



**RIS**  
Research and Information System  
for Developing Countries  
विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली



# Strengthening Cooperation Initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire

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## CONCEPT NOTE

### **The Context**

The growth of the global economy over the last 30 years has had remarkable effects on development. Incomes have risen, productivity has gone up—particularly in developing countries—and poverty has fallen. At this moment, however, there is reason to worry that this path to development is under growing threat. Global growth, estimated at 2.9 percent in 2019, is projected to decrease significantly in 2020 and possibly even in 2021. Current estimates put the cumulative loss in the range of USD 5.8-8.8 trillion or approximately 6.5-9.7% of the global GDP. The contraction of the world economy being predicted will surely be the largest since the Great Depression. The June 2020 OECD Economic Outlook presented two equally likely scenarios: A “double-hit” scenario, in which global GDP is projected to decline by 7.6 per cent this year and remain well short of its pre-crisis level at the end of 2021; and a “single-hit” scenario, in which world GDP is projected to decline by 6 per cent this year, but will have almost regained the pre-crisis level at the end of 2021.

Even prior to the pandemic significant issues such as the US-China trade tensions, the rise of protectionism, social unrest and geopolitical tensions threatened global growth. Across all economies, a key imperative—increasingly relevant at times like these—is to enhance inclusiveness, ensure that safety nets are indeed protecting the vulnerable, and governance structures strengthen social cohesion. This is also in line with the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development, also known as Agenda 2030 or the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 17 emphasises the importance of networks and collaborations in furthering development. In this regard it is both important and valuable for the countries of the South to collaborate and learn from each other's experiences to be able to promote a more equitable, inclusive and balanced development process with sustainable outcomes for all.

### **The Indian Experience**

Consistently growing at an average annual growth rate of between 6-7% since the start of the millennium, India is one of the world's fastest growing major economies. Moreover this growth has also been inclusive raising more than 30% of its population to middle-class status and deepening the consumption abilities of the population.

India has long-standing and ever-expanding cooperation with African countries. Our partnership is focused on **“Africa-owned” and “Africa-led” development** which is based on **mutual respect, mutual trust, equality and solidarity**. The model of our cooperation is **demand driven, consultative and participative**, focusing on building capacities in terms of skilled manpower and institutions **involving local resources and traditional knowledge**.

Recent developments in India have attracted wide global attention not only in terms of their substance and articulation but also in the context of systemic changes that have contributed to ongoing economic and social transformation, and improvements in ‘ease of doing business’ besides attempting behavioural and attitudinal changes. The rise in agricultural productivity; the expansion of a globally competitive entrepreneurial base; the shift from unorganised sector to organised commercial sectors; and the growing emphasis on industrialisation with less carbon footprint are part of an evolving growth strategy, aided by digitalisation and innovation, with special focus on localisation and financial inclusion.

### **The Côte d'Ivoire Experience**

The Côte d'Ivoire economy has experienced strong growth averaging around 8 percent a year from 2011 onwards, making it the largest economy in the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The high growth rate is a result of high advances in agribusiness, telecommunications, and construction activity. However the Côte d'Ivoire economy remains vulnerable to global commodity price fluctuations especially in oil, cocoa, and cashew nuts.

Given the importance of the agricultural commodities in terms of their more than 20% share in GDP and more than 40% exports there is an increasing need to focus on diversification of the economy through skill development as well as adoption of new technologies such as digital and information technologies that promote inclusive development in a sustained manner.

### **Scope for Collective Action channelised through the Global Development Center**

In light of the above scenario, it is strongly felt that the Global Development Center (GDC) at RIS can play a transformative role for them, particularly since the GDC was set up with the task of sharing of India's development experiences with partner countries in Asia and Africa. Hence it is an ideal platform for promoting and strengthening cooperation initiatives between India and the Côte d'Ivoire. Some of the key areas in which there is tremendous potential for assisting them could include the following:

