai, 28
perfect competition, 141
Permanent Five (P-5), 48
petroleum, 104
pharmaceuticals, 126, 133, 217
piracy, 12, 229
platinum, 7
policy autonomy, 56
policy space, 47, 56
political instability, 13
political stability, 100
popular culture, 180–1
post-colonial states, 22
poverty, 75, 77, 100, 185, 197
price stabilization, 32, 44
private sector, 34, 35, 57
privatization, 2, 3, 155
productivity, 152
pro-poor policies, 56
protectionism, 155
PTA unit of account (UAPTA), 53–4
rational discrimination, 184
Reagan, Ronald, 44
regional development banks, 30, 33, 36n5
regional identity, 180
regional payment and clearing house, 53–4
regional powers, 171–82
regional trade agreements, 138–52
  benefits of, 139, 143–4
  features of, 140
  growth of, 140–2
  rationale of, 140–2
  rise of, 142–6
regulatory environment, 7–8
Research and Information System for Development Countries (RIS), 38n23
reserve currencies, 53
resource diplomacy, 209
Russia, 4, 42
  see also BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, and China)
  Africa and, 101–2, 110
  Angola and, 105–6
  economic growth, 98
  economy of, 99
  Rwanda, 8, 96, 100, 125, 204
Said, Edward, 205
Saudi Arabia, 90, 91, 116, 213, 225
science education, 23–4, 33, 37n12
scientific cooperation, 55
‘second world’, 4, 5
Shagari, Shehu, 89
Singapore issues, 46
Singh, Manmohan, 172, 176
slave trade, 208
Small Island Developing States (SIDS), 19, 35
smart power, 181
social justice, 217
social policies, 57–8
social protections, 12, 184–201
  internationalization of, 190–4
social security, 184, 185, 188–91
soft power, 11–12, 171, 173–6, 179–82
Somali pirates, 229
South
  see also specific countries
  Africa’s engagement with, 203–18
  defined, 1
  regional leaders of, 171–82
  rise of, 205
  South Africa, 4, 11, 24, 48, 96, 100, 146
  economy of, 7
  foreign policy, 172–3, 178
  India and, 172–3, 223, 224
  military power, 179–80
  as regional leader, 171–3
  relations between Africa and, 208
  social security, 198n5
  soft power of, 175, 180–1
  South African Customs Union, 198n3
  South America, 42–3, 48
  South Asia, 145
  South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), 145, 155
  South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), 145
  South Bank, 30, 43, 52–3
  Southern Africa Customs Union (ASCU), 47
Southern African Development Community (SADC), 184–201
challenges facing, 194–7
characteristics of, 184–6
Charter of Fundamental Social Rights, 187–8, 190–1, 195
Code on Social Security, 188–90, 191, 195
emerging opportunities in, 194–7
internationalization of social protection norms in, 190–4
objectives of, 186–7
reform in, 195
social protections in, 184–97
South Korea, 91, 108
South–South Cooperation (SSC), 9–10, 205–6
academic models for, 62–5
BRICs and, 96–112
challenges facing, 46–9
civil society and, 203–18
concept of, 1–3
differences between North-South Cooperation and, 20–1
economic dimensions of, 10–11, 75–168
food security and, 75–93
future of, 49, 69–70
historical context, 1–3, 43–4, 138–9
in Indian Ocean, 61–71
in macroeconomic and investment policies, 54
mutual learning and, 171
in post-1980s, 44–5
redefining, 69–70
to reform global governance architecture, 50–2
regional trade agreements and, 138–52
socio-political context, 11–12, 171–231
strategic integration, 55–8
WTO and, 45–6
South-South Development Cooperation (SSDC), 9–10, 19–39
broadened agenda for, 29–35
context of, 22–6
trends and issues in, 26–8
South-South FDI, 31
South-South trade, 52, 54–5, 140
sovereign wealth funds (SWFs), 33
Soviet Union, dissolution of, 4, 96, 155
specialization, 141
Special Safeguard Measures, 46, 51
spill over effects, 165
Stanley, Henry Morton, 6
Stiglitz, Joseph, 3
Strategic Group of Seventeen (SG17), 92
strategic integration, 52, 55–8
strategic partnerships, 210
structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), 2, 3, 44, 83–4
sub-regional development banks, 30, 33, 36n5
Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
economic growth, 100
food insecurity in, 75–6
GDP of, 7, 100
healthcare sector in, 117–26
social security in, 184, 185
subsidies, agricultural, 46, 51, 86–7, 88
Sudan, 11, 91, 96, 100, 110
business opportunities in, 157
China and, 161, 164–5
oil resources, 157–61, 165
political situation in, 157
power sector, 161–2
relations between India and, 154–66
symbolic diplomacy, 210
System of Stabilization of Export Earnings (STABEX), 32
Taiwan, 101
Talisman Energy Inc., 159
Tanzania, 68–9, 109, 223–5
tariffs, 32, 54–5, 145, 150
TEAM 9 Initiative, 217n5
technical assistance, 27–8, 30–3
telemedicine, 133–4, 217n4, 228
territoriality, 64–5
terrorism, 12, 230–1
tertiary education, 23–4, 33, 37n12
Tharoor, Shashi, 173–4, 175
Thatcher, Margaret, 44
think tanks, 34
Third World, see developing countries
Third World activism, 45–6
Tokyo International Conference on African Development, 42
Index

trade
between Asia and Africa, 146–9
between Brazil and Africa, 103, 110
between BRICs and Africa, 99–112
between China and Africa, 108–11
between India and Africa, 102, 223–5
Indo-Sudan, 163–4
intra-African, 11, 144–5
regional trade agreements, 138–52
between Russia and Africa, 110
South-South, 52, 54–5
trade liberalization, 86
Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), 44
Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs), 44
trade theory, 140–1
transport costs, 141, 145
Trans-Sahara Gas Pipeline, 102
Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), 217
triangular cooperation, 34
Tri-continental Movements, 43
Turkey, 43

Uganda, 8, 76, 77, 100, 121, 129, 131, 132, 134, 145, 157, 230
‘unbalanced rule’, 50–1
unemployment, 185, 198n2
United Kingdom, 44
United Nations, 2, 33–4
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 2, 138
United Nations Development Decade, 22
United States, 44
decline of, 4, 10
foreign policy, 180
investment in Africa by, 107
role of, 172–3
soft power of, 174, 177, 180
trade between Africa and, 5–6
universities, 34, 37n11
UN Security Council, 48, 50, 101
urbanization, 141
Uruguay Round (UR), 3, 44–5, 220
US-India Civilian Nuclear Cooperation, 48

Venezuela, 48, 52–3, 156, 157

war on terror, 107
Washington Consensus, 2–3, 5, 9, 13n1, 55, 205, 206, 207, 209
Wen, Jiabao, 25, 101
White Nile Petroleum Operating (WNPOC), 159–60
worker rights, 185–6
World Bank, 2, 3, 4, 10, 20, 30, 50, 99
World Economic Forum, 177
World Social Forum, 206
World Summit Outcome (2005), 35
World Trade Organization (WTO), 6, 10, 32, 45–6, 142, 143, 149, 210

Yar’ Adua, Alhaji Umaru Musa, 116
Yekaterinburg Summit, 98, 99

Zambia, 88, 90, 109, 121, 146, 215
Zanzibar, 65, 68, 227
Zimbabwe, 54, 100, 116, 121, 148, 178