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**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2025-26)**

EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of the Committee on the subject 'Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2025-26'

TENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

DECEMBER, 2025 / Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)



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COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2025-26)

(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Fourth Report of the Committee on the subject 'Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2025-26

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18 December, 2025
Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 18 December, 2025



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

DECEMBER, 2025 / Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2025-26)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

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3. Shri Vijay Baghel
4. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
5. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
6. Shri Arun Govil
7. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
8. Shri Naveen Jindal
9. Shri Navaskani K.
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11. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
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18. Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
19. Ms. Bansuri Swaraj
20. Shri Akshay Yadav
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla
23. Dr. John Brittas
24. Shri Raghav Chadha
25. Smt. Sagarika Ghose
26. Dr. K. Laxman
27. Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu
28. Shri Rajeev Shukla
29. Shri A. D. Singh
30. Shri Ratanjit Pratap Narain Singh
31. Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

Secretariat

1. Shri Anjani Kumar – Joint Secretary
2. Shri Shangreiso Zimik – Director
3. Ms. Smita Singh – Assistant Committee Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2025-26) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Tenth Report (18th Lok Sabha) on action taken by the Government on the Observations /Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2025-26.

2. The Fifth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha and laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha on 17 March 2025. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 30 July 2025.
3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their Sitting held on 16 December 2025. The Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.
4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
16 December, 2025
25 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER-I

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in their Fifth Report on the subject 'Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2025-26' which was presented to the both Houses of Parliament on 17 March, 2025.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 52 observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -

Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50 and 51.

Total- 35

Chapter-II

(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies: -

Recommendation No. 22

Total- 01

Chapter-III

(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -

Recommendation Nos. 3, 10, 14, 20, 34, 37, 38, 43 and 52

Total- 09

Chapter-IV

(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited: -

Recommendation No. 6, 9, 17, 18, 39, 47 and 48,

Total- 07

Chapter-V

3. **The Committee desire that the final replies to the comments contained in Chapter-I and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.**

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

LoC Provisioning
(Recommendation No.3)

5. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee find that this year’s budgetary allocation of Rs. 20,516.61 crore for MEA excludes the Indian Exim Bank sovereign guarantees which in BE 2024-25 had accounted for 15.45% increase (Rs. 2744.91 crore) from the productive BE 2024-25. The Committee acknowledge the clarification provided by the Ministry regarding the non-inclusion of a provision for the Lines of Credit (LoC) in the Ministry’s budget for the fiscal year 2025-26. The Committee understand that LoC provisioning, which is a necessary mechanism to address the non-performing assets in the Exim Bank’s balance sheet, has been a significant and somewhat unforeseen budgetary requirement in recent years. However, the Committee are of the view that the inclusion of such provisions within the regular budget distorts the correct picture of actual allocation to the MEA and also impinges on its ability to meet core diplomatic and development responsibilities, as the provisioning for the Indian Exim Bank are non-productive in nature and do not contribute directly to the foreign policy objectives of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of External Affairs make a compelling case to the Ministry of Finance to treat EXIM Bank provisioning as a separate item. The provisioning for non-performing loans should be allocated outside of the regular MEA budget, over and above the core funding necessary for the Ministry’s diplomatic and developmental functions. This distinction will ensure that the Ministry’s essential international responsibilities are adequately funded, without being compromised by non-productive and non-diplomatic financial obligations.”

6. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:
- “As part its budget, the Ministry provides ‘Support to Exim Bank towards Gol Guaranteed Line of Credit (LoC)’, which is for provisioning requirement and invocation of guarantee claims that have arisen in respect of LoCs extended under IDEAS scheme due to non-payment of loan and interest in a timely manner by the borrowing entities, i.e. sovereign nations. This provisioning amount is an expenditure charged to the Guarantee Redemption Fund – a notional expenditure and an adjustment of accounts between different branches of the Government. As per the directions of the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance, the MEA is required to cover in its budget, the payments that are due to the Exim Bank of India on account of the LoCs that the latter extends to foreign countries on MEA’s recommendation. Based on the claims raised by Exim Bank, and approval from Department of Economic Affairs, payments have been made to Exim Bank towards provisioning over the last three years. Gol has paid 100% provisioning to Exim Bank for a majority of countries. Exim Bank’s books have been strengthened substantially. No budget has been allocated in the BE of 2025-26 towards provisioning.

The recommendation of the Hon’ble Committee that the provisioning for non-performing loans be allocated outside of the regular MEA budget, over and above the core funding necessary for Ministry’s diplomatic and development functions, is important, as this will ensure that Ministry’s core responsibilities receive adequate funding. The Ministry remains engaged with RBI and Ministry of Finance on the matter.”

- 7. Noting that inclusion of Lines of Credit (LoC) in the Ministry’s budget distorted the correct picture of actual allocation to the MEA, the Committee in their original report had recommended the Ministry of External Affairs to make a compelling case to the Ministry of Finance to treat EXIM Bank provisioning as a separate item. The Committee note from the reply furnished by the Ministry that this is done as per the directions of the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of**

Finance for payments due to the Exim Bank of India on account of the LoCs that the latter extends to foreign countries on MEA's recommendation. The Ministry has also informed the Committee that the recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee is important, as this will ensure that Ministry's core responsibilities receive adequate funding and the Ministry continue to engage with RBI and Ministry of Finance on the matter. Considering that the Ministry of External Affairs is still engaged with RBI and Ministry of Finance on the matter, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation that the MEA should continue to make a compelling case before the Ministry of Finance to treat EXIM Bank provisioning as a separate item, so as to bring the matter to a logical conclusion. The Committee are of the considered view that proper implementation of this recommendation will provide a correct picture of actual allocation of Ministry's diplomatic and developmental functions. The Ministry may keep the Committee apprised of any progress made in this regard.

Adequate Gender Representation in Indian Foreign Service (IFS)

(Recommendation No.10)

8. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:
“The Committee commend the Ministry for increased representation of women in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), with women officers constituting 39.39% of the 2024 batch. The appointment of 15 lady officers as Heads of Missions is a notable step towards promoting gender equality at the senior-most levels of the Ministry. Additionally, the establishment of the Gender Budget Cell, the implementation of mentorship programmes and the provision of creche facilities for employees are positive initiatives that reflect the Ministry's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for women. However, the Committee believe that further efforts are necessary to enhance gender

equality, not only in terms of representation but also in terms of professional advancement, particularly in senior and decision-making roles.

While the increase in the number of women officers is commendable, the Committee urge the Ministry to ensure that women are not only well-represented in numbers but are also given the tools, resources, and opportunities needed to progress to leadership positions. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should take proactive steps to encourage the recruitment of more women into the IFS and other departments within the MEA. Although the UPSC examination process is gender-neutral, the Ministry should explore additional measures, such as targeted awareness programmes, mentorship schemes, and career development initiatives, to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for female candidates. These initiatives should be designed to specifically address the barriers, if any, that women face in entering and advancing in diplomacy. Furthermore, the Committee emphasize the importance of prioritizing women in diplomacy, as it can significantly enhance the nation's global standing.”

9. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The recommendations of the Hon’ble Committee have been duly noted. Ministry is taking a number of steps to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for women personnel in the Ministry. For this purpose, Ministry has commissioned a study on Gender Budgeting in other countries so that the best practices could be adopted. The Exim Bank, which is involved in funding and execution of projects abroad, has also been requested to undertake a gender impact assessment and provide recommendations. The Ministry will continue to ensure that barriers, if any, to career progression of women officers in the Ministry are resolved while creating a conducive environment for the professional progress of women officers.”

10. The Committee had *inter alia* recommended that the Ministry should take proactive steps to encourage the recruitment of more women into the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and other departments within the MEA. The Committee note

from the Action Taken Reply that the Ministry is taking a number of steps to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for women personnel in the Ministry. The Committee also note from the reply that the Ministry will continue to ensure that barriers, if any, to career progression of women officers in the Ministry are resolved while creating a conducive environment for the professional progress of women officers. However, the reply of the Ministry does not expressly address the specific recommendation of the Committee to explore additional measures, such as targeted awareness programmes, mentorship schemes, and career development initiatives, to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for female candidates. The Committee desire a concrete reply from the Ministry on the various measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Committee, especially on the measures taken to prioritize entry of women in diplomacy. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should take proactive steps to encourage the recruitment of more women into the IFS and other departments within the MEA and address the barriers, if any, the women face in entering and advancing diplomacy. The Committee are of the view that prioritizing women in diplomacy can significantly enhance the nation's global standing.

**Indian Missions/Posts Abroad
(Recommendation No.14)**

11. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:
“It is observed that there are currently 216 Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The Committee also take note of the criteria for establishing new Missions, focusing on economic partnerships, strategic cooperation, diaspora engagement and multilateral diplomacy. The Committee recognizes the

establishment of new Missions in Riga (Latvia), Tbilisi (Georgia), Tirana (Albania), Libreville (Gabon), Dili (Timor Leste), and La Paz (Bolivia), as well as new Consulates in Brisbane (Australia), Marseille (France), Barcelona (Spain), and Auckland (New Zealand). The Committee have also been informed about the future plans to open 5 new Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean regions. However, the Committee observe that India currently lacks a resident Mission or Post in 41 countries, limiting opportunities for engagement with potential partners and the strengthening of diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties. The Committee emphasize that Missions should be prioritized in countries where there is significant potential for trade and investment, a strong Indian diaspora, or an opportunity for India to bolster its political outreach in multilateral forums. The Committee urge the Ministry of External Affairs to expedite the establishment of Missions and Posts in these countries and to seek additional funds, if necessary, during the Revised Estimate stage to ensure timely operationalization of Missions, especially, the proposed Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean regions.

15. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“The recommendations of the Hon’ble Committee have been duly noted. The Ministry formulates proposals from time to time for opening of resident Missions in countries where there are no Indian Missions. The objective of our Foreign Policy is to build a conducive environment for India’s growth and development through partnerships with friendly countries. India’s Missions and Posts across the world serve as conduits of its relations with partner countries. The decision to open new Indian Missions is to expand India’s footprint in various regions and broaden international support for our priorities.

In 2024, 10 new Missions and Posts were operationalized. By June 2025, five new Posts have been operationalized in Belfast (UK), Manchester (UK), Fukuoka (Japan), Boston (USA) and Los Angeles (USA). Ministry is working to operationalize Missions in countries where India currently does not possess a diplomatic Mission on a need basis. In all the 41 countries without a diplomatic Mission, diplomatic relations are currently being handled by

concurrent accreditation with neighbouring Missions and appointment of Honorary Consuls.

Approval has been received for operationalizing five new Missions in Europe and in Latin America and Caribbean region. Additionally, new Consulates are also being opened by the Ministry in view of India's increasing diplomatic engagement. In FY 2025-26, new Consulates are expected to be operationalized in Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia). Ministry will also send proposals seeking allocation of funds well in advance of operationalization of Missions/Posts to ensure that they can be operationalized expeditiously."

16. During the examination of Demands for Grants (2025-26) the Committee had observed that India currently lacks a resident Mission or Post in 41 countries. Accordingly, the Committee in their original Report had emphasized that Missions should be prioritized in countries where there is significant potential for trade and investment, a strong Indian diaspora, or an opportunity for India to bolster its political outreach in multilateral forums. The Committee note from the Action Taken Reply that by June 2025, five new Posts have been operationalized in Belfast (UK), Manchester (UK), Fukuoka (Japan), Boston (USA) and Los Angeles (USA). However, the Committee note that no progress has been made in opening of a resident Mission or Post in 41 countries, and the diplomatic relations in these countries are currently being handled by concurrent accreditation with neighbouring Missions and appointment of Honorary Consuls. The Committee had noted that approval had been received for operationalizing five new Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean region. The Committee note that during the FY 2025-26, new Consulates are expected to be operationalized in Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia). The Committee hope that the two new Consulates have been opened by now.

The Committee however, failed to understand the reasons why India currently still lacks a resident Mission or Post in 41 countries. The Committee would appreciate if the Ministry could provide the reasons for the same. The main concern of the Committee is that absent of resident mission or posts in 41 countries would have adversely affected the objective of our Foreign Policy to build a conducive environment for India's growth and development through partnerships with friendly countries. Should the Ministry require the expansion of diplomatic corps to facilitate the expansion of Missions and Posts, the Committee are pleased to recommend such expansion. Considering that India's Missions and Posts across the world serve as conduits of its relations with partner countries, the Committee once again urge the Ministry to expedite operationalization of five new Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean region approval for which has been taken, including opening a resident mission in countries where India still does not have, so as to increase India's diplomatic and strategic footprints.

mPassport Police App
(Recommendation No.20)

17. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee recognize the progress made by the Ministry in improving the Police Verification Report (PVR) process through the introduction of the mPassport Police App. The Ministry has informed that the App has been successfully rolled out in 25 States/UTs, covering over 9,400 Police Stations. The digitalization of the process has significantly reduced the average time for Police Verification Reports (PVRs). The Committee recommends that the Ministry should prioritize the deployment of the mPassport Police App in the remaining 12 States/Uts where it is yet to be launched. The Ministry should

continue to collaborate with the concerned State/UT authorities to address any infrastructure challenges and work towards the timely rollout in these areas. The Ministry should also ensure that training and support is provided to police personnel to enhance the optimal use of the App.”

18. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“It is mentioned that 25 States/Uts covering more than 9425 Police Stations across the country have already launched the mPassport Police App. The Ministry and the concerned RPOs are coordinating with the States/Uts where mPassport Police App has not yet been launched. It is also submitted that the Ministry is providing all technical support to States/Uts including the application support, training and handholding to police personnel (before and after the launch of mPassport Police App) through the Service Provider of Passport Seva Program, M/s. TCS. Post deployment, all technical support is also provided to State/Uts regarding police verification and submission. It may be further noted that the roll out of mPassport Police App at States/Uts depends on the readiness of IT infrastructure at the concerned State/UT for which the Ministry is also providing financial support to each State/UT, per application processed by them and for verification and submission of Police Verification Report (PVR).

19. Noting that mPassport Police App has been successfully rolled out in 25 States/UTs, covering over 9,400 Police Stations, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should prioritize the deployment of the mPassport Police App in the remaining 12 States/UTs. The Committee note from the Action Taken Reply that the Ministry is providing all technical support to States/UTs including the application support, training and handholding to police personnel (before and after the launch of mPassport Police App) through the Service Provider of Passport Seva Program, M/s. TCS. However, the rollout of the app in the remaining 12 states/UTs is currently under consideration

following the Committee's recommendation. The main reason of the delay is the roll out depends on the readiness of IT infrastructure at the concerned State/UT. The Committee note that the Ministry is providing financial support to each State/UT for application processed by them and for verification and submission of Police Verification Report (PVR). The Committee are of the view that rolling out this app in the remaining States/UTs is important, considering that the digitization process has significantly reduced the average time taken for Police Verification Reports. Keeping in view that mPassport Police App is both citizen friendly and useful to law enforcing authority in completing the passport verification process, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation for rolling out the service to all the remaining 12 states/UTs, and also provide necessary technical and financial assistances so as to address any infrastructural challenges.

Aid to Afghanistan

(Recommendation No.34)

20. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that the budgetary allocation for ‘Aid to Afghanistan’ was Rs. 200 crore during BE 2024-25, which was decreased to Rs. 50 crore at the RE 2024-25 stage and then increased to Rs. 100 crore in BE 2025-26. Regarding the reductions, the Ministry stated that the budgetary allocation to Afghanistan over the past three and a half years was primarily aimed at stabilizing the country in terms of food security, medicines and emergency supplies, etc. and now, that these efforts have been fruitful, leading to marked improvement in these areas, it has been decided to explore development cooperation projects in addition to the ongoing humanitarian aid. The Committee welcome this move as it presents a good opportunity for furthering

our foreign policy objectives through development cooperation and desire that projects/programmes which caters to the domestic needs of the people of Afghanistan should be identified and action plan drawn up for implementation at the earliest.

21. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“India and Afghanistan share deep-rooted civilisational and historical ties. India has traditionally enjoyed close relations with the Afghan people and post-August 2021, has extended humanitarian assistance for their development needs. These efforts have been noted positively by the Afghan authorities and the UN agencies. During the meeting of the Foreign Secretary with the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan in January 2025, it was decided to explore development cooperation projects in Afghanistan. In this regard, we have been in touch with the Afghan side and have endeavoured to identify projects that cater to the domestic needs of the Afghan people.”

22. In their original Report, the Committee had desired that the Ministry to identify projects/programmes that would cater to the domestic needs of the people of Afghanistan and draw up an action plan for implementation. The Committee are pleased to note that post-August 2021, India has extended humanitarian assistance for the development needs of Afghanistan, and these efforts have been positively acknowledged by the Afghan authorities and the UN agencies. The Committee also note that following the meeting between the Foreign Secretary of India and the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan in January 2025, both sides are in communication to identify projects that will cater to the domestic needs of the Afghan people. The Committee note that India has traditionally enjoyed close relations with the Afghan people, and Afghanistan continues to be a strategically important country for advancing India’s diplomacy and security interests. It is therefore essential that India scale up its development cooperation and have a

meaningful presence in Afghanistan. Since no specific projects have been identified yet, the Committee once again reiterate their earlier recommendation that suitable projects/programmes catering to the needs of the Afghan people, particularly women and children, may be identified and action plan for its implementation prepared at the earliest. The Committee would like to be apprised of all the progress made in this regard.

Aid to African Countries

(Recommendation Nos. 37& 38)

23. The Committee in the Recommendation No 37 of their report has observed/recommended as under

“The budgetary allocation for ‘Aid to African Countries’ has been marginally increased from Rs. 200 crore in BE and RE 2024-25 to Rs. 225 crore in BE 2025-26. The Committee note that no budgetary provision has been made for the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) for the FY 2025-26 as agreement of African Union for hosting of IAFS-IV is yet to be firmed up. The Committee are concerned about the delay in conducting the India-Africa Forum Summit–IV and urge the Ministry to maintain active coordination with the African Union so that dates for the summit are finalized at the earliest and seek additional allocation for the same at Revised Estimate stage, if necessary. In respect of ongoing projects committed under IAFS-I, II and III, the status may be communicated to the Committee.”

24. In its action-taken reply to Recommendation No 37, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“India-Africa Forum Summit-IV (IAFS-IV) was anticipated to be held in the Year 2024 due to which budgetary allocation of Rs. 40.00 Crore was made for the FY 2024-25. Though the budgetary provisions for IAFS-IV were not made for FY 2025-26, the available funds under the budget head ‘Aid to African Countries’ will be utilized to meet the expenses on hosting of IAFS-IV as and

when finalized. Additional funds, if required, will be sought at RE stage under the budget head “Aid to African Countries”. The Ministry of External Affairs and the African Union are exploring various options for organizing the IAFS-IV. Status Report on Ongoing Projects under IAFS-I, IAFS-II & IAFS-III is enclosed at Annexure I.”

25. The Committee in the Recommendation No 38 of their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that Research & Information Systems for Developing Countries (RIS) is conducting mid-term impact assessment of the e-VBAB Network Project. The Terms of Reference, timeline and status of the assessment may be communicated to Committee. Further, the feasibility of conducting mid-term impact assessment of the projects under IAFS by RIS may also be explored.”

