

Peacebuilding Through Development Partnership: An Indian Perspective

Lt. Gen. (ret.) P.K. Singh

INTRODUCTION

As the largest democracy to have emerged out of the bonds of colonialism, India has played an important role in providing valuable aid and assistance to newly independent and developing countries around the world since its independence. In order to fulfil its international obligation of helping countries make the difficult transition to self-reliance and development, India has contributed to building strong and peaceful countries and regions across the globe by sharing with them the benefits of its own experience as well as global best practices, along with providing valuable aid and assistance.

To put India's development assistance programme in its correct perspective, it is absolutely necessary to understand the factors shaping Indian discourse over the years. India played an important role on the global stage even before it became an independent nation on 15 August 1947. The Indian Armed Forces provided the largest volunteer armies to participate both in the First and Second World Wars, where there were hundreds of thousands of casualties and faced demobilisation immediately after the

Lt. Gen. (ret.) P.K. Singh (✉)
United Service Institution of India, New Delhi, India

wars. During the First World War, the Indian Army was one of the first to face the horrors of Chemical Warfare. India was also a founding signatory of the League of Nations as well as the United Nations (UN). During 1943 India was faced with a famine in Bengal, where reportedly two to three million people died, yet the export of food grains from India to support the global war effort continued uninterruptedly.

While independence broke the shackles of British colonialism, it also partitioned the country and saw the greatest displacement of population that the world had ever known. It led to rioting and communal violence that left thousands dead. Before the nation could get to grips with this, the Pakistan Army supported by irregular forces invaded the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. Being a founding member of the UN and believing in its principles, India took the issue to the UN hoping for justice, but what followed was an eye-opener for India, as also a lesson on what to expect from great powers and international institutions. Insurgency, supported by foreign countries, also reared its head in the early to mid-1950s, and India's experience in successfully handling these insurgencies, where it used the security forces along with the civilian administration in addressing social-politico-economic development, shaped its outlook towards development assistance.

India also faced a major refugee problem in 1971, when over ten million people from East Pakistan flooded into India. This and other events led to a short Indo-Pakistan war in December 1971, resulting in the creation of Bangladesh. India not only pulled back its troops from Bangladesh within about three months after the hostilities, but also relocated over 92,000 Pakistani prisoners of war from Bangladesh to India, thereby ensuring their safety in consonance with the Geneva Conventions. India's contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations is well known. These factors, amongst others, need to be kept in mind while analysing India's contribution to development partnership, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

THE PEACEKEEPING PARADIGM

India's contribution towards building the infrastructure for peace and stability in developing countries precedes and, to a large extent, anticipates, the concept of "peacebuilding" as enunciated by the UN. India's aid and assistance programmes have not only helped countries tide over the onset or aftermath of major crises, but have often come in early to forestall potential crises from destabilising a country or a region. Close

partnerships in the development process have naturally led to strong contacts, and the benefits of the association have exceeded beyond the “assistance” paradigm. It is this attitude of mutual respect and goodwill between the development assistance partners that has proven more successful for India than just the quantity or amount of aid delivered per se.

However, to compare India’s development aid and assistance practices with the UN’s principles of “peacebuilding,” it would be important to study the two concepts at the outset.

THE UN PERSPECTIVE

The emergence of the theory and practice of “peacebuilding” has been one of the most innovative developments in peace and conflict research over the past generation. It is believed that just as peacekeeping was the UN’s most important contribution to peace and security in the first 50 years of its existence, peacebuilding could become its most important innovation in the future (Ryan 2013).

The concept of peacebuilding in the UN was introduced in 1992 by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in the report “An Agenda for Peace,” wherein he defined peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan 2006). Although the report had only a few paragraphs devoted to the concept, it acted as a catalyst for further research and evolution of the concept.

A more detailed understanding of the term was given by the UN Secretary General’s Policy Committee in 2007, which described peacebuilding as “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels of conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development” (United Nations Information Centre for India and Bhutan 2006). The Secretary General’s Report of 2009 identified five recurring priority areas for international assistance. The first was the support to basic safety and security; the second referred to political processes; the third referred to the provision of basic services; the fourth referred to the restoration of core government functions; and the fifth identified economic revitalisation as a priority area.

Although the idea of “peacebuilding” has been well received, it has faced many challenges over the years. Thus, the Policy Committee’s

aforementioned statement in 2007 also enunciated the way in which peacebuilding strategies need to be developed and implemented. It states, “Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritised, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.”

