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India and Nigeria Discuss Areas of Cooperation in Fight Against Terrorism

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Context:

The **Second Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue** between **India and Nigeria** concluded in New Delhi.

Summary of the Second Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue between India and Nigeria:

- **Date and Location:**
- **Dates:** The dialogue took place over two days, concluding today in New Delhi.
- **Participants:**
- **India:** National Security Adviser (NSA) **Ajit Doval**.
- **Nigeria:** NSA **NuhRibadu**.
- **Key Focus Areas:**
- **Terrorism and Extremism:** Discussions centered on tackling **terrorism**, **extremism**, and **radicalization**, including threats emanating from **cyberspace**.
- **International Crime:** Focused on combating **international crime**, **arms smuggling**, and **drug trafficking**.
- Both sides agreed on a **firm stance against terrorism** and reiterated that there is **no justification** for terrorism in any form.
- **Outcomes and Agreements:**
- **Cooperation on Counter-Terrorism:** The dialogue resulted in identifying **specific areas of cooperation** to enhance mutual efforts in combating terrorism.
- **Capacity Building:** Both nations agreed to enhance **bilateral capacity building** and strengthen **cooperation at international platforms** to counter common security challenges.
- **Visit by Nigerian NSA:**
- As part of his visit, **NuhRibadu** also toured the **National Security Guard (NSG)** facilities in **Manesar**, India.

The dialogue underscored the **strategic partnership** between India and Nigeria, highlighting the importance of joint efforts in countering terrorism, extremism, and international crimes. Both countries agreed to further deepen collaboration in both bilateral and multilateral arenas.

India-Nigeria Bilateral Relations Overview

India and Nigeria share a long-standing, friendly, and strategic relationship characterized by cooperation in multiple sectors such as trade, defense, education, development, culture, and science. Their bilateral ties have grown over time, evolving from historical friendships to a comprehensive **Strategic Partnership**.

1. Overall Relations:

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- **Natural Partnership:** Both India and Nigeria are large, diverse, and democratic nations with multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multilingual societies. India's population of 1.3 billion and Nigeria's 190+ million people make them prominent global players, with India being the world's largest democracy and Nigeria the largest in Africa.
- **Colonial and Post-Colonial Legacy:** Their shared history of anti-colonial struggle, coupled with their active roles in multilateral organizations like the **United Nations**, **G77**, and **NAM**, has solidified their ties over the years.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** India established its diplomatic mission in Lagos in 1958, two years before Nigeria gained independence in 1960. Since then, high-level political contacts have flourished.
- **Strategic Partnership:** In 2007, during Prime Minister **Manmohan Singh's** visit to Nigeria, both countries elevated their ties to a "Strategic Partnership." Today, Nigeria remains a key partner in India's outreach to Africa.

2. Bilateral Visits:

- **Notable Visits:**
- **India to Nigeria:**
- **Jawaharlal Nehru** (1962) and **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** (2003) are among the key Indian leaders who have visited Nigeria, strengthening bilateral ties.
- **Dr. Manmohan Singh** (2007) marked a turning point by establishing the **Abuja Declaration** on strategic partnership.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** met President **Muhammad Buhari** at the **India-Africa Forum Summit** (2015) and again in 2023 during the **G20 Summit**.
- **Nigeria to India:**
- **President Sheh Shagari** and **President Olusegun Obasanjo** have visited India on multiple occasions, attending Republic Day celebrations and participating in key forums like the **India-Africa Forum Summit** (IAFS).
- **Vice President Hamid Ansari** (2016) and **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu** (2023) have also engaged with Indian counterparts.
- **Ministerial Visits:**
- Indian ministers, including **Rajnath Singh** (Defence Minister) and **V. Muraleedharan** (MoS for External Affairs), have visited Nigeria for significant events like the **swearing-in ceremony** of President Tinubu (2023) and the **Nigeria-India Business Council** inaugural event (2022).
- Nigeria has also sent high-ranking officials to India, including Foreign Minister **Geoffrey Onyeama** (2023) and others participating in G20 and various international summits.

