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**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2020-21)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

[Action Taken Report on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22]

ELEVENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

September, 2021/ Bhadrapada, 1943 (Saka)

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[Action Taken Report on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22]

Presented to Hon'ble Speaker on 10 September 2021

Presented to Lok Sabha on -----, 2021

Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on----- , 2021



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
September, 2021/ Bhadrapada, 1943 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21)

1. Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
6. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
7. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
8. Smt. Preneet Kaur
9. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
10. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
11. Shri P. C. Mohan
12. Ms. Chandrani Murmu
13. Shri Ritesh Pandey
14. Dr. K. C. Patel
15. Shri N.K. Premachandran
16. Shri Navneet Ravi Rana
17. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
18. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
19. Shri Rebati Tripura
20. Vacant^{\$}
21. Vacant^{*}

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri K. J. Alphons
23. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
24. Smt. Misha Bharti
25. Shri P. Chidambaram
26. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
27. Shri Swapan Dasgupta[#]
28. Shri Kapil Sibal
29. Shri Abdul Wahab^{@@}
30. Shri Brij Lal
31. Vacant[@]

Secretariat

1. Shri P.C.Koul - Additional Secretary
2. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
3. Shri Paolienlal Haokip - Additional Director
4. Ms. Smita Singh - Assistant Executive Officer

^{\$} Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma passed away on 17 March, 2021.

^{*} Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi ceased to Member of the Committee on her appointment as Minister w.e.f. 07.07.2021.

[#] Shri Swapan Dasgupta resigned on 17.03.2021 and has been re-nominated w.e.f. 11.06.2021.

^{@@} Shri Abdul Wahab retired on 21.03.2021 and has been re-nominated w.e.f. 11.06.2021.

[@] Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia ceased to be Member of the Committee on his appointment as Cabinet Minister w.e.f. 07.07.2021.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2020-21) having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Eleventh Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22.

2. The Eighth Report was presented to the Parliament on 17 March, 2020. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 24 June, 2021 (English version) and 5 July December, 2021 (Hindi version).

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Report on action taken at their Sitting held on 11.08.2021. 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 Eighth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

NEW DELHI
11 August, 2021
Shravana (Saka),1942

P.P.CHAUDHARY
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER-I

REPORT

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in their Eighth Report on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2021-22 which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the table of Rajya Sabha on 17 March 2021.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 41 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, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39 and 41..

Total- 34

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

NIL

Total- NIL

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

Recommendation Nos. 17 and 40

Total- 2

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

Recommendation Nos. 4, 9, 10, 11 and 36

Total- 5

3. **The Committee desire that final replies to the comments contained in Chapter-I and Observations/Recommendations contained in Chapter-V of this Report should be furnished to them at an early date.**

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their Observations/Recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO 3)

INCORPORATION OF ZERO-BASED BUDGETING AND GENDER BUDGETING

5. Recognizing the significance of a focused budgetary planning process, the Committee had emphatically stressed upon the need to develop a well-defined and focused budgetary planning (including Zero- Based Budgeting). In its replies, the Ministry had informed that a rigorous mechanism of Quarterly Budget Management Meeting has been developed whereby detailed exercise for head-wise evaluation of projects under various Heads are carried out. Furthermore, the overarching principle of Zero-Based Budgeting guided the continuous evaluation and assessment of budgetary allocation as against fund utilization in Ministry's budget management. Appreciating the Ministry's efforts to incorporate the idea of Zero-Based Budgeting in the budgetary planning process, the Committee had suggested that sustained endeavour should be made to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units to diminish the gap between budgetary demand and allocation. The Committee had noted lack of gender budgeting dimension in MEA's scheme of things. The Committee had, therefore, urged the Ministry to constitute a Gender Budget Cell in line with the 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. In Committee's view as a powerful instrument for achieving gender mainstreaming, the concept of Gender budgeting, must be integrated in the Ministry's policy formulation, implementation and review.

6. The Ministry of External Affairs, in its Action Taken Reply, has stated that it appreciates the Hon'ble Committee's recognition of its efforts in incorporating the principle of zero-based budgeting in the budgetary planning process. Ministry would like to reaffirm its focused efforts to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units to diminish the gap between budgetary demand and allocation.

As far as the aspect of Gender Budgeting is concerned, Ministry would like to apprise the Hon'ble Committee that as per the 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry has constituted a Gender Budget Cell (with the latest Cell being reconstituted in September 2020), headed by an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary. In addition, Ministry administers a number of

fully women-centric schemes (100 % provision towards women) and pro-women schemes (at least 30% provision towards women) under its different Aid Heads. Some instances of such schemes in the Current Financial Year are - construction of Girls Hostel Building for Nepal APF School in Kathmandu, Special Programme for Women Correspondents, India Palestine Centre for Empowering Women in Palestine, Assistance for Livelihood Improvement, Women Empowerment and Awareness Programme, etc.

7. In order to make the process of budgetary planning more astute and inclusive, the Committee had urged the Ministry to incorporate the principle of zero-based budgeting and gender budgeting. The Committee are happy to learn that the Ministry has embraced the idea of zero based budgeting by undertaking focused measures to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units with the objective of reducing the gap between budgetary demand and allocation. As regards the Committee's recommendation related to constitution of a Gender Budget Cell in accordance with 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, the Ministry has submitted that such a Cell, headed by a Joint Secretary has been already constituted. The Ministry has also informed that it administers a number of fully women-centric schemes (100 % provision towards women) and pro-women schemes (at least 30% provision towards women) under its different Aid Heads.

The Committee urge the Ministry to continue making sustained efforts towards realistic budgetary demands, efficient implementation and optimum utilization of resources. While appreciating the gender inclusive measures taken by the Ministry, the Committee are of the opinion that more can be done. One of the most important functions of the Ministry is protection and welfare of Indian woman. The Ministry should in such endeavours emphasize on the problems faced by women emigrants, students and Overseas Indians and also allocate sufficient budgetary resources allocation for their mitigation.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO 4)

CROSS COUNTRY COMPARATIVE STUDY

8. While examining the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the past four years, the Committee had been recommending that the Ministry should conduct a cross-country comparative study of budgetary allocations of Ministries/Departments entrusted with the task of managing foreign affairs. In their initial replies, the Ministry had submitted that the

preliminary report of a study conducted by Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under examination. On further probing, the Ministry had informed that a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report has been completed and more comparative study variables are being included in the report. The Committee did not approve such casual approach of the Ministry in furnishing replies to the Committee on such serious matters. The Committee had, therefore, strongly recommended that the findings of the preliminary Report should be furnished to the Committee instantly and final report should be compiled within three months. The Ministry should also ensure that the comparative data and figures are used to bolster its case for enhanced budgetary allocation in the next financial year.

9. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated that the recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. Ministry would like to assure the Committee that the Report of the study conducted by the Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under active consideration. As submitted earlier, a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report has been completed. Further, Ministry has convened a few rounds of meetings with representatives of RIS to exchange views on the areas which need further work and the addition of more parameters to make the Study more relevant and contemporary. The Ministry will endeavour to complete the final draft of the Study in the current calendar year.

10. Over the past few years, the Committee have been persistently recommending that the Ministry of External Affairs should undertake a cross-country comparative study of budgetary allocations of Ministries/Departments entrusted with the task of managing foreign affairs. The Ministry in its replies has maintained its previous position that the Report of the study conducted by the Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under active consideration. Further, the Ministry was specifically asked to make the Report available within three months. The Committee decry such nonchalant and evasive attitude of the Ministry. Expressing their strong disapproval of the Ministry's lack of action taken on this aspect of the Committee's recommendation, they desire that the information, complete in all aspects should be furnished at the final reply stage, without fail.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 6)

SCHEME SECTION

11. The Committee had noted that an allocation of Rs. 7635.15 crore and Rs. 10,519.58crore has been made at BE 2021-22 for Scheme and Non-Scheme Sections, respectively. In terms of distribution about 42% of MEA's budget was on Scheme side, which primarily constituted Technical and Economic Cooperation with other countries. The Non-Scheme Section included Passport Sewa Project, Missions/Post abroad, obligatory as well as voluntary contributions to UN and other International Organizations.

The Committee were aware that both the Scheme and Non-Scheme sections are vital in their own right. However, by virtue of catering to international aid and assistance programmes that directly impinged upon our international credentials; the Committee were of the considered view that the Scheme section should be given requisite priority in budgetary allocations. The Committee were pleased to learn that there had been intensive monitoring and review of technical aid and assistance programmes in the past year, including at the level of External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary. Those institutionalized reviews had led to identification of several new initiatives and projects. While maintaining a fine balance between our aid and non-aid outlays, the Committee were hopeful that the Scheme section would be kept unaffected from budgetary cuts. The Committee had therefore, recommended that the Ministry should ensure that funds are available for smooth and efficient implementation of our international projects without any cost and time over-runs. The Committee had also desired that the Ministry should prepare a detailed timeline for initiation and completion of the newly identified projects and initiatives.

12. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply stated that it would like to reaffirm its focused efforts to ensure adequacy of funds for its international projects and robust utilization of allocated funds in an efficient and timely manner. Ministry would like to also reassure Hon'ble Committee that it will continue to engage with Ministry of Finance to keep them informed of funds required to meet our international commitments and to emphasize the importance of providing adequate budgetary allocations to the Ministry. Further, Ministry would like to assure the Hon'ble Committee that it will continue its endeavour to complete projects within the timelines envisaged while also addressing the inherent political, security, geological and other challenges faced by the Ministry in implementing projects abroad.

13. With the bifurcation of the Ministry's Budget Heads into Revenue and Capital Heads and Scheme and Non- Scheme sections, the Committee were optimistic about enhanced budgetary allocation to MEA, especially for its international aid and assistance programmes. Keeping in view the significance of effective and timely implementation of our developmental assistance programmes, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should ensure that requisite funds are available under the Scheme section to circumvent any cost and time over-runs. The Ministry was also asked to prepare a detailed timeline for initiation and completion of the newly identified projects and initiatives. In its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has assured that it will continue to engage with Ministry of Finance to keep them informed of funds required to meet our international commitments and also continue its endeavour to complete projects within the timelines envisaged. The Committee has duly noted the Ministry's written assurance and are optimistic that international projects will be accorded due importance in terms of fiscal allocation, effective monitoring of physical progress and timely completion under regular intimation to them.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 9)
INDIAN MISSIONS/POSTS ABROAD

14. Highlighting the significance of Missions and Posts, the Committee had opined that opening of Indian Missions would help in expanding India's diplomatic footprint, deepen political relations, enable growth of bilateral trade, investments and economic engagements, facilitate stronger people-to-people contacts, bolster political outreach in multilateral fora and help garner support for India's foreign policy objectives. The Union Cabinet had accorded approval for opening up of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa in a phased manner between 2018-2021. Of these 15 Missions - Conakry (Guinea), Djibouti (Djibouti), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and Kigali (Rwanda), Yaounde (Cameroon), Asmara (Eritrea) and Mbabane (Eswatini), Monrovia (Liberia), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Sao Tome (Sao Tome and Principe), Nouakchott (Mauritania), Lomé (Togo) and N'djamena (Chad) are in various stages of functioning. Efforts are ongoing to operationalize the last three remaining Missions viz., Mogadishu (Somalia), Bissau (Guinea Bissau) and Praia (Cape Verde). Ministry had also informed that there are 48 countries where India did not have resident Indian Missions. Furthermore, the Committee also note that in December 2020, the Cabinet has approved opening of three new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.

Standing by the Ministry's own admission about the imperative of having presence in all UN countries for attaining our goal of UNSC permanent seat, the Committee had strongly felt that India should have a resident Mission in all UN Member countries. The Committee had appreciated that opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise which entails internal planning and approvals as well as coordination and liaising with the host Government. While lauding the timely completion of the 15 Missions in African countries, the Committee had strongly recommended that the Ministry should complete the remaining three Missions in Africa and the newly approved 3 Missions in Latin America in 2021. The Ministry should also seek additional finances to that end, if required, at the RE stage.

15. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted that among the 18 Missions approved by Cabinet in March, 2018, 15 Missions are in various stages of functioning and all efforts are being made to operationalize the last 3 Missions *viz*, Mogadishu, Bissau and Praia. Appropriate budgetary provisions are projected as per the expected timeline of operationalization of the Missions, in consultation with the Internal Finance Division of the Ministry.

Cabinet approval has been received in December, 2020 to open 3 new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic and administrative processes for implementation of these decisions are underway. Recently on 25 May, 2021, Cabinet has approved opening of Consulate in Addu, Maldives. Opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise requiring internal planning for logistics, deployment, infrastructure and approvals as well as coordination and liaisoning with the host Government and Ministry would follow it up closely with the relevant authorities. As recommended by Hon'ble Committee, Ministry would seek additional budgetary allocations under head Embassies & Missions, if necessary, for early operationalization of newly approved Missions/Posts.

16. The Committee had observed that the Union Cabinet had approved the opening of eighteen Missions in Africa during a period of four years from 2018-2021. Out of these, 15 Missions were in various stages of implementation and efforts were underway to operationalize the remaining three. It was also learnt that in December 2020, the Cabinet has approved opening of three new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic. The Committee had therefore recommended that Ministry should seek additional finances, if needed to ensure that the three Missions each in Africa and in Latin America are

completely in a time- bound manner. In its Action Taken Reply the Ministry has submitted that appropriate budgetary provisions are being projected as per the expected timeline of operationalization of the Missions, in consultation with the Internal Finance Division of the Ministry. The Committee desire that the Ministry should ensure that requisite steps are taken for operationalization of the newly approved Missions/Posts in Africa and Latin America within the stipulated time and apprise the Committee accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 10)

INSPECTION OF MISSIONS/POSTS ABROAD

17. The Committee had observed that the Directorate General of Inspections (DGI) was setup in 2014 in the system of regular inspection of Indian Missions/Posts abroad and in 2016 also introduced a web portal named Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) for selection of Missions/Posts for on-site inspections. But the Committee were astonished to note that after all these efforts, only eight Missions/Posts were inspected in 2018 and two in 2019 and during 2020 not a single on-site or off-site inspection took place. The Committee were not at all satisfied with such tardy progress in such an important process of performance evaluation and monitoring. Emphasizing the imperative of periodic inspection and monitoring in increasing the efficacy of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should launch the revamped PEMS portal at the earliest since it had already missed several timelines. The Ministry should also compile an annual data on country-specific challenges faced by the Missions/Posts abroad so that the evaluation exercise could result in positive outcomes and suggestions.

18. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply stated that due to various reasons, only eight Missions/Posts could be inspected in 2018 and two Missions/Posts were inspected in 2019. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and revamping process of PEMS portal, inspection could not be conducted during 2020. The Ministry has launched the revamped portal of Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS-2.0) on 07.06.2021. The evaluation exercise will be done in a time-bound manner followed up by off-site and on-site inspection, where required, for improving the functioning of our Missions/Posts.

19. Recognizing the imperative of regular monitoring and evaluation in improving the functioning of the Mission/Posts, the Committee had desired that the revamped Performance

Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) portal should be launched at the earliest. The Committee are glad to know that after missing several deadlines, the revamped portal of Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS-2.0) was launched in June 2021. The Committee note that due to the ongoing Covid pandemic onsite inspections could not be done in 2020. As regards the Committee's recommendation on compilation of annual data on country-specific challenges faced by the Missions/Posts abroad, the Ministry has not mentioned anything in its replies. While disapproving the tendency on part of the Ministry to furnish incomplete replies, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation that data should be prepared to understand the country specific challenges faced by Indian Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee also desire that that the Ministry should prepare a time-bound action plan for covering all the Missions/Embassies through on-site or off-site annual inspections once normalcy is restored.

**RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 11)
ESTABLISHMENT OF VIDESH BHAWANS**

20. The Committee had observed that the budget head 'Passport and Emigration' catered to expenditure on Passport offices, printing of travel documents, lease/purchase of passport printers, payments to State and Union territories Governments for verification, expenses of pre-departure orientation and skill up-gradation of emigrant workers. The budgetary allocation under that sub-head has witnessed a decline from Rs. 1348.59 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 1328.63 crore (BE 2021-22). As per the Ministry the reduction in projections and allocation was primarily on account of slow progress due to COVID-19 pandemic under printing and procurement of travel documents, Postal and Freight charges, Office Expenses and Information Technology head.

The Committee had observed that the budget sub-head 'Passport and Emigration' catered to two diverse but crucial set of items and directly affect on public services delivery and welfare of Overseas Indians. Keeping this in mind, the Committee felt that provision of adequate funds is essential. The Committee had therefore, recommended that the Ministry should ensure timely delivery of public services in terms of passport and emigration support and if required, seek additional funds at the RE stage. The Committee had also desired that Videsh Bhawans should be established as a one stop service center in every state capital. The Ministry should work out a detailed proposal in that regard and apprise the Committee at the soonest.

21. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry stated that the observation of the Committee have been noted and based on need assessment of funds and efficient utilization pattern, Ministry shall seek additional funds at the RE stage for passport and emigration services. Ministry initiated process for establishment of Videsh Bhawans (VB) in Indian States capitals in June, 2016. The proposal was to bring all subordinate offices of MEA such as Branch Secretariat, Passport office, ICCR Centre and POE under one roof to enhance the efficiency of service to be provided to the public of the respective state/ union territory (UT) and also for better coordination among the State/ UT administration and the Ministry. Initially, efforts were made to identify the places where space is available in the existing RPO that can be used for VB after making required modifications and rest of the state governments were requested to allot suitable land (free of cost) for construction of VB. Presently, all proposals for Videsh Bhawan have been put on hold where no construction has commenced so far. The construction on only those projects which commenced as RPO (Bhopal, Kolkata, Ranchi) and were later modified as Videsh Bhawan are being continued.

22. Regarding the Committee's recommendation for adequate provisioning of funds for the budget sub-head 'Passport and Emigration', the Ministry in its Action Taken Replies has submitted that based on need assessment of funds and efficient utilization pattern, Ministry shall seek additional funds at the RE stage for passport and emigration services. The Committee had also desired that Videsh Bhawans should be established in all state capitals as a one stop organization to bring all subordinate offices of MEA such as Branch Secretariat, Passport office, ICCR Centre and POE under one roof to enhance the efficiency of service to be provided to the public of the respective state/ union territory (UT) and also for better coordination among the State/ UT administration and the Ministry. The Committee note that efforts were made at the initial stage to identify available spaces in the existing Regional Passport Offices that can be used for Videsh Bhawans after making required modifications and rest of the state governments were requested to allot suitable land (free of cost) for its construction . In its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has informed that in the present situation all proposals for Videsh Bhawan have been put on hold where no construction has commenced. The construction on only those projects which commenced as RPO (Bhopal, Kolkata, Ranchi) and were later modified as Videsh Bhawans are being continued. The Committee can understand the current halt in construction works related to Videsh Bhawans in some state capitals, however, the Ministry should strive to complete the establishment of the Videsh Bhawans in all state capitals within fixed timelines.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 12)

PASSPORT SERVICES

23. The issuance of passports in a timely, seamless and hassle free manner is the most citizen-centric service provided by the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee were also aware that there are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPsK) functioning under the supervision of the 36 Passport Offices in the country to handle this important work. The Passport Seva Programme(PSP) had been extended to the Missions/Posts abroad in order to provide better and smoother service to Indian diaspora living abroad. So far, 153 Missions/Posts have been integrated into Passport Seva Project and integration of 26 other Missions/Posts is underway. It was seen that MEA maintains a centralized database of passports—Passport Related Information Data Exchange (PRIDE). It has established a robust grievance redressal mechanism with a multi-lingual call centre operating in 17 languages on a 24x7 basis. Additionally, a Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism had also been set up in all Passport Offices to attend and redress any complaint within a time-frame. The Ministry had further informed that in the States/UTs where mPassport Police app has been launched, the time of average Police Verification Report (PVR) has been reduced to 18 days.

The Committee were pleased to learn about a plethora of measures taken by the Ministry to make qualitative and quantitative improvements in passport services in recent times. The vast expanse of our passport office network is laudable. The Committee had, however, urged the Ministry to ensure that there is a PSK/POPKs in every parliamentary constituency. While appreciating the progress made in integration of Passport Seva Projects (PSP) with Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee had desired that the remaining Missions/Posts were integrated at the earliest. The Ministry should also make consistent efforts to encourage States/UTs to launch the ‘mPolice App’ so that the time taken for submission of Police Verification Report is reduced to the minimum.

24. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply stated that as on 17 May 2021, 519 Passport Kendras, including 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs), are functioning in the country as an extended arm of 36 Passport Offices (POs). By opening of 93 PSK and 426 POPSKs, the Ministry has covered 489 Lok Sabha Constituencies where there is at least one Passport Kendra. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Department

of Posts are working together to ensure operationalization of a POPSK in the remaining 54 Lok Sabha Constituencies.

Ministry had advised 189 Missions/Posts to acquire the necessary IT equipment for integration into the PSP system. Out of these 189 Missions/Posts, 4 Missions/Posts are temporarily closed and 5 Missions/Posts do not issue passports. As on current date, 166 Missions/Posts have been successfully integrated into the Passport Seva Project. 7 Missions/Posts have procured the requisite IT equipment and the integration process is currently in progress. Remaining 7 Missions/Posts are in process of acquiring the necessary IT equipment and Ministry is coordinating with them to expedite the process. Once the availability of the IT equipment is confirmed by the remaining 7 Missions/Posts to the Ministry, the integration process would be started remotely.

25. The Committee are aware that the issuance of passport constitutes the most citizen-centric function of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee are pleased to know that 519 Passport Kendras, including 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs), are functioning in the country as an extended arm of 36 Passport Offices (POs). As regards the Committee's recommendation of opening of PSK/PoPSKs in every parliamentary constituency, the Committee were pleased to note that the Ministry has covered 489 Lok Sabha Constituencies and is working with the Department of Posts to ensure operationalization of a POPSK in the remaining 54 Lok Sabha Constituencies. The Ministry has further informed that so far 166 Missions/Posts have been successfully integrated into the Passport Seva Project. However, the Ministry has not submitted any information about efforts made to encourage States/UTs to launch the 'mPolice App'. The Committee are happy to learn that out of 189 Missions/Posts, 166 have been successfully integrated into the Passport Seva Project and the remaining ones have either acquired or are in the process of acquiring IT equipment for integration.

The outreach of Passport services in India through an extensive network of PSKs/PoPSKs is a laudable feat. The Committee are hopeful that the Ministry will operationalize PoPSKs in the remaining 54 Lok Sabha constituencies and integrate the remaining Missions/Posts abroad with the Passport Seva Portal in a time-bound manner. The Committee would like to be kept apprised of the developments made in this regard. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should take proactive measures to reach out to all the State Governments to launch mPolice app to make the verification process seamless, swift and contactless.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 13)
SHORTAGE OF STAFF IN PASSPORT OFFICES

26. The Committee had observed that the shortage of personnel is one of the key challenges faced by the Ministry in expansion of Passport Seva Project (PSP). Against the sanctioned strength of 2,741, the actual working strength of Central Passport Organization (CPO) is 1,789 (as on 01.02.2021). The difficulty in filling the vacant posts in CPO cadre was attributable to the extant Recruitment Rules, which allows direct recruitment only in the grades of Office Assistant, Junior Passport Assistant (JPA), Stenographer, Junior Translator and Assistant Superintendent. MEA has been indenting Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for recruitment in these grades as per available vacancies. Against an indent of 310 posts that was made in 2017, SSC had recommended only 118 persons till date. As an interim measure the Ministry had engaged 347 Data Entry Operators to ease the pressure created due to shortage of staff. During examination of Demands for Grants for the past few years, the Ministry had informed that a proposal for physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to Ministry of Finance in November 2019. The Committee had desired to be apprised about the progress made in that regard. The Committee had also recommended that the issue of human resource shortage must be taken up with Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) at the highest level and a lasting solution be worked out.

27. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry stated that the sanctioned strength of Central Passport Organisation is 2741 and the actual working strength of the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) Cadre is 1783, as on 1 May, 2021. In addition, 21 posts (including 15 Technical and 6 supporting staff) were created by the Union Cabinet decision in 2007 to man the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Passport Seva Project. Recently, dossiers for 31 Junior Translators from Staff Selection Commission have been received and appointment letters issued to the candidates, out of which 5 have joined. Dossiers for 6 Stenographers (Grade “D”) and 24 Office Assistant (MTS) grade are awaited from the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The break-up of the vacancies is as under:

Sl. No.	Group 'A'		Group 'B' Gazetted		Group 'B' and Group 'C' non Gazetted	
	Sanctioned	Working	Sanctioned	Working	Sanctioned	Working
1						

	Strength	Strength	strength	strength	strength	strength
Total	226	192	565	362	1950	1229
Vacancy	34		203		721	

Group 'A' posts: Eligible Officers from feeder post are not available, hence needed to fill up vacancies on deputation, in consultation with the UPSC.

Group 'B' (Gazetted) posts: No one is eligible from feeder grade, hence vacant.

Group 'B' (Non-gazetted) and Group 'C' Posts: 199 vacancies have been indented for direct recruitment to Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for the vacancy years 2018, 2019 & 2020. SSC has also been requested to either conduct the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) or allow Ministry to conduct the LDCE for 151 vacancies. The rest of the vacancies are due to following reasons:

- (i) Direct recruit vacancies for the year 2021 are yet to be indented to SSC when called for.
- (ii) The employees with requisite qualifying service in the feeder grade are not available to fill the promotion vacancies.
- (iii) Recently, 17 appointment letters were issued to the candidates against which they are yet to join.

2. A proposal for the physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to the Ministry of Finance in November 2019. In March 2021, Ministry of Finance has been requested to accord priority to this matter and consider undertaking Physical Inspection & Staffing Study of Central Passport Organisation on an urgent basis.

28. **In their DFG Report, the Committee had recommended that the issue of human resource shortage in CPO must be taken up with Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) at the highest level and a lasting solution be worked out. The Committee note with concern that against the sanctioned strength of 2741, the actual working strength of the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) Cadre is 1783, as on 1 May, 2021. In order to fill these posts, the Ministry has submitted dossiers for the posts of Junior Translators and Stenographers from Staff Selection Commission and made a proposal for the physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.**

In the considered opinion of the Committee, a consistent deficit in personnel in CPO, may adversely impact the overall functioning of existing PSKs/POPSKs. The Committee find that the efforts made by the Ministry are inadequate as it has not yielded desired outcomes in the past few years. The Committee therefore, desire that Ministry may impress upon the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance to complete the staffing study of CPO on priority basis so that the vacant posts can be filled. The Committee further desire that if necessary, the recruitment through lateral entry of qualified and experienced individuals from academic, private and other cadres of the Ministries may also be undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 17)
DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

29. The Committee had noted that development partnership projects were rooted firmly in the underlying principle of South-South Cooperation, *viz.* mutual benefit, solidarity, free of conditionality, voluntary and demand driven cooperation. The assistance was implemented with the long-term goal of generating goodwill and generating a positive leverage to drive foreign policy objectives. The Committee, however, felt that the fluctuating budgetary demands and allocations convey a different picture. The Committee were happy to note that international projects are being reviewed and monitored through institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committees (JPMCs) and Project steering Committees as well as to effectively handle India's developmental aid project Development Partnership Administration (DPA) has been created. The Committee had also noted that various challenges often impede the execution of international projects, including delays in land acquisitions and approval of local permits; procurement challenges; occasional reluctance and apathy of host governments; political uncertainties security threats; natural calamity, etc. Keeping these extraneous challenges in mind, the Committee had desired that the Ministry should undertake an assessment and accordingly re-orient our approach for project formulation, appraisal, implementation monitoring and evaluation, to overcome such challenges. In the firm opinion of the Committee, the Ministry should frame a developmental aid policy along with a separate aid disbursement body/subsidiary organ within DPA with a specialized and focused mandate of streamlining and evaluating the various projects.

30. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply stated that India's development partnership cooperation is integral part of India's foreign policy. The inalienable component of our

development cooperation is “partnership”. India’s economic cooperation through development partnership is demand driven. For example, India’s Grants-in-aid projects and capacity building programs are demand driven and are based on local demand/priority of the partner countries. Through development cooperation, Government aims to give fillip to South-South Cooperation. Development assistance is offered on the request of the host government, which is scrutinized by the Ministry in consultation with concerned Territorial Division from foreign policy perspective and also the line ministries. Feasibility study / DPR is undertaken by the project implementation agency, which is vetted by the line ministries. Physical and financial progress is monitored at various levels, including our Missions abroad as well as Project Monitoring Committees (PMC) constituted for this specific purpose. Additionally, expert advice of consultants and technical advisors on deputation from other specialized organizations outside the Ministry is also taken regarding implementation of these projects. Moreover, period reviews of the development assistance programs, viz., comprehensive review of ITEC, CEITs, etc are undertaken to attune these programs from impact and outcome perspective. Budgetary outlays are pre-fixed and payments are released on milestone basis.

Delay in the implementation schedule in some of the development assistance projects is apparently due to extraneous factors, viz., lack of appropriate interest /alacrity demonstrated by the host government in implementation of the project, once MoU is signed, non-identification and non-availability of project site for a considerable period of time, civil wars / internal strife prevalent in some of the African countries, local epidemics, inability to identify and nominate local project implementation agency for the project by the host government, etc. These factors lead to delay in the implementation schedule of the project and non-utilization of budget allocated for the relevant FY. However, efforts are made to periodically update and revise our budget projections and requirement for development assistance to other countries taking into account the overall perspectives of a dynamic and fluid nature. All efforts are being made to limit delays to only extraneous factors and due diligence is done at every stage of the process.

As regards Hon’ble Committee’s recommendation of instituting an autonomous aid disbursal body similar to USAID for development assistance partnership, the Ministry is fully seized of the matter and is periodically reviewing all aspects of development cooperation and aid delivery.

31. With the larger objective of making India’s developmental partnership more meaningful and predictable, the Committee had exhorted the Ministry to formulate a

developmental aid policy along with a separate aid disbursal body/subsidiary organ within Development Partnership Administration (DPA) with a specialized and focused mandate of streamlining and evaluating various projects. In response to the Committee's specific recommendation, the Ministry has furnished a general Action Taken Reply illustrating the premise, challenges faced and review mechanism of India's developmental cooperation. While understanding the significance of nature, context and contour of our developmental cooperation, the Committee are disappointed with the evasive reply of the Ministry. Merely acknowledging does not amount to Action Taken and such tendency on part of the Ministry is unacceptable. The Ministry ought to provide a convincing case for adhering to the status quo and not having a policy or an autonomous aid disbursal body for international projects. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that a thorough review of our developmental cooperation should be carried out and on the basis of such an analysis, a call may be taken on establishment of a separate aid disbursal body.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 26)

AID TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES

32. The budgetary allocation under 'Aid to African countries' catered to setting up of institutes, various scholarships/training programmes; ICCR scholarships; food aid, books, medical aid, cash grants etc. An allocation of Rs. 300 crore had been provisioned for BE 2021-22. India's partnership with Africa is based on a consultative model of cooperation and sharing of development experiences and is focused on addressing the priorities and needs of African countries. The three India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS-I, II and III) in 2008, 2011 and 2015 have further reinforced development partnership with the country. The Committee had noted that the progress in various projects under India Africa Summits was reviewed regularly in consultation with concerned Ministries and relevant stakeholders. The Committee had noticed that so far 17 African countries have joined the e-VidyaBharti and e-arogyaBharti Network project (e-VBAB) which was approved in 2015 to provide quality education to African students. The declining trend of allocation to African countries had been a source of great discontentment to the Committee. The Foreign Secretary asserted that Africa is a key foreign policy priority and our engagement has been intensifying, albeit the budgetary allocations speak otherwise. The Committee had strongly recommended that the budgetary allocation for African countries should be in alignment with the

importance, size and extent of the region. There is an urgent need to intensify our diplomatic presence in the region. The Ministry should also take all requisite steps, including seeking enhanced allocation and effective utilization of funds, for expeditious implementation of our diverse ongoing projects in Africa.

33. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry submitted that it has sincerely noted the concerns and recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee. The Ministry would like to reassure the Hon'ble Committee that Africa is receiving very high priority by the Government.

2. India has maintained a vibrant relationship with African countries, which is evident with 34 outgoing visits since 2014 [President (13), Vice President (12) and Prime Minister (9)] and more than 100 incoming visits at ministerial level from African nations. The 10 guiding principles enunciated by honourable Prime Minister in Uganda in 2018, will continue to guide India-Africa relations and take our engagement to the next higher level. These guiding principles have been given 'top priority' in identifying key areas of cooperation with Africa including digital & IT, agriculture, trade & investment, development partnership especially designing people-centric projects, building local capacity and assisting African youth through training programmes, cooperation in security, terrorism & maritime issues, international cooperation in climate change, etc. The Ministry is in the process of taking these elements forward in a focused manner. This is reflected in the range of important events completed in previous years and/or planned between India and Africa in near future.

3. In order to expand our diplomatic footprints and outreach in African continent, Government of India has decided in 2018 to open 18 new Missions in African countries. Missions in Republic of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Togo, Sao Tome & Principe, Liberia and Sierra Leone have already been opened and the Missions in Somalia, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Chad and Mauritania may be operational by end of 2021. After opening of the 18 new Missions in Africa, India will have resident Missions in 47 out of 54 African countries.

4. The India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)-IV was expected to be held in September 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the run up of the Summit, 1st India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave was held in February 2020 in Lucknow. However, various other scheduled events since then were postponed due to the ongoing

COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry endeavours to hold the IAFS-IV at the earliest suitable opportunity.

5. Since the spread of COVID-19 pandemic world over, India has signed 5 Air Bubble Agreements with African countries (Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria) to ease out travel between India and these countries, and has evacuated stranded Indian nationals from various African countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Eswatini, Zambia, Botswana, etc.) and vice versa. During the COVID-19 pandemic, around 150 tonnes of medical aid worth US\$ 5.3 million (Rs. 40 crore) has been delivered by India to the continent of Africa, in the form of supplies of HCQ tablets and 16 other essential life-saving drugs [worth US \$ 0.16 million (Rs. 1.22 crore) each to 32 African countries] on grant basis. India has maintained high level contacts at political level also with various African countries to express our solidarity with them.

6. The Ministry, with the budgetary allocation of Rs. 300 crore for the financial year 2021-22 provisioned under the Head “Aid to African Countries”, would continue to focus on catering to the setting-up of Institutes; running various Scholarships/Training programmes including under IAFS-III; ICCR Scholarships; providing Food Aid, Cash grants, Medical aid including supplying of equipment; Books; Vehicles; organising Events/Seminars/ Studies/Visits, etc. in order to further strengthen our friendly relations with various African countries. The Ministry would vigorously follow up and review the projects announced during IAFS-I, IAFS-II and IAFS-III which are presently at various stages of setting up to have these implemented within the shortest possible time. In order to augment our development partnership with the friendly African countries, India would continue to extend LoCs and Grants to various African countries as per their need basis within the parameters prescribed.

7. India is currently implementing a flagship project in tele-education (e-VidhyaBharti) and tele-medicine (e-ArogyaBharti) for Africa called e-VidyaBharati ArogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB Project). So far, 17 countries have signed the MOU to become partner countries. The enrolments for graduate and post-graduate programmes have commenced since February 2020. The actual expenditure under the project till date is Rs. 24.50 crore. Currently, we are implementing Phase II of the project. An amount of Rs. 20 crores are due for payment under this project. Under e-Vidya Bharati, so far 3570

scholarships have been approved during January 2020, July 2020 and January 2021 academic session. Under this project I-Learn Centres in each of the African country is proposed to be set-up. So far 4 I-learn centres have already been set-up. Each project costs Rs. 1 crore. Twenty more i-learn centres are to be established in the coming months.

