

## Industry Report on PM's Africa Visit

19 August 2016 | Features | By BioSpectrum Bureau

### Industry Report on PM's Africa Visit



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's four-nation African tour this past July went on to grab most of the industry's attention. His five-day visit to the African continent started with Mozambique, and then over to South Africa and Tanzania, and ended in Kenya. During his visit he met with key state heads of the 4 African countries, including political and business leaders. Agri-Biotech, innovation, science and technology, and medical equipments space were on the Minister's cards.

"..... the economic agenda of the visit was high on the priority of my delegation and I. In all the 4 nations I went, ways to deepen our economic cooperation and improve trade ties were comprehensively discussed," Mr Modi wrote in his official LinkedIn blog.

The Prime Minister's first visit to Mozambique ended in a fruitful culmination, with Mr Modi seeing 'a great scope for wide range of economic cooperation' between the nations.

He said that India's needs and Mozambique's strengths perfectly complement each other. He emphasized the need in fast-tracking cooperation between the two countries in the area of Agriculture and Food Security. Mr Modi also pointed about possible collaborations in the Healthcare space. "There is a rich potential to deepen cooperation in skill development and healthcare as well," he said.

In his visit to South Africa, Agriculture again, took the centre stage between the 2 countries' economic and collaboration

opportunities. Clean energy and greener ways towards progress was also emphasized. Mr Modi stated, "India with its huge domestic market offers massive opportunities for food processing industry. Our collaboration in this sector will bring value for our farmers and our villagers."

According to World Trade Organization's (WTO) calculations based on UN COMTRADE data, there has been an increase in the share of high technology exports to Africa to 13.8% in 2011 compared to 10.9% in 2001, led by exports of pharmaceuticals, electronics and communication equipments.

The President of the Republic of South Africa Mr Jacob Zuma met with the Indian Prime Minister emphasizing on intense collaborations between the 2 nations in the area of innovation, science and technology.

With respect to the Pharma industry, President Zuma requested Mr Modi to relax India's norms on Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and lift caps on them. This will be seen as a major announcement by both Indian and African pharmaceutical companies and is expected to have high-impact in terms of business investments and trade. India now has the opportunity to leverage African FDIs and further bolster its traditional ties with the once Dark Continent.

The leaders also took pride and congratulated both the countries' Departments of Science and Technology for their vibrant scientific research and collaborations in the last twenty years. India has been extensively supporting South Africa in Healthcare projects related to the burgeoning Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) threat.

Both Ministers also approved the new call inviting research projects focused on HIV-TB in the Healthcare. Both the nations have also agreed to support 14 new collaborative initiatives in Agri-Biotech and Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

Thirdly, Mr Modi visited Tanzania, where the scope for opportunities and collaborations were laid out in the areas of Agriculture, Energy and Natural Gas.

He added that India as a nation would be happy to meet the Healthcare priorities of Tanzanian Government, enabling supply of required medicines and Healthcare equipments. This good news comes just in time for Indian companies eying expansion in developing markets like African and Eurasian markets.

Mr Modi's Africa visit positively ended in Kenya. According to him, India is Kenya's largest trading partner and second largest investor. "India and Kenya are both young countries with their workforce in great demand worldwide... We can work together to nurture and train human capital," he held.

Trade between India and Africa has significantly risen from \$25 billion in 2006 to \$70 billion today. Both India and Africa represent one-third of the planet's population.

Mr Modi recalled India and Kenya holding a favorable global position in Medical Tourism. He explained, "The health sector is another area of great interest to both sides. We are happy that thousands of Kenyan patients have returned from India after successful treatments. I understand that Kenya would like to replicate the Indian experience in medicare and become a medical hub in the region..."

During his entire five-day visit to Africa, the following MoUs were signed by the countries:

- i,§ MoU on ICT
- i,§ MoU on the Establishment of Grassroots Innovation in Science and Technology
- i,§ MoU on Tourism
- i,§ Programme of Cultural Cooperation