It is noteworthy that the importance of local ownership, as is evident in the statement above, has remained a key component to the idea of peacebuilding, but it has been difficult to observe in practice. Cedric de Coning has highlighted this shortcoming in peacebuilding efforts by stating that “the notion of local ownership has become a buzzword. It is one of those words that has to be in any document about end states and exit strategies, yet no one really expects it to be meaningfully pursued” (de Coning 2013).

He points out that “external peace-builders see themselves as acting in a kind of unacknowledged guardian role, in which they act according to what they think are in the best interest of the society. Very few recognise or acknowledge the role the international community plays in undermining local ownership” (de Coning 2013).

Again, the political nature of peacebuilding is often ignored. This issue was squarely addressed by the UN Secretary General in his address to the first session of the Peacebuilding Commission on 23 June 2006, when he stated:

“We must also remember that peacebuilding is inherently political. At times the international community has approached peacebuilding as a largely technical exercise, involving knowledge and resources. The international community must not only understand local power dynamics, but also recognize that it is itself a political actor entering a political environment”. In this regard, the statement of Mr Jan Eliasson, the UN Deputy Secretary General, during the debate on post-conflict peacebuilding, wherein he said that “peacebuilding is most effective when political, security and development actors support a common, comprehensive and clear strategy for consolidating peace,”¹ merits consideration.

AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

India has a distinguished legacy of international peacekeeping and peacebuilding dating back to the 1950s when as a newly independent and democratic country, it reached out and helped other newly independent

countries emerge from the scourge of colonialism by partnering in the establishment of state institutions and developmental activities. In essence, the foundation of later South–South Cooperation (SSC) can rightly be attributed to these partnerships, which cemented national identities with those of a later day larger South–South movement.

Right from the beginning the economic and technical assistance that India extended to other developing countries was voluntary and not an obligation, like the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). Further unlike the ODA, India characterised its assistance as development partnership and not a donor–recipient relationship. India’s basic approach to development assistance was that it was demand-driven, given without conditionalities, administered in a decentralised manner and would not constrain the sovereignty of its partners. Simply put, India’s philosophy was that despite being a poor, developing country just out from the shackles of colonialism, it had an international responsibility and obligation to share its modest resources and capabilities with other developing countries.

India has clearly articulated its position on issues pertaining to peacebuilding during various debates at the UN. It has given particular emphasis to local ownership, inclusiveness and relevance rather than being imposed from above. In his statement at the UN Security Council Open debate on post- conflict peacebuilding on 12 July 2012, Mr Vinay Kumar, Charge d’Affaires, Permanent Mission of India to the UN (PMI), said, “We, therefore, think that the core institutions of governance are the key to sustainable peace. They must be rooted locally rather than being imposed from above. Their local relevance and inclusiveness will make all the difference in the governance process. It is, therefore, important for the PBC (Peacebuilding Commission) to align its objectives with national priorities and ensure that all plans and programs are implemented under national leadership and through national institutions so that gains are sustainable even if slow” (Kumar 2012).

In its statement on the Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its 7th Session and the Report of the Secretary General on the Peacebuilding Fund on 26 March 2014, India stated that: “Peacebuilding is important. It is necessary to rebuild institutions and infrastructure in nations torn by civil war if we want to solidify peace and avoid a relapse into conflict. A certain amount of external guidance is implicit in peacebuilding, but it should not be at the cost of local ownership and agenda.... The external footprint should be light to avoid any outcomes of neo-colonialism or humanitarian intervention” (Mukerji 2014).

In his statement, at the Informal Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on 8 September 2014, Mr Abhishek Singh, First Secretary, PMI, stated, “Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives. The emphasis should be building national capacities and national ownership” (Mukerji 2014).

It is therefore heartening to note that today India has provided development assistance to over 160 countries since its independence, encompassing multiple sectors, while at the same time adhering to its declared philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY AND EVOLUTION OF INDIAN DEVELOPMENT

Partnership Architecture

Right at the outset it needs to be understood that the “Indian Development Partnership Architecture” is a work in progress and there is no single document or White Paper that spells out the “architecture.” The building blocks of this “architecture” have to be culled out from the then prevailing national/international scenario, policy statements, participation in bilateral and multilateral development organisations and so on. India’s development partnership architecture could therefore be looked as an experimental model that has undergone a series of institutional innovations at different points in time.