26. In its action-taken reply to Recommendation No 38, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“RIS has successfully conducted the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of the e-VBAB Network Project, and has submitted their report in April 2025. The information as sought is as follows:

Terms of Reference (ToR): is enclosed at Annexure II.

Timeline: As per the Terms of Reference RIS was expected to complete the Mid-term impact assessment and submit the final report within 2 months. The timeline commenced after MEA conveyed the approval of Competent Authority to RIS vide email dated 11 November 2024. However, as the evaluation included inputs from various stakeholders, including foreign students and Universities, the report was finally submitted in April 2025.

Current Status: RIS completed the activities viz., Data collection, stakeholder consultations, and e-VBAB learner surveys, on account of impact assessment. The final report was submitted by RIS to MEA on 8 April 2025. The report was also forwarded to concerned official in NITI Aayog on 23 April 2025 for further

action. Thereafter, RIS made a comprehensive presentation to Secretary (ER) on e-VBAB impact assessment to clarify the queries. The report is under review in the Ministry.

Hon'ble Committee's recommendation for undertaking mid-term impact assessment of the completed IAFS projects has been noted."

27. Noting that the dates for the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)-IV is yet to be decided, the Committee had expressed concerned over the delay and urged the Ministry to maintain active coordination with the African Union to finalize the dates at the earliest. The Committee had also recommended that the feasibility of conducting mid-term impact assessment of the projects under IAFS by RIS may also be explored. The Committee are concerned to note that the dates for IAFS-IV have not been finalized yet and it is unlikely that it will take place in 2025. Moreover, a thorough review of the status report on ongoing projects under IAFS-I, IAFS-II & IAFS-III, as furnished by the Ministry, reveals that although 21 projects have been identified for implementation, actual implementation has not commenced in 16 of them due to various constraints. With regard to the establishment of the Pan African University of Life and Earth Sciences (PAULESI) at University of Ibadan, Nigeria which is an IAFS-II project, the Committee note that Nigeria has not shown interest in pursuing the project.

From the above observations, the Committee note that even though India has committed numerous projects in Africa, the actual progress of their implementation is unsatisfactory. The Committee are of the considered view that date for IAFS-IV summit need to be finalised at the earliest. The Committee further emphasize that Africa is emerging as a vital arena for global diplomacy, and it should be India's earnest endeavour to significantly enhance its presence across

the African continent. The Committee also reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should explore the feasibility of conducting mid-term impact assessment of the projects by RIS, with a view to improving the planning and implementation of ongoing and future initiatives under the IAFS framework.

Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) Programme

(Recommendation No.43)

28. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:

“The Committee note that the Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme launched by the Ministry of External Affairs in January, 2018 under the ‘*Surakshit Jaayein Prashikshit Jaayein*’ campaign of the Government of India provides one day free of cost orientation training to emigrant workers to help them understand local rules and regulations of the destination country, its culture, tradition, language, etc. in addition to enhancing their soft skills. From its inception till 31st January 2025, a total of 1, 82,381 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training under PDOT programme and financial assistance for the same is being disbursed to the State government run departments/agencies. However, the Committee are startled to see that no fund was released to the State Agencies in 2022-23 and in 2023-24, Rs. 79.77 lakh out of 1.20 Crore and in 2024-25, only 16.08 lakh have been released till January 2025 out of the 1 crore Budget. This financial performance of the scheme makes the Committee worry about the working of the scheme as well as its efficacy. The Committee, while expressing their displeasure, desire that the reasons may be identified and earnest efforts are made for optimum utilization of the funds so that the migrant workers are sensitized about the pathways to safe and legal migration as well as on about various government programmes for their welfare and protection.”

29. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

“During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Pre-Departure Orientation Training was stopped from March 2020 to November 2021. The PDOT Centers, which were closed down during the pandemic, were gradually re-opened. After resumption of PDOT in November 2021 in some centres, initially the training did not pick up pace due to low demand as the pandemic had led to large scale job loss for emigrants going abroad and there were restrictions in place during the subsequent waves of the pandemic. The training started to gradually pick up pace in most centres from late 2022. A proposal for opening of 58 new PDOT centres in 11 states had been approved by the Ministry in July 2022 and the same was conveyed to the concerned states. The Ministry reached out to the States in September 2022, requesting them to send requisition of funds for PDOT. Keeping in view the expansion of the programme, the Division had requested for a budget grant of Rs. 3 crore for FY 2023-24.

In the Financial Year 2023-24 on receipt of demands for funds from the states of Telangana, Punjab and Karnataka, funds amounting to Rs. 79.77 lakhs were disbursed accordingly out of the allocated budget amount of Rs. 3 Crore. In January 2024, the Ministry again reached out to the concerned State Governments to seek their proposals for allocation of funds to carry out the PDOT.

Additionally, in March 2024, the Ministry reached out to the Principal Secretaries of the concerned States seeking their intervention to operationalize the approved new PDOT centres in their states and send their budget proposals for running of the centres. Subsequent reminders to follow-up on the subject matter were sent in July, October and December of 2024, and in February 2025. On receipt of demands from the states of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana during 2024-25, a total amount of Rs. 45,71,300/- was disbursed to the State Agencies of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana out of the allocated budget. The BE for FY 2025-26 is Rs. 5 crore which is the same as the BE for FY 2024-25.

Since the inception of the PDOT programme in 2018, a total of 1,90,362 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training till 28 February 2025. The pace of PDOT is expected to pick up during the current Financial Year as

Ministry has been closely coordinating with all State Governments/Training Partners to expand the PDOT outreach.

Detailed budget statement on PDOT for last three FYs is given below:

Financial Year	Budget Estimates (BE) (Rs)	Revised Estimates (RE) (Rs)	Final Estimates (FE) (Rs)	Funds released to State Agencies (Rs)
2022-23	3 Crore	3 Crore	3 Crore	0
2023-24	3 Crore	3 Crore	1.20 Crore	79.77 lakhs
2024-25	5 Crore	1 Crore	0.50 Crore	45.71 lakhs
2025-26	5 Crore	--	--	--

30. The Committee had noted that the Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme was launched by the Ministry of External Affairs in January, 2018 under the '*Surakshit Jaayein Prashikshit Jaayein*' campaign of the Government of India to provide one day free of cost orientation training to emigrant workers to help them understand local rules and regulations of the destination country, its culture, tradition, language, etc. in addition to enhancing their soft skills. Noting the poor financial performance under the scheme, the Committee had recommended the Ministry to identify the reasons and made earnest efforts for optimum utilization of the funds. The Committee note from the Action Taken Reply that low utilization of funds was mainly because only few states are implementing the scheme. During 2023-24, an amount of Rs. 79.77 lakh was disbursed to states of Telangana, Punjab, and Karnataka. Similarly, during 2024-25, a total amount of Rs. 45,71,300/- was disbursed to the state agencies of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Since the inception of the PDOT programme in 2018, a total of 1,90,362 emigrant workers have been imparted

orientation training till 28 February 2025. From the above information, the Committee observe that many states/UTs are yet to show any interest in implementing the scheme. This is in spite of the efforts made by MEA to operationalize the approved new PDOT centres in their states and send their budget proposals for running of the centres. The Committee are of the view that PDOT is a very far-sighted and visionary initiative by MEA which will greatly help the emigrant workers to understand local rules and regulations of the destination country. To better equip them with the knowledge of the destination country, the Committee would like to impress upon the Ministry to increase coordination with various states governments and enhance their awareness of this scheme in order to expand the outreach programme. The Committee, reiterate their earlier recommendation that earnest efforts should be made by the Ministry for optimum utilization of the funds so that the migrant workers are sensitized about the pathways to safe and legal migration, as well as the various government programmes available for their welfare and protection.

**Foreign Policy Document
(Recommendation No. 52)**

31. The Committee in their report has observed/recommended as under:
- “The Committee acknowledge the longstanding and well-established principles that have underpinned India’s foreign policy, which have significantly contributed to the nation’s diplomatic successes and global standing. The Committee also recognize that a growing number of countries, such as the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and Japan have formalized national foreign policy strategies, which have proven to be valuable tools in guiding their international engagement. India, with its burgeoning geopolitical influence must not lag behind in articulating its own roadmap for a future-oriented foreign policy

that corresponds to its increasing global stature. The Ministry of External Affairs, through its ongoing assessment of the foreign policy strategies of other nations has undertaken a valuable exercise in understanding the shifting paradigms of global diplomacy. The Committee, however, suggest that the Ministry should consider the desirability of taking the logical next step which is the formulation of a formal and comprehensive foreign policy document/strategy that is specifically tailored to India's distinctive geopolitical context, emerging economic clout, and evolving global relationships. The Committee recommend that MEA should expeditiously initiate consultations with relevant stakeholders, including experts, diplomats, policymakers, and the Committee, to explore the feasibility and scope of such a document. The Committee desire to be apprised of the action taken in this regard."

32. In its action-taken reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated as under:

"Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to initiate consultations with relevant stakeholders is duly noted. The Ministry will keep the Hon'ble Committee apprised of such consultations as and when they are undertaken."

33. The Committee have consistently underscored the importance of creating a formal, comprehensive foreign policy document tailored to India's unique geopolitical situation, growing economic influence, and dynamic global relations. In their original report for the current year, the Committee recommended that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) take immediate steps to engage in consultations with relevant stakeholders such as experts, diplomats, policymakers, and the Committee itself on the feasibility and scope of developing such a document. However, the Ministry's response indicates that no concrete actions have been taken so far regarding either the identification of stakeholders or the formulation of the document. The Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should prioritize these consultations

at the earliest with a view to expediting the preparation of such a document and keep the Committee apprised of the progress at each stage. Furthermore, the Committee expect to be informed of the progress on this matter during the examination of the Demands for Grants for the year 2026-27.

Chapter-II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 1

Upon a detailed examination of the budgetary allocation of the Ministry of External Affairs for the fiscal year 2025-26, the Committee observe with dismay that despite India's growing global profile and expanding diplomatic and development responsibilities, the Ministry's allocation remains disproportionately low compared to the increasing global role that India is expected to play. The allocation in the Budget Estimates (BE) 2025-26, at Rs. 20,516.61 crore, represents a 7.39% reduction from BE 2024-25 and an 18.83% decrease compared to the Revised Estimates (RE) for 2024-25. India's diplomatic influence is growing, and the country is taking on an increasingly important role in global affairs, including multilateral engagements, regional security, development partnerships, and responding to emerging challenges such as climate change, cyber security and global public health. However, MEA's allocation as a percentage of the Government of India's total budget continues to decline from 0.46% in FY 2024-25 to 0.41% in FY 2025-26. This reduction in MEA's share is alarming, particularly given the broadening scope of India's international outreach and responsibilities. While the Ministry has worked within its means, managing to fulfill its international obligations, it must be acknowledged that India's role on the global stage continues to expand, with increasingly complex diplomatic engagements, security concerns and development commitments that demand more robust financial support. The Committee are of the firm view that the current allocation does not adequately support India's foreign policy priorities and international stature and urgently calls for a substantial increase in the MEA's budget to ensure that India can meet its diplomatic and development objectives effectively and assert its growing influence on the world stage. The Committee, therefore recommend that the Government should consider increasing the budgetary allocation of MEA by at least 20% in the next fiscal year to meet the expanding needs and ensure more effective engagement on the global stage.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has been following the Hon'ble Committee's advice to take up the requirement of optimum allocation of funds with the Ministry of Finance. The Hon'ble Committee has recommended an increase of budgetary allocation of at least 20% in the next fiscal year and had earlier recommended a phased increase of at least 20% annually in the Ministry's budget over the next five years. In an effort towards this target, sustained engagement with the Ministry of Finance has resulted in an increased budgetary allocation to the Ministry for BE 2025-26 of Rs. 20,516.61 crore. This is an increase of Rs. 2744.91 crore i.e.15.45% from productive BE of 2024-25 i.e. BE 2024-25 minus LOC provisioning. The Ministry will make a strong case to the Ministry of Finance for a further increase in budgetary

allocation at the 2025-26 RE stage. The Ministry continues to engage with the Ministry of Finance at all levels to emphasize the importance of providing adequate budgetary allocations so that there is no shortage of funds for the Ministry in the pursuit of India's international commitments.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 2

The Committee underscores that the current budget allocation for the Ministry of External Affairs is neither reflective of India's growing stature on the world stage, nor does it adequately support the expanding mandate of the Ministry in line with the country's foreign policy aspirations. While the Ministry has provided a comprehensive assessment of its funding requirements, including the identification of critical areas in need of enhanced financial support, the Committee emphasize that the allocation remains insufficient given the challenges and opportunities India faces internationally. The Committee would like to highlight three key areas that require urgent attention: human resource development to strengthen India's diplomatic cadre; embassy and mission operations to enhance India's presence abroad; and acquisition of diplomatic real estate to establish more permanent and cost-effective missions globally, alongside increased funding for development assistance to further India's strategic objectives through goodwill and partnerships. The Committee strongly urge the Government to prioritize these critical areas by providing substantial additional resources to MEA. These funds are necessary to ensure that the Ministry can effectively build a robust diplomatic infrastructure capable of meeting the demands of India's expanding global role. The Committee also call on the Government to reassess the Ministry's budget allocations, not only at the Revised Estimates (RE) stage but also in future budget cycles, to ensure that the Ministry has the resources it needs to fully capitalize on India's diplomatic and development opportunities. Such an investment will enable India to maximize its influence and uphold its interests on the world stage, positioning it as a leader in addressing both regional and global challenges.

Reply of the Government

The Hon'ble Committee's recommendation on increasing the allocation of budgetary resources towards the highlighted critical areas is noted. With an aim to enhance India's presence abroad and opening up of new Missions, the allocation under 'Embassies and Missions' budget head for BE 2025-26 is 8.7% higher than BE 2024-25 (Rs. 4,206.22 crore in FY 2025-26 as against Rs. 3,867.64 crore in FY 2024-25). The Ministry had utilized 99.3% of the budgetary allocation of Rs 3969.19 crore under Embassies and Missions allotted during RE of 2024-25.

On the acquisition of diplomatic real estate, it is shared that the RE 2024-25 was increased by 22% over the 2024-25 BE (2024-25 RE of Rs. 700.89 crore as against 2024-25 BE of Rs. 574

crore). The allocated amount was fully utilized. Similarly, the allocation for human resource development to Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service was fully utilized.

On development assistance to further India's strategic objectives through goodwill and partnerships, it is shared that the budgetary allocation in FY 2024-25 was fully utilized. For BE 2025-26, the allocation towards development partnerships is Rs 6,750 crore, which is an increase of Rs 1,082 crore i.e. 19.10% over the previous year's allocation of Rs 5,667 crore and is in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to aim for 20% annual increase in budget.

The Ministry will make a strong case with the Ministry of Finance for increased allocations at the 2025-26 RE stage and for the BE of 2026-27, as per the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to enhance budgetary allocation towards the identified critical areas.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No .4

The Committee has observed with concern the consistent trend of significant gaps between the budgetary demands and the actual allocations for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) over the past few years. The most notable instance is the sharp differential observed in the allocation for BE 2025-26, where the Ministry's demand for Rs. 30,871.82 crore has been slashed down to Rs. 20,516.61 crore, resulting in a differential of Rs. 10,355.21 crore—the highest recorded in recent years. This trend of budgetary allocations falling short of the Ministry's demands is a matter of serious concern. The Committee note that such discrepancies have created challenges for the Ministry in meeting its core diplomatic, development, and operational objectives, particularly in light of the evolving global challenges and India's aspirations for a more prominent role on the global stage. The Committee urge the Ministry of Finance to take a more forward-looking approach to budget allocation, factoring in not only the Ministry's ongoing commitments but also its future aspirations, and provide MEA with adequate and timely financial support to fulfill its expanding global responsibilities.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has received BE of Rs. 20,516.61 crore for 2025-26. This allocation is an increase of 15.45% in BE 2025-26 from the productive BE of 2024-25 (i.e. BE 2024-25 minus LOC provisioning). The Ministry will again make a strong case to the Ministry of Finance for increased budgetary allocations at the RE stage for 2025-26 and for an enhancement of at least 20% for BE 2026-27 over 2025-26 BE, in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 5

In pursuance of the Committee's ongoing recommendations, the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) has conducted an inter-Ministerial and cross-country comparison of budgetary allocations for foreign affairs. The findings of the report titled 'Analysis of Trends of MEA Budgetary Allocation' are highly illuminating and further underscore the necessity for substantial budgetary support to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to effectively meet its expanding global responsibilities and advance India's aspirations on the world stage. The Committee note that, for the current fiscal year, the MEA has been allocated Rs. 20,516.61 crore, positioning 22nd amongst the ministries of the Government of India. This situation reinforces the Committee's long-standing concern that the MEA is significantly underfunded. The Committee, hence, strongly urge that the Ministry of External Affairs should urgently utilize the data and insights from the RIS Report, alongside inter-Ministerial comparisons, to present a compelling case to the Ministry of Finance for a substantial increase in the budgetary allocation to ensure that India's foreign policy can evolve in alignment with the country's expanding global stature. By presenting a data-driven argument, the MEA will be better positioned to advocate for the resources necessary to build a more robust diplomatic infrastructure and meet the increasingly complex and diverse demands of international relations and development cooperation.

Reply of the Government

In line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendations, the Ministry had made a strong case for increased funding to the Ministry of Finance for the FY 2025-26. As a result, Ministry has received BE 2025-26 of Rs. 20516.61 Crore, which is an increase of Rs. 2744.91 Crore i.e. 15.45% from productive BE 2024-25 i.e. BE 2024-25 minus LOC provisioning. The Ministry had also received an augmentation of Rs 3,122.56 crore in the first Supplementary and additional Rs 300 crore in the second Supplementary for FY 2024-25.

Ministry accords utmost priority to effective budgetary allocation and resource prioritization. The Ministry continues to hold extensive discussions with Ministry of Finance at all stages of the budgetary cycle to convince and impress upon the need for judicious allocation of funds, within the overall constraints of Government finances.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 7

The Committee note that the budget classifications for the Ministry of External Affairs are divided into Revenue and Capital heads, as well as Scheme and Non-Scheme sections. The Scheme section primarily supports MEA's Central Sector Schemes, which are critical for India's development partnerships and cooperation with other countries. On the other hand, the Non-Scheme section covers a range of essential functions, including

establishment costs, assistance to autonomous institutions, passport and emigration services, welfare of the Diaspora, and international cooperation. For the fiscal year 2025-26, the total budgetary allocation to MEA includes Rs. 6,750 crore for the Scheme section and Rs. 13,766.61 crore for the Non-Scheme section. Both sections are vital for the Ministry's functioning and should see increased funding. The Committee have consistently underscored the importance of the Scheme section due to its direct impact on India's international development commitments and partnerships. The Committee strongly reiterate that the Scheme sections should be appropriately funded, and under no circumstances should it be subjected to budgetary cuts, particularly during fiscal rationalization or resource allocation exercises.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has noted the advice of Hon'ble Standing Committee regarding budgetary allocation to the Scheme section of MEA. Ministry's scheme commitments have ranged between 32-43% of the Ministry's overall budget for the last few years, reflecting steadfast prioritization of development partnership with international partners.