#### ***Agriculture***

Agriculture contributes over 19 percent of Côte d'Ivoire's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs about 70 percent of the active population. The sector is not only the largest source of export earnings but also the main source of income to over two thirds of the country's population. The country decided for crop diversification in the 1970s. However, no policy road map for implementing this wise approach could be implemented to replace overdependence on commercial crops such as rubber, coffee and cocoa farming. Import substitution of food crops such as rice and wheat along with red meat and fishery products was the longing aspiration. Much of these commodities can be placed in the small holding context of the country. The appropriate implementation of farming system approach in accordance with the agro-climatic situation can satiate the food and nutrition security requirement of the country with increased self-sufficiency. Endowed with rich natural resources as the backbone for enhancing agriculture factor productivity steering the country with science and technology based agri-input services and marketing infrastructure could encourage both food / nutrition security alongside improving agriculture GDP. Sharing of country experience for sustainable use of natural resources such as soil and water in agriculture would be rewarding leverage for fulfilling the Agenda 2030 of UN-SDGs.

However, the smallholder farmers who are backbone of agriculture in the country still have challenges in accessing financial services, assured quality inputs, and measures to cope up

with the changing climatic conditions among others. There is potential in collaborative initiatives that enhance financial sustainability to smallholder farmers, digitization of farm practices, minimization of commodity losses across the value chains, offsetting farm losses through insurance schemes among other relevant options.

In India the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) which is the national agricultural research body has been highly successful in increasing the productivity of major cereals, pulses, oilseeds, horticultural, and commercial crops including cotton, banana, and cashew nuts as well as livestock productivity for poultry and fisheries under agro-climate based farming systems. The specialized national research institutes under ICAR along with over seventy State Agricultural / Horticulture / Veterinary / Fisheries Universities (forming NARS-National Agriculture Research System) focus upon the production / processing technologies of farm commodities with inclusive value chains. Scientific farm input management and expert system service to address farm productivity of small holdings, post-harvest processing and marketing infrastructure. Their experiences over the decades can be shared with Côte d'Ivoire in order to bring about an improvement in the existing agricultural production practices in Côte d'Ivoire. Mutually identified initiatives such as the promotion of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) as well as other innovations such as improved irrigation technology and Soil Health Cards, grass root extension machinery and the like, there is a large scope for collaborative projects and initiatives between India and the Côte d'Ivoire in the area of Agriculture.

### ***Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals***

The healthcare system in Côte d'Ivoire is better than some of its neighbours in Western Africa. However, there is enormous scope for further improvement in this sector. Côte d'Ivoire has a relatively lower average life expectancy of around 56 years and relatively high prevalence of infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, etc.

In India, we have implemented *Ayushman Bharat*, a flagship scheme of Government of India, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). This initiative has been designed to meet Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) and its underlining commitment, which is to "leave no one behind."

This scheme aims to undertake path breaking interventions to holistically address the healthcare system (covering prevention, promotion and ambulatory care) at the primary, secondary and tertiary level. *Ayushman Bharat* PM-JAY is the largest health assurance

scheme in the world which aims at providing a health cover of around USD 6,600 per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization to over 107.4 million poor and vulnerable families (approximately 500 million beneficiaries) that form the bottom 40% of the Indian population. PM-JAY is fully funded by the Government and cost of implementation is shared between the Central and State Governments.

Côte d'Ivoire is also dependent on European countries for its requirements of medicines. Given India's highly developed pharmaceutical sector, and the high quality of affordable products such as vaccines, generic medicines, and formulations that are made in India, there is tremendous scope for cooperation initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire in this area. Sourcing affordable pharmaceutical products directly from India instead of indirectly through transit countries in Europe, would allow Côte d'Ivoire to provide affordable healthcare to its population in a sustainable manner improving the efficacy of their spending on public health. Hence there is a large scope for cooperation initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire in the area of Universal Health Insurance Systems, Vaccine development, Pharmaceuticals, etc.

### *Financial Inclusion*

The Financial sector in Côte d'Ivoire has been performing very well. However the development of an inclusive financial system that facilitates higher economic growth remains a challenge for them. According to their 2014 National survey, just about 34 percent of the adult population has access to financial services of which 19 percent are mobile money accounts.