India’s foreign policy philosophy since independence in 1947 under its first Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru has often been seen as one laced in an element of idealism. However, in the early years of its independence, India realised that countries in the global south that were emerging from colonialism would be affected by fragility, poverty, lack of infrastructure and possibly conflict or violence and would need development partnership right from the moment they gained independence. Although the term “South–South Cooperation” was not coined then, the seeds of its need and values can be traced to this phenomenon of helping countries in the South build a peaceful environment through development aid and partnership.

The foreign policy philosophy of India was based on the ideal of peaceful co-existence, wherein the economic development of all countries would be an obligation of the whole international community. India's development partnership was thus a commitment to internationalism, wherein all countries emerging from the scourge of colonialism and the after-effects of the Second World War would contribute to the evolution of a new and just global order. In 1947 when India became independent, it neither had any experience in the field of international aid/partnership, nor was there any substantive architecture for this available that would suit its ideas of development needs and partnership. Therefore, India's development partnership programme is an evolutionary process that takes into account its own developmental experiences and its own vision of social and economic development.

India's development partnership programme commenced in 1949 and precedes the concept of peacebuilding as we know it today. Right from the outset, India's basic philosophy towards development assistance was that any aid/assistance would be demand-driven, given without conditionalities, be administered in a decentralised manner and would not constrain the sovereignty of its partners in any way. An important point to note is that India has not made the same distinction between development assistance and peacebuilding activities that the traditional actors seem to make. Another point worth mentioning is that although never very clearly spelt out, India shares her experiences of democracy, pluralism and tolerance with the host countries, without interfering in their internal politics and social dynamics.

Some of the important milestones in the evolution of India's Development Partnership programmes that commenced in 1949 itself were the establishment of the Cultural Fellowship in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the follow-up by a special concessional loan to Burma (Myanmar) in 1949 itself to help meet its balance of payment crisis. The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was conceived in January 1950 and launched on 1 July 1951 as a cooperative venture by seven Commonwealth nations, including India, thereby showing that India was willing to partner multilateral organisations in addition to its bilateral developmental relationships.

In 1954, an overseas Indian Aid Mission (IAM) was launched at Kathmandu, Nepal, for coordinating and monitoring implementation of various Indian projects in Nepal. In 1964, the first agreement was signed with Nepal for periodic review of development projects. Seeing its success, a joint commission for project reviews was established in

Afghanistan in 1969. This commission, which was set up in other countries too, was tasked to also identify resources and capabilities for undertaking projects of mutual interest and also exploring possibilities for expanding trade. The IAM was renamed as the Indian Cooperation Mission (ICM) in 1966, signifying that the Indian partnership was not just about aid but was a cooperative partnership, and in 1980 the ICM was merged under the new Economic Cooperation Wing of the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu. In November 2003, India and Nepal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for initiating the Small Development Projects (SDP) in Nepal. The SDP was based on local needs through community participation with development directly reaching the beneficiaries in a short period of time. The project costs were less than US\$ 0.7 million. The implementation of the SDP was overseen by a Project Monitoring Committee, which ensured that there was no cost and time overruns. These projects are so successful in Nepal that India is now implementing SDP in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Many ministries are involved in the Indian Development Partnership Programs. For instance, Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal ministry of two international organisations connected with rural development. These are as follows:

- The Afro-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO). This is an inter-governmental, autonomous organisation founded in 1962 with a view to promote coordinated efforts, exchange of experiences and cooperative action for furthering the objectives of development of rural areas. It has 30 African and Asian nations, including India, as its members. Earlier, AARDO was known as the Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organisation. The AARDO has its permanent headquarters at New Delhi.
- Centre for Integrated Rural Development of Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP). India is a member of the inter-governmental CIRDAP, which was established in July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific Region and the FAO of the UN with support from several other UN bodies. It has 15 member countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh (host country), India, Myanmar and Vietnam. It came into being to meet the needs of various developing countries of that time. It was mandated to facilitate the provision of services that will influence policy formations and programme actions towards rural development and poverty alleviation (CIRDAP 2017).