8. The Ministry would like to emphasize that this high priority and importance accorded to Africa in our Foreign Policy is sought to be reflected in the development cooperation context. The Ministry will ensure effective utilisation of funds for expeditious implementation of our diverse ongoing projects in Africa and seek enhanced allocation under the budgetary Head “Aid to African countries” at Revised Estimates (RE) stage, if necessary; and/or on finalisation of the dates of the IAFS-IV. During the fiscal year 2020-21, we were able to spendmost of the funds allocated under the budgetary Head “Aid to African Countries” despite the COVID-19 induced lock down. Nevertheless, due to the ban on international travel out of India, many of our aid projects in Africa could not make optimal progress since our experts were not able to travel, etc. As and when the COVID-19 pandemic subsides and the situation becomes normal, we will move ahead on our grant projects with renewed focus.

9. The Ministry has taken a note of all the recommendations of the Hon’ble Committee and will seek to address them with utmost seriousness.

34. Expressing their discontent with the fiscal space (as evident from the budgetary outlays) accorded to Africa; the Committee had insisted that such a diverse and large region require proper engagement and commitment. In response to the concerns of the Committee, in its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has assured that Africa is receiving high priority in our foreign policy. The Committee are pleased to know that on the basis of 10 guiding principles outlined by the Prime Minister in 2018, has paved way for upscaling our ties with the African region. Furthermore, in order to expand our diplomatic footprints and outreach in African continent, India has already opened 15 new Missions in Africa and opening of three new Missions are in advanced stage. After opening of the 18 new Missions in Africa, India will have resident Missions in 47 out of 54 African countries. It is satisfying to note that despite Covid related disruptions, the Ministry has been able to utilize greater part of the budgetary allocation under the head ‘Aid to African Countries.’ While acknowledging the plethora of steps taken by the Ministry to forge better ties with Africa, the Committee are of

the firm opinion that the funds, efforts and priority is not in alignment with the potential. The Committee therefore urge the Ministry should make persistent effort to deepen our outreach and engagement with a region that has immense potential.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 28)
AUGMENT HUMAN RESOURCES IN MEA

35. The persistent under staffing of the Ministry of External Affairs have been a source of constant concern. During the course of oral evidence before the Committee, the Foreign Secretary had also underlined the problem of human resource constraints in the Ministry. Vacancies in the Ministry of External Affairs are filled by a combination of direct recruitment through the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC, examinations conducted by SSC and promotion from feeder cadres as per extant Rules. The Committee had noted that there had been revamping of the organizational structure of MEA at the topmost level with an objective to streamline the decision making process. The gap between the sanctioned strength and actual strength had created anomalies not only in promotion but also in meeting the requirements of the Ministry. The Committee had observed that the Ministry has taken a series of affirmative action such as placing indent with Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Staff Selection Commission (SSC); reinforcing technical capacity by taking officers with domain expertise on deputation from Line Ministries and Departments of Governments and engaging Consultants with expertise in various fields.

Taking a serious view of this matter, the Committee felt that the justifications and actions taken by the Ministry to fill up the vacant posts are inadequate and unproductive. The Committee had urged the Government at the highest levels to consider the human resource requirements of MEA favourably and also direct Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to fill up the enhanced number of direct recruitments on priority basis. The Committee had also recommended that the Ministry should continue to create cadre/indent expertise from other Ministries, academia, think tanks and the private sector, as needed to supplement its human resource with relevant domain expertise.

36. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, stated that it takes regular and concerted action to ensure adequate human resources in order to meet its functional requirements. Regular indents are placed with SSC, UPSC and DoPT to fill vacancies across various Cadres under the control of the Ministry. In addition to filling vacancies by a combination of direct recruitment, departmental

promotion and Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCE) in line with extant Rules, the Ministry also induct officers from various Departments and Ministries of Government of India on deputation to perform specialized roles and fulfill specific functional and technical requirements.

24 IFS officers of the batch of 2020 (CSE-2019) have joined the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in January, 2021 and are completing their Phase-I in mid-June 2021. Ministry has placed an indent of 73 for the years 2021 & 2022 with DoPT and UPSC.

Further, more than 100 ASOs from CGLE 2017 had already joined the Ministry and 89 ASOs from CGLE 2018 have also started joining the Ministry. Requisite indents for ASOs for 2019 & 2020 have already been placed with SSC for which the recruitment process is still underway and is expected to be completed shortly. Indents for the posts of Stenographers 'C' & 'D' grades have also been placed with SSC and action on this front is being followed up regularly. SSC is also in the process of completing the recruitment process for more than 150 MTSs for the Ministry.

There are more than 200 LDCE vacancies of SO and PS for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 which remain unfilled as the result for LDCE 2015 has been declared in April 2021 and from years 2016 to 2019 have not been held by UPSC due to an ongoing court case. Recently, the result of LDCE 2015 has been declared by UPSC in April 2021 and it is hoped that the process for conducting LDCE for 2016 onward will soon be initiated by UPSC. Ministry is in consultation with DoPT and UPSC to find ways to fill these vacancies at the earliest.

The process for filling vacant positions in the Legal & Treatise Cadre of the Ministry is also underway by the UPSC and is expected to be completed soon.

The Ministry also engages Consultants, including retired Government officials as well as experts hired from the open market *via* a transparent and competitive recruitment process, with expertise in varied fields including project management, international law, consular services, arbitration, disarmament etc.

37. While observing the continuous problem of under-staffing in the Ministry of External Affairs the Committee has urged that the Ministry should fill the vacant posts through direct recruitment, promotion, deputation and induction of expertise from relevant fields. In its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has informed about a plethora of steps being taken to expand its human resources through placing of indents with SSC, UPSC, direct recruitment, departmental promotion, Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCE),

deputation and engaging domain experts as Consultants. The Committee feel that adequate availability, regular up skilling and training are important for developing human capital and therefore, the Ministry should accordingly take measures to enhance it at the organizational level.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 29)

GENDER BALANCED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

38. The Committee were appalled to discern the marginal representation of women within the Ministry of External affairs. According to the data furnished by the Ministry, of the 3756 officers (Gazetted as well as non-Gazette posts) only 612 (16.29%) are women. Of these, there were only 22 women officers holding charge of Ambassadors/High Commissioners in various Missions/Posts abroad. On being enquired about the reason for such gender imbalance, the Ministry had stated that the requirement of officers is done by a competitive examination conducted by UPSC and there is no gender-based reservation indirect recruitment or in induction and promotion.

The Committee found that the Ministry's justification for the gender imbalance within the organization attributing it to skewed intake ratio presents a dismal picture of foreign policy being regarded largely as masculine domain. Emphasizing the imperative of a gender balance within MEA, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should ensure improvement in internal practices on occupational equality including careers progression, promotion, training and appointments to higher ranks. The Ministry should also undertake a thorough and comparative cross-service analysis of the reason behind the skewed gender intake ratio and apprised the Committee about the findings of the same.

39. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry stated that the recruitment of IFS officers is *via* a competitive examination conducted by UPSC. There is no gender based reservation in direct recruitment to IFS or in induction and promotion to IFS from the feeder grade of Grade I of IFS Branch B. However, the Service has been open to both men and women in equal measure since its inception and have good gender balance with more and more women officers entering the Service in recent years. Gender equality is more a common practice than an exception as far as the IFS is concerned. At present, nearly 25% of the Cadre strength of IFS is composed of women officers. Similarly, recruitment to General Cadre of IFS 'B', Stenographers' Cadre of IFS'B' and

other cadres in the Ministry is done *via* competitive examination conducted by UPSC/SSC and there is again non-gender based reservation in direct recruitment or in promotion.

40. In order to overcome the existing gender imbalance in the organizational structure of the Ministry of External Affairs, the Committee had recommended it to improve internal practices on occupational equality. The Ministry in its Action Taken Replies has merely reiterated its Replies furnished during the examination of DFG stage. The point of the Ministry regarding recruitment through competitive examination without any gender based reservation is well taken. In the instant recommendation, the Committee had advised the Ministry to take gender sensitive measures within its organization. Further, the Ministry was also asked to undertake a comparative cross-service analysis of the reasons behind the skewed gender intake ratio. The Action Taken Replies on this aspect of the Committee's recommendation have not been furnished. The Committee once again recommend that specific efforts should be made to reduce the gender gap within the organization in the longer run. The Ministry should also conduct a cross-Service study of gender intake ratio and inform the Committee about the findings of the same at the final action taken stage.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 31)

WELFARE OF INDIAN DIASPORA

41. The Committee were aware that the Indian Diaspora has an impact on Indian foreign policy and they play a constructive role in facilitating India's developmental agenda and soft power projection. There are institutionalized mechanisms for regular engagement with the Indian Diaspora. Various schemes and programmes such as Know India Programme (KIP), Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra, Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY), Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (Rishta Portal) etc are being executed for the welfare of Indian Diaspora. While comparing the budgetary allocation to various schemes and programmes that were being implemented for welfare of Indian Diaspora by erstwhile MOIA and by MEA now, the Committee had observed a set pattern of arbitrary and constant allocation of funds. The Committee were also discerned that India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI), Study India Programme (SIP), Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), Tracing the Roots Scheme were closed during 2014 to 2018, without citing any valid justification. Schemes and programmes are effective only when those reach the target audience. The Ministry has submitted that IT is making efforts to spread awareness

about the various schemes and programmes through its website and Missions, social media platforms, State outreach programmes and recently launched Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA). In the considered view of the Committee, the objectives behind the merger of erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with MEA gets compromised, if adequate attention and fiscal space is not provided to the Diasporic community. The Committee, therefore, reiterated their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should constitute a working group to assess all schemes and programmes for welfare of overseas Indians and apprise them about its outcome within six months. The Committee had also desired that the Ministry should proactively engage with the State Governments to deepen the impact of information and awareness campaigns related to various schemes and programmes for engaging Indian Diaspora.

42. The Ministry, in its Action Taken Reply, stated that it is highly sensitive to the needs of the Indian Diaspora and has been giving adequate attention to them. The policy of the Government of India towards Diaspora is of making the engagement deeper, continuous and comprehensive. In pursuance of its policy, the Ministry has been consistently evaluating and examining its initiatives and programmes for the welfare of the Indian community abroad. Therefore, on merger of MOIA with MEA, the Ministry, under the guidance of EAM, had re-examined all the initiatives which had been undertaken by erstwhile MOIA and has strengthened the once which have had encouraging response from the Diaspora. It has also shelved a few schemes because of either duplication of work or for poor response and some new initiatives have been introduced. This has been done to bring more efficiency and effectiveness in the system and for better engagement with the diaspora. The changes brought about such as introduction of technology, comprehensive partnership with various State Governments, wider outreach, etc are not arbitrary but well thought out initiatives.

It is reiterated that the endeavour of the Ministry is to improve the existing schemes and to roll out new initiatives using modern technological tools which are low cost but highly effective in greater engagement with persons dispersed across the Globe. The increased use of cost effective technologies and enhanced outreach and interaction with the diaspora have been found very useful during the last over one year of the pandemic when there has been largely virtual interaction. The Ministry has been able to rise to the occasion during the pandemic by assisting millions of Indians abroad through Vande Bharat Mission and also in extending help to the members of the community by providing food, shelter and medicines from ICWF. This is the best example of the Ministry being on the right path in making changes to its strategies on evaluating its programmes for the welfare of the Indian community on the real time basis and has been able to rise to the occasion at

the critical time of need. Further, Ministry has been able to engage with various State Governments in different schemes for the Diaspora and will work pro-actively to enhance this engagement.