The Ministry had received an overall increase of Rs 3422.53 crore in the Supplementary Demand for grants in 2024-25 out of which Rs 1714.45 was only in the Scheme section. This was an increase of 30.45% over Scheme section allocation during BE 2024-25 and was completely utilized. For BE 2025-26, the allocation towards the Scheme section is Rs 6750 crore, which is 33% of the overall budget. This is an increase of Rs 1082 crore i.e. 19.10% over the previous year's Scheme section allocation of Rs 5667 crore, which is in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to aim for 20% annual increase in budget. The Ministry will once again make a case with the Ministry of Finance for increased budgetary allocations under the Scheme section at the 2025-26 RE stage and for the BE of 2026-27.

Ministry accords utmost priority to effective budgetary allocation and resource prioritization. The Ministry continues to hold extensive discussions with Ministry of Finance at all stages of the budgetary cycle to convince and impress upon the need for judicious allocation of funds, within the overall constraints of Government finances.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 8

The Committee take note of MEA's consistent efforts over the years to optimize the utilization of its allocated budgetary resources. The data presented for the last three fiscal years clearly demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to efficient expenditure management. The Foreign Secretary's testimony further reinforces Ministry's record of achieving high levels of budget utilization, with an impressive 99.6% utilization for the financial year 2023-24 and 82.5% utilization as of January 2025 for the current fiscal year, 2024-25. The Committee appreciate the effective quarterly expenditure management and close monitoring of fund releases in alignment with physical and financial progress by MEA. However, the Committee also note the unspent balances of the Ministry in the past few years, which include Rs. 3,110.72 crore in 2021-22, Rs. 281.17

crore in 2022-23, and Rs. 66.68 crore in 2023-24. While the overall utilization rate has been high, the Committee desire that the Ministry further strengthen its efforts to minimize unspent balances by ensuring the timely and efficient execution of all projects and schemes, particularly in the last quarter of the financial year.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has duly noted the advice of Hon'ble Standing Committee and has almost fully utilized (99.8%) the budgetary allocation for 2024-25. Ministry has also made full efforts to ensure optimum utilization of available budgetary allocation evenly throughout the year. Budgetary demand and allocation are a dynamic exercise aided by regular assessment of Ministry's expectation of expenditure progress in a financial year. Instruments of re-appropriation of budget, Supplementary demands, etc. allow re-prioritization and reallocation of funds for the full and efficient utilization of budgetary resources. The Ministry has been holding regular quarterly budget review meetings to ensure rigorous budget planning, sharper monitoring and budget management, the last one being held in the month of May and chaired by the Foreign Secretary. These meetings aid in the analysis of expenditure utilization, assessment of budgetary resources and the useful repurposing of budgetary distribution as per Ministry's international commitments.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 11

The Committee note with concern the reduction in the budgetary allocation for the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) for the fiscal year 2025-26, despite its vital role in providing in-service training for Indian Foreign Service officers, MEA personnel, and foreign diplomats. The Ministry has clarified that this reduction is primarily due to a decrease in the number of training days for foreign diplomats as per indications from the participating countries. Further, it has also been assured that this reduction in the budget will not lead to a decrease in the number of training programmes conducted and that all mandatory and skill development training programmes will continue as scheduled. However, the Committee believe that any reduction in budgetary allocation, even if not immediately impactful, may limit the scope of future training initiatives and hinder the ability of SSIFS to adapt to new challenges in diplomatic training. Furthermore, the Committee appreciate the Ministry's initiative to incorporate feedback from trainees through written and virtual sessions, which is a valuable mechanism for improving training content and delivery.

In light of the growing demands of diplomacy and the constantly evolving international landscape, it is essential to ensure that the FSI remains adequately funded to meet the challenges of a modern diplomatic workforce. The Committee recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs consider revisiting the allocation of funds for training on a regular basis to ensure that it aligns with the evolving needs of Indian

diplomats. Additionally, the Ministry should continue to monitor the effectiveness of training programmes by incorporating regular feedback from trainees and making necessary adjustments based on their suggestions.

Reply of the Government

Budgetary Allocation of Rs.24.72 crore for the FY 2025-26 is broadly in line with the expenditure incurred in the previous financial years, even with a reduction in number of training days for foreign diplomats from the participating countries. The SSIFS remains adequately funded to meet the challenges of a modern diplomatic workforce and no new initiatives shall be postponed. As part of monitoring the effectiveness of training programmes, SSIFS launched a Learning Management Software (LMS) Platform in January 2025. This platform aims to make training more paperless, efficient, transparent, and therefore more effective. It is also being used to explore new pedagogical approaches that leverage technology, including AI tools, to enhance the learning experience. The LMS platform has a feature for collecting feedback from trainees, which is taken into account, as appropriate, to incorporate improvements in training content and delivery. Any requirement for additional funds will be raised at the RE stage.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 12

The Committee appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of External Affairs to professionalize the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) by inducting domain experts and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds, including retired Indian Ambassadors, serving officials from the MEA and other Ministries, as well as domain experts from think tanks and industry bodies. This diverse approach in faculty selection contributes to a well-rounded and comprehensive training programme for Indian diplomats. Additionally, the inclusion of foreign experts, as seen in the recent 5th Annual Disarmament & International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme is a commendable initiative. Furthermore, the Committee acknowledge the Ministry's initiative to incorporate emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cyber security, and digital diplomacy into the training curriculum. The inclusion of such cutting-edge topics is crucial in preparing diplomats to navigate the evolving digital landscape and address modern challenges in diplomacy. The Ministry's collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), particularly in relation to events like the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in Paris, highlights the commitment to equipping diplomats with the necessary technological skills.

However, the Committee believe that while the steps taken so far are commendable, more should be done to ensure that the curriculum is continuously updated to reflect the rapidly changing global landscape, particularly in areas like digital

diplomacy, cyber security, and artificial intelligence. The Committee recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should further strengthen its collaboration with international organizations and governments to share best practices in diplomatic training. The 101 MoUs signed by SSIFS with 98 countries and three plurilateral groupings are a significant step in this direction. The Committee encourage the Ministry to continue expanding these partnerships to include more countries and international organizations that are at the forefront of diplomatic training, particularly those with expertise in emerging technologies and global challenges.

Reply of the Government

SSIFS updates its curriculum across all courses, both on its own initiative and based on feedback received from trainees. Topics such as digital diplomacy, cyber security and artificial intelligence are already integrated into the training modules, including both the Induction and mid-career training programmes. Since the last update to the Hon'ble Committee, SSIFS has signed four more MoUs with diplomatic academies of Ireland, Armenia, Mauritius and Slovakia, bringing the total number of MoUs to 105. These agreements reflect SSIFS's ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration with international organizations and governments for exchange of best practices in diplomatic training.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 13

The Committee note the upward trend in the budgetary allocation under the sub-head 'Embassies and Missions', from Rs. 3867.64 crore (BE 2024-25) to Rs. 3969.19 crore (RE 2024-25), and further to Rs. 4206.22 crore (BE 2025-26), driven by the opening of new Missions and future plans for expansion. While the increased allocation reflects a proactive approach to India's growing diplomatic engagement, the Committee observe a gap between budget projections and actual expenditures in previous years, particularly in 2021-22 and 2024-25.

The Committee recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs prioritize the expansion of India's diplomatic footprint abroad, which is crucial for strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing India's global standing. Additionally, the Committee urge the Ministry to improve its budget forecasting process to ensure better alignment between projected and actual expenditures, especially given the increasing number of new Missions and Consulates abroad.

Reply of the Government

In line with the Hon'ble Standing Committee's recommendations, the Ministry has almost fully utilized (99.3%) the budgetary allocation of Rs 3969.19 crore allotted under 'Embassies and Missions' during RE of 2024-25. The allocation under 'Embassies and Missions' under BE

2025-26 is 8.7% higher than BE 2024-25 (Rs. 4206.22 crore in FY 2025-26 as against Rs. 3867.64 crore in FY 2024-25), keeping in line with the opening of new Missions and future plans for expansion. The Ministry has noted the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to prioritize the expansion of India's diplomatic footprint abroad and improve budget forecasting to ensure better alignment between projected and actual expenditures. The Ministry utilizes the instruments of re-appropriation of budget, etc. for re-prioritization and reallocation of funds to ensure the full and efficient utilization of budgetary resources allotted under 'Embassies and Missions'.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 15

Recognizing the importance of an effective monitoring mechanism for ensuring the optimal performance of Indian Missions and Posts abroad, the Committee note the establishment of the Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) by the Ministry. The Ministry's efforts to expand the scope of inspections, conduct annual evaluations, and provide performance scores to Missions/Posts are commendable. However, the Committee observe that certain concerns raised by Missions/Posts, such as the applicability of specific questions and technical difficulties in updating webpages or verifying social media accounts, need to be addressed more systematically. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should continue to refine the PEMS portal by regularly updating the evaluation criteria to ensure their relevance, providing enhanced training and technical support to Missions/Posts, streamlining approval processes for critical activities such as the Crises Management Plan (CMP), and establishing a robust follow-up mechanism to address concerns promptly. These actions will further strengthen the monitoring system, ensuring that it remains efficient and responsive to the evolving needs of Missions/Posts abroad.

Reply of the Government

With reference to the recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee, it is submitted that different questionnaires are given to Missions/Posts and Multilateral Missions to ensure the applicability of questions. Besides, a 'Not Applicable' option is available for Missions/Posts, which can be opted if any question is not applicable to a particular Mission/Post. Regarding the technical difficulties in updating web pages and verifying social media accounts, Missions/Posts have been specifically advised to approach XP Division for further assistance.

Evaluation criteria are regularly reviewed and updated at the launch of every new PEMS version. Under PEMS 6.0, which was launched in May 2025 for evaluating performance of Missions/Posts for FY 2024-25, a subjective evaluation criteria has been introduced. This evaluation will be done by the concerned territorial Division and will carry a weightage of 20% in the overall score of Mission/Post. Moreover, the questionnaire for PEMS is also revised every year to keep it relevant to the functionality of Missions/Posts.

For technical assistance, user guide and step-by-step tutorial regarding using the PEMS portal are shared with Missions/Posts during the launch of new PEMS version every year.

Further, this guide and tutorial are also uploaded on the portal for ready reference of the Missions/Posts. Any other technical issue faced by Mission/Post is promptly addressed by the Technical Cell by providing technical support/guidance, as and when required.

Mission/Post is instructed at each stage of evaluation to follow up on the pending action points with the concerned divisions in the Ministry. In PEMS 5.0, improvement was seen in the compliance rate of critical activities like approval of Crisis Management Plan, which increased from 54% in PEMS 4.0 to 66% in PEMS 5.0. Further, a new feature has been included in PEMS portal through which HODs of functional Divisions at HQ can monitor the action taken by Missions/Posts related to their concerned area of work.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 16

The Committee note that India's Missions and Posts abroad currently operate with a strength of 6277, comprising 3158 India-based posts and 3119 local posts as of 1 February 2025. These positions span various cadres, including the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), General Cadre of IFS Branch B, Stenographers Cadre, Interpreters Cadre, and Legal and Treaties Cadre. The Committee also acknowledge the efforts of the Ministry in optimizing human resource deployment at Indian Missions and Posts. However, given the growing diplomatic, economic, and consular challenges, the Committee emphasizes the need for a more proactive approach to addressing evolving manpower requirements. The Committee desire that the Ministry should undertake a periodic and comprehensive assessment of staffing needs in each Mission and Post, considering region-specific political, economic, and consular dynamics. The Committee further suggest that that the Ministry should expedite recruitment processes to ensure timely filling of vacancies, while also expanding the pool of specialized personnel for evolving diplomatic roles. In addition, the Committee urge the Ministry to implement a robust, continuous training programme that enhances practical skills for handling complex diplomatic and consular tasks, with a particular focus on crisis management, intercultural communication, and familiarity with international regulations.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. The Ministry accords highest priority to optimize the deployment of its human resources to help fulfil its growing responsibilities. The Ministry regularly reviews the requirement of manpower at various levels and takes appropriate action, including recruitment of additional officers and staff, through placement of requisite indents with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), respectively.

The Ministry received approval of the Union Cabinet for the Fifth Cadre Review of the Indian Foreign Service in October 2023 to be implemented between 2023-27. These were aimed at keeping the Ministry's personnel requirements in line with India's expanding diplomatic footprint, enabling the growth of bilateral trade, investment, and economic

engagements, bolstering political outreach in multilateral fora, and helping garner support for India's foreign policy objectives.

Keeping in mind the requirements of the Ministry, and to fill up the vacancies on a priority basis, Ministry has increased its indent with the UPSC to 55 in 2024 for CSE 2025. Further, to inculcate specialized expertise into MEA, the Ministry also takes officers with specialized skills from other Departments/Ministries on deputation. The Ministry also engages consultants with relevant skillsets in key areas of functioning of the Ministry such as counter terrorism, project management, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, international law, consular and disarmament related work.

With regard to the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation on training, it is shared that the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) regularly conducts training programs for serving MEA officers at key stages of their careers. These sessions cover core aspects of diplomacy, including crisis management case studies, intercultural communication, and relevant international legal frameworks. The programs also introduce thematic areas for potential specialization, encouraging officers to explore these further. Additionally, SSIFS offers customized training for specialized cadres, incorporating subject experts, simulations, and peer learning. The overarching aim is to strengthen both the domain expertise and behavioral competencies of officers, enhancing their overall diplomatic effectiveness.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 19

The Committee note that database on passport has been integrated with the Bureau of Immigration (BOI) and NATGRID and the integration with Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) database of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is ongoing. With the introduction of e-passports, which involve the storage of critical information on an embedded RFID chip, the Committee is of the considered opinion that it is imperative that the Ministry continue to prioritize data protection. The Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry expedite the full integration of the Passport Seva Programme with MHA's CCTNS database to further enhance security and improve the verification process for passport applications. The Committee also suggest that the Ministry conduct public awareness campaigns highlighting the robust data security measures in place, reassuring citizens of the safety and privacy of their information during the e-passport rollout.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has already initiated the integration process between the PSP system and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) database of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Regarding data security measures, Ministry has taken several steps like pop-up alert on Passport Portal for fake websites, sending advisory to the applicants over email regarding password/data protection. As per Hon'ble Committee's recommendation, data

security measures are also implemented in the PSP portal to protect the citizen's data being uploaded as part of passport issuance process.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 21

The Committee note that the Central Passport Organization (CPO) is operating with a working strength of 1,737 out of a sanctioned strength of 2,737, leaving a significant number of vacancies, particularly in crucial positions such as Assistant Passport Officers (APOs) and Verifying Officers (VOs). While the Committee acknowledge Ministry's efforts to address this staffing gap, they express concern that the current vacancies could affect the efficiency and timeliness of passport services. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should prioritize expediting the recruitment process to fill these vacancies, particularly for positions advertised through the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for Junior Passport Assistants, Assistant Superintendents, and other essential roles. Additionally, the Committee suggest exploring further measures to streamline recruitment procedures, ensuring that manpower resources meet the growing demand for passport services.

Reply of the Government

Staff Selection Committee (SSC) has declared results for recruitment in the grade of Junior Passport Assistant (JPA), Assistant Superintendent (AS) and Office Assistant (OA). Offer of appointment against 63 vacancies of Assistant Superintendent, 300 vacancies of Junior Passport Assistant and 46 vacancies of Office Assistant for the year 2024 have been issued by the Ministry. Additionally, the Ministry has invited applications from Section Officers of the Central Secretariat Service (CSS) for appointment in the 37 Passport Offices on deputation basis to address the issue of critical shortage in these offices. These initiatives taken by the Ministry are likely to improve the availability of staff and passport issuance delivery in the Passport Offices across the country.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 23

The Committee acknowledge the steadfast commitment of the Government of India to reviving the ancient seat of learning through the establishment of Nalanda University under the Nalanda University Act, 2010. However, despite substantial budgetary allocations and the completion of a state-of-the-art Net-Zero sustainable green campus spanning 455 acres, the delays and operational challenges have hindered the University's full operationalization. Although the campus was inaugurated in June 2024, delays caused by logistical bottlenecks, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the shortage of skilled manpower has resulted in significant time and cost overruns.

While recognizing the progress made by Nalanda University in terms of infrastructure, academic programmes and regional collaborations, the Committee

express their concern regarding its financial sustainability and global academic standing. Despite its mandate under the East Asia Summit framework to function as a collaborative global enterprise, financial support from member states and international donors has been sporadic and inadequate. The Committee also note that while Nalanda University has entered into several bilateral agreements, its global academic presence remains underdeveloped. The Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should adopt a more proactive approach in urging member states to honor their financial commitments, while diversifying funding sources through philanthropic donations, corporate sponsorships, and endowments. Furthermore, to strengthen its position as a centre of global academic excellence, the university must accelerate its research output, particularly in emerging fields such as climate change, sustainable development, and digital transformation.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Nalanda University continue to take necessary steps to implement the esteemed Committee's recommendations to address challenges in the University's establishment. The University has put in place oversight mechanisms as mandated by the Nalanda University Act and its Statutes. These include the Building and Works Committee, Finance Committee, Executive Council, and Academic Council, all of which regularly monitor progress in infrastructure development, faculty recruitment, academic programme expansion, and research initiatives. Having overcome the disruptions and logistical challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the University's core infrastructure is now fully functional, with only minor finishing work and some need-based construction underway. To ensure stable academic and administrative leadership, a regular Vice Chancellor was appointed on 21 May 2025.

To enhance financial and institutional support through diplomatic engagement, Nalanda University continues active engagement with East Asia Summit (EAS) member states. Regular bilateral meetings and campus visits by Ambassadors and diplomats have enhanced the University's international visibility and partnerships. As per Section 9(2) of the Nalanda University Act, 2010, financial contributions and endowments have been received from foreign governments, private individuals/institutions on a voluntary basis.

Progress has been made in building academic partnerships and launching interdisciplinary programmes through several bilateral and multilateral MoUs and agreements with various countries/institutions of repute. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening research, particularly in areas such as climate change, sustainable development, and cultural diplomacy.

The Ministry remains committed to realizing the vision of Nalanda University as a world-class institution that embodies India's civilizational heritage and contributes meaningfully to global academic discourse. The esteemed Committee will be kept informed of all significant developments and progress.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 24

The Committee acknowledge the significant role that development cooperation plays in India's foreign policy and the expanding scope of India's development assistance across various regions, including its immediate neighborhood, Africa, South East Asia, and beyond. The allocation under the overseas development partnership portfolio for the financial year 2025-26, which amounts to Rs. 6,750 crore, constitutes 33% of the overall budget of MEA. This increase of approximately 20% over the previous year's allocation is in alignment with India's foreign policy objectives and responds to the growing demands of partner countries for developmental assistance. The Committee recognize that this enhanced allocation is a step towards meeting India's global aspirations and fulfilling its international obligations, especially in areas like infrastructure development, capacity building, and people-to-people ties. Emphasizing the growing scope and complexity of India's development assistance, the Committee recommends that the allocation for this Head be consistently increased, as per the trajectory set by the current fiscal year's increase, to maintain and further enhance India's developmental partnerships. This increase should not only account for expanding global engagements but also cater to the rising demand for projects in emerging regions such as Africa, Latin America, and the Indo-Pacific.