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC)—Realising the importance of capacity building and skills development, India launched the ITEC in 1964 under its MEA to share knowledge and skills with fellow developing countries. The ITEC programme, which is fully government funded, is essentially bilateral in nature and is in line with its stated objective of respecting sovereignty and fostering a cooperative approach. It is demand-driven and does not impose any conditionalities. It furthers national development priorities of India's partners and has national ownership at its core. Under the ITEC and its sister programme, SCAAP (Special Commonwealth African Assistance Programme), a total of 161 countries in Asia, Africa, East Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean as well as Pacific and Small Island countries are invited to share in the Indian developmental experience acquired over six decades. For civilian training programmes, a total of 8280 slots were allotted to ITEC/SCAAP partner countries during 2013–14, for which approximately US\$ 23 million was budgeted. Similarly about 1500 vacancies for security training were allotted to ITEC partners for nominating their personnel for training in the field of Security and Strategic Studies, Defense Management, Marine and Aeronautical Engineering, Logistics and Management and so on. Although ITEC was initially conceived as a programme at the bilateral level, in recent years, ITEC programmes have also been used for cooperation activities conceived in regional and inter-regional contexts such as Economic Commission for Africa, Industrial Development Unit of Commonwealth Secretariat, UNIDO, Group of 77 and G-15. It has also been associated with regional and multilateral organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), African Union (AU), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Afro-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), Caribbean Community (CARICOM), World Trade Organization (WTO), Pan-African Parliament, Indian Ocean Rim—Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) and India-Africa Forum Summit. ITEC is the flagship programme for India's capacity-building effort, not only because of its magnitude and wide geographical coverage, but also for innovative forms of technical cooperation. Approximately US\$ 3 billion has been spent by India on the programme since its launch in 1964.

Pan-African e-Network—With the growth of the economy and the technology, especially in the IT and health care sector, India embarked on an ambitious and visionary project in 2009, known as the “Pan-African

e-Network,” to provide educational and medical support to 54 participating African countries, remotely via satellite technology through a grant of US\$ 125 million. The network is equipped to support e-governance, e-commerce, remote mapping and meteorological data sharing. Over a dozen super-specialty hospitals in India have been connected to African hospitals where tele-consultations and continuing medical education sessions are conducted. Simultaneously about 50 learning centres in Africa were connected to five Indian universities, thereby providing education facilities to thousands of students.

Alongside the processes mentioned above, the MEA itself continues to evolve, learning not just from its own experiences but also from best practices in the development architecture globally. In 1961 the Economic and Coordination Division was established in the MEA to coordinate technological cooperation, and in 1964 the ITEC programme was launched as a part of this Economic Division. With the success of the ITEC programme and the consequent increase in workload, the ITEC Division was established in the MEA in 1995. In 2004, the India Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) was launched to provide lines of credit (LOC) by the EXIM Bank, and in 2005 a new division called the Development Partnership Division was created in the MEA for better delivery of development projects. During the budget speech of 2007, the Union Finance Minister had proposed the setting up of the India International Development Cooperation Agency for Coordinating all projects, lines of credit, technical cooperation, deputation of experts and training of foreign nationals in India. However, this agency was never set up and instead a new division called the “Development Partnership Administration (DPA)” was set up in 2012 for coordinating all aspects of India’s Development Assistance.

As regards financial support, while the capacity-building ITEC programme was totally Government funded, loans and grants were also provided. To increase the amount of funding available for development activities, since 2003, LOC covering 63 countries totalling almost US\$ 12 billion have been extended, with Africa receiving almost 60% of this. Similarly, the DPA is implementing a number of grant assistance programmes, which include construction of 50,000 houses for internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka, construction of the Salma Dam and power sub-station in Doshi and Charikar, and the Parliament building in Afghanistan. The EXIM Bank (2012) data on operative LOC for financial year 2011–12 provides the following detail (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 EXIM Bank Operative Lines of Credit (2011–12, US\$ million)

| | | |
|-------------------|---|------|
| 1. Asia | – | 3458 |
| 2. Africa | – | 4313 |
| 3. Americas | – | 191 |
| 4. Europe and CIS | – | 148 |
| 5. Total | – | 8160 |

DIVERSITY AND MAGNITUDE OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

To get a good understanding of the diversity and magnitude of India's development partnership, one needs to just look at the India–Africa and India–Afghanistan development programmes.

India–Africa Programmes

India's links with Africa stretch back centuries, cutting across social, economic, political and diplomatic issues. The shared experience of colonialism leading to economic deprivation, fight for independence, partnership in the Non-Aligned Movement, the urge to promote SSC all come together, and it is difficult to separate one from the other. The fact that Indian peacekeepers under the UN flag have been participating in all UN missions in Africa also adds to this unique relationship between India and Africa. Therefore, examining India–Africa relations in silos may not bring out the true picture. Table 4.2 highlights the framework for Africa–India cooperation (Kragelund 2010).

Building on the foundations of the partnership laid through the ITEC programme amongst others, India launched the Focus Africa Programme in 2002 and was followed in 2005 by the Conclave of India–Africa Project Partnership, and in the next eight years there had been 22 Indo-African business conclaves. Buoyed by the healthy all-round economic and trade linkages, India hosted the first India–Africa Forum Summit in 2008 and the next summit meeting was held in 2011.