43. For comprehensive assessment of the various measures/schemes undertaken for the welfare of the Indian Diaspora, the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should constitute a working group and also play a pro-active role in conjunction with various state governments for wider dissemination of awareness about the ongoing schemes. The Ministry has informed that in consonance with its policy of deeper, continuous and comprehensive engagement it has been consistently evaluating and examining initiatives and programmes for the welfare of the Indian community abroad. The Committee applaud the effort of the Ministry to use cost effective technologies and enhanced outreach and interaction with the Diaspora during the ongoing pandemic. In the firm opinion of the Committee, following the merger of the erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MoIA) with MEA, the Ministry should have conducted a systematic study of the various schemes and programmes for welfare of Indian Diaspora and documented the same. In the absence of such a detailed study, the Committee reiterate its earlier recommendation to constitute a working group to make a comparative analysis of the objectives, working and challenges of various programmes/initiatives/schemes for welfare of Indian Diaspora. The Ministry should keep the Committee informed about the progress made in this regard.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 35 & 36)

INDIAN COUNCIL OF CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR)

44. As the principal organ for soft and cultural diplomacy of the Government of India, ICCR's activities are spread across the globe ranging from providing scholarships, organizing exhibitions, to performing and visual arts programmes. The Committee had noted that Rs 300 crore has been provisioned for ICCR for BE 2021-22 (as compared to Rs. 290 cr. in BE 2020-21). The Ministry had informed that the enhanced allocation has been made for scholarship, welfare activities, incoming Exhibitions, Distinguished Visitors Programmes, Academic Visitors Programmes, festivals abroad and Multimedia & Website. Based on the fact that ICCR activities have been affected in the wake of global Covid-19 lockdown, the budgetary allocation during RE 2020-21 was decreased. The Ministry clarified that no substantial efforts had been made by ICCR for generating additional resources to run its activities. Despite the limited allocation, the Committee found that it was not fully utilized. Keeping in view the broad spectrum of activities

undertaken by ICCR, the Committee had strongly felt the need for enhanced budgetary allocation of ICCR. The Ministry was encouraged to explore the possibility of Partnerships and PPP Models for ICCR where the partners also put in resources for executing projects. ICCR should establish a mechanism for ensuring that the pace of expenditure was improved for better requisition of budgetary demands in the next fiscal. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that the Government should further increase the budgetary allocation for ICCR at RE 2021-22 and BE 2021-22 stage justifying the increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and central role of ICCR in it.

45. In its Action Taken Reply to Recommendation No. 35, the Ministry of External Affairs has stated that it has taken note of Hon'ble Committee's recommendation and assures that to ensure pace of expenditure and effective utilization of allocation of Grant-in-Aid, ICCR has prepared Revised Plan of Action for Financial Year 2021-22 which is based on proposals/inputs received from more than 125 Missions/ Posts, in addition to programmes planned/to be executed at ICCR headquarters. ICCR would also be exploring avenues for generating additional fund in future by organizing event on PPP model and renting its infrastructural spaces. Ministry would also like to add that in line with the increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and ICCR's central role in it, BE 2021-22 has been provisioned higher at Rs 300 crore (as compared to Rs. 255 cr. in RE 2020-21).

46. ICCR Cultural Centres constitute a key tool of India's cultural outreach abroad through their wide range of cultural, academic and intellectual activities. The Ministry had informed that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris were expected to be operational by the end of this year. The Ministry had submitted that establishment of a new cultural centre is dependent on a variety of factors which included local formalities for opening of a new Cultural Centre, background information of Mission, information about the city where a Cultural Centre is proposed, details of Foreign Cultural Centre set up by other major countries, interest of general public about India in terms of art, culture, Bollywood, other Art forms and India-centric activities proposed for a Cultural Centre, etc. The Committee had recommended that the Ministry should ensure that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are operational by end of 2021 positively. The Ministry should also empanel artists from the widest possible variety of Indian languages/ dialects and cultures so that India's diversity is richly showcased abroad.

47. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that the renovation work of Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are underway. The Ministry acknowledges recommendation of Hon'ble Committee for empanelment of artists in widest possible way and is committed to represent India's rich diversity through its programmes/schemes.

48. Availability of sufficient funds is imperative for carrying out the varied and wide-ranging activities of ICCR. The Committee had, therefore, asked ICCR to seek additional funds and effectively utilize the amount allocated to it. In its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has stated that based on proposals/inputs received from more than 125 Missions/Posts as well as programme/activities planned at ICCR headquarters and regional offices, ICCR has prepared Revised Plan of Action for Financial Year 2021-22. The Committee are satisfied to note that in pursuance of their recommendation, ICCR would be exploring avenues for generating additional fund in future by organizing event on PPP model and renting its infrastructural spaces. Regarding the status of Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris, the Ministry has informed that renovation work of Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are underway. The Committee are dismayed to observe the tardy progress of the Indian Cultural Centres at Washington and Paris. The Committee recommend that the renovation work must be expedited and the Centres at Washington and Paris may be made operational by the end of the year.

RECOMMENDATION (SL. NO. 39)

GREATER EXCHANGE WITH ACADEMIA & THINK TANKS

49. The Policy Planning & Research Division of the Ministry of External Affairs is entrusted with four primary functions – organization of collaborative conferences and seminars with various think tanks; conduct of bilateral and multilateral policy planning dialogues with other Foreign Offices; preparation of research papers, policy briefs and situation reports pertaining to global developments and international affairs in general and India's foreign policy in particular; and preparation of the Annual Report of the Ministry. The Committee had observed that there are multiple mechanisms for engagement with academics, which *inter alia* includes funding of national/international seminars and thematic conferences through its autonomous bodies – ICWA and RIS, commissioning of research projects through think tanks, etc. The Ministry had also submitted that the research output of the academic activities is compiled into reports and

compendia. The Ministry was also utilizing external expertise in the form of subject specialist consultants for the purpose of research and policy planning. The Committee were surprised to note that there are no established research collaborations with other countries on issues pertaining to foreign policy.

The Committee were pleased to learn that the Policy Planning & Research Division along with its network of autonomous bodies (Indian Council of World Affairs and Research and Information Systems), think tanks and collaborations with academia had undertaken a continuous analysis of our principal foreign policy objectives as well as provides research-based perspectives to the Ministry on various regional and global developments. The Committee had, however, felt that the interface between policy and academia required greater synergy. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that the Policy Planning and Research Division should make persistent efforts to incorporate academic and policy analysis into the process of foreign policy formulation. There was also a need for wider dissemination of the publications of Reports, Briefs and compendia of the Ministry and its network of think tanks and autonomous bodies. The Committee had also desired that the Ministry should reach out to established think tanks in partner countries for a deeper exchange of ideas and policies.

50. The Ministry of External Affairs in its Action Taken Reply stated that Policy dialogues are an established diplomatic mechanism that facilitates exchange of perceptions and ideas. The purpose of these dialogues, within the broader bilateral relationship, is to focus on long-term trends and develop a deeper and more wide-based understanding on important bilateral, regional, and global issues. They usually complement and supplement other dialogue mechanisms such as Foreign Office Consultations and subject-specific dialogue mechanisms that have a more immediate and tactical focus.

Policy Planning Division has initiated and conducted Policy dialogues with several partners with robust policy units. They have been instituted with the assistance of Missions abroad which maintain contact with policy units in their countries of accreditation. Agendas for dialogues are decided based on consultations through diplomatic channels.

The themes usually include broad surveys of the international scene with an analysis of geo-political, geo-economic, and increasingly, geo-technical trends. Multilateral issues, particularly the evolution and impact of long-term trends, are invariably discussed. Bilateral and regional issues of interest to either partner, particularly those with strategic implications over a longer timeframe, are included on the agenda on the basis of mutual discussions.

The output of the talks is circulated with the relevant diplomatic stakeholders and informs the policy formulation process within the Ministry by bringing in longer-term, historical, and strategic perspectives.

Many of the dialogues have moved to virtual platforms following the pandemic. This has also facilitated more sustained and regular interaction between Policy units.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2018

The following table lists the PPDs held in the year 2018.

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Date and Year
1.	India-Indonesia Policy-Planning Dialogue	15.01.2018
2.	India-Japan Policy Planning Dialogue	18.07.2018
3.	India-Iran Policy Planning Dialogue	04.09.2018

These dialogues involved a productive exchange of views on themes such as foreign policy priorities of the respective countries, relations with the major powers of the world, issues of global governance, terrorism, connectivity in Asia, etc.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2019

The following table lists the PPDs held in the year 2019.

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Date and Year
1.	India-Russia Policy-Planning Dialogue	07.06.2019
2.	India-Indonesia Policy-Planning Dialogue	11.07.2019
3.	India-Germany Policy-Planning Dialogue	10.09.2019

Themes discussed included regional issues such as developments in the EU, India and its evolving neighbourhood, Multilateralism in times of Great Power Competition, Indo-Pacific, Transatlantic relations, US-China, China-Russia, crisis hotspots, ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, BRI and indebtedness of recipient nations, to name a few.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2020-21

The following table lists the PPDs held in 2020-21:

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Session I	Session II
1.	India-Vietnam	15/09/20	--
2.	India-Germany	29/09/20	--
3.	India-EU	19/10/20	28/01/21
4.	India-Israel	21/10/20	22/12/20
5.	India-Turkey	22/10/20	--
6.	India-Australia	23/10/20	04/02/21
7.	India-Denmark	10/11/20	--
8.	India-BRICS	10/12/20	--
9.	India-UK	17/12/20	--
10.	India-Poland	28/01/21	24/03/21
11.	India-Russia	16/02/21	--

Relations with US, China, Europe, Middle East and Indo-Pacific, geo-technological and geo-energy trends, multilateral cooperation and international architecture, global multilateral trends - counter-terrorism, climate change, health, migration and demographics, UNSC- India's Priorities, perspectives on the post COVID-19 world order, Conflicts- emerging trends and fault lines, future of globalization, emerging economic and trade issues including supply chain resilience, big tech, great powers and their relations, etc., were discussed during these dialogues.

Policy Planning Division has been funding various research projects, with a view to fulfil its mandate of encouraging research in the foreign policy domain. Research projects are regularly commissioned in Think Tanks and academic institutions. Officers in the Division maintain regular contact with academics and researchers working on areas of interest to the Ministry.

The Ministry supports Track 1.5 Dialogues with the participation of prominent think-tanks. Regular interactions of academics with senior officials are facilitated by this Division. The four flagship annual conferences - Raisina Dialogue, Global Technology Summit, Asian Economic Dialogue, and Indian Ocean Conference - are supported by the Ministry in collaboration with prominent think-tanks to facilitate greater interaction of academia with the policy-making community.

The following is the list of Conferences/Track 1.5 Dialogues and Other Conferences supported by this Division in FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21:

S.No.	Conference/Track 1.5 Dialogue	Partner Institute
Flagship Conferences		
1.	Raisina Dialogue	Observer Research Foundation
2.	Global Technology Summit	Carnegie India
3.	Asia Economic Dialogue	Pune International Centre
4.	Indian Ocean Conference	India Foundation
Track 1.5 Dialogues		
5.	India-Republic of Korea	Ananta Aspen Centre
6.	India-Japan Forum	
7.	Indo-US Forum	
8.	India-Japan	Delhi Policy Group
9.	India-Canada	Gateway House
Track 2 Dialogues		
10.	India-Myanmar Conference	India Foundation
11.	India-Bangladesh Conference	Jadavpur Association of International Relations (JAIR)
12.	West Asia Conference	ManoharParrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)
13.	Kolkata-Dhaka Dialogue	HP Ghosh Research Centre, Jadavpur University
Other Conferences		
14.	Dialogue on Strategic Security Threats	National Institute of Advanced Studies NIAS-CISAC

15.	Conference on India's Neighbourhood Policy	VidyaPrasarakMandal
16.	Conference on Indo-Pacific	Madurai Kamaraj University
17.	IAAPS Conference	Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies

The following table lists thematic research projects supported by the Division in FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21

S. No.	Financial Year	Institute	Project
1.	2019-20	Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Pakistan
		Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Bangladesh
		Association of Indian Diplomats	A quarterly journal of Foreign Policy
		Chennai Centre for China Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on China
		Centre for China Analysis and Strategy	Analytical and Research Studies on China
2.	2020-21	Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Pakistan
		Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Bangladesh
		Association of Indian Diplomats	A quarterly journal of Foreign Policy
		Chennai Centre for China Studies (CCCS)	Analytical and Research Studies on China

		Centre for China Analysis and Strategy	Analytical and Research Studies on China
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The Ministry has a system of circulating policy papers within the larger policy community both within the government and outside. Policy Planning Division has circulated papers on the following topics in the last 12 months:

1. COVID series non-papers
2. Think-Tank Survey in India
3. The Legal Implications of Brexit for India
4. Geo-political and Geo-economic Impact of Coronavirus and the Implications for India
5. Coronavirus Pandemic, Global Supply Chain input on India
6. Radical Islamic Terrorism in Africa
7. Mapping of Think Tank and Track 1.5 Linkages
8. Paper on “Emerging Contours of Health Diplomacy
9. Disruptive Trends in Economic Diplomacy

The Division regularly produces a Think-Tank compendium which is shared extensively with various stakeholders. The Compendium comprises the output of select Indian think-tanks dealing with diplomacy, international trade, and national security. Several relevant webinars/seminars and conferences organized by think-tanks are monitored by Policy Planning and Research Division and an attempt is made to identify broad trends in foreign policy thinking and analysis.