Reply of the Government

The Hon'ble Standing Committee has noted that the allocation under the overseas development partnership portfolio for the financial year 2025-26, which amounts to Rs. 6,750 crore, constitutes 33% of the overall budget of MEA. This increase of approximately 20% over the previous year's allocation is in alignment with India's foreign policy objectives and responds to the growing demands of partner countries for developmental assistance. The Ministry has fully utilized the funds allotted under the overseas development partnership portfolio during the RE 2024-25.

For FY 2025-26, the BE under 'Aid to Africa' head has been enhanced to Rs 225 crore, keeping in view the funding needs of 'India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme' and other bilateral projects. The Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit is planned to be held in CFY 2025-26, which is expected to bring enhanced focus to the region in terms of developmental partnership projects.

The BE allocation under 'Aid to Latin American Countries' in 2024-25 was increased from Rs 30 crore to Rs 90 crore at the RE stage. The allocated funds were fully utilized following multiple proposals for HADR support from countries beset with natural disasters and updated payment schedules in respect of ongoing projects. BE 2025-26 (Rs 60 crore) is twice the amount allocated in BE 2024-25 (Rs 30 crore). Enhanced allocation is expected at the RE stage this year considering various commitments, including the announcements made by Hon'ble Prime Minister during the second India-CARICOM Summit in Georgetown, Guyana in November 2024.

To streamline the financial allocation and execution of projects to ensure targeted and impactful utilization of resources in the 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs), a new sub head for

Aid to Pacific Island Countries has been created in the Detailed Demands for Grants of the Ministry for the year 2025-26.

The Ministry notes the Hon'ble Committee recommendation on consistently increasing the allocation for the Development Partnership Head to maintain and enhance India's developmental partnerships. Budgetary demand and allocation is a dynamic exercise aided by regular assessment of Ministry's expectation of expenditure progress in a financial year. Instruments of re-appropriation of budget, Supplementary demands etc., allow re-prioritization, and re-allocation of funds for full and efficient allocation of budgetary resources. The Ministry's Quarterly Budget Management Meetings aid in analysis of expenditure utilization and assessment of budget resources and the useful repurposing of budgetary distribution as per Ministry's international commitments.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 25

The Committee commend the Ministry of External Affairs for its efforts to implement and monitor its development cooperation projects effectively. The creation of a dedicated Project Management Unit, the establishment of an online dashboard system for tracking project progress, and the active involvement of both Indian and host country stakeholders in project implementation are all positive steps in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of India's development assistance. However, the Committee emphasize the need for more robust and transparent monitoring mechanisms to ensure the optimal utilization of resources and timely execution of projects. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should establish a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for all ongoing and upcoming development projects.

Reply of the Government

With regard to the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation regarding robust and transparent monitoring mechanisms, it is shared that the Ministry ensures regular monitoring of the projects both from the Headquarters as well as through Indian Mission in the country where the project is undertaken. Many Indian Missions have designated officers for project monitoring and in countries with large number of projects, a separate project unit functions under the overall supervision of the Head of Mission. Site visits are undertaken by representatives from the Indian Mission and occasional visits undertaken from the Ministry for project monitoring and evaluation. Institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC) regularly review and monitor all major projects to iron out issues hindering smooth implementation.

In addition, the review mechanisms exist at multiple levels both internally in the Ministry as well at the level of Prime Minister's Office (through PRAGATI mechanism).

Regular returns are sent on the status of projects through the prescribed channels. Ministry has also ensured the adoption and implementation of Integrity pact for the projects as per standard operating procedures circulated by the Central Vigilance Commission. The process of overseeing and implementation of Integrity pact by Independent External Monitors (IEM) is also being followed.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 26

The Committee understand that implementation of development projects abroad is a challenging task with the nature of challenges varying from country to country, especially with the changing politico-security situation. Recognizing that the impact of such challenges can best be managed or minimized, the Committee urge the Ministry to evolve robust institutional mechanisms at the earliest so that the challenges faced in project execution abroad are managed in a systematic and organized manner.

Reply of the Government

Ministry keeps track of the changing politico-security situation of the countries where the projects are being undertaken. Regular contact with the Indian Mission and inputs from the project implementing agency ensure that challenges faced in the project are dealt within an organized manner, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including the authorities from the host country. Institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC) meetings are organized, as provided under the agreements, to tackle any challenges in the projects.

Additionally, anMoU has been signed between IIFCL Project Ltd. (IPL) and MEA on February 21,2025. This MoU outlines the framework and agreement for the establishment of a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) for implementation of GoI aided projects. This PMU, will be involved from ‘concept to commissioning’ of projects abroad, including assistance in contract and project monitoring with critical paths, advising corrective measures and mitigative actions, risk assessment frameworks, legal advice etc.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 27

The Committee find that there is lack of information in public domain which provides a comprehensive visibility on all the grants/LoCs extended, projects undertaken or the capabilities developed abroad by India despite having completed several significant development partnership projects in various countries, especially in neighbouring countries. Though the External Publicity Division of the Ministry is using social media, influencers, regional press, reels, films and documentaries for dissemination of information among Indian and global audiences about various aspects of India’s foreign policy, art, culture, economy, etc, it is felt that not enough is being done to amplify the

information specifically on India's aid programmes either in the recipient communities or in India. Since India's people-oriented aid programmes in other countries are seen to impact the people at grassroots levels generating significant goodwill for India, the Committee feel the need to leverage the same into deep people-to-people ties through awareness generation about India's contributions. In this context, the Committee recommend that the Ministry publicize our international aid projects and their impact in host countries as well as in India so that the visibility of India's aid programmes is increased among domestic and global audiences. Once projects are completed, publicity activities may be undertaken to bring forward the impact and value of these projects in the local communities where they are executed.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry through its External Publicity & Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division undertakes several measures to increase visibility and of India's foreign aid programs among domestic and global audiences.

- a. **MEA's Performance Smart Board/Dashboard:** The MEA's Performance Smartboard captures all major schemes, programmes and initiatives of the Ministry. It aims to provide information to the public while improving transparency and accountability in governance. Accordingly, it is used not only as a performance monitoring tool within the government, but also as a tool to keep citizens, Diaspora and foreigners informed of the services, activities and functioning of the Ministry. Information on Iconic Projects undertaken by Ministry in various countries and the Grants and Loans extended as Development Assistance to countries abroad will continue to be made available. The performance Board has been integrated with Ministry's website for enhanced visibility and easy access.
- b. **Media Engagement:** The Ministry engages and brief the local and international media on its development partnerships abroad. This would help in not only disseminating its aid program but also provide a larger context to its efforts. Capsules providing key facts or insights on developmental cooperation with countries especially during Prime Minister's visits abroad are designed for electronic media to ensure broader awareness about India's aid programs. Ministry will continue to organize interactions of visiting foreign media delegations, especially from Global South, with senior officials of Ministry, on India's development partnership initiatives and its impact.
- c. **Short films, documentaries and videos:** The Ministry will continue to commission short films and documentaries for dissemination of information among Indian and global audiences about India's development programmes, its approach to the global south and various aspects of Indian foreign policy. A documentary "India and Global South" highlighting India's developmental partnership with countries of Global South is under process. The documentary will cover information on India's people centric projects and their impact in more than 25 countries in India's neighbourhood and around the globe. In the recent past, the Ministry has commissioned short films on India-

BIMSTEC, India & Africa, 'Nalanda University', 'Restoration of temples in Wat Phou', 'Restoration of temples in ASEAN countries' 'What MEA did', 'Forum for India Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), 'Marching together- India's Development Cooperation Initiatives', 'Operation Dost', etc. which also cover India's aid programs in these regions. In addition, ahead of each visit of a foreign leader to India or during President, Vice President or Prime Minister's visit abroad, videos are made for publicity. These contain detailed information and visuals of our development assistance and projects.

- d. **Commissioning of articles by experts and former Ambassadors:** MEA will continue to commission articles on various themes authored by retired Indian diplomats and eminent experts which will be published across the world through Indian Missions/Posts. Ministry will also continue to encourage Ambassadors to regularly write articles on India's development cooperation with other countries.
- e. **Social media engagements:** MEA has strong social media presence with more than 7.5 million followers on several digital platforms i.e. X, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc. Ministry will continue to use these to amplify information related to the progress of its aid programs in other countries. MEA also plans to give due visibility to the posts from Indian Missions and Posts by reposting, sharing, retweeting etc. News reporting and content related to India's aid programs, from private media, freelancers, influencers and experts will also be amplified on MEA's social media platforms. MEA will utilize modern tools such as infographics, stories, highlights, reels among others to ensure larger appeal and visibility of India's programs. In extraordinary situations like HADR operations, the Ministry will provide regular updates of efforts by other Government of India agencies such as NDRF, Indian Army, Indian Air Force among others.
- f. **Familiarization Visits & Influencer Engagements:** MEA will continue to organize familiarization visits of foreign journalists and Social Media Influencers as part of India's public diplomacy and media outreach efforts. A total of 306 Journalists and Content Creators from 114 countries visited India during 2024-25 and were exposed to different facets of Indian foreign policy, including visibility of India's aid programs through interactions with senior officials of the MEA. Additionally, interactions with organizations such as CDRI, ISA, IFC-IOR, RIS, FICCI, PSUs among others, also provide them an opportunity to gain insights on India's aid and developmental assistance to other countries. During and after the visit, participants create posts, reels, stories, blogs etc. on social media platforms to share their experiences and learnings with their audiences and followers. MEA will remain in continuous touch with the alumni of such visits for amplification of specific posts and more visibility of India related content, including those related to India's aid programs.
- g. **Dissemination of information among regional press:** MEA will continue to disseminate information on India's foreign policy initiatives, including aid programs to

over 100 regional/vernacular media outlets in a time bound manner. The stories on aid programs received from Missions/Posts will be placed in regional media, with special focus on tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 28

The Committee note that no new High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) are expected to be initiated in 2025-26 as the political and security situation in Bangladesh remains disturbed, however, two HICDPs are expected to be completed by May of the current year. The Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project initiated to provide better connectivity between India and Bangladesh has achieved 100% physical progress and is currently in the Defect Liability Period. Government of Bangladesh has recently processed the case for extension of project validity till 30 June 2025, and made adequate provisioning in their ongoing FY (till June 2025) to help the project attain financial closure. The Committee expect that these projects, as well as the ongoing work of dredging inland waters of the Jamuna and Kushiara Rivers, would be completed as per schedule. Active coordination with Government of Bangladesh should be maintained to insulate such projects from the political and security related challenges and the feasibility of taking up new projects too may be explored along with additional budgetary provision at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry notes the Hon'ble Committee's observation and remains closely engaged with the Interim Government of Bangladesh. Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link project and dredging works on Jamuna and Kushiara rivers in identified stretches are progressing on ground. The Ministry will evaluate new proposals based on their strategic relevance, socio-economic impact and alignment with India's foreign policy objectives, mindful of the political and security situation on the ground.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 29

The Committee note that Bhutan has again garnered the highest share from the external aid portfolio with an outlay of Rs. 2,150 crore in the budget for 2025-26. It includes a Grant component of Rs. 1775 crore and Rs. 375 crore as Loans. The Grant component has increased by Rs. 101 crore (6%) compared to the RE 2024-25 allocation of Rs. 1673.78 crore. Till date, 61 Project Tied Assistance (PTA) projects worth Rs. 4957 crore and 283 High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) worth Rs. 417 crore have been approved by both Governments and have commenced implementation. In respect of hydroelectric projects, technical discussions are underway for Punatsangchhu-I HEP while all the 6 units of Punatsangchhu-II HEP are expected to be commissioned by

September 2025. The Committee urge for fruitful completion of the ongoing PTA projects and HICDPs at the earliest. Hydro-electricity being central to Indian-Bhutan economic cooperation under the plan outlay, all out efforts should be made to conclude the technical discussions for Punatsangchhu-I HEP so that the project is brought forward without further delay and Punatsangchhu-II HEP is fully commissioned as scheduled.

Reply of the Government

The PTA and HICDP projects in Bhutan are monitored periodically through bilaterally agreed mechanisms so that they remain on track and are completed on time. Status update of all the ongoing projects in Bhutan are as follows:

Sl. No.	Project Category under Development Cooperation	Plan Period of Bhutan	Number of Projects	Approved amount (in RS. Crore)	Status of the project
1	Project Tied Assistance (PTA)	13 th FYP (2024-2029)	61	4957.9	Under implementation; to be completed in 13th FYP period. RS. 529 crore have been released till date
2	High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP)/Small Development Projects (SDP)	13 th FYP (2024-2029)	283	417.191	Under implementation; to be completed in 13th FYP period. RS. 375 crore have been released till date

With regard to the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation regarding hydroelectricity being central to India-Bhutan economic cooperation and the need to observe timelines for Punatsangchhu-I and Punatsangchhu-II HEPs, the following is submitted:

Sl. No.	Name of the hydroelectric project	Approved Cost (in RS. crore)	Status of the project
1	Punatsangchhu – I HEP	9375.575 at December 2013 Price Level (1 st RCE)	Under implementation. Overall physical progress as on April 2025 is 87.75%. Technical discussions ongoing to reach a common understanding on the way forward regarding construction of main dam structure.
2	Punatsangchhu – II HEP	9445.68 (cost to completion as vetted by CEA)	Under implementation. Physical progress as on April 2025 is 98.91%.

		3 out of 6 units have been commissioned so far. All the units are likely to be commissioned by September 2025.
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[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 30

India’s development aid to Nepal covers key sectors such as earthquake reconstruction and capacity building infrastructure, energy supply and related infrastructure, trade & connectivity, defence and community development. The Committee find that the assistance to Nepal in the wake of the massive earthquake is currently being completed and is in its final stages. Major ongoing projects include construction of National Police Academy, ICPs at Bhairahawa and Dodhara Chandani, Terai roads projects, Jayanagar-Bardibas rail link, Jogbani-Biratnagar rail link, Nepal Bharat Maitri Polytechnic Institute, Hetauda, reconstruction of health facilities and cultural heritage projects, etc. The Committee express hope that the Ministry would adequately give attention to cyber-security, training and preparedness in neighbouring areas. Emphasizing the need to complete and operationalize all the ongoing projects within the specified timeframe and given in particular fraternal relationship that India seeks to maintain with our neighbour, the Committee urge for effective monitoring and oversight mechanism in the execution of such projects. The Committee hope that inadequate funds would not stand in the way of implementation of these projects and urge the Ministry to seek additional funds, if required, at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

MEA acknowledges the Hon’ble Committee’s observations and reaffirms India’s commitment to strengthening its development partnership with Nepal through timely and effective implementation of high-impact people-centric projects across key sectors.

Earthquake Reconstruction: Following the 2015 earthquake, India committed US\$ 1 billion (US\$250 million in grant assistance and US\$ 750 million in Lines of Credit). The grant supported Housing (US\$150 million), Education (US\$ 50 million), Health (US\$ 50 million), and Cultural Heritage (US\$50 million). Housing and Education projects have been fully completed. In Health, 102 of 133 facilities are complete; in Cultural Heritage, 15 of 30 sites have been restored, with others in progress. The Ministry remains focused on completing the remaining projects in close coordination with the Government of Nepal.

Major Infrastructure Projects: Key projects under implementation include the National Police Academy (65.68% complete; Rs. 625.94 crore), ICP Bhairahawa (71.2% complete; RS. 161.76 crore), and preparatory work at ICP Dodhara Chandani. The Terai Roads Project (Rs. 500 crore) has achieved 100% physical progress. Under railway connectivity, the Jaynagar-

Bijalpura-Bardibas line (RS. 783.83 crore) is partially operational, pending land handover; the Jogbani-Biratnagar link (Rs. 373.87 crore) is partially complete, with Phase-II awaiting land acquisition. The Nepal-Bharat Maitri Polytechnic Institute at Hetauda (Rs. 39.31 crore) is 46.08% complete, pending decisions from the Government of Nepal.

Energy and Digital Infrastructure: India is executing pipeline connectivity projects in Nepal. Phase II of Motihari Amlekhgunj cross border pipeline has recently been completed and future connectivities are being implemented. India and Nepal are expanding cooperation in cybersecurity, AI, and Digital Public Infrastructure. India has already operationalized Peer to Merchant UPI transactions in Nepal and is ready to launch peer to peer mechanisms for digital payment transfers. A Nepali delegation visited India in May 2025 for talks on DPI and e-governance.

Capacity Building and Training: Since 2003, India has implemented 573 HICDPs in Nepal (494 completed, 79 ongoing), valued at NPR 1359 crore. The project cap was raised in 2024 to NPR 20 crore (Rs. 12.5 crore). Over 500 Nepali officials were trained under ITEC in 2024-25. Fifteen scholarship schemes benefit around 800 students annually in India and 700 in Nepal.

Specialized Exposure and Skills Programs: India organized thematic trainings including Natural Farming (Sept 2023), Urban Development (Nov 2023), and Organic Horticulture (Feb-Mar 2024). Delegations from Humla (July 2024) and Sankhuwasabha (10-day rural development program at NIRDPR) also visited India.

Monitoring and Financial Oversight: Projects are monitored through mechanisms like Joint Project Monitoring Committee, Joint Working Group, Project Steering Committee etc.

Funding: Adequate funding will be provided to all projects and additional allocations would be requested at the RE stage as required.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 31

The Committee note that the budgetary allocation under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' has been increased to Rs. 300.00 crore at RE 2024-25 as well as BE 2025-26 to cater to Phase IV of Indian Housing Project, Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity project, Floating Dock and the Solar Electrification of Religious Places in Sri Lanka. Moreover, several projects under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) framework are at various stages of implementation and would require budgetary support for their continued implementation. India's announcement to extend grant assistance towards undertaking rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai Port, provision of 22 diesel locomotives to Sri Lankan Railways, training of 1500 Sri Lankan civil servants over 5 years, etc. further necessitated additional budgetary support for implementation. The Committee hope that inadequate funds would not stand in the way of implementation of these projects and urge the Ministry to seek additional funds, if required, at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

The allocation under 'Aid to Sri Lanka' was increased from Rs. 245 crore to Rs. 300 crore at the RE 2024-25 stage. The funds have been fully utilized. Ministry closely monitors the progress in implementation of various ongoing projects such as Phase IV of Indian Housing Project, Sri Lanka Unique Digital Identity project, Floating Dock and the Solar Electrification of Religious Places in Sri Lanka, projects under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) framework, the rehabilitation of Kankesanthurai Port, provision of 22 diesel locomotives to Sri Lankan Railways, training of 1500 Sri Lankan civil servants over 5 years as well as new initiatives such as Indian capacity building for 700 Sri Lankan citizens annually, the development of Thirukoneswaram and Sita Eliya temple complexes and the Sacred City Project in Anuradhapura. Based on effective utilization and progress in implementation of these projects, additional funds will be requested at RE stage for FY 2025-26.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 32

The budgetary allocation under 'Aid to Maldives' has been increased from Rs. 400 crore during BE 2024-25 to Rs. 600 crore in BE 2025-26. The major chunk of the budgetary allocation of Rs. 600 crore would cater for payment towards the Ekatha Harbour project and the Greater Male Connectivity Project. The Committee appreciate the financial assistance extended by India for undertaking infrastructure and developmental works in Maldives and desire that the Government should continue to extend support - financial or technical, in view of the special place it holds under India's Neighbourhood First Policy and Vision SAGAR.