India–Afghanistan Programmes

A striking example of India's development assistance programmes that are in consonance with UN peacebuilding principles and the stated needs, requirements and involvement of the recipient country in promoting its

Table 4.2 Africa–India framework for cooperation

| <i>Areas</i> | <i>Sub areas</i> | <i>Focus</i> | <i>Forms</i> | <i>Concrete initiatives</i> |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Economic cooperation | Agriculture, trade, industry and FDI, SMEs, finance, regional integration | Food security, market access, exports to world markets and joint ventures | Cooperation, capacity-building, experience-sharing and TA | Financial support to African Union over mutually agreed programmes of continental importance |
| Political cooperation | Peace and security, civil society and governance | Governance structures, civil society, peacekeeping operations | TA, capacity building and cross fertilization of ideas | Joint Platform for Discussion of Global Issues (South–South basis) |
| Science technology and research | Science and technology, ICT | Technology transfer, quality standards and ICT regulation | Experience sharing, cooperation | Roll out the Pan-African E-Network project |
| Social development | Education, health, water and sanitation, culture and sports, poverty eradication | MDGs, HRD, access to health care | Experience sharing, cooperation | Increase ITEC scholarships |
| Terrorism | | Regulation and governance | Partnerships | – |
| Infrastructure, energy and environment | – | PPP and creation of enabling environment | Cooperation | – |
| Media and communications | – | South–South communication | Cooperation | – |

development and capacity building can be gleaned from the large-scale multisectoral assistance India has provided for the reconstruction and developmental programmes in Afghanistan. This development partnership dates back to the years shortly after Indian independence and continued during the civil war that followed the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, despite significant internal economic pressures. India provided Afghanistan with millions of US dollars in grants and humanitarian assistance through the UN during the 1990s. Since 2002, India has played an active role in the

reconstruction of Afghanistan, with its programmes following priorities of the Afghan government and people.

The “Afghanistan National Development Strategy-Executive Summary 2008–2013—A Strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction” (Afghanistan 2013) lists eight pillars for their national development: security; good governance; infrastructure and proper utilisation of natural resources; education and culture; health and nutrition; agriculture and rural development; social protection; and economic governance and private sector development. It is noteworthy that India’s development assistance programmes to Afghanistan have substantially contributed to almost all of the pillars of national development enlisted by the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Thus, India’s reconstruction and developmental programmes in Afghanistan are tailored to the specific needs and ownership of the Afghan government and its people, as is enshrined in the values of the UN ideals of peacebuilding.

India has played a significant role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. India’s extensive developmental assistance programme, which now stands at around US\$ 2 billion, is a strong signal of its abiding commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan during this critical period of security and governance transition. This makes India one of the leading donor nations to Afghanistan, and by far the largest in the region.

The government of India has taken on several medium and large infrastructure projects in its assistance programme in Afghanistan. Some of these include construction of a 218 km road from Zaranj to Delaram for facilitating movement of goods and services to the Iranian border; construction of a 220KV DC transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul and a 220/110/20 KV sub-station at Chimtala; upgrading of telephone exchanges in 11 provinces; expansion of national TV network by providing an uplink from Kabul and downlinks in all 34 provincial capitals for greater integration of the country; and three airbus aircraft to Ariana Airlines and construction of the new Afghan Parliament building. In the area of skill development, the Indian government offers training to Afghan officials/nationals in diverse fields through 500 ITEC slots allocated annually to Afghanistan; special ITEC courses for Afghan government officials; 614 ICAR scholarships under the India–Afghanistan Fellowship Program during 2012–13 to 2020–21; training via tele-education at the Afghan National Agriculture Sciences and Technology University, Kandahar, and at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health, Kabul; and ICCR

scholarships to 1000 Afghans every year to pursue under graduate courses in various Indian universities in major cities across India.

Major on-going Indian projects in Afghanistan include Salma Dam, Doshi and Charikar power substations; restoration of the Store Palace; and wheat assistance to Afghanistan to the tune of 1.1 million MT, out of which 7,11,882 tonnes of wheat has already been supplied. India has also decided to donate 1000 more buses to Afghanistan along with improving related infrastructure.

A significant addition to India's development portfolio in Afghanistan is the Small Development Projects (SDP) scheme for developing infrastructure in the fields of agriculture, rural development, education, health and so on. Announced during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Afghanistan in 2005 initially with an amount of US\$ 20 million, the scheme was further enhanced with additional provision of US\$ 100 million in November 2012.