The Ministry ensures that the deliberations of conferences and Track 1.5 dialogues supported by it are widely disseminated to the academic community and public. It has also intensified its presence in social media and other channels to better communicate with stakeholders of foreign policy.

Ministry of External Affairs and its network of Missions and Posts abroad interacts extensively with the foreign policy research community at headquarters and abroad. Several formal and informal connections have developed that promote collaboration amongst think-tanks and research/ academic institutions. These have been mapped by the Policy Planning Division (**Annexure III** Paper on Think Tank Mapping).

The Policy Planning Division supports research collaborations/academic conferences organised by various universities and think-tanks on a case-to-case basis. Some of these collaborations through think-tanks and universities involve foreign partners as well. The annually organised India-South Korea and India-Japan Track 1.5 Dialogues are supported by the Ministry which has collaboration between Indian think-tanks and think-tanks from South Korea and Japan to cite a few examples.

RIS and ICWA have established research collaborations with think tanks, research institutes, and academic institutes of foreign countries, on issues pertaining to foreign policy. The details are available at **Annexure I and II**, respectively.

The Think Tank space in India is expanding rapidly. Think tanks are connectivity rich and the Indian think-tank space is organically linked and growing with a larger global public diplomacy space. The Policy Planning Division is in regular contact with many research organisations and Think Tanks based in New Delhi and all over India. These organisations have robust collaboration mechanisms with important opinion makers and stakeholders all over the world. To know more about these collaborations, the Division undertook an exercise to map Think Tanks and 1.5 linkages between India and 20 select countries. 19 India-based Think Tanks active in this space were identified. This exercise helped Ministry gain domain awareness and a database about this vital public diplomacy sphere. It also helped formulate a working database of the think-tank space in India and their linkages abroad while giving Ministry a sense of their evolution over time.

One of the mandates of Indian Missions and Posts across the world is to establish and maintain exchanges with Think Tanks and research institutions in the host countries. Indian Missions and Posts across the world regularly and systematically maintain contact with Think Tanks and academic/ research institutions in their countries of accreditation. They regularly meet with such Think Tanks, participate in events, and interact with Think Tank and academic personnel and researchers. The results of these interactions are reported to Ministry through its system of diplomatic reporting. Ministry, through its Missions and Posts, is therefore in regular contact with established Think Tanks in countries in the world. Further, a large number of these Think Tanks and institutions conduct visits to India. Meetings with Ministry officials are a regular feature of their programs. Ministry through participation of growing number Track 1.5 dialogues interacts frequently with a growing number of international Think Tanks.

The two organisations supported by the Ministry, ICWA and RIS have regular programs of interactions, academic and research collaborations with partner institutions in several countries and

academic bodies in other countries. The research resulting from such collaborations is published in various academic journals. As far as establishing research collaboration with national and international MoU partners is concerned, ICWA has 53 international and 18 National MoU partners. Efforts are underway to establish more research collaboration with national and international MoU partners.

51. With the objective of enhancing the research base and inclusion of varied perspectives into our foreign policy, the Policy Planning and Research Division was urged to deepen engagements with academia and think tanks both within and outside India. In its Action Taken Replies, the Ministry has enlisted a plethora of measures taken by the Policy Planning & Research Division along, Autonomous bodies like Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) , Research & Information System (RIS) and Missions/Posts abroad. Some of the notable efforts include conducting of Policy Dialogues, funding research, extensive interactions with think tanks, research organizations and academic Institutes; and supporting research collaborations/academic conferences organised by universities and think-tanks. As regards, the Committee's recommendation about wider dissemination of publications by the Ministry as well as its autonomous bodies (ICWA and RIS), the Ministry has submitted that the results emanating from interaction of its autonomous bodies like RIS and ICWA with partner institutions and academic bodies in other countries are published in various journals. Recognizing the significance of public diplomacy, the Committee are of the opinion that there is immense scope for engagement with academic institutions, think tanks and research organizations and the Ministry should widen and deepen such exchanges. The outcomes of such exchanges should be widely publicized for public information and incorporated in our foreign policy agenda.

RECOMMENDATION (SL.NO. 41)

FOREIGN POLICY DOCUMENT

52. According to the Ministry, the key principles shaping and guiding Indian foreign policy were to pursue pragmatic and outcome oriented engagements, build influence in key global forums, creation of mutually beneficial, people oriented regional frameworks for stability and prosperity, working out reformed multilateralism and globalization and strengthening bonds of Indian Diaspora with their homeland. The Ministry had also informed that there was no single overarching and formalized strategic document that could delineate a roadmap for India's foreign policy apparatus and that the underlying principles of our diplomatic strategy were long established and

enduring. The Ministry continually assessed and refined its diplomatic stance and policies in response to evolving global challenges. India's positions on relevant issues and its interests, in the context of these principles, have been articulated through various platforms. The Committee had observed that frequent consultations were held with concerned Ministries/Departments and other organizations of the Government while formulating specific foreign policy goals. The Committee had also noted that mechanism of Foreign Office consultations exists with all countries for consultations on foreign policy. The Committee had also noted that the Ministry is utilizing subject specialist consultants.

Over the years, the Committee had been encouraging the Ministry to articulate India's grand strategy encompassing short term, medium term and long term objectives of our foreign policy. The Committee were unimpressed by the Ministry's justification for not having a grand strategy. The Committee had, therefore, reiterated their earlier recommendation that the Ministry of External Affairs should take all necessary steps to spell out a coherent and balanced Grand Foreign Policy strategy for India on priority basis.

53. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry stated that India's foreign policy is articulated, in accordance with precedent, law and parliamentary rules in documents that are available in the public domain. Continuity and change have been one of the defining characteristics of India's foreign policy. The ends of our foreign policy are deeply intertwined with national developmental priorities. Correspondingly, the means and strategies devised to achieve those ends have been attuned such that there is maximum convergence between India's global diplomatic engagement and domestic development. In effect, India's foreign policy strategy is aimed to diversify and expand the country's political, economic, and geo-strategic options to ensure that India continues moving on an upward trajectory as a fast-growing inclusive economy, with a rising profile in global affairs.

A changing world requires a dynamic foreign policy. Over the decades, India has rapidly grown in economic, political, and military strength. Consequently, India's global footprint has expanded remarkably. There is greater integration of Indian economy with regional and global economies. Our commerce, trade and energy linkages have grown substantially. Connectivity – physical, digital, and financial – with our neighbouring partners and beyond is a fast-emerging reality. Our diaspora has grown in stature and profile and has expanded vertically and horizontally across the world. We have much stake in global governance regimes that shape our climate, technology, health, and other socio-economic policies.

While no single overarching policy document can capture all aspects of India's foreign policy, the principles of India's diplomatic strategy are long-established and enduring. The underlying principles and priorities have been disseminated by the Ministry through various channels of public communication.

The Annual Report of the Ministry contains a comprehensive statement of policies followed in the diplomatic sphere and their implementation. Replies to Parliamentary Questions, submissions to Parliamentary Committees and Ministerial statements also articulate foreign policy strategy in accordance with the rules of parliamentary democracy.

Public statements by the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs, the Minister of State in the Ministry, and senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs which are collated on the website of the Ministry are also utilized to articulate Indian diplomatic and foreign policy objectives. This is supplemented by other diplomatic documents which contain the public expression of foreign policy priorities. This is in accordance with international practice as followed by the foreign offices of major powers.

The Ministry would also like to draw attention of the Committee to its Recommendation no. 40 of the Seventh Report on action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Second Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2020-21 whereby the committee recommended that the Ministry conduct a comparative study of countries' grand strategy. In accordance with the recommendations of the Standing Committee, Indian Missions across the world were asked to provide information about the existence of grand foreign policy documents/strategy in their countries of accreditation and whether such documents, if they exist, are brought out by Foreign Offices.

The responses received are tabulated as **Annexure IV**.

The main findings of the survey are as follows :

- a. Out of the 171 countries surveyed, 86%, *i.e.*, 148 countries, do not have any single comprehensive strategy document. (Table A)
- b. countries and the EU publish comprehensive strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives. 17 of these documents are published by Foreign Offices. 6 of them are published by offices of Heads of Government (PMO equivalent).
- c. The 17 countries where the Foreign Office publishes strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives are:

1. Australia
2. Costa Rica
3. Czech Republic
4. Ecuador
5. Ireland
6. New Zealand
7. Poland
8. Peru
9. Russia
10. Spain
11. Switzerland
12. South Africa
13. Thailand
14. Turkey
15. Finland
16. Estonia
17. Slovenia

d. The EU document is published by European External Action Service.

e. The 6 countries where strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives are published by offices of Heads of Government are:

Azerbaijan: (Azerbaijan in the International Arena/Office of the President)

Belgium: (Comprehensive Approach-Strategy Note/Council of Ministers)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: (The Foreign Policy Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2023/Office of the President)

Nigeria: (National Security Strategy/Office of the President)

USA (National Security Strategic Guidance/ White House)

UK (Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy/ UK PMO)

Ministry's practise of articulation of foreign policy through Annual Reports, Parliament discussions, statements of high functionaries etc is therefore in line with international practice of the vast majority of foreign offices.

54. Over the years in their DFG Reports, the Committee have been making the recommendation that the Ministry should articulate a cogent grand foreign policy strategy as a guiding framework for our bilateral, regional and multilateral engagements. The Committee are relieved to note that in pursuance of its recommendation, the Ministry has conducted a comparative study of countries' grand strategy. Based on the data furnished by the Ministry 148 of the 171 countries surveyed do not have any single comprehensive strategy document. The Ministry has therefore asserted that its practise of articulation of foreign policy through Annual Reports, Parliament discussions, statements of high functionaries etc is therefore in line with international practice of the vast majority of foreign offices. The Committee are satisfied to note that unlike previous years, the Ministry had offered a substantiated justification not having a grand strategy. The Committee, however, are of the opinion that the current practice of articulation of India's foreign policy is fragmented and not well documented. The Ministry may accordingly come up with a Foreign Policy Document, if not a grand strategy, that clearly delineates the guiding framework for our foreign policy engagements.

CHAPTER II
OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT

(Recommendation No. 1)

Against a budgetary demand of Rs. 22,888.73 crore, the Ministry of External Affairs has been allocated Rs. 18,154.73 crore for BE 2021-22. The Committee observe that BE 2021-22 allocation is the highest ever allocation to the Ministry and is 4.66% more than BE 2020-21 and 21 % more than RE 2020-21 allocation. Notwithstanding these figures, the percentage of MEA's budget during 2021-22 as a percentage of GOI's budget is merely 0.52%. While the increased allocation to MEA in absolute term is a fine development, however it is continuously slipping down as a percentage of the GOI's total expenditure. The Ministry's affirmative response to the Committee's query on adequacy of allocated budget indicates that the former has accepted budgetary constraint as a given reality. Keeping in view the extent and magnitude of India's diplomatic outreach and foreign policy objectives, the Committee strongly feel that the allocation is incommensurate and inadequate. Budgetary resources will play a determining role in India's pursuit of permanent seat at United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that require adequate global presence and expansion of diplomatic outreach. Provisioning of adequate finances is critical to ensure that India's global footprint and diplomatic outreach is not circumscribed. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the allocation to the Ministry of External Affairs, mandated with managing India's external relations, should further be suitably and appropriately enhanced from what is being provisioned now. The Ministry of External Affairs should make a strong case for the same.