Reply of the Government

With regard to the Hon'ble Committee's recommendations, it is shared that the anticipated expenditure projected under the 'Aid to Maldives' is based on the upcoming milestones as part of implementation of various infrastructure development projects and initiatives being carried out by the Government of India in Maldives. These primarily pertain to the Ekatha Harbour Project, Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) and capacity building & training of Maldivian stakeholders. These efforts are aligned with the priorities and requirements of Maldives as well as India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Vision MAHASAGAR, i.e., Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 33

The budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to Myanmar’ was increased from Rs. 250.00 crore during BE 2024-25 to Rs.400.00 crore at RE 2024-25 and to Rs. 350.00 crore in BE 2025-26. The Committee note that the political turmoil and the security situation have negatively impacted the pace of progress of key projects underway in Myanmar, however, projects stalled or delayed due to COVID-19 pandemic and political crisis have been revived and the work on the same has progressed further. The Committee find it reassuring that construction works are underway including key projects such as the Kalewa-Yargi road section and Road component of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Corridor and agreements have been concluded on new proposals including small community infrastructure, education, capacity building initiatives, healthcare, etc. The Committee urge the Government to extend all assistance to the stakeholders involved in the implementation of these projects for early completion.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry notes the Hon’ble Committee’s observations and remains committed to advancing key infrastructure projects in Myanmar, including the Kaladan Multi Modal Transport corridor and the Kalewa-Yargi road section, despite the prevailing challenges. The project-related activities are underway, and collaboration with various stakeholders is being actively pursued to ensure timely progress. The Ministry also supports new proposals focused on community development and capacity building contributing to overall development.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 35

The security situation in Afghanistan is a matter of concern for the safety of Indian personnel involved in developmental and humanitarian work. The Committee have been informed that the Technical Mission in Kabul oversees our developmental assistance to Afghanistan. It is also true that the Afghan side have underlined their sensitivities to our security concerns in meetings with them. The Committee, however, feel the need for a separate mechanism/wing to give focused attention to the security aspects and urge the Government to work out the modalities in this regard, in consultation with the agencies concerned in India.

Reply of the Government

The Government of India accords highest priority to security of our Technical Mission in Kabul and the safety and well-being of Mission personnel in Afghanistan. In this regard, Ministry is in touch with the concerned agencies to ensure focused attention on all aspects related to the security of Mission in Afghanistan.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 36

The Committee note that India has provided assistance to support women and children in Afghanistan through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, e-ICCR scholarships, Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals (SSSAN) and Scholarship Scheme for Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). Currently, there are 600 female students approximately, out of 2000 Afghan students studying under the e-ICCR scholarships while 74 female students out of 489 Afghan students under SSSAN. Out of 53 Afghan students, the number of female students studying under ANDSF is only 6. The Committee feel that the coverage of female students under these scholarship schemes needs to be improved and urge the Government to make efforts in this direction. The Committee attach the highest importance to the welfare of women in Afghanistan as an objective of India's foreign policy and therefore desire that projects/programmes aimed at the welfare of women and children may be launched and additional funds, if required, may be sought at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has taken note of the recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee. It is shared that the 351.4 tons of medical assistance and 32 tons of social support extended by India to Afghanistan post-August 2021 have been aimed at benefiting the Afghan nationals including women. India has also extended assistance to Habibia High school in terms of 500 units of winter clothing, 650 GI tagged Channapatna toys and 1.2 tons of stationery kits, with majority of beneficiaries being girl students. India has engaged with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Afghanistan, to provide assistance for the welfare of the Afghan drug-user population, particularly women. As part of education and capacity building programmes, India has provided e-ICCR scholarship to 2000 Afghan nationals, out of which nearly 580 are girls/women. Additionally, India continues to offer online scholarships for agriculture-related fields in collaboration with the Afghanistan National Agricultural Science and Technological University (ANASTU), from which Afghan students, including girls/women have benefited. Any future programme/scheme would be considered depending on the prevailing circumstances and policy priorities, while remaining mindful of the needs of Afghan women and children.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 40

The Committee note that in addition to India's resident diplomatic missions in 17 Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, plans to open more are in the pipeline. India has also been consistently engaging with key regional groupings in Latin America, including CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), CARICOM (Caribbean Community), SICA (Central American Integration System) and MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market). 26 LAC countries have signed ISA

framework agreement, 12 countries have joined CDRI, 5 countries have joined GBA, and 5 countries have joined IBCA. For optimum exploitation of economic, cultural and diplomatic opportunities with the LAC countries, the Committee desire that resident Indian diplomatic missions should be opened in the identified countries of the LAC region at the earliest and the Ministry should make constant efforts to persuade the remaining countries in the LAC region to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) and International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).

Reply of the Government

CDRI's Membership in Latin and Caribbean (LAC) Region: CDRI's total membership is 43 Countries and 7 Organizations, of which 13 member countries are from the Latin and Caribbean (LAC) Region. Ecuador is the latest country to join CDRI in 2025. MEA is working closely with CDRI to build partnerships with Belize, Dominica, Marshal Islands, St Kitts and Nevis and St. Vincent and Grenadines as full member of CDRI and these countries are already receiving technical support under CDRI's Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) program for SIDS.

GBA's Membership in Latin and Caribbean (LAC) Region: The Global Biofuels Alliance currently has 27 member countries and 12 international organizations out of which 5 member countries are from the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. MEA has been actively engaging with prospective member countries that have huge potential in biofuels to join the alliance.

ISA's Membership in Latin and Caribbean (LAC) Region: The International Solar Alliance (ISA) currently has 23 full Member Countries and 3 Signatory Countries in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. Over the past four years, MEA has worked significantly towards expanding ISA membership by adding 09 new Member Countries—an increase of over 50% in its LAC membership. Notably, Chile and Panama joined in 2023, followed by Paraguay in 2024, reflecting the region's growing commitment to solar energy.

MEA is actively supporting ISA in expansion of its current membership with 7 prospective countries—Bahamas, Uruguay, Honduras, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, and Guatemala. Given the strong interest from the region, MEA is prioritizing outreach efforts with Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico to facilitate integration into the Alliance and further accelerate solar energy adoption.

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee on opening resident Indian diplomatic missions in the identified countries of the LAC region has been duly noted and it is shared that approval has been received for operationalizing five new Missions in Europe and in Latin America and Caribbean region. The Ministry formulates proposals from time to time for opening of resident Missions in countries where there are no Indian Missions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 41

The Committee observe that budgetary allocations are made for programmes aimed at welfare of Indian Diaspora and engagement with them under the sub-heads ‘Welfare of Overseas Indians’ and ‘Engagement with Indian Diaspora’. Know India Programme (KIP), Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD), celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), Pre-Departure Orientation and Skill Upgradation of Emigrant Worker, Evacuation of Indian due to War/Civil Disturbance, Repatriation of Indian Destitutes, Legal Assistance to Women facing problems in NRI Marriages and Legal Counselling/Assistance to Indian workers in the Gulf are funded from the grants. In 2025-26, Rs. 92.21 crore are seen to have been earmarked for these schemes which shows an increase of 55% as compared to BE 2024-25 of Rs. 59.21 crore. This increase, the Committee note is under the sub-head ‘Engagement with Indian Diaspora’ and mainly on Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and Know India Programme. While appreciating this enhancement, the Committee note with concern that the allocation under the ‘Welfare of Overseas Indians’ has remained unchanged from BE 2024-25 and is almost stagnant for over the last several years without even accounting for inflation. While viewing that the existing allocations made to various schemes and programmes for the welfare of Overseas Indians is quite inadequate, the Committee desire that additional funds be sought during the next financial year. Since the Indian Diaspora of 15.85 million NRIs and 19.57 million PIOs/OCIs, spread across the globe is one of the largest overseas communities comprising a diverse range from laborers/workers, traders, political leaders, professionals, students etc., the Committee have been continuously recommending the Ministry to ensure that requisite budgetary allocation for all the schemes for their welfare and protection are sought and received. While reiterating the same, it is strongly felt that an increase in funds is essential if our Missions/ Posts abroad have to meet the demands, expectations and priorities of the local Indian diaspora in their respective jurisdictions.

Reply of the Government

PDOT: The Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) Programme was launched by the Ministry in January 2018 under the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) with an aim at enhancing soft skills of Indian migrant workers largely going to the Gulf and other ECR Countries. Under this programme, the emigrant workers are given free-of-cost one-day orientation training to enable them to understand the culture, language, tradition and local rules and regulations of the destination country. The orientation training also helps to sensitize the migrant workers about pathways to safe and legal migration and various government programmes for their welfare, safety and protection such as ICWF, MADAD, PBBY etc. Since inception of the PDOT programme, a total of 1,90,362 emigrant workers have been imparted training through 41 PDOT Centres as on 28 February, 2025. Proposal to open another 51 new P-DOT centres within the next one year is under implementation.

The PDOT training is imparted under two models –

- PDOT Centres operated by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) empaneled training partners under the Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PKKY), a joint collaboration under an MoU between Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for which a grant of Rs. 10 crore was extended by MEA to MSDE.

- The second model is PDOT Centres managed by State Government agencies. Ministry has been granting funds to State Governments to conduct PDOT Training to emigrant workers @ Rs. 500/- per candidate for in-person training and Rs. 100 for online training.

The Ministry has been making concerted efforts to expand the PDOT outreach to promote safe, legal and orderly migration. Towards this end, Ministry has reached out to all concerned State Governments/agencies to send their proposal for allocation of funds to carry out PDOT and also operationalize the new PDOT centres approved by the Ministry. In this regard, letters have been written to the Chief Secretaries/Principal Secretaries of the concerned States seeking their intervention for promotion of PDOT programme and early operationalisation of new PDOT Centres in their States. The matter is being followed up directly with the State Governments as well as through the PoEs in these States. Ministry is working in close coordination with all relevant stakeholders to expand the P-DOT outreach.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY): The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY), a mandatory insurance scheme for Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries for overseas employment, provides an insurance cover of 10 lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and some other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of Rs. 275/ Rs. 375 for a period of two/three years. The Scheme was comprehensively revamped and has become effective from August 1, 2017. The scheme now provides for global coverage irrespective of employer and location and has facility for online renewal. The revised scheme is simpler and more beneficial for emigrant workers and is aimed at ensuring an expeditious settlement of claims. No budgetary allocation is provided for the scheme, since it is a user-paid scheme.

Ensuring the welfare and protection of the large and diverse overseas Indian Community is the foremost priority of this Ministry. Besides the various Diaspora Welfare Schemes and Programmes, such as SPDC scholarship, Know India Programme, PCTD, etc., for which the budgetary allocations have been steadily increasing, the Government of India has different mechanisms / tools to assist distressed Indian nationals in foreign lands, to ensure that all possible consular assistance are provided to them, including emergency medical care and boarding/ lodging, whenever required. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) has been set up in Indian Missions/ Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations on a means tested basis in deserving cases. This is extra-budgetary in nature and is funded through additional levies on the services provided by Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

The Ministry's budget head 'Evacuation of Indians due to War/Civil Disturbance' is used for safe evacuation of stranded Indian Nationals from foreign countries during crisis situations arising out of conflict/war/civil disturbances. The allocation under this budget head has been

Rs10 Crore on yearly basis in FY 2023-24, 2024-25 & 2025-26, except in 2023-24 when additional Rs50 crore were allocated in view of Operation Dost. The expenditure under this budget head is by definition uncertain and depends upon evolving situations abroad that necessitate evacuations. During FY 2023-24, the allocated fund of Rs. 60 Crore was booked upto more than 90%. In FY 2024-25, the expenditure could be booked upto only 3% out of allocated funds of Rs. 10 crore. As this budget head caters to exigencies, fund allocation is done on need basis in addition to the consistent budgetary outlay.

Ministry is also in the process of setting up One-Stop Centers in selected cities across the world to provide 24/7 emergency assistance to Indian women in distress. This will be funded through the Nirbhaya Fund, set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. This Ministry has sought and received additional funds amounting to Rs 9.50 crore from the Ministry of Finance for setting up the One-Stop Centers. The Ministry will assess and make a case of additional required funds at the RE stage to meet the demands, expectations and priorities of the local Indian diaspora in their respective jurisdictions, in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendations.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 42

Under the Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD) initiative, the Ministry provides funds to Missions/Posts across the globe. In BE 2023-24 and 2024-25 an amount of Rs.4 crore was provided and in BE 2025-26, an enhanced allocation of Rs. 6 crore is made for PCTD. However, the Committee note with dismay that the funds released to Missions/Posts for financial year 2023-24 & 2024-25 are Rs. 3,48,38000 and Rs. 3,80,50000 respectively. The Committee wonder, how the Indian Missions and Posts are expected to organize cultural events with limited resources available to them and are surprised to see that the Ministry had projected only Rs. 10 crore for 66 Missions in the current FY despite knowing that it is difficult to meet the expectations with meager funds. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to make further improvements in its Budgetary projections taking into consideration the requests received from Missions/Posts and impress upon the Ministry of Finance to provide adequate Budgetary provisions so that the Missions are able to support their initiatives to strengthen ties with the Overseas Indian Community without being hindered by financial constraints.

Reply of the Government

Based on the increasing requests from Missions/ Posts abroad to support their initiatives to strengthen ties with the Overseas Indian Community, the Budgetary allocation under the Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD) had increased by about 30% in FY 2024-25 to Rs. 4 Crore, compared to FY 2022-23. The Ministry projected Rs. 10 crore for FY 2025-26 and has been allocated Rs. 6 Crore, amounting to a 50% increase over the last Financial Year. The allocated amount has already been disbursed to 112 Missions and Poststo support their initiatives to strengthen ties with Diaspora and to preserve, maintain and showcase their Indian

heritage and culture. The Ministry intends to increase the coverage of the scheme by including more Missions/Posts, as new Missions/Posts have been established in the recent times. The funds under PCTD are intended as seed capital to organize events and initiatives for the above-mentioned objectives, and the Missions/Posts are encouraged to include Indian Community Organisations and local government bodies as partners to share the expenditure of the events. This is in alignment with the larger vision of *Jan Bhagidari* of the Government of India. However, in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to make further improvements in the budgetary provisions, the Ministry will reassess the requests received from Missions/Posts and their utilization of already released funds to make a strong case for additional funds at the time of RE for FY 2025-26.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 44

The Committee are aware that the Diaspora Engagement (DE) Division of MEA plans, implements and monitors different schemes and programmes for engaging with and for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora living abroad. The Division also closely monitors the utilization of funds for different schemes by calling for detailed reports from Missions on the activities held by them through these funds and scrutinizing the reports regularly before approving any further allocation of funds. Though the Ministry has informed that the schemes and programmes of the Ministry are evaluated by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, a closer look at the performance of the programmes/schemes aimed at welfare of Indian Diaspora and engagement with them, prompt the Committee to call for a thorough review in terms of effectiveness and impact, over and above the financial audit by CAG. In this regard, the Committee may be apprised of the outcome of the Joint Working Group constituted to analyze the objectives, working and challenges of various programmes/initiatives/schemes for welfare of Indian diaspora and the extent of reach and delivery of such schemes. The Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) has selected the subject 'Indian Diaspora Overseas including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs and Migrant Workers: All Aspects of their Conditions and Welfare, including the Status of the Emigration Bill' for detailed examination and Report during their current term. A more detailed Report on schemes and programmes for welfare of Indian diaspora will be presented to the Parliament shortly.

Reply of the Government

The Joint Working Group (JWG) on the subject mentioned by the Hon'ble Committee, was constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (CPV & OIA) and the Heads of Division of the erstwhile OIA-I, OIA-II (now Emigration Policy & Welfare and Diaspora Engagement Divisions, respectively), CPV, PSP and OE&PGE Divisions as members of the Working Group. The JWG met on 22.12.2021 to conduct a comprehensive review of all the diaspora welfare schemes and programmes implemented by the Government of India, before and after the transition of these Divisions from erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs to the

Ministry, including a review of the Programmes which have since been closed/wound up. Besides taking stock of the existing Programmes, the working group also made two recommendations, viz. to include medical courses under SPDC Scheme, and to provide 50% reservation of seats for women under SPDC. These recommendations have since been implemented. Since then, Secretary (CPV & OIA) chairs weekly meetings with the Heads of respective divisions (members of JWG) under his charge to discuss issues in their respective domains and regularly monitors the progress of various schemes. As the purpose of Working Group was deemed to be well-fulfilled, the Working Group has been dissolved. However, subsequent to the suggestion of the Hon'ble Committee, the Ministry has decided to hold monthly meetings of the Working Group to deliberate upon effectiveness of various schemes/programmes/initiatives of the Government for engaging with the Diaspora and to address challenges for securing the latter's welfare.

The proposed 'Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024 seeks to replace the existing Emigration Act, 1983 with an aim of accessing a global workplace for citizens of India by developing a mechanism for safe, legal, orderly and regular mobility for employment and stay abroad through processes provided therein and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The draft Bill 2024 has been revised in consultations with the relevant authorities, and the same is under internal consultations. Thereafter, it will be put for public consultations for 30 days which will be followed up by Inter-Ministerial consultations with the relevant line ministries along with the Draft Cabinet Note on the revised draft.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 45

The Committee recognize the critical role played by autonomous bodies such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in advancing India's foreign policy objectives, especially in the domains of cultural diplomacy, international relations, and research on emerging global issues. In the Committee's considered opinion, the current financial allocations to these institutions fall short of adequately supporting the expanding demands for their research, outreach activities, and strategic collaborations with international think tanks—endeavors that are pivotal to advancing India's interests and influencing global discourse on critical issues such as South-South cooperation, Digital Diplomacy, Artificial Intelligence, Climate Action, Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), food security, women-led development, sharing of best practices, etc. Therefore, the Committee strongly urge for a substantial augmentation of the financial provisions for these institutions to align with their expanded mandates and activities. The increased funding would facilitate the growth of their research capabilities, outreach initiatives, and global visibility, which are crucial for elevating India's standing in the international policy sphere.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee has been duly noted. It is shared that there has been an increase of Rs. 20 crore in ICCR's Budget allocation for the current Financial Year 2025-26 (Rs. 351.25 crore as against Rs. 331.25 crore in the last FY). Also, there has been an increase in the budget allocations of RIS and ICWA for the current Financial Year 2025-26 (Rs. 19.51 crore and RS. 15.48 crore as against Rs. 18 crore and Rs15.47 crore in last FY).

ICCR has accordingly initiated a comprehensive review of the current financial allocations and is formulating specific proposals for augmentation of its budgetary provisions in the current financial year (2025-26) to cater to new initiatives such as:

- (i) 50 new QUAD STEM Scholarships (a new scholarship scheme launched in 2025);
- (ii) Sending 75 folk art troupes to perform abroad (3 troupes each from 25 Indian States with whom ICCR has signed MoU's);
- (iii) Organizing 3 or 4 signature cultural events in premier global venues;
- (iv) Launch of 12 new cash awards for ICCR foreign scholars promoting Indian culture ('*ICCR YuvaMitra*' Prize and '*ICCR Kala Sadhak*' Prize);
- (v) Organizing three cultural festivals in India - Festival of Ukraine, Festival of Belarus and Festival of Russia;
- (vi) Settling pending Tuition Fees to Universities hosting ICCR scholar (approx. ₹37.00 Crore).