India is contributing to the security sector by providing equipment and training to the Afghan National Army and the Afghan Police. To help promote rule of law, India has trained Afghan judges and lawyers at the Indian Law Institute. As part of support to democracy, India has trained staff members of the National Assembly Secretariat at the Bureau of Parliamentary Study and Training on various aspects of parliamentary functions. Training was also imparted to journalists and news agency officials.

Development Partnership Administration (DPA)

From relatively modest beginnings, India has become an important player in the area of international development cooperation. Over the past few years, India's development assistance has started to cover a large number of countries, and, consequently, the projects being implemented by the MEA have increased substantially. Recognising this, the DPA was created in the MEA in January 2012 to effectively handle India's aid projects through the stages of concept, launch, execution and completion.

India's development partnership is based on the needs identified by the partner countries, and the effort of the MEA is geared toward accommodating as many of the requests received from partner countries as is technically and financially possible. DPA has started to create in-house, specialised technical, legal and financial skills in order to fast-track all stages of project implementation. DPA has three divisions. Currently,

DPA I deals with project appraisal and LOC; DPA II deals with capacity-building schemes, disaster relief and the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Program; and DPA III deals with project implementation. As the DAP in the MEA is gearing towards meeting its mandate, it is expected that effective and efficient handling of all aid projects from the stages of concept, launch, execution and completion would result in efficient implementation of projects, in close cooperation and facilitation of the partner countries.

While the lead agency in India's development partnership strategy will continue to be the MEA, it needs to be reiterated that other ministries in the government will continue to have an important role. MEA will therefore continue to advise the Ministry of Finance regarding assistance packages and priorities; coordinate with the Ministry of Commerce in relation to LOC; coordinate with the Ministry of Water Resources for hydroelectric projects; and coordinate with the Ministry of Defense for overseas projects to be undertaken by the Border Roads Organisation or for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief by the armed forces. The DPA while not formulating development assistance policy will deal with its implementation by focusing on greater synergy and coordination, streamlining the delivery mechanism and improving the effectiveness of the total development assistance/aid provided.

EMERGING POWERS AND THE DYNAMICS OF SOUTH–SOUTH COOPERATION (SSC)

During the last two decades, there has been a major shift in geopolitics with the emergence of new economic and military powers on the global stage. Many of these countries have the capacity to take on the role of peacebuilding because like the big industrialised nations of the past they have the finances, capacities and expertise to provide effective support in peacebuilding missions around the world. Underscoring the importance of emerging powers in maintaining and promoting peace at the global level, Benjamin de Carvalho and Cedric de Coning have noted:

what distinguishes emerging powers from merely regional ones is that they are often responded to by others on the basis of system-level calculations about the present and near future distribution of power. Consequently, emerging powers can be said to be emerging from their regions onto the global scene, and they possess a certain set of attributes, or serious potential,

to bid for great power status—i.e. taking on even greater responsibility for co-managing the global order in the short to medium term. (de Carvalho and de Coning 2013, 2)

They further state that:

the rising powers are committed to the reform of the global order, and that they are pursuing a multilateral rule-based global architecture that can provide the legal and political framework necessary to ensure a more equitable, enforceable and stable global order, in which it would be impossible for any one country, or bloc of countries to dominate the system. (Ibid, 6)

These new emerging powers, particularly countries like India, China and South Africa, are becoming very important players in the development cooperation arena too. The emergence of these countries as development partners is very visible in Africa, where they have significantly expanded their presence through foreign direct investment, trade and knowledge transfer. Their achievements in addressing their own development challenges through innovative approaches make them more attractive as development partners, and have eroded the North's exclusive hold on matters of international development.

DEBATE OVER ROLE OF SOUTH–SOUTH COOPERATION (SSC)

Conceptually, SSC refers to the sharing of knowledge and resources between developing countries with the aim of identifying the most effective steps towards the eradication of their developmental challenges. It is strongly based on the notion of development through equitable access to trade, investment and technology and takes place at bilateral as well as inter/intra- regional levels. The emerging powers are offering the developing countries a choice, thereby introducing some form of competitive challenge in the existing development aid system and possibly this causes some tension in the North–South debate. This notwithstanding, it must be reiterated that SSC must be seen as a complement to and not a replacement of North–South Cooperation (NSC).

In the framework of SSC, there is no distinction between the partner countries. All the countries engaged have something to offer and take from each other. The key values of the SSC are respect for national sovereignty,

national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. However, there are conceptual differences between the NSC and SSC, which are highlighted in Table 4.3 (Chaturvedi 2014).