3. Institutional Dialogues:

- **Foreign Office Consultations (FoC):** The first FoC was held in **Abuja** (2003) and the most recent in **New Delhi** (2022).
- **Joint Commission Meetings (JCM):** Established in 1979, JCM meetings have been held at regular intervals (1981, 1989, 2000, 2003, and 2011) to review bilateral ties.
- **Joint Trade Committee (JTC):** Aimed at enhancing trade relations, JTC meetings have been held since 2019.
- **Consular Dialogues:** Meetings to address consular issues between the two nations were held in **September 2019** and **February 2023**.

4. Defense and Security Cooperation:

- **Military Relations:** India has been involved in training Nigerian armed forces and assisting in setting up military institutions like the **Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA)** and the **Naval College** in Port Harcourt.
- **Defense Cooperation Agreement:** Signed in **October 2007**, the two countries have engaged in joint training, counter-terrorism operations, peacekeeping missions, and defense exchanges.

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- **Recent Developments:** The **Indian Navy** visited Nigeria in **2022** for anti-piracy operations in the **Gulf of Guinea**, marking a significant step in bilateral defense relations.

5. Trade and Investment Relations:

- **Bilateral Trade:** India is one of Nigeria's top trading partners, with trade reaching **US\$ 11.8 billion** in 2022-23, though there has been a decline due to a drop in oil imports. India continues to export goods, including machinery, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals, while Nigeria's primary export to India remains oil.
- **Trade Statistics:**
- India's exports to Nigeria increased to **US\$ 5.16 billion** in 2022-23, while imports decreased to **US\$ 6.69 billion**.
- The **trade volume** fluctuated from **US\$ 9.4 billion** (2016-17) to **US\$ 11.8 billion** in 2022-23.

6. Development Cooperation:

- **Concessional Loans:** India has extended **Lines of Credit (LOC)** to Nigeria for energy and infrastructure projects, such as a **gas-fired electricity generation station** and **solar-powered streetlights** in various states.
- **Capacity Building:** Under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** program, Nigeria has been receiving support in education and skills development since 1964. India offers a variety of training programs in sectors like agriculture, health, and hydropower.
- **Africa Forum Initiatives:** Following the **India-Africa Forum Summit** (2015), India has extended additional training opportunities to Nigeria, training Nigerians in various disciplines at Indian institutions.

7. Education:

- **Indian Scholarships:** India offers scholarships for Nigerian students through programs like the **ICCR Africa Scholarship Scheme** and the **C.V. Raman International Fellowships** for post-graduate research. Thousands of Nigerian students study in India, with special scholarships for undergraduate, post-graduate, and higher education.
- **Collaboration in Online Education:** India's **e-Vidya Bharati** and **e-Arogya Bharati** programs provide tele-education and telemedicine to Nigerian students and medical professionals.

8. Science & Technology Cooperation:

- **Space Cooperation:** India and Nigeria signed an **MoU on space collaboration** in **2020**, focusing on satellite applications for agriculture, environment, and mining.
- **COVID-19 Response:** India played a vital role in providing medical aid to Nigeria during the pandemic, including the supply of **COVID-19 vaccines** and essential medicines. Additionally, India assisted Nigeria in setting up vaccine production capacity through a joint venture with **Serum Institute of India**.

9. Cultural and People-to-People Ties:

- **Cultural Diplomacy:** India promotes cultural exchange through events like **Namaste Nigeria** (2018), showcasing Indian art and performances. Indian cultural troupes regularly perform in Nigeria, while Nigerian groups also visit India.
- **NRI/PIO Community:** There is a large Indian expatriate community in Nigeria, estimated at **50,000**, contributing to the cultural and economic fabric of both countries. Indian community organizations and cultural associations are active in Nigerian cities.

Conclusion:

India-Nigeria relations are characterized by a broad and multi-dimensional partnership, with both countries working together to strengthen cooperation in areas such as defense, trade, development, education, and science. The

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bilateral relationship continues to evolve with both nations committed to addressing common challenges, such as terrorism, extremism, and economic development, while also expanding their people-to-people ties.