In line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation, the Ministry will assess the funding requirements of these bodies and make a case for augmentation of funds to the Ministry of Finance at the 2025-26 RE stage and 2026-27 BE stage.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 46

The Committee acknowledge that ICCR plays a crucial role in India's cultural diplomacy and the projection of India's soft power. The activities of ICCR encompass a broad spectrum, including scholarships, hosting of cultural delegations/events, establishment of Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad, promotion of Indian languages, dance, music, etc. The Committee note that allocation to ICCR for FY 2025-26 has been increased to Rs. 351.25 crore. The enhanced allocation is on account of expanding research and scholarship rates, cultural hospitality norms and for various cultural initiatives.

The Committee observe with concern that the budget allocation for the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has always remained in the range of Rs. 300-350 crore annually over the past decade. While acknowledging incremental improvements, the Committee contends that such funding levels are insufficient to meet ICCR's expanding mandate and the growing breadth of its activities. The Committee, therefore, recommend a substantial increase in ICCR's budget, proposing an allocation of Rs. 500-

600 crore in the forthcoming years to enable the ICCR to carry out its pivotal role mandate of cultural outreach and promotion of India's soft power. Further, efforts should also be geared towards diversification of ICCR's resource generation, including the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, exemplified by the ICCR's Casa de la India in Valladolid, Spain.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry has duly noted the Hon'ble Committee's observations. The ICCR is expanding its cultural, academic and public outreach activities and will accordingly scale up its budgetary projections. For instance, ICCR has launched 50 new Quad STEM scholarships and is working on a new DAKSHIN scholarship scheme for the Global South. ICCR has also launched an annual global dance competition for foreigners and has institutionalized the award of Annapurna Certificates to authentic Indian restaurants abroad. ICCR also proposes to undertake annual theme-based activities to promote specific aspects of Indian culture like Buddhism, North-east India, Indian Epics, etc. and conduct 3-4 signature cultural events in premier global events and international festivals.

In the current Financial Year, ICCR has been allocated Budget of Rs 351.25 Crore, which is 20 Crore more than last year's allocated Budget whereas the demand for Financial Year 2025-26 was Rs. 413.78 Crore. ICCR will seek additional funds at the Revised Estimates (RE) stage during 2025-26 to meet its varied requirements, viz., Scholarships, Awards, Incoming foreign cultural delegations (ICDs), Outgoing Indian cultural delegations (OCDs), Busts & Statues, IDY 2025, Conferences & Seminars, Media & EGIT etc.

ICCR is also actively promoting Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) and innovative funding models through Indian Embassies/ Consulates/ Indian Cultural Centres abroad. For instance:

- i) ICCR has circulated policy guidelines for our Diplomatic Missions abroad to collaborate with local authorities, community organizations and diaspora in organizing cultural events abroad. Depending on the quantum of financial contribution by the local entity, ICCR is offering specific categories of incentives to local partners, including scholarships, travel grants, and visits to India.
- ii) ICCR is encouraging the establishment of new cultural centres in a PPP mode, on the lines of the Casa-de-la India in Valladolid (Spain).
- iii) Nearly half the Teachers of Indian Culture (TICs), currently teaching Yoga, Indian music, dance, languages, etc. abroad, are now local residents of foreign countries who are hired on contracts as Local Resource Persons (LRPs).

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 49

The Committee are aware that the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) works in collaboration with various governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Culture,

Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Education, Ministry of AYUSH, and others. While ICCR currently coordinates with these ministries for specific events and scholarship schemes, the Committee believe there is significant potential for more integrated and cohesive planning and execution of joint initiatives. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ICCR enhance its coordination with relevant ministries, particularly in areas such as managing cultural events, promoting Indian tourism, and fostering a more comprehensive approach to cultural diplomacy. A formalized mechanism for inter-ministerial cooperation and resource sharing should be established to maximize the impact of India's soft power initiatives.

Reply of the Government

(i) Enhanced coordination with relevant Ministries and an 'all of government' approach to cultural promotion is important for enhancing the scale and impact of cultural diplomacy. Accordingly, ICCR is working closely with the Ministry of Culture in anchoring Festivals of India abroad through Missions and also collaborated actively in organizing cultural events during G-20. Similarly, ICCR actively engages with the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Ministry of Education and entities like the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), National Archives of India (NAI), National Book Trust (NBT), SangeetNatak Academy (SNA), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), SahityaAkademi (SA), National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), National School of Drama (NSD), National Museum etc. in organizing exhibitions, administering scholarships, youth exchange programmes, monument and manuscripts promotion, Book Fairs, Conferences, Seminars etc.

(ii) ICCR also actively cooperates with other relevant Ministries/entities in formal mechanisms for international cultural cooperation. For instance, at the India-UAE Cultural Council Forum meeting chaired by ICCR on 19 March 2025, representatives from the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Youth Affairs & Sports, NAI and NBT were also involved in drawing up an Action Plan as members of the Indian delegation.

(iii) ICCR anchors cultural events for various Ministries, PMO, Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha Secretariats, Vice President's/ President's Secretariats, NSCS, etc. at their request.

(iv) ICCR also has MoU's with 25 Indian States and works closely with them to project their culture abroad as well as facilitate participation of foreign artists in State Festivals and local cultural events.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 50

The Committee note that the last empanelment by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was conducted in 2019, with the inclusion of 451 artists/groups from 27 states. The Committee appreciate the steps ICCR has undertaken to digitize the empanelment process and introduce measures such as national-level youth competitions,

inclusion of underrepresented regions through a lottery system, and the categorization of senior artists as 'Master Trainers'. In the considered view of the Committee, these initiatives, along with the signing of MoUs with 23 States to promote regional art forms, are commendable and should help in broadening the scope of cultural representation. There should be a five yearly review of the empanelment of artists by ICCR to give opportunity to emerging talents.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee for a five year review of the empanelment of artists by ICCR is noted and it is shared that the ICCR is currently undertaking a review of its empanelment process to, tap into fresh young talent, and provide opportunities for rural/tribal artists living in remote corners of India, differently-abled artists and winners of reality talent shows. The new empanelment process will be widely advertised in all leading national and regional newspapers of India, ICCR website, social media etc. to ensure pan-India publicity so that any artist irrespective of his/her place of origin/residence, may apply for empanelment.

Selection of artists for inclusion in ICCR's panel will be done by distinguished expert Advisory/Sub Advisory Committees comprising eminent artists from specific genres. The empanelment will be done in a transparent and fair manner, and artists will be graded as 'Outstanding', 'Established', & 'Proficient' depending on their skill and competence.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 51

The Committee recognize the role of the Policy Planning & Research Division for its strategic outreach, policy research and engagement with academia, think-tanks and international partners in shaping India's foreign policy. The Committee appreciate the Division's efforts to engage State Governments through regional strategic dialogues like NADI Dialogue, Kochi Dialogue, Health Diplomacy Dialogue and in organizing major strategic outreach initiatives such as the Raisina Dialogue, the Global Technology Summit, and the Indian Ocean Conference. Furthermore, the Division's collaborative engagements with universities, think tanks, and international institutions have strengthened India's foreign policy framework by incorporating expert insights and fostering a culture of research-driven policy-making. The Committee urge the Ministry to continue its momentum in institutionalizing global collaborations, promoting greater inter-governmental coordination, and encouraging the active participation of non-governmental stakeholders in foreign policy discussions on a regular basis.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee are noted. The Ministry is continuously working on institutionalizing global collaborations, promoting and strengthening inter-

governmental coordination and encouraging active participation of non-governmental stakeholders in foreign policy discussions.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

CHAPTER-III

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No. 22

The Committee express their deep concern regarding the slow progress in the establishment and operationalization of the South Asian University (SAU), which is a flagship initiative under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Though India is committed to covering 100% of the capital expenditure of SAU, the operational budget is supposed to be contributed by all the member countries. However, several SAARC member states have been unable to meet their financial obligations despite repeated efforts and follow-ups by both SAU and the Indian Government resulting in SAU's operational budget becoming heavily dependent on India's contribution, which currently stands at 57.49%. This disproportionate financial burden is especially disconcerting and the continued non-payment of dues by other member states without adequate justification has led to a growing financial imbalance. This, not only undermines the university's capacity to expand its academic programmes, improve infrastructure, and offer scholarships but also threatens to derail its broader objective of fostering regional integration in providing quality education to the youth of South Asia. In light of these ongoing challenges, the Committee urge the Government to reconsider the operational structure of SAU. The Ministry should specifically explore the possibility of India assuming a principal role in both the administrative and academic management of the university, given its substantial financial contribution. India's leadership should be accompanied by an effort to streamline operations and ensure that the university's goals are met in a timely and efficient manner. As for the foreign member states, those countries that continue to make contributions to SAU should be granted representation on the advisory or governing board, in a manner that reflects their financial support.

Reply of the Government

The operational structure of South Asian University (SAU) is governed by the Inter-Governmental Agreement on SAU signed by the SAARC Member States in 2007. As per the Agreement, there is no possibility for any one Member State to assume leading/higher role in administrative and academic management of the University even though it gives higher financial contribution. The only added facility that India has is to have half of the student intake. There is no provision in the Agreement either to remove or to give higher/lesser role to any of the Member States in governing the University.

Any changes to the Agreement are to be proposed through necessary amendments by the Member States, which could only come into force upon ratification by all Member States. In view of the fact that SAARC runs on consensus principle, it is not possible to have any

amendments effected to the Agreement by India alone. Accordingly, Government of India continues its efforts through the University authorities and at the meetings of the SAU Governing Board and the SAARC Programming Committee, to urge the Member States to pay their dues at the earliest.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

CHAPTER- IV

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation No. 3

The Committee find that this year's budgetary allocation of Rs. 20,516.61 crore for MEA excludes the Indian Exim Bank sovereign guarantees which in BE 2024-25 had accounted for 15.45% increase (Rs. 2744.91 crore) from the productive BE 2024-25. The Committee acknowledge the clarification provided by the Ministry regarding the non-inclusion of a provision for the Lines of Credit (LoC) in the Ministry's budget for the fiscal year 2025-26. The Committee understand that LoC provisioning, which is a necessary mechanism to address the non-performing assets in the Exim Bank's balance sheet, has been a significant and somewhat unforeseen budgetary requirement in recent years. However, the Committee are of the view that the inclusion of such provisions within the regular budget distorts the correct picture of actual allocation to the MEA and also impinges on its ability to meet core diplomatic and development responsibilities, as the provisioning for the Indian Exim Bank are non-productive in nature and do not contribute directly to the foreign policy objectives of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of External Affairs make a compelling case to the Ministry of Finance to treat EXIM Bank provisioning as a separate item. The provisioning for non-performing loans should be allocated outside of the regular MEA budget, over and above the core funding necessary for the Ministry's diplomatic and developmental functions. This distinction will ensure that the Ministry's essential international responsibilities are adequately funded, without being compromised by non-productive and non-diplomatic financial obligations.

Reply of the Government

As part its budget, the Ministry provides 'Support to Exim Bank towards GoI Guaranteed Line of Credit (LoC)', which is for provisioning requirement and invocation of guarantee claims that have arisen in respect of LoCs extended under IDEAS scheme due to non-payment of loan and interest in a timely manner by the borrowing entities, i.e. sovereign nations. This provisioning amount is an expenditure charged to the Guarantee Redemption Fund – a notional expenditure and an adjustment of accounts between different branches of the Government. As per the directions of the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance, the MEA is required to cover in its budget, the payments that are due to the Exim Bank of India on account of the LoCs that the latter extends to foreign countries on MEA's recommendation. Based on the claims raised by Exim Bank, and approval from Department of Economic Affairs, payments have been made to Exim Bank towards provisioning over the last three years. GoI has paid 100% provisioning to Exim Bank for a majority of countries. Exim Bank's books have been

strengthened substantially. No budget has been allocated in the BE of 2025-26 towards provisioning.

The recommendation of the Honble Committee that the provisioning for non-performing loans be allocated outside of the regular MEA budget, over and above the core funding necessary for Ministry's diplomatic and development functions, is important, as this will ensure that Ministry's core responsibilities receive adequate funding. The Ministry remains engaged with RBI and Ministry of Finance on the matter.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 10

The Committee commend the Ministry for increased representation of women in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), with women officers constituting 39.39% of the 2024 batch. The appointment of 15 lady officers as Heads of Missions is a notable step towards promoting gender equality at the senior-most levels of the Ministry. Additionally, the establishment of the Gender Budget Cell, the implementation of mentorship programmes and the provision of creche facilities for employees are positive initiatives that reflect the Ministry's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for women. However, the Committee believe that further efforts are necessary to enhance gender equality, not only in terms of representation but also in terms of professional advancement, particularly in senior and decision-making roles.

While the increase in the number of women officers is commendable, the Committee urge the Ministry to ensure that women are not only well-represented in numbers but are also given the tools, resources, and opportunities needed to progress to leadership positions. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should take proactive steps to encourage the recruitment of more women into the IFS and other departments within the MEA. Although the UPSC examination process is gender-neutral, the Ministry should explore additional measures, such as targeted awareness programmes, mentorship schemes, and career development initiatives, to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for female candidates. These initiatives should be designed to specifically address the barriers, if any, that women face in entering and advancing in diplomacy. Furthermore, the Committee emphasize the importance of prioritizing women in diplomacy, as it can significantly enhance the nation's global standing.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. Ministry is taking a number of steps to create a more supportive and encouraging environment for women personnel in the Ministry. For this purpose, Ministry has commissioned a study on Gender Budgeting in other countries so that the best practices could be adopted. The Exim Bank, which is involved in funding and execution of projects abroad, has also been requested to undertake a gender impact assessment and provide recommendations. The Ministry will continue to

ensure that barriers, if any, to career progression of women officers in the Ministry are resolved while creating a conducive environment for the professional progress of women officers.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 14

2.52 It is observed that there are currently 216 Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The Committee also take note of the criteria for establishing new Missions, focusing on economic partnerships, strategic cooperation, diaspora engagement and multilateral diplomacy. The Committee recognizes the establishment of new Missions in Riga (Latvia), Tbilisi (Georgia), Tirana (Albania), Libreville (Gabon), Dili (Timor Leste), and La Paz (Bolivia), as well as new Consulates in Brisbane (Australia), Marseille (France), Barcelona (Spain), and Auckland (New Zealand). The Committee have also been informed about the future plans to open 5 new Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean regions. However, the Committee observe that India currently lacks a resident Mission or Post in 41 countries, limiting opportunities for engagement with potential partners and the strengthening of diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties. The Committee emphasize that Missions should be prioritized in countries where there is significant potential for trade and investment, a strong Indian diaspora, or an opportunity for India to bolster its political outreach in multilateral forums. The Committee urge the Ministry of External Affairs to expedite the establishment of Missions and Posts in these countries and to seek additional funds, if necessary, during the Revised Estimate stage to ensure timely operationalization of Missions, especially, the proposed Missions in Europe, Latin America and Caribbean regions.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. The Ministry formulates proposals from time to time for opening of resident Missions in countries where there are no Indian Missions. The objective of our Foreign Policy is to build a conducive environment for India's growth and development through partnerships with friendly countries. India's Missions and Posts across the world serve as conduits of its relations with partner countries. The decision to open new Indian Missions is to expand India's footprint in various regions and broaden international support for our priorities.

In 2024, 10 new Missions and Posts were operationalized. By June 2025, five new Posts have been operationalized in Belfast (UK), Manchester (UK), Fukuoka (Japan), Boston (USA) and Los Angeles (USA). Ministry is working to operationalize Missions in countries where India currently does not possess a diplomatic Mission on a need basis. In all the 41 countries without a diplomatic Mission, diplomatic relations are currently being handled by concurrent accreditation with neighbouring Missions and appointment of Honorary Consuls.

Approval has been received for operationalizing five new Missions in Europe and in Latin America and Caribbean region. Additionally, new Consulates are also being opened by the Ministry in view of India's increasing diplomatic engagement. In FY 2025-26, new Consulates are expected to be operationalized in Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia).

Ministry will also send proposals seeking allocation of funds well in advance of operationalization of Missions/Posts to ensure that they can be operationalized expeditiously.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 20

The Committee recognize the progress made by the Ministry in improving the Police Verification Report (PVR) process through the introduction of the mPassport Police App. The Ministry has informed that the App has been successfully rolled out in 25 States/UTs, covering over 9,400 Police Stations. The digitalization of the process has significantly reduced the average time for Police Verification Reports (PVRs). The Committee recommends that the Ministry should prioritize the deployment of the mPassport Police App in the remaining 12 States/UTs where it is yet to be launched. The Ministry should continue to collaborate with the concerned State/UT authorities to address any infrastructure challenges and work towards the timely rollout in these areas. The Ministry should also ensure that training and support is provided to police personnel to enhance the optimal use of the App.

Reply of the Government

It is mentioned that 25 States/UTs covering more than 9425 Police Stations across the country have already launched the mPassport Police App. The Ministry and the concerned RPOs are coordinating with the States/UTs where mPassport Police App has not yet been launched. It is also submitted that the Ministry is providing all technical support to States/UTs including the application support, training and handholding to police personnel (before and after the launch of mPassport Police App) through the Service Provider of Passport Seva Program, M/s. TCS. Post deployment, all technical support is also provided to State/UTs regarding police verification and submission. It may be further noted that the roll out of mPassport Police App at States/UTs depends on the readiness of IT infrastructure at the concerned State/UT for which the Ministry is also providing financial support to each State/UT, per application processed by them and for verification and submission of Police Verification Report (PVR).

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 34

The Committee note that the budgetary allocation for ‘Aid to Afghanistan’ was Rs. 200 crore during BE 2024-25, which was decreased to Rs. 50 crore at the RE 2024-25 stage and then increased to Rs. 100 crore in BE 2025-26. Regarding the reductions, the Ministry stated that the budgetary allocation to Afghanistan over the past three and a half years was primarily aimed at stabilizing the country in terms of food security, medicines and emergency supplies, etc. and now, that these efforts have been fruitful, leading to marked improvement in these areas, it has been decided to explore development cooperation projects in addition to the ongoing humanitarian aid. The Committee welcome this move

as it presents a good opportunity for furthering our foreign policy objectives through development cooperation and desire that projects/programmes which caters to the domestic needs of the people of Afghanistan should be identified and action plan drawn up for implementation at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

India and Afghanistan share deep-rooted civilisational and historical ties. India has traditionally enjoyed close relations with the Afghan people and post-August 2021, has extended humanitarian assistance for their development needs. These efforts have been noted positively by the Afghan authorities and the UN agencies. During the meeting of the Foreign Secretary with the Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan in January 2025, it was decided to explore development cooperation projects in Afghanistan. In this regard, we have been in touch with the Afghan side and have endeavoured to identify projects that cater to the domestic needs of the Afghan people.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 37

The budgetary allocation for ‘Aid to African Countries’ has been marginally increased from Rs. 200 crore in BE and RE 2024-25 to Rs. 225 crore in BE 2025-26. The Committee note that no budgetary provision has been made for the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) for the FY 2025-26 as agreement of African Union for hosting of IAFS-IV is yet to be firmed up. The Committee are concerned about the delay in conducting the India-Africa Forum Summit–IV and urge the Ministry to maintain active coordination with the African Union so that dates for the summit are finalized at the earliest and seek additional allocation for the same at Revised Estimate stage, if necessary. In respect of ongoing projects committed under IAFS- I, II and III, the status may be communicated to the Committee.