Table 4.3 Comparison between North–South and South–South development partnership

| <i>Indicators</i> | <i>Aid programme (North–South)</i> | <i>Development partnership (South–South)</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Nature and purpose of support | ODA. Stated to be altruistic in nature | Mutual benefits and growth |
| Philosophical perspective | Framework approach | Ingredient approach |
| Participants | At least one participant has very high per capita income | Both partners may have very low per-capita income |
| Level of development | Large differences in stages of economic development between donors and recipients | Both partners almost at the same stage of economic development |
| Role of participants | Donors and recipient of ODA | Relationship of equality, both may contribute to the process |
| Conditionality | “Top-down” with policy conditionality and no predictability | Request-driven and generally free from conditionality of any kind, so largely within timelines |
| Flexibility | Multilayered time-consuming bureaucratic structures, hence added transaction cost | Highly decentralised and relatively fast with a few implications for transaction cost |
| Priority sectors | Grant assistance and budget support for social sectors | Economic and technical cooperation largely confined to projects in infrastructure and productive sector investment |
| Adherence to global governance framework like Paris Declaration | Donors use guidelines of Paris Declaration, which they evolve as an instrument for effectiveness | Providers are out of the purview of any global arrangement such as Paris Declaration, in which they are not involved. Hinges on mutual trust of partner countries |
| Data, monitoring and evaluation | Peer-reviewed by DAC-OECD. Data are compiled and periodically released by the national governments and DAC-OECD | No monitoring mechanisms beyond occasional reports of data and anecdotal details |
| Role of NGOs | Extensive | Limited |
| Role of Private Sector | Limited | Extensive |

The above notwithstanding, the fact is that as of now the South–South countries somewhat lack the requisite structural and organisational capacity to effectively pursue their aims. This contrasts sharply with the developed North that has well-funded institutions and mechanisms that coordinate their interests. Perhaps to overcome these challenges we see trilateral groupings such as the India–Brazil–South Africa dialogue forum or the multilateral groupings such as BRICS, spanning many continents (Ugwuja et al. 2014).

The growing role played by India and other developing countries in the area of development assistance seems to be causing anxiety in the West as they are apprehensive of losing influence in a field that they dominated. India has reservations about the Busan process, which is viewed as an attempt to standardise the delivery of assistance/aid on the norms and principles of the West. India is also generally cautious of some of the premises underlying the post MDG development agenda. India would not like to see that it becomes a means for the West to pass on a greater burden to developing countries. It needs reiteration that whereas North–South aid is a historical responsibility, SSC is a voluntary undertaking. The development assistance provided by the emerging developing countries should be viewed as different from the North–South commitments. It is neither a substitute for North–South aid nor should it be used as an excuse for developed countries to reduce their aid programmes.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

India's Development Partnership, while contributing to peacebuilding, is very different from economic intervention in support of counter-insurgency or counter-terrorism operations, such as those waged by ISAF in Afghanistan. It needs to be understood that economic assistance/partnership in the same country at the same period of time may have two totally differing aims as well as outcomes. India's development partnership assistance in Afghanistan since 2002 and that of other donors who also were supporting military operations there would therefore be quite different in conception and implementation, although they may both support peacebuilding. Thus, the peacebuilding situation addressed by India and others could have different but possibly complementary outcomes, which need to be understood. Further, foreign powers that intervene in local conflicts often seek to end the fighting and "restore stability" possibly within the duration of the intervention or immediately after it. So their

economic activities for “restoring stability” are likely to be quite different from economic activities that are part of India’s development partnership, which is a long-term strategic partnership. These pose challenges but can be overcome by greater transparency, coordination and synergy between the host country and aid providers.

The challenge posed to the safety of foreign citizens working in development partnership programmes as also of the investment made by the government and private entities in conflict-affected countries is a matter of serious concern. Providing security to men, material and investment is a serious challenge, which has to be factored in. India has provided security for its diplomatic mission and projects in Afghanistan in close cooperation with the government of Afghanistan.

A question that is sometimes asked is about development intervention aggravating conflict situation in the host country. While there has been no reported case of Indian development partnership programmes aggravating the conflict situation, this issue needs to be constantly kept in mind. This could best be done by following India’s fundamental principles of aid/assistance being inclusive and demand-driven with local ownership, given without conditionalities and would not constrain the sovereignty of the host country in any way.