Reply of the Government.

Ministry would like to assure the Hon'ble Committee that it will continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance at all levels to emphasize the importance of providing adequate budgetary allocations to the Ministry and to ensure that there is no shortage of funds for the Ministry in the pursuit of its international commitments.

As submitted earlier and noted by the Committee, sustained engagement with the Ministry of Finance has resulted in increased allocation of Rs. 18,154.73 crore for BE 2021-22, the highest ever allocation to the Ministry, with an increase of 4.66% over BE 2020-21 and 21 % over RE 2020-21.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No. 2)

The gap between budgetary demand and actual allocation to the Ministry of External Affairs at both the BE as well as the RE level have been a recurrent feature of MEA's Demands for Grants. The Ministry has informed that the two pronged approach of making realistic and need based assessment coupled with closer consultative process with the Ministry of Finance has yielded the most favourable BE allocation ratio with RE 2020-21 (82% of demand) and BE 2021-22 (79.32% of demand) to the Ministry. Owing to the reduction in budgetary allocation during RE 2020-21, the Ministry had to undertake re-assessment of fund requirements for budget heads.

The Committee are happy to learn that the Ministry's RE and BE demand-allocation differential has improved, demonstrating realistic projections and constructive appreciation of Ministry's requirements by the Ministry of Finance. The Committee urge that the Ministry should continue to make unrelenting efforts in narrowing down the RE and BE demand-allocation differential through credible budgetary demands justified by efficient utilization of funds and objective assessment of anticipated expenditures.

Reply of the Government

Ministry highly values the observations & recommendations of the Committee and would like to assure the Hon'ble Committee that it will continue to make efforts to narrow the gap between demand and allocation at RE and BE stages. To this end, Ministry will further sharpen the existing and successful strategy of making realistic and need based assessment of budgetary requirement coupled with closer consultative process with the Ministry of Finance, while also ensuring robust utilization of funds in an efficient and timely manner.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 3)

Recognizing the significance of a focused budgetary planning process, the Committee have emphatically stressed upon the need to develop a well-defined and focused budgetary planning (including Zero-Based Budgeting). In its replies, the Ministry has informed that a rigorous mechanism of Quarterly Budget Management Meeting has been developed whereby detailed exercise for head-wise evaluation of projects under various Heads are carried out. Furthermore, the overarching principle of Zero-Based Budgeting guides the continuous evaluation and assessment of budgetary allocation as against fund utilization in Ministry's budget management. Appreciating the Ministry's efforts to incorporate the idea of Zero-Based Budgeting in the budgetary planning process, the Committee suggest that sustained endeavour should be made to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units to diminish the gap between budgetary demand and allocation.

The Committee note the lack of gender budgeting dimension in MEA's scheme of things. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to constitute a Gender Budget Cell in line with the 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. In Committee's view as a powerful instrument for achieving gender mainstreaming, the concept of Gender budgeting, must be integrated in the Ministry's policy formulation, implementation and review.

Reply of the Government

Ministry appreciates the Hon'ble Committee's recognition of its efforts in incorporating the principle of zero-based budgeting in the budgetary planning process. Ministry would like to reaffirm its focused efforts to make precise, objective and realistic demands by all Divisions/Spending Units to diminish the gap between budgetary demand and allocation.

As far as the aspect of Gender Budgeting is concerned, Ministry would like to apprise the Hon'ble Committee that as per the 2007 Guidelines of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry has constituted a Gender Budget Cell (with the latest Cell being reconstituted in September 2020), headed by an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary. In addition, Ministry administers a number of fully women-centric schemes (100 % provision towards women) and pro-women schemes (at least 30% provision towards women) under its different Aid Heads. Some instances of such schemes in the Current Financial Year are - construction of Girls Hostel Building for Nepal APF School in Kathmandu, Special Programme for Women Correspondents, India Palestine Centre for

Empowering Women in Palestine, Assistance for Livelihood Improvement, Women Empowerment and Awareness Programme, etc.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 5)

After the discontinuation of the Plan and Non-Plan classification since Financial Year 2017-18, budget classifications are being done along two verticals – Revenue and Capital heads and Scheme and Non-scheme Sections. The Committee observe that there has been an increase in allocations under both the Revenue and Capital sections during BE 2021-22 and decreased allocations during RE 2020-21. According to the Ministry, there are varied reasons for reduced allocations which *inter-alia* includes disruptions in supply chains, manpower and material availability due to COVID-19 lockdown, extant Cash Management Guidelines, etc. The Committee observe that adjustments have been made in allocation under various budget heads of MEA to comply with the overall RE and BE ceilings given by the Ministry of Finance. While acknowledging the grounds for reduced allocations during RE 2020-21, the Committee are of the firm opinion that the current allocations under both Capital and Revenue sections would be inadequate. The Committee, therefore, strongly urge that the Ministry should undertake a detailed and careful assessment of funds requirements for various heads in MEA budget and make a case for enhanced allocation at the RE stage to cover up for the slow pace of progress last year due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has noted the concerns of the Hon'ble Committee and would like to submit that our existing mechanism of holding Quarterly Budget Management Meetings with major Divisions and Spending Units, chaired by Foreign Secretary or Financial Advisor, where spending as well as demands are assessed in detail based on project-wise status of implementation, has assisted in the Ministry projecting realistic demands for a given financial year for the Revised Estimates and for the subsequent financial year for the Budget Estimates. Further, Ministry will focus on achieving anticipated implementation progress in all key result areas and ensuring robust expenditure in the first half of the financial year, which would assist in making a positive case with Ministry of Finance at the RE stage.

(Recommendation No 6)

The Committee note that an allocation of Rs. 7635.15 crore and Rs. 10,519.58 crore has been made at BE 2021-22 for Scheme and Non-Scheme Sections, respectively. In terms of distribution about 42% of MEA's budget is on Scheme side, which primarily constitutes Technical and Economic Cooperation with other countries. The Non-Scheme Section includes Passport Sewa Project, Missions/Post abroad, obligatory as well as voluntary contributions to UN and other International Organizations.

The Committee are aware that both the Scheme and Non-Scheme sections are vital in their own right. However, by virtue of catering to international aid and assistance programmes that directly impinge upon our international credentials; the Committee are of the considered view that the Scheme section should be given requisite priority in budgetary allocations. The Committee are pleased to learn that there has been intensive monitoring and review of technical aid and assistance programmes in the past year, including at the level of External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary. These institutionalized reviews have led to identification of several new initiatives and projects. While maintaining a fine balance between our aid and non-aid outlays, the Committee are hopeful that the Scheme section will be kept unaffected from budgetary cuts. The Committee would recommend that the Ministry should ensure that funds are available for smooth and efficient implementation of our international projects without any cost and time over-runs. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should prepare a detailed timeline for initiation and completion of the newly identified projects and initiatives.

Reply of the Government

Ministry would like to reaffirm its focused efforts to ensure adequacy of funds for its international projects and robust utilization of allocated funds in an efficient and timely manner. Ministry would like to also reassure Hon'ble Committee that it will continue to engage with Ministry of Finance to keep them informed of funds required to meet our international commitments and to emphasize the importance of providing adequate budgetary allocations to the Ministry. Further, Ministry would like to assure the Hon'ble Committee that it will continue its endeavour to complete projects within the timelines envisaged while also addressing the inherent

political, security, geological and other challenges faced by the Ministry in implementing projects abroad.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No. 7)

Upon careful scrutiny of the budget documents and replies furnished by the Ministry, the Committee observe a smooth and balanced pace of expenditure during each quarter of the Financial Year 2020-21. The cumulative expenditure in the first three quarters have been 21%, 39% and 62% which is in consonance with the Cash Management Guidelines of Ministry of Finance. The Committee note that in order to ensure optimum utilization of budgetary resources, expenditure is closely and regularly monitored through quarterly review meetings. It is satisfying to note that the mechanism has resulted in effective budgetary utilization to the tune of 98% over past five years.

While acknowledging the prudent and optimum utilization pattern of MEA for BE 2020-21, the Committee would urge that the Ministry should continue its focused approach towards sharper monitoring and expenditure management through its review meetings. Such perfect budgetary utilization would certainly make a compelling case for enhanced budgetary allocation to MEA during RE 2021-22 as well as BE 2022-23.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry acknowledges recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee on optimization of budgetary utilisation, and Ministry would endeavour to reinforce its sustained and focused approach towards sharper monitoring and expenditure management through its review meetings at the highest levels. Ministry will continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance for adequate budgetary allocation at the RE 2021-22 as well as BE 2022-23, justified by efficient utilization of funds and objective assessment of anticipated expenditures, in line with the Hon'ble Committee's recommendation.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 8)

The Committee note that the budgetary allocation under the head ‘Embassies and Missions’ has been enhanced from Rs. 2994.06 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 3240.07 crore (BE 2021-22). As per the Ministry, the increased allocation is for opening of new Missions/Posts to expand our diplomatic outreach. In Committee’s view Missions and Posts constitute the vital interface not only between India and the respective country in which they are located but also serves as its connect with Indian diaspora. The Committee also understand that resident Indian Missions are opened on the basis of potential for deepening strategic cooperation, strong potential for bilateral trade and investment, strong Diaspora presence, bolster political outreach and for signaling India’s commitment to stepping up of diplomatic engagement with important countries/regions. The upward budgetary allocation under the head ‘Embassies and Missions’ is a satisfying development. However, the Committee find that like the overall trend in MEA’s Demands for Grants, there has been a mismatch between the budgetary projection and actual allocation under this head. The Committee also note the good pace of expenditure and budgetary utilization under this sub head during the past three years. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should actively seek to redress the sub- optimal allocation under this head with the Ministry of Finance at all levels. The prudent expenditure pattern displayed by the Ministry should be cited as a valid ground for suitable improvement in allocation at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

Ministry would like to assure the Hon’ble Committee that it will continue to engage with the Ministry of Finance to redress the optimal allocation under the budgetary allocation under the head “Embassies and Missions”. As pointed out, our increasing diplomatic footprint coupled with robust utilization of budgetary allocation under this head has been cited and will continue to be cited as grounds for more budgetary allocation under this Head.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 12)

The issuance of passports in a timely, seamless and hassle free manner is the most citizen-centric service provided by the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee are also aware

that there are 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPsK) functioning under the supervision of the 36 Passport Offices in the country to handle this important work. The Passport Seva Programme (PSP) has been extended to the Missions/Posts abroad in order to provide better and smoother service to Indian diaspora living abroad. So far, 153 Missions/Posts have been integrated into Passport Seva Project and integration of 26 other Missions/Posts is underway. It is seen that MEA maintains a centralized database of passports – Passport Related Information Data Exchange (PRIDE). It has established a robust grievance redressal mechanism with a multi-lingual call centre operating in 17 languages on a 24x7 basis. Additionally, a Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism has also been set up in all Passport Offices to attend and redress any complaint within a time-frame. The Ministry has further informed that in the States/UTs where mPassport Police app has been launched, the time of average Police Verification Report (PVR) has been reduced to 18 days.

The Committee are pleased to learn about a plethora of measures taken by the Ministry to make qualitative and quantitative improvements in passport services in recent times. The vast expanse of our passport office network is laudable. The Committee, however, urge the Ministry to ensure that there is a PSK/POPKs in every parliamentary constituency. While appreciating the progress made in integration of Passport Seva Projects (PSP) with Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee desire that the remaining Missions/Posts are integrated at the earliest. The Ministry should also make consistent efforts to encourage States/UTs to launch the ‘mPolice App’ so that the time taken for submission of Police Verification Report is reduced to the minimum.