On the other hand, in India, financial inclusion among the underserved population in recent years has significantly improved. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is a National Mission on Financial Inclusion encompassing an integrated approach to bring about comprehensive financial inclusion of all the households in the country. The plan envisages universal access to banking facilities, at least one basic banking account in every household, financial literacy, access to credit, insurance and pension facility. The initiative envisages channeling all Government benefits (from Centre / State / Local Body) to the beneficiaries' accounts and pushing the Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT) scheme of the Union Government. As of now, this scheme has benefitted more than 400 million people of which more than 250 million have been from rural or semi-urban areas, and has managed to mobilize more than USD 17 billion in unbanked savings into the formal system. Supplemented with systems such as the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and schemes such as the Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)

the Indian experience has been extremely positive in terms of improving financial inclusion among the underserved population. As such, there is ample scope for joint efforts in the development of appropriate technologies, systems, policies and innovations that facilitate financial inclusion.

### *Digital Technologies*

Mobile phone cellular subscription in Côte d'Ivoire has increased by over 50 percent between 2011 and 2017. Along with increasing internet access, this presents a fertile ground for the development of digital technologies. The digital sector already contributes up to 7% of Ivorian GDP. The government of Côte d'Ivoire has been playing an important role through initiatives like the “One Student One Computer” scheme.

India has implemented its push into using digital technology through the Digital India programme with the vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Digital India programme weaves together a large number of ideas and thoughts into a single, comprehensive vision so that each of them can be implemented as part of a larger goal. Digital India aims to provide the much needed thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas, namely Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti - Electronic Delivery of Services, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs and Early Harvest Programmes. The programme is centred on three key vision areas:

- Digital Infrastructure as a Core Utility to Every Citizen: Initiatives such as AADHAR (The largest biometrics based identification system in the world providing a unique identity to every Indian citizen with 1,259,777,719 IDs generated and 44,057,029,735 authentications done), Bharat Broadband Network (the National Optical Fiber Network in India covering around 250,000 Gram Panchayats spread over 641 Districts), etc.
- Governance & Services on Demand: Initiatives such as BHIM UPI App (a digital payments app with more than 133.89 million downloads and around USD 1 billion worth of transactions every month), Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN is the robust IT Backbone for the smooth functioning of the Goods & Services Tax regimen in India having around 12.4 million registered taxpayers, and handling close to USD 350 billion in payments till date), etc.

- Digital Empowerment of Citizens: Initiatives such as MYGOV (a citizen-centric platform empowering people to connect with the Government & contribute towards good governance having more than 12.3 million members contributing more than 10,000 posts per week on various issues, which are analyzed and put together as suggestions for the concerned departments who are able to transform them into actionable agenda), etc.

Given the extensive experiences of Indian ecosystem in implementing large-scale digital technology programmes, there is vast potential in collaborative efforts between India and Côte d'Ivoire in developing inclusive digital technologies that foster economic development.

### ***Affordable Housing***

Affordable Housing is another area where both the countries may collaborate fruitfully with each other. Given the rising population and urbanization trends in Côte d'Ivoire, affordable housing is an area which should be explored further for the mutual benefit of both the countries.

In India we have the *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* a social welfare scheme initiated to meet the objectives of the “Housing for All” scheme by the year 2022. The scheme aims to provide a 25-square meter house including basic amenities to beneficiaries of the scheme. The houses provided will have certain special features such as disaster-resilience, low cost, and will be built keeping in mind the socio-cultural and geo-climatic factors. Till date there have been close to 16 million units sanctioned and more than 11 million units completed with funding provided to the tune of around USD 21 billion under this scheme. Hence India and Côte d'Ivoire can think about Affordable Housing as an area where cooperation initiatives can be implemented that will enhance the strength of their relations.

### **Conclusion**

Given the many areas where India and Côte d'Ivoire can implement mutually beneficial projects, a Webinar on “Strengthening Cooperation Initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire” is being organized. Highly eminent and distinguished speakers from India having profound subject domain knowledge are scheduled to take part in this important Webinar to share India’s vast experiences and expertise in dealing with these critical areas and to explore the possibilities of forging mutually beneficial partnerships between India and Côte d'Ivoire under the auspices of GDC at RIS.