Reply of the Government

India-Africa Forum Summit-IV (IAFS-IV) was anticipated to be held in the Year 2024 due to which budgetary allocation of Rs. 40.00 Crore was made for the FY 2024-25. Though the budgetary provisions for IAFS-IV were not made for FY 2025-26, the available funds under the budget head ‘Aid to African Countries’ will be utilized to meet the expenses on hosting of IAFS-IV as and when finalized. Additional funds, if required, will be sought at RE stage under the budget head “Aid to African Countries”. The Ministry of External Affairs and the African Union are exploring various options for organizing the IAFS-IV. Status Report on Ongoing Projects under IAFS-I, IAFS-II & IAFS-III is enclosed at Annexure I.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 38

The Committee note that Research & Information Systems for Developing Countries (RIS) is conducting mid-term impact assessment of the e-VBAB Network Project. The Terms of Reference, timeline and status of the assessment may be communicated to Committee. Further, the feasibility of conducting mid-term impact assessment of the projects under IAFS by RIS may also be explored.

Reply of the Government

RIS has successfully conducted the Mid-Term Impact Assessment of the e-VBAB Network Project, and has submitted their report in April 2025. The information as sought is as follows:

Terms of Reference (ToR): is enclosed at Annexure II.

Timeline: As per the Terms of Reference RIS was expected to complete the Mid-term impact assessment and submit the final report within 2 months. The timeline commenced after MEA conveyed the approval of Competent Authority to RIS vide email dated 11 November 2024. However, as the evaluation included inputs from various stakeholders, including foreign students and Universities, the report was finally submitted in April 2025.

Current Status: RIS completed the activities viz., Data collection, stakeholder consultations, and e-VBAB learner surveys, on account of impact assessment. The final report was submitted by RIS to MEA on 8 April 2025. The report was also forwarded to concerned official in NITI Aayog on 23 April 2025 for further action. Thereafter, RIS made a comprehensive presentation to Secretary (ER) on e-VBAB impact assessment to clarify the queries. The report is under review in the Ministry.

Hon'ble Committee's recommendation for undertaking mid-term impact assessment of the completed IAFS projects has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 43

The Committee note that the Pre-Departure Orientation Training Programme launched by the Ministry of External Affairs in January, 2018 under the 'Surakshit Jaayein Prashikshit Jaayein' campaign of the Government of India provides one day free of cost orientation training to emigrant workers to help them understand local rules and regulations of the destination country, its culture, tradition, language, etc. in addition to enhancing their soft skills. From its inception till 31st January 2025, a total of 1, 82,381 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training under PDOT programme and financial assistance for the same is being disbursed to the State government run departments/agencies. However, the Committee are startled to see that no fund was released to the State Agencies in 2022-23 and in 2023-24, Rs. 79.77 lakh out of 1.20 Crore and in 2024-25, only 16.08 lakh have been released till January 2025 out of the 1 crore Budget. This financial performance of the scheme makes the Committee worry about the

working of the scheme as well as its efficacy. The Committee, while expressing their displeasure, desire that the reasons may be identified and earnest efforts are made for optimum utilization of the funds so that the migrant workers are sensitized about the pathways to safe and legal migration as well as on about various government programmes for their welfare and protection.

Reply of the Government

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Pre-Departure Orientation Training was stopped from March 2020 to November 2021. The PDOT Centers, which were closed down during the pandemic, were gradually re-opened. After resumption of PDOT in November 2021 in some centres, initially the training did not pick up pace due to low demand as the pandemic had led to large scale job loss for emigrants going abroad and there were restrictions in place during the subsequent waves of the pandemic. The training started to gradually pick up pace in most centres from late 2022. A proposal for opening of 58 new PDOT centres in 11 states had been approved by the Ministry in July 2022 and the same was conveyed to the concerned states. The Ministry reached out to the States in September 2022, requesting them to send requisition of funds for PDOT. Keeping in view the expansion of the programme, the Division had requested for a budget grant of Rs. 3 crore for FY 2023-24.

In the Financial Year 2023-24 on receipt of demands for funds from the states of Telangana, Punjab and Karnataka, funds amounting to Rs. 79.77 lakhs were disbursed accordingly out of the allocated budget amount of Rs. 3 Crore. In January 2024, the Ministry again reached out to the concerned State Governments to seek their proposals for allocation of funds to carry out the PDOT.

Additionally, in March 2024, the Ministry reached out to the Principal Secretaries of the concerned States seeking their intervention to operationalize the approved new PDOT centres in their states and send their budget proposals for running of the centres. Subsequent reminders to follow-up on the subject matter were sent in July, October and December of 2024, and in February 2025. On receipt of demands from the states of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana during 2024-25, a total amount of Rs. 45,71,300/- was disbursed to the State Agencies of Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana out of the allocated budget. The BE for FY 2025-26 is Rs. 5 crore which is the same as the BE for FY 2024-25.

Since the inception of the PDOT programme in 2018, a total of 1,90,362 emigrant workers have been imparted orientation training till 28 February 2025. The pace of PDOT is expected to pick up during the current Financial Year as Ministry has been closely coordinating with all State Governments/Training Partners to expand the PDOT outreach.

Detailed budget statement on PDOT for last three FYs is given below:

Financial Year	Budget Estimates (BE) (Rs)	Revised Estimates (RE) (Rs)	Final Estimates (FE) (Rs)	Funds released to State Agencies (Rs)
2022-23	3 Crore	3 Crore	3 Crore	0
2023-24	3 Crore	3 Crore	1.20 Crore	79.77 lakhs
2024-25	5 Crore	1 Crore	0.50 Crore	45.71 lakhs
2025-26	5 Crore	--	--	--

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 52

The Committee acknowledge the longstanding and well-established principles that have underpinned India's foreign policy, which have significantly contributed to the nation's diplomatic successes and global standing. The Committee also recognize that a growing number of countries, such as the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, and Japan have formalized national foreign policy strategies, which have proven to be valuable tools in guiding their international engagement. India, with its burgeoning geopolitical influence must not lag behind in articulating its own roadmap for a future-oriented foreign policy that corresponds to its increasing global stature. The Ministry of External Affairs, through its ongoing assessment of the foreign policy strategies of other nations has undertaken a valuable exercise in understanding the shifting paradigms of global diplomacy. The Committee, however, suggest that the Ministry should consider the desirability of taking the logical next step which is the formulation of a formal and comprehensive foreign policy document/strategy that is specifically tailored to India's distinctive geopolitical context, emerging economic clout, and evolving global relationships. The Committee recommend that MEA should expeditiously initiate consultations with relevant stakeholders, including experts, diplomats, policymakers, and the Committee, to explore the feasibility and scope of such a document. The Committee desire to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to initiate consultations with relevant stakeholders is duly noted. The Ministry will keep the Hon'ble Committee apprised of such consultations as and when they are undertaken.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

CHAPTER-V

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation No. 6

The Committee acknowledge the efforts made by the Ministry of External Affairs in establishing a Gender Budget Cell to assess and incorporate gender-related dimensions into the Ministry's budgetary processes. The initiative to evaluate the gender-related contributions of projects implemented by the Ministry is a commendable step towards aligning the Ministry's budgetary framework with India's broader commitment to gender equality and inclusive development. However, the Committee observe that while the Ministry has undertaken a data collection exercise to evaluate the gender-related aspects of its projects, the data is still under analysis, and further action is awaited. Given the growing global recognition of gender equality as a cornerstone of sustainable development, it is imperative that the gender dimension be integrated into the Ministry's projects and budgetary demands in a more structured and timely manner. The Ministry should accelerate the analysis of the gender-related data it has collected and develop a concrete action plan to ensure that gender budgeting is systematically incorporated into all relevant projects and schemes. Furthermore, the Committee urge the Ministry to expand the capacity of the Gender Budget Cell and ensure that it is adequately resourced to carry out this essential work effectively.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. The Ministry is committed to advancing India's goals of gender equality and inclusive development. It is actively engaging with all relevant stakeholders to gather their inputs on the matter. This includes liaising with EXIM Bank officials and think-tanks/research organization such as RIS, etc. This consultative process is ongoing. Following a comprehensive analysis of the feedback received, Ministry will evaluate the need for further capacity-building. Additionally, the Ministry is continuously reviewing service rules and Government of India's directives to improve gender-specific service conditions. Efforts are also underway to explore opportunities for broader dissemination of both existing and forthcoming success stories related to gender dimension of Ministry's responsibilities, highlighting Ministry's dedication to gender equality and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 9

After reviewing the current staffing situation in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Committee are deeply concerned about the persistent gap between the sanctioned and actual cadre strength. As of February 2025, the Ministry's sanctioned and actual strength stands at 5915 and 5121, respectively (excluding the local cadre in Missions/Posts abroad). Over half of these positions are allocated to Missions and Posts abroad. Despite Ministry's significant efforts to address this gap through the 5th Cadre Review of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and increased indents with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the gap remains due to factors such as delays in the creation of new posts, prolonged recruitment cycles, and retirements. This gap continues to hinder the Ministry's ability to fulfill its growing diplomatic, administrative, and global responsibilities efficiently.

The Committee believe that more urgent action is needed to ensure that Ministry's staffing levels align with India's expanding diplomatic footprint and increasing global engagements. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should work in close coordination with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) to streamline recruitment processes and minimize the time lag between the creation of posts and their eventual fulfillment. Priority should be given to filling critical vacancies in Group A, B, and C posts, both at Headquarters and in Missions abroad, especially in areas that directly impact India's foreign policy objectives. Additionally, the Committee urge the Ministry to explore measures for the induction of specialized expertise from other Ministries, academic institutions, think tanks, and the private sector. Such domain expertise in emerging fields such as climate change, cyber security, and artificial intelligence will be crucial for enhancing the Ministry's capabilities in managing contemporary global challenges.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee has been noted. The Ministry is currently implementing the Fifth Cadre Review, and it is expected to be completed by 2027. The sanctioned strength of the Ministry has increased since inputs sent for the Fourth Committee on External Affairs Report. As of 01 April 2025, the current sanctioned strength of the Ministry stands at 9113, which previously stood at 9034 as on 01 February 2025. Out of this, 53.76 percent strength is located in Missions and Posts abroad. These positions spanned various cadres within the Ministry, such as the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), IFS General Cadre, Branch B, Stenographers Cadre, Interpreters Cadre, Legal and Treaties Cadre. Missions/Posts abroad also consist of a Local cadre strength of 3149, which previously stood at 3119 on 01 February 2025. MEA will steadily increase its India-based and local staff strength to implement the recommendation of the Fifth Cadre Review by 2027. Subsequent to this, the strength of

personnel in MEA will be reviewed and a roadmap will be laid down for further increasing the strength of the Ministry, based on vacancies arising due to superannuation of serving officers/officials, indent placed for intake of officers/officials, the number of Missions/Posts operational worldwide and those expected to be operationalized in the near future.

To bridge the gap between sanctioned strength and in-position strength of India-based staff of MEA, Ministry will review and increase the yearly indent with UPSC and SSC in light of the opening of new Missions/Posts in the near future. Further, to inculcate specialized expertise into MEA, the Ministry also takes officers with specialized skills from other Departments/Ministries on deputation. The Ministry also engages consultants with relevant skill sets in key areas of functioning of the Ministry such as counter terrorism, project management, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, international law, consular and disarmament related work.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 17

The Committee observe a significant increase in the budgetary allocation under the minor head 'Passport and Emigration', with the BE 2025-26 allocation rising to Rs. 1913.48 crore from Rs 970.66 crore during BE 2024-25. This increase is primarily attributed to factors such as outstanding payments for passport production, the transition to e-passports, higher personalization and printing costs, and payments to service providers such as TCS and the Department of Posts. The Committee acknowledge Ministry of External Affairs' efforts in expanding and improving passport services, including the enhancement of the Passport Seva Programme, which now includes 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 444 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) and 37 Regional Passport Offices across the country. These initiatives have significantly expanded coverage across 505 Lok Sabha constituencies, improving accessibility to passport services. The Committee also note a steady increase in revenue earnings, particularly from passport fees, which have risen significantly from Rs. 2332.50 crore in FY 2021-22 to an estimated Rs. 4000 crore in BE 2024-25. The Committee observe that since the payment of printing is carried forward to the next year, a significant portion of the budget in the coming year is likely to be consumed by outstanding payments for passport printing and related services. The Committee however note with concern, reports from Indians abroad about inordinate delays in issuance of passports.

Keeping in view the rising demand for passport services, expansion of the Passport Seva Programme and the higher anticipated expenditure on travel document printing, freight charges, and service charges for the Passport Seva Project, the Committee are satisfied to observe the upward revision in allocation under this sub head. While emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the enhanced budget is utilized efficiently and effectively, the Committee desire that the Ministry should prioritize the timely implementation of the

ePassport project, addressing any technical and operational challenges involved in the transition. The Committee also urge the Ministry to ensure that payments for passport production, service provider charges, and other related costs are processed promptly to avoid disruptions in service delivery.

Reply of the Government

Pilot testing of PSP V2.0 started in Regional Passport Offices at **Bhubaneswar** and Nagpur in April 2024. As on date, the project has been implemented in all 37 Passport Offices across the country. Pilot testing of GPSP 2.0 in 1 Mission is being done. Pilot testing in some more Missions/Posts are scheduled for July/August 2025. Once Pilot testing is successfully done, GPSP 2.0 will be rolled out in remaining Missions/Posts in batches.

As regards payment of passport production, the Passport Booklets are provided by ISP Nashik. The payments to different stakeholders such as ISP Nasik, Service Provider of PSP, Police authorities, Department of Posts, e-Passport personalization vender are processed upon receipt of invoices. This is subject to verification of applicable Service Level Agreements and rates as per contract scope.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No.18

The Committee acknowledge that the issuance of passports is one of the most visible and citizen-centric statutory services provided by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The Committee commend the ongoing efforts of the Ministry to modernize the Passport Seva Programme (PSP), particularly through the implementation of PSP V2.0, which incorporates advanced biometric matching, AI-driven assistance, and streamlined processes. The expansion of Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and Post Office Passport SevaKendras (POPSKs) across 505 Lok Sabha constituencies is a commendable step in enhancing the accessibility of passport services.

Welcoming the proposal to establish additional PSKs and POPSKs in underserved constituencies in 2025, the Committee encourage the Ministry to expedite the establishment of PSKs and POPSKs in the remaining 38 constituencies. The Committee also welcome the successful pilot launch of the e-passport initiative, which enhances security through the embedding of an RFID chip and look forward to its phased rollout across the country by April 2025. To further improve service delivery, the Committee suggest accelerating integration with government databases like Aadhaar and PAN, expanding e-passport issuance, strengthening technological infrastructure, conducting extensive public awareness campaigns, and prioritizing user experience.

Reply of the Government

Passport Seva Programme is the citizen centric flagship programme of Ministry of External Affairs. Ministry in association with Department of Posts (DoP) had decided in January 2017 to open Passport Seva Kendras at the Head Post Offices (HPO)/ Post Offices (PO) in the country called Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) in each Lok Sabha Constituency where there is no PSK or POPSK. As on date, 93 PSKs and 450 POPSKs have been set up in the country and are operational across 510 Lok Sabha Constituencies to cater to the needs of passport seekers. The Ministry is working on the Committee's recommendation to establish PSKs and POPSKs in the remaining 33 constituencies.

The Division is continuously following with the respective Government Departments for documents such as Aadhaar, PAN, etc. to be integrated with PSP system and to validate the authenticity of these documents at the respective source databases for strengthening the Passport Insurance process and elimination of fake documents.

Further, DigiLocker has been successfully integrated with the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) system enabling citizens to submit various documents required for passport services through DigiLocker in a paperless mode.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 39

The Committee are aware that the budgetary allocation for 2025-26 under 'Aid to Latin American Countries' is pegged at Rs. 60 crore. Following various announcement made by the Hon'ble PM during 2nd India-CARICOM summit in Georgetown in November 2024, additional funds of Rs200 crore has already been requested during 2025-26. Being aware of the potential for significant growth in trade, investment, strategic partnership and developmental cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean, and the need to tap the same, the Committee desire that the Ministry should actively pursue its request for additional funds in FY 2025-26 so that the commitments are honoured, projects/ programmes announced are implemented, thereby significantly enhancing India's geopolitical presence in the region.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry is currently undertaking various projects in LAC region like supply of SME machinery (maximum value USD 1 million) to CARICOM and SICA countries, supply of food grains to Suriname, supply of digital scoreboard to Jamaica, and Quick Impact Projects in Suriname and SVG.

Following various announcements made during the Second CARICOM Summit in November 2024 at Georgetown, Guyana, efforts are being made for their timely implementation. Additional funds will be sought at RE stage for the financial year 2025-26 on the basis of expression of interest received the CARICOM countries for their implementation.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 47

The 37 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) serve as vital instruments in projecting India's rich and diverse cultural heritage through a wide array of activities, including dance, music, yoga, languages, food, festivals, history, and contemporary cultural narratives. However, the Committee note with concern that, despite the property for the ICC in Washington D.C. being acquired as early as 2013, renovation and operationalization have been delayed for several years, resulting in an escalating cost of US\$ 441,581.91. Similarly, the acquisition of property for the ICC in Paris occurred in 2011, and although renovation work commenced in 2018, the project has incurred costs amounting to €2.8 million thus far.

The Committee are concerned by these prolonged delays and the significant cost overruns in the establishment of the ICCs in Washington D.C. and Paris. These delays reflect inefficiencies in project execution and are wholly unacceptable, especially given the strategic importance of these centres in advancing India's cultural diplomacy. Such inefficiencies not only undermine the mission of cultural outreach but also result in unnecessary financial wastage. The Committee strongly urge the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to expedite the completion and operationalization of both centres, ensuring that any future delays are averted. Furthermore, the Committee underscore the urgent need to operationalize the Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre (TVCC) in Singapore. In addition, the Committee desire that they be kept informed of the progress made on these three centres every three months, ensuring full accountability and transparency throughout the process.

Reply of the Government

ICCR operates 38 full-fledged Indian Culture Centres abroad. Additionally, cultural wings of the Indian Mission/Posts undertake cultural outreach activities. Hon'ble Prime Minister announced the establishment of Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre (TVCC) in Singapore on September 5, 2024. The Mission is currently in the process of identifying a suitable property to house the cultural centre. As regards the new cultural centre in Paris, which was announced by former EAM, Smt. SushmaSwaraj on June 2019 and was named as Swami Vivekananda

Cultural Centre (SVCC), the operationalization is at an advanced stage. The construction work is complete and work on 'Indianisation' (incorporating Indian cultural motifs in the building), installing of signage, etc. is underway. The Mission has sought necessary approvals from Local Municipal Authorities for starting activities at the Centre. The approvals are awaited.