Reply of the Government

As on 17 May 2021, 519 Passport Kendras, including 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs), are functioning in the country as an extended arm of 36 Passport Offices (POs). By opening of 93 PSK and 426 POPSKs, the Ministry has covered 489 Lok Sabha Constituencies where there is at least one Passport Kendra. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Posts are working together to ensure operationalization of a POPSK in the remaining 54 Lok Sabha Constituencies.

Ministry had advised 189 Missions/Posts to acquire the necessary IT equipment for integration into the PSP system. Out of these 189 Missions/Posts, 4 Missions/Posts are temporarily closed and 5 Missions/Posts do not issue passports. As on current date, 166 Missions/Posts have been successfully integrated into the Passport Seva Project. 7 Missions/Posts have procured the requisite IT

equipment and the integration process is currently in progress. Remaining 7 Missions/Posts are in process of acquiring the necessary IT equipment and Ministry is coordinating with them to expedite the process. Once the availability of the IT equipment is confirmed by the remaining 7 Missions/Posts to the Ministry, the integration process would be started remotely.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 13)

The Committee observe that the shortage of personnel is one of the key challenges faced by the Ministry in expansion of Passport Seva Project (PSP). Against the sanctioned strength of 2,741, the actual working strength of Central Passport Organization (CPO) is 1,789 (as on 01.02.2021). The difficulty in filling the vacant posts in CPO cadre is attributable to the extant Recruitment Rules, which allows direct recruitment only in the grades of Office Assistant, Junior Passport Assistant (JPA), Stenographer, Junior Translator and Assistant Superintendent. MEA has been indenting Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for recruitment in these grades as per available vacancies. Against an indent of 310 posts that was made in 2017, SSC has recommended only 118 persons till date. As an interim measure the Ministry has engaged 347 Data Entry Operators to ease the pressure created due to shortage of staff. During examination of Demands for Grants for the past few years, the Ministry had informed that a proposal for physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to Ministry of Finance in November 2019. The Committee would desire to be apprised about the progress made in that regard. The Committee also recommend that the issue of human resource shortage must be taken up with Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) at the highest level and a lasting solution be worked out.

Reply of the Government

The sanctioned strength of Central Passport Organisation is 2741 and the actual working strength of the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) Cadre is 1783, as on 1 May, 2021. In addition, 21 posts (including 15 Technical and 6 supporting staff) were created by the Union Cabinet decision in 2007 to man the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Passport Seva Project. Recently, dossiers for 31 Junior Translators from Staff Selection Commission have been received and appointment letters issued to the candidates, out of which 5 have joined. Dossiers for 6

Stenographers (Grade “D”) and 24 Office Assistant (MTS) grade are awaited from the Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The break-up of the vacancies is as under:

Sl. No.	Group 'A'		Group 'B' Gazetted		Group 'B' and Group 'C' non Gazetted	
	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength	Sanctioned strength	Working strength	Sanctioned strength	Working strength
Total	226	192	565	362	1950	1229
Vacancy	34		203		721	

Group 'A' posts: Eligible Officers from feeder post are not available, hence needed to fill up vacancies on deputation, in consultation with the UPSC.

Group 'B' (Gazetted) posts: No one is eligible from feeder grade, hence vacant.

Group 'B' (non-gazetted) and Group 'C' Posts: 199 vacancies have been indented for direct recruitment to Staff Selection Commission (SSC) for the vacancy years 2018, 2019 & 2020. SSC has also been requested to either conduct the Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) or allow Ministry to conduct the LDCE for 151 vacancies. The rest of the vacancies are due to following reasons:

- (i) Direct recruit vacancies for the year 2021 are yet to be indented to SSC when called for.
- (ii) The employees with requisite qualifying service in the feeder grade are not available to fill the promotion vacancies.
- (iii) Recently, 17 appointment letters were issued to the candidates against which they are yet to join

2. A proposal for the physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to the Ministry of Finance in November 2019. In March 2021, Ministry of Finance has been requested to accord priority to this matter and consider undertaking Physical Inspection & Staffing Study of Central Passport Organisation on an urgent basis.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 14)

The budgetary allocation under the sub-head 'South Asian University' has witnessed a downward trend from Rs. 325 crore in BE 2020-21 to Rs. 150 crore at RE 2020-21 and to Rs. 314 crore in BE 2021-22. The construction work of SAU is divided into 4 packages –Package-I was completed in January 2016; Package-II was completed in December, 2020, Package-III is scheduled to be completed by September, 2021 and package IV have not been initiated yet due to ongoing litigation on some land pockets. The Ministry has submitted that various encumbrances on allotted land and delay in grant of statutory approvals/permission by various local Government authorities has resulted in time over run in the South Asian University construction project. The Ministry has informed that due to frequent NGT ban on construction activities in NCR and labour migration due to COVID-19 pandemic, construction work was severely affected during the past one year. Regular Progress Review Committee (RRC) meetings are conducted with the agency at site to expedite the work. The Committee observe that the total contribution of India to SAU including its operational cost is about US\$ 225 million.

The Committee express deep concern over the persistent delay in completion of construction work of the permanent campus of South Asian university in the name of litigation in a small portion of land. In the considered opinion of the Committee, the tardy progress has visibly tarnished our capacity of leading regional initiatives. Highlighting the significance of timely implementation of projects, the Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the construction work of SAU should be completed as per schedule and no further time and cost overruns should be incurred. The Committee also desire that the academic credential of SAU should be maintained in terms of course curriculum, selection of students and faculty recruitment.

Reply of the Government

Ministry would like to update the Hon'ble Committee on the further progress of work in SAU construction project. Packages I & II of the construction of the South Asian University have been completed. The University is in the process of obtaining Occupancy Certificate for the completed buildings for shifting to the new campus. Package III is expected to be completed by December 2021. The work progress has slowed down due to COVID 19-related restrictions/ lockdown.

Package IV construction has not been initiated yet due to various encumbrances on allotted land/ongoing litigations on some land pockets.

DDA physically handed over only 93.68 acres of land to MEA in two instalments in 2010 and 2011 out of the proposed allocation of 100 acres for construction of the University at Maidan Garhi and the remaining 6.32 acres land, which was under litigation at the time, is yet to be allocated.

Nearly 50% of the allocated 93.68 acres of land was found to be under various kinds of encumbrances or subsequently came under litigation. The Ministry has brought down the land under litigation/other encumbrances through vigorous pursuit of court cases and liaison with the concerned agencies. However, 14.96 acres of land is still under litigation, which is not a single patch of land but in the form of scattered pockets (4.64, 3.63, 2.31, 2.30 and 2.08 acres) that prevents construction of the buildings that have footprint on any of these pockets in accordance with approved design.

In addition, Forest Department in January 2015 informed that there had been an ingress into forest land and geo-morphological ridge area and hence no construction could be done on the encumbered land. Supreme Court though granted permission for non-forest use of forest land subject to clearance being obtained under Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA) and compliance with conditions that are imposed for such diversion of land use. Delhi Government conveyed in March, 2019 that in order to obtain necessary clearance, it is mandatory for the user agency to arrange for handing over and mutation of 1.0789 hectares (2.67 acres) of non-forest land in favour of Department of Forests and Wildlife.

Out of the allocated land, DDA took back 4.29 acres of land for peripheral road-widening and only partially compensated by allocating 2.47 acres of Gram Sabha land to MEA. The University has recently informed us that the Department of Forest has started constructing a boundary wall on the said Gram Sabha land as the same has been declared ridge/forest land by the Special Task Force order 2012.

Thus, the inordinate delay in commencing Package IV of the SAU construction project is due to shortfall of 28.24 acres of land scattered in several pockets that has been either not yet allotted by DDA or is under litigation or encumbrance due to environmental issues.

All such building that have footprint on the encumbered land were clubbed in Package IV. Ministry has been pursuing the court cases to release the remaining land totalling 14.96 acres under litigation and following up with DDA to allot 1.0789 hectares (2.67 acres) of an alternative land to Forest Department, GNCTD to obtain final clearance from the Forest Department for use of the ridge land and also to provide the remaining 6.32 acres of land as committed initially. Ministry is

also actively pursuing with Forest Settlement Office to denotify the Gram Sabha land (2.47 acres) which has been declared as ridge/forest land to enable the Ministry to take possession of the said land.

As regards the academic credential of SAU in terms of course curriculum, it is submitted that selection of students is made through an entrance test followed by an interview (in case of Ph.D students). There is a periodic review of the curriculum. Faculty members are appointed by the Selection Committee and the President thereafter recommends the selected applicants to the Executive Council. All teachers are selected on the basis of merit, in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Regulations. The promotion of faculty members is linked to various academic parameters, which are comparable with those of other academic institutions.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 15)

The Committee note that an allocation of Rs. 250 crore has been provisioned for Nalanda University for BE 2020-21 as well as BE 2021-22. Regarding the progress in construction work of Nalanda University, the Ministry has submitted that despite a time overrun at the initial stage, the pace of progress has accelerated from 0.3% in May 2017 to over 80% in January 2021. COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant restrictions had also adversely impacted the Nalanda University construction project. The pace of construction, however, has picked up and the remaining works are expected to be completed in 2021-22. The University has also established a dedicated monitoring mechanism for timely completion of the works. The Committee are of the firm view that the construction work of Nalanda University campus should be completed in 2021-22 without any delay. The Ministry should also ensure that the academic standards and curriculum are in keeping with the international image of the University.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has taken note of Hon'ble Committee's recommendations and would like to submit that concerted efforts are being taken to accelerate the progress of construction for timely completion. By May 2021, a physical progress of approximately 83.5% of construction works has been achieved.

As per Section 8 (1) of the Nalanda University Act 2010, “*the Governing Board shall be responsible for all the policies and directions of the University and management of its affairs*”. The Ministry through its participation in the Governing Board works to ensure that academic standards and curriculum are in keeping with the international image of the University.

The Ministry is also coordinating with the Nalanda University for early completion of subordinate legislation (Statutes/Ordinances/Regulations) which will empower the University to fill functional gaps and strengthen its governance structures, including Statutes related to the establishment of new schools of study, composition, and powers of Academic Council etc.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 16)

The Committee are aware that development partnership constitute a central plank of our foreign policy, and has continuously expanded in scope and outreach. The budget head ‘Technical and Economic Cooperation’ covers expenditure related to India's aid and assistance programmes. Following the overall budget trend of MEA, allocation under this head has grown from Rs. 6617.17 (BE2020-21) to Rs.6754.40 (BE2021-22). The Committee note that budgetary demands under this head are prepared after undertaking a realistic assessment of needs and spending patterns, based on project implementation cycles, local conditions and physical progress to effectively implement the ongoing projects commitments as well as new off takes. The Committee observe that the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant restrictions have adversely affected the implementation of ongoing projects in different partner countries.

Over the years, the Committee have underscored the imperative of making the budgetary allocation under this head more predictable and consistent. The Committee are happy to learn that in pursuance of its recommendation, the budget head ‘Technical and Economic Cooperation’ has been suitably allocated. The Committee hope that with the gradual easing down of Covid restrictions, the various ongoing projects will gain momentum and more allocation might be required for swift implementation of ongoing projects in Financial Year 2021-22. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should seek additional finances, if required, from the Ministry of Finance, including supplementary grants or increased RE 2021-22 allocation so that lack of funds do not hinder developmental assistance.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted with a view to incorporate them during implementation of the ongoing development projects in partner countries. As rightly pointed by the Hon'ble Committee, Budgetary Outlay under the Head 'Technical and Economic Cooperation' has been enhanced from Rs. 6617.17 (BE2020-21) to Rs.6754.40 (BE 2021-22). Ministry will ensure that as and when Covid-related restrictions are eased, the earmarked budget would be utilized towards implementation of the ongoing projects, based on realistic assessment of their physical and financial progress. In case additional funds are required, the same shall be requisitioned at the RE stage.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 18)

Given the considerable importance of India's aid and assistance in South Asia and our pronounced policy of 'India's Neighbourhood First Policy', the Committee welcome the increase in allocation for Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar which covers a wide spectrum of sectors such as projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, strong cooperation in sectoral areas and broader people to people