India is neither part of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) nor does it report its development assistance to DAC. However, India has taken part in the OECD-led international dialogue on development. While this dialogue contributed to mutual understanding regarding aid and development cooperation, India did convey its concerns on some of the premises underlying the OECD led dialogue. Although it is early to say, but the possibility of an alternative to the OECD definition of aid could emerge. India and other rising powers could consider doing so by putting out a draft vision of development aid, which would encompass the key features of SSC, including trade, investment, technology transfer and so on.

The challenges of bringing in greater transparency, creating a level field for public and private sectors, and promoting a greater role for non-governmental organisations and academia have often been discussed over the years as has been the fact that one could learn from the best practices of the international community and also share the lessons/experiences of India. The DPA is addressing these issues and one hopes to see movement on these fronts. The DPA could also consider bringing out a “White

Paper” on India’s Development Partnership programmes. Many internal and external challenges that India faces come up during closed-door discussions. Some of these pertains to project conceptualisation; appraisal, monitoring, political sensitivities and vested interests in the partner countries and so on. The DPA is aware and has started to tackle these challenges, and we should see new guidelines, greater transparency and public outreach in the near future.²

International development aid given by any country would be linked to their national interests and foreign policy strategy. Although not stated in so many words, can India’s development assistance/partnership programmes be any different? While there is no doubt that India’s development partnership activities must conform to its guiding principles, it must also be closely linked to its commercial, strategic and foreign policy interests. This is a challenge which the MEA has negotiated very successfully in the past and must continue to do so in the future too.

CONCLUSION

The defining characteristic of India’s development assistance programmes has been to share its experience in poverty alleviation and economic development. India’s policymakers strongly believe that given the aid and assistance through effective development partnership, unstable and underdeveloped countries can emerge as healthy and strong constituents of the international community. This can establish the prerequisites of progress and harmony that can then propel the engines of growth and development and yield ever appreciating returns. India’s own emergence from its colonial past into a vibrant democratic and global economic power has made it both a role model and major player in the realm of peacebuilding and development partnership.

As stated in this chapter, India’s contribution towards building the infrastructure for peace and stability in developing countries not only precedes the concept of peacebuilding as enunciated by the UN, but also conforms to the way in which “peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritised, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.”

India has not made any major distinction between development assistance and peacebuilding activities as many Western actors seem to do. One Indian official characterised these discussions as “academic hair-splitting,”

a view that many others seem to share. The UN Secretary General's Policy Committee in 2007 itself described peacebuilding as "a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels of conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development." Further, India's basic philosophy towards development assistance has been that any aid/assistance would be demand-driven, locally owned, given without conditionalities and void of any constraints on the sovereignty of its partners. These principles have stood India in good stead and need to be preserved.

Although deliberate, well-conceived and integral to India's foreign policy since independence, the development assistance programmes were pursued more as an important convention rather than as part of clearly articulated and declared policy as perhaps India was incrementally evolving this dimension to its foreign relations, based on its careful study of various international initiatives, in the field of international development aid. India's assistance to its neighbours in 1948 followed by the Colombo Plan of 1950 and later the ITEC programme and now the DPA underscore the country's proactive albeit incremental steps in this regard. However, there is no denying that India has not been able to leverage its development aid as it has never been promulgated in a coherent manner and so it has not been researched on the basis of contemporary standards. Still, there has been a growing realisation of this aspect, which has led to the formation of the DPA in the MEA. It is a step in the right direction, although one does not see a completely centralised form of development assistance being pursued in the near future.

The chapter also shows that India's development assistance programmes have been global in reach, covering every continent of the world. India's development assistance in Africa and Afghanistan, amongst others, not only indicates the wide spectrum of activities of their assistance, but also their large time horizon. Most of this assistance is not well known and has not been widely disseminated. It is hoped that the chapter would initiate the process of bringing out all aspects of India's development assistance, and analysing it comprehensively by researchers and think tanks.

As stated earlier, from a modest beginning in 1948, today India has become an important player in the area of global development cooperation. This, coupled with its significant role in UN peacekeeping/peacebuilding operations, will only help its stature grow. Hopefully, India and the other rising powers will solidify their rightful place in the global security and development architectures.

NOTES

1. Report of the Security Council on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding at its 7359th meeting on 14 January 2015, S/PV. 7359.
2. At a Roundtable held in March 2013 at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi, Ambassador P.S. Raghavan, who was then heading the DPA, had highlighted some of these issues in his keynote address.

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P.K. Singh Lt. Gen. (ret.) is Director, United Service Institution of India, New Delhi.

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