

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2058

ANSWERED ON- 06/12/2024

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

2058. DR. K SUDHAKAR

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) whether India is taking steps to foster South-South Cooperation (SSC) and to make the country be the voice of Global South in the comity of nations and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Government plans to open new consulates across the world and if so, the details of the proposed consulates and missions;

(c) whether the Government has data with regards to progress of transport corridors such as India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor, International North-South Economic Corridor and others and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the efforts taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to resolve rising conflicts amongst countries of the world; and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to promote the cultural heritage of India across the globe?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) India has always been committed towards addressing the needs and aspirations of fellow-developing countries and has been constructively championing the cause of holistic human-centric development of countries in the Global South in various international forums. With this in view, the Government of India has also undertaken several development partnership initiatives to promote self-reliance among countries of the Global South, including in undertaking infrastructure projects to enhance connectivity and economic inter-linkages, as well as in extending financial, budgetary and humanitarian assistance and in contributing towards capacity building and skill development by offering scholarships and training programs to students and professionals.

Further, in line with Prime Minister's vision that India's G20 Presidency be shaped in consultation with fellow partners in the Global South, India hosted three editions of the Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) in January 2023, November 2023, and August 2024. Each edition of this Summit witnessed the participation of over 100 countries at Heads of State/Government, Ministerial and Senior Officials Levels. The Voice of Global South Summits provided a useful platform for exchange of views

with the leadership of Global South countries on our shared development priorities and concerns, including for reforms of the multilateral institutions in various domains.

The inclusion of African Union into the G20 as a permanent member during India's G20 Presidency at the New Delhi G20 Summit on 09-10 September 2023 and the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration adopted unanimously by the G20 member countries are reflections of the perception and impact on developing and developed countries of India's advocacy of issues relevant for Global South.

(b) Currently, efforts are underway to operationalize Consulates in Fukuoka (Japan), Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia). Future plans include opening of 5 new diplomatic Missions in Europe, and Latin America and Caribbean regions.

(c) On the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit, leaders of India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE and US announced an MoU committing to work together to develop a new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It will comprise two separate corridors, the eastern corridor connecting India to the Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Gulf to Europe. It will include digital, energy and railway connectivity and provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing

maritime and road transport routes, enabling goods and services to be traded between these regions.

The corridor also aims to facilitate the development and export of clean energy; lay undersea cables and link energy grids and telecommunication lines to expand reliable access to electricity; enable innovation of advanced clean energy technology; and digital connectivity. It intends to increase efficiency, reduce costs, secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, enhance economic unity, generate jobs, and lower greenhouse gas emission- resulting in a transformative integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

An Intergovernmental Framework Agreement (IGFA) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) concerning cooperation for operation of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor was signed on 13 February 2024. The main elements of the Framework include development and management of a logistics platform, including a digital ecosystem, and provision of supply chain services to handle all types of general cargo, bulk, containers and liquid bulk in order to enable IMEC. This is the first agreement under the IMEC initiative. The IMEC corridor, which aims at economic integration of Asia, Europe and the Middle East, involves multiple stakeholders and is at an incipient stage.

The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is a 7,200-km-long multimodal transport route designed to connect the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, and Caspian Sea via Iran, extending to Russia. Movement of cargo through INSTC faces certain infrastructural and other challenges at present and work is continuing to develop the missing infrastructure links.

(d) As a responsible player on the global stage, India has been concerned about the rising conflicts in the world which are accompanied by humanitarian crises, as well as disproportionate impact on developing countries due to shortage of food, fuel and other essential commodities. In all global conflicts, India has always advocated for cessation of violence and hostilities, humanitarian assistance to civilians, and adopting the path of diplomacy and dialogue for a peaceful resolution. India has engaged with and maintained communication at various levels with all parties and players involved in various global conflicts. In conversations with global leaders at the highest levels, India has emphasized to all Member States of the UN that the global order is anchored on international law, UN Charter and respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.

(e) Government has taken a number of significant steps to promote the rich cultural heritage of India abroad. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian culture worldwide through its Cultural Centres and Missions/Posts abroad. Activities conducted by them include, inter-alia, teaching of Yoga, Dance, Music (vocal and instrumental), Sanskrit and Hindi; organising/supporting Conferences/Seminars/ Workshops in different fields of Indian culture; supporting Chairs of Indian Studies in foreign universities; gifting of busts/statues of Mahatma Gandhi and other national icons, exchanging visual arts exhibitions, celebrating International Day of Yoga, Ayurveda Day and Indian festivals, promoting Indian films, hosting visitors under various Visitors Programmes (Academic/Distinguished/Important/Gen. Next Democracy Network); and sponsoring scholarships to foreign students under different scholarship schemes.

The Government has also made conscious efforts in working towards conservation of cultural sites abroad, especially in the South-East Asian region in recent times. In March 2020, a dedicated Division in MEA – Development Partnership Administration (DPA)- IV was established for undertaking such conservation projects. This Division implements projects in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India and the Ministry of Culture. Currently, the Ministry of External Affairs,

through the DPA-IV division, is engaged in conservation projects at 4 world heritage sites which include Ta Prohm Temple, Cambodia; Preah Vihear Temple, Cambodia; Vat Phou Temple, Lao PDR; My Son group of Temples, Vietnam.