The renovations to the property in Washington DC were delayed primarily due to restrictions in local law and divergences in tendering practices, compounded by Covid related lockdowns and resultant disruption in supply chains. The change in local building codes in 2022 also adversely impacted the process. A Property Team (PMT) that had visited Washington (DC) in April 2024 recommended repurposing/selling the property due to certain locational disadvantage and structural deficiencies. The Ministry is examining this as well as other reasonable and prudent proposals regarding the future of the property.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

Recommendation No. 48

The Committee are aware that the ICCR scholarship programme is a vital initiative in enhancing India's soft power, promoting educational exchanges and fostering global cooperation. The Committee note that a total budget allocation of Rs. 80.50 crore including Rs. 80 crore for scholarships and Rs. 50 lakhs for educational exchanges has been provisioned for BE 2025-26. The Ministry has informed that 3960 scholarship slots have been awarded so far, with the highest number of scholarships granted to countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Kenya, and Tanzania. The Ministry has submitted that ICCR plans to increase the budget for scholarships and educational exchanges by 15% for the financial year 2026-27. It is observed that the digitization of the scholarship process through the A2A (Admissions to Alumni) Portal has streamlined the application and admission process for foreign students, ensuring greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

The Committee recommend a robust expansion of the ICCR scholarship program to better accommodate the increasing demand for educational opportunities, particularly from regions such as Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The Committee endorse the proposed 15% budget increase for FY 2026-27, recognizing its necessity to address the rising costs of tuition fees and related charges, and urge the Ministry to ensure that this expansion also includes a greater number of scholarship slots. Additionally, the Committee emphasize the importance of expanding the pool of participating institutions, ensuring that both state and central universities are better represented while preserving the quality of education by adhering to high academic standards.

Reply of the Government

In line with the recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee for robust expansion of ICCR's Scholarship programme to optimally accommodate the increasing demand, ICCR has already increased the total number of scholarship slots by adding 87 new slots in the current Academic year 2025-26 (two under Atal Bihari Vajpayee General Scholarship Scheme, 35 slots under India -Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme and 50 slots under the newly launched QUAD STEM Scholarship Scheme), taking the total number of scholarships to 4047 slots from 3960. These new slots cater to countries from the global South, including Africa (Burundi, Comoros, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Africa, Seychelles, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) and South-East Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste and Vietnam) in addition to countries in other regions such as Australia, Suva, Fiji, Japan, Republic of Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Port Moresby, Philippines, Bangladesh etc. ICCR also endeavors to re-allocate any unutilized slots under its schemes to students from other countries where there is a demand for them.

ICCR appreciates the endorsement of the Hon'ble Committee for the proposed 15% budget increase for the financial year 2026-27 to run its 21 flagship scholarship schemes, in view of the rising costs of tuition fees and other related charges.

As regards the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation to expand the pool of participating institutions, ICCR is currently examining the feasibility of including new Universities/Institutions like IIT Jammu, South-Asian University (SAU), University of Science & Technology (Meghalaya), Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology (VNIT-Nagpur) etc. in ICCR list of institutions. This is being done on the basis of transparent and specific criteria such as UGC accreditation, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC rating, A and above) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF rating 1-100) to ensure the highest academic standards as well as the need to ensure balanced geographical representation of Central/State Universities.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/28/2025 dated 23.07.2025]

NEW DELHI
16 December, 2025
25 Agrahayana, 1947 (Saka)

Dr. Shashi Tharoor,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

ANNEXURE-I

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS UNDER INDIA-AFRICA FORUM SUMMIT [IAFS-I (2008); IAFS-II (2011) & IAFS-III (2015)]

SN	Project Name. Implementing Agency (IA) & Estimated Cost	Details of MOUs/Agreements & Project Activities undertaken	PROJECT STATUS
1.	<p>Setting up of the India-Africa Institute of Foreign Trade (IAIFT) in Uganda.</p> <p>Implementing Agency : Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)</p> <p>Estimated cost : Rs. 60.00 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-I Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>GoI-AU MOU for Pan- African Project for IAIFT signed on 23.5.2011 (valid for 05 years from date of signature; may be extended by mutual consent; May be terminated by giving 05 months prior written notice)</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>A 04-member IIFT delegation visited Kampala, Uganda during Jan 18-24, 2011 and submitted a Preliminary Report on the Project. The Draft Business Plan, Draft MOU and Budget proposals for the project were also submitted.</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced.</p> <p>G/o Uganda has decided to dedicate 02 floors of new building for IAIFT at Uganda Management Institute (UMI).</p>
2.	<p>Establishment of India-Africa Diamond Institute (IADI) in Botswana.</p> <p>IA: Indian Diamond Institute (IDI), Surat Estimated budget : Rs. 19.00 Crore</p> <p>(cost revised during IAFS-III)</p> <p>(earlier approved figure was Rs. 16.00 Crore in IAFS-I)</p> <p>(IAFS-I Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>GoI-AU MOU for Pan-African Project for setting up of IADI signed on 23/5/11.</p> <p>(valid for 05 years from date of signature; may be extended by mutual consent. May be terminated by giving 05 months prior written notice)</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>Proposed MOU/ Agreement was negotiated. A Botswana delegation visited IDI, Surat to discuss certain technical issues</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced.</p> <p>After initial interest and activities, the implementing agencies from India and Botswana have not shown much enthusiasm.</p>

		relating to the MOU between IDI Surat and counterpart IA in Botswana.	
3.	<p>Setting up of 05 Food Testing Laboratories (FTLs) in African countries</p> <p>[Republic of Congo (ROC), Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Gambia & Nigeria]</p> <p>IA: M/o Food Processing Industries through ICRISAT, Hyderabad</p> <p>Estimated Budget : Rs. 50.00 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>MoFPI-ICRISAT MOU signed on 16.11.2012 (Valid for 03 years).</p> <p>Extended MoA signed on 24.11.15 (Validity extended for another 02 years). MoFPI can terminate by 30 days prior notice & ICRISAT by 60 days.</p> <p>[G-2-G MOU & I-2-I MOU signed for FTL in Zimbabwe, Rep. of Congo & Rwanda].</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>Implementing Agency visited all 5 host countries. Country Agreement signed with regard to Congo, Zimbabwe and Rwanda. DPR and Business Plans were prepared for all 5 centres. MoFPI subsequently transferred all the works back to MEA.</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>Implementing agency discontinued the Project implementation. MEA has short closed the FTL projects.</p>
4.	<p>Setting up of 05 Food Processing Incubation Centres (FPBICs) in African countries</p> <p>[Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali & Angola]</p> <p>IA : M/o Food Processing Industries through ICRISAT, Hyderabad</p> <p>Est.budget:Rs. 50.00 Cr. (Cost revised during IAFS-III) (Earlier approved figure was Rs.7.30 Cr. in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>MoFPI-ICRISAT MOU signed on 17.10.2012 for 05 FPBICs in African Countries. Extended MoA signed on 24.11.2015. Country Agreement signed for FPBIC in Ghana, Cameroon & Uganda (Angola dropped in IAFS-III).</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>Feasibility Studies were conducted for the FPBIC projects in Angola, Cameroon, Ghana & Uganda. DPR and</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced.</p> <p>MoFPI transferred project work back to MEA due to other priority work of MoFPI.</p>

		Business Plans were prepared for FPBICs in Cameroon, Ghana & Uganda. G-2-G MOUs were signed with regard to projects in Uganda, Ghana & Cameroon.	
5.	<p>Setting up of India-Africa Food Processing Cluster in Mauritania</p> <p>IA: M/o Food Processing Industries; IL&FS is the Project Monitoring Agency)</p> <p>Estimated budget: Rs. 117 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : NONE</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>Project could not implemented as Mauritania was not found suitable for the Food Processing Cluster.</p>
6.	<p>Human Settlement Institutes in 5 locations (DRC, Mauritania, Zambia Togo & Kenya)</p> <p>Building Material and Technology Promotion Council/ Ministry of HUPA.</p> <p>Estimated Budget : Rs. 20.00 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-I Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken: Project already dropped for all other countries except Togo during IAFS-III.</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced.</p> <p>Togo showed initial interest in the Project.</p>
7.	<p>Setting up India-Africa Civil Aviation Academy in Tunisia</p> <p>IA: Ministry of Civil Aviation</p> <p>Estimated budget : Rs. 250 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : Setting of India Africa Civil Aviation Academy was proposed during IAFS-II in Chad. However, during IAFS-III the location was shifted to Tunisia. An Indian delegation visited Tunisia and submitted report in May 2018 recommending setting up of Civil Aviation Centre in Tunisia. It was decided that we need to take Africa centric perspective, which can impact Pan African Institute. In January 2020, Ministry of Civil Aviation was</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced. Project is unlikely to be implemented in the current format.</p>

		requested to explore possibilities of other suitable country for the establishment of India-Africa Civil Aviation Academy.	
8.	<p>Setting up of India-Africa Textile Cluster in Ethiopia</p> <p>IA : Ministry of Textiles</p> <p>Estimated budget : Rs.315 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : Ethiopia was identified for the project. The PMC for the project is to be selected/nominated.</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced.</p> <p>M/o Textiles has transferred the project to MEA. Project unlikely to be implemented in the current format.</p>
9.	<p>Setting up of 05 Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs) in African countries (Namibia, Rwanda, Zambia, Senegal & Gabon)</p> <p>IA: EDII, Gandhinagar</p> <p>Estimated budget : Rs.25.30 Crore</p> <p>(Cost revised during IAFS-III, 2015) (earlier approved figure was Rs. 24.00 Crore in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>Project for EDC in Rwanda is complete. G-2-G MOU for EDC in Zambia was signed on 11/04/2018. (Validity upto 3 years; can be terminated by advanced 6 months written notice).</p>	<p>Project “EDC in Rwanda” was completed in November 2023. For remaining 04 EDCs, implementation has not yet commenced. EDC project for Namibia is being finalized for implementation. EDC projects in other selected African countries shall be considered thereafter.</p>
10.	<p>Setting up of 05 Centres for English Language Training (CELT) in African countries [Djibouti, Sudan, Mauritania, Togo & Central African Republic]</p> <p>IA: English & Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad</p> <p>Est. budget : Rs. 20.41 Crore (Cost revised in IAFS-III)</p> <p>[Earlier approved cost Rs. 15.00 Cr. in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE.</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>A team of EFLU, Hyderabad visited Djibouti & Sudan in October 2013 for Feasibility Study and submitted the Feasibility Study Report. Djibouti has not shown interest in the project.</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p>
11.	<p>Setting up of Solar Multi Utility (SMU) Centres in African countries [Being implemented by TERI [Kenya, Ethiopia & Malawi]</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE.</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced. TERI did not take up the project.</p>

	<p>IA: The Energy and Resources Institute</p> <p>Estimated budget :Rs. 87.90 lakh</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>Activities Undertaken: A team of experts visited Kenya, Ethiopia & Malawi to conduct Feasibility Study for the project implementation. TERI has submitted the Feasibility Report for Ethiopia, Kenya & Malawi.</p>	
12.	<p>Setting up of the India-Africa Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IAIEPA) in Burundi.</p> <p>IA : National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA)]</p> <p>Estimated budget: Rs. 120 Cr.</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>Agreement between of Govt. of Burundi & NUEPA for Pan African Project on IAIEPA in Burundi signed on 14/10/2011. (Valid for 05 years; can be terminated by 6 months written notice).</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>A four member team of the NUEPA visited Burundi (Jan 11-17, 2011 for Feasibility Study. NUEPA had submitted the Detailed Project Report for India-Africa Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IAIEPA) in Burundi (June 2017).</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>The project could not be implemented due to non-readiness of necessary infrastructure for the project and unstable political & security situation in Burundi.</p>
13.	<p>Setting up of India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi</p> <p>IA: NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS)]</p> <p>Estimated budget : Rs. 92 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>MEA-NABCONS Agreement for setting up IAIARD in Malawi was signed on 02.04.2019 [Project period: 36 months] [Agreement is valid till completion of project, Can be terminated by giving 03 month notice].</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>NABCONS had conducted the Feasibility Study for the project in Malawi (Jan 27-</p>	<p>Actual implementation not yet commenced. G2G MOU between India and Malawi could not be finalized due to various implementation and cost factors.</p>

		31, 2014) and submitted the Feasibility Study Report.	
14.	<p>Establishment of 08 India-Africa Regional Farm Science Centers in Africa (i.e. one for each of the 08 RECs]</p> <p>[Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Liberia & Burundi]</p> <p>IA: DARE/ Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)</p> <p>Estimated budget:</p> <p>Rs. 55.02 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>DARE/ICAR team visited Ethiopia during 28 Nov-01 Nov 2013 for Feasibility Study on Farm Science Centre (FSC) in Ethiopia. DARE has submitted the Tour/ Deputation Report the project. Project proposals also submitted for FSC in Ethiopia.</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>The project could not be implemented due to non-finalization of Implementation modalities.</p>
15.	<p>Establishment of 08 India-Africa Agriculture Seed Production-cum-Demonstration Centers in Africa (i.e. one for each of the 08 RECs] [Togo, Rwanda, Republic of Congo & South Sudan]IA: DARE/ Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)</p> <p>Estimated budget:Rs. 52.12 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : A delegation from DARE/ICAR visited Togo during 4-5 December, 2013 and inspected the location at “Project for Rehabilitation and Farming Land”, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of Togo. Another Team visited Rwanda during November 2014 & inspected the location at Bugusera and found it suitable. DARE had submitted Project Proposals for ASPDC in Rwanda and Togo.</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>The project could not be implemented due to non-finalization of Implementation modalities.</p>
16.	<p>Establishment of 05 India-Africa Barefoot Vocational Training Centers (BVTCs) by ‘The Barefoot College, Tilonia’</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>Feasibility Study was conducted by the IA for BVTCs in Senegal, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Tanzania & South Sudan . MEA-IA Agreements were also signed for BVTCs in 2014.</p>	<p>Project implementation did not take place. The Barefoot College, Tilonia (IA) has short closed the BVTCs projects.</p>
17.	<p>Establishment of 08 India-Africa Regional Material Testing</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):NONE</p>	<p>RM TL projects in Ghana, Cameroon & Kenya have</p>

	<p>Laboratories for Highways in Africa (i.e. one for each of the 08 RECs)[Uganda,Ghana,Cameroon & Kenya]</p> <p>IA: IAHE, NOIDA/ MORTH</p> <p>Est.budget : Rs. 7.50 Crore</p> <p>(Cost revised during IAFS-III)(earlier approved figure was Rs.5.6 Crore in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>RM TL project in Uganda is complete.</p>	<p>not yet commenced. RM TL project in Uganda is complete.</p> <p>The RM TL projects in remaining 04 African countries were kept in abeyance due to non-completion of the RM TL project in Uganda, considered as pilot project.</p>
18.	<p>Solar Electrification of 7500 rural households in 15 African countries</p> <p>I [Mozambique, Namibia,Kenya, Tanzania(Zanzibar),South Africa, Malawi, South Sudan]</p> <p>II[Burkina Faso, Senegal, Cameroon, DRC,CAR, Botswana, Zimbabwe]</p> <p>IA: The Barefoot College, Tilonia</p> <p>Estimated budget</p> <p>: Rs. 25.00 Crore(Revised Cost during IAFS-III)</p> <p>(Earlier approved figure was Rs. 17 Crore in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	NONE	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>The IA has not yet submitted the detailed project proposal for solar electrification of 7,500 rural households in 15 African countries.</p> <p>Project has not been implemented till now and is unlikely to be implemented by Barefoot College, Tilonia.</p>
19.	<p>Setting up of Project Arrow (with a centralized monitoring system, workplace computer training centre and centralized control office) in Ghana</p> <p>IA: Department of Posts</p> <p>Estimated budget: Rs.2.60 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s): NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : A 02-member Indian delegation from Department of Posts visited Ghana from March 17-21, 2014 to conduct the Feasibility Study for setting up a Project Arrow Post Office in Ghana. The Department of</p>	<p>Actual implementation has not yet commenced.</p> <p>Department of Post has submitted the Feasibility Study Report. The MOU/Agreement is yet to be concluded. D/o Post is to respond to certain queries on the implementation modalities pertaining to the scope of</p>

		Posts had submitted the Feasibility Study Report (FSR).	work and disbursement of funds for the project.
20.	<p>Setting up of a Pan African University of Life and Earth Sciences (PAULESI) at University of Ibadan, Nigeria</p> <p>IA : Department of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE)</p> <p>Estimated budget: Rs. 500 Crore</p> <p>(IAFS-II Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):</p> <p>Partnership Memoire between AUC & GOI signed on 23/05/2013.</p> <p><i>“Valid till project completion; can be terminated by giving 03 months advanced written notice.”</i></p> <p>Activities Undertaken :</p> <p>NONE</p>	Nigeria has not shown interest.
21.	<p>Setting up of Apex Planning Organization and Training institute in Coal Sector in Mozambique.</p> <p>IA : Coal India Limited/Ministry of Coal</p> <p>Estimated budget : Rs. 385.00 Crore (Cost revised during IAFS-III) (earlier approved figure was Rs. 135.00 Crore in IAFS-II)</p> <p>(IAFS-I Project)</p>	<p>MOU(s) / Agreement(s):NONE</p> <p>Activities Undertaken : NONE</p>	<p>Commitment was initially made in IAFS-II in 2011. Subsequently, CIL considered Mozambique unsuitable.</p> <p>Project was not implemented and in 2018 CIL requested to consider relieving it from the Project citing absence of business interest.</p>

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2025-26) HELD ON 16 DECEMBER, 2025

The Committee sat on Tuesday, 16th December, 2025 from 1700 hrs. to 1800 hrs. in Committee Room No. 2, Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

- 2 Smt. D. K. Aruna
- 3 Shri Vijay Baghel
- 4 Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
- 5 Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
- 6 Shri Navaskani K.
- 7 Shri Brijendra Singh Ola
- 8 Shri Arun Govil
- 9 Ms. Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde
- 10 Ms. Bansuri Swaraj

Rajya Sabha

- 11 Shri Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla
- 12 Dr. John Brittas
- 13 Smt. Sagarika Ghose
- 14 Dr. K. Laxman
- 15 Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu
- 16 Shri Ratanjeet Pratap Narain Singh
- 17 Dr. Sudhanshu Trivedi

Secretariat

1. Shri Anjani Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Shangreiso Zimik - Director
3. Ms. Shanta Banerjee Datta - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee and apprised them of the agenda for the day.

3. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the following draft reports:

(i) Draft Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Fifth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (18th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2025-26 and

(ii) xxx xxx xxx xxx

4. The Chairperson, invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Reports. After deliberations, the Committee adopted the Draft Reports with minor modifications suggested by the Members.

5. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Action Taken Reports incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FIFTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

- (i) **Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -**
Recommendation Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50 and 51.
Total- 35
Percentage : 67.30%
- (ii) **Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies: -**
Recommendation No. 22
Total- 1
Percentage: 1.92 %
- (iii) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -**
Recommendation Nos. 3, 10, 14, 20, 34, 37, 38, 43 and 52
Total- 09
Percentage : 17.30 %
- (iv) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited: -**
Recommendation No. 6, 9, 17, 18, 39, 47 and 48,
Total- 07
Percentage: 13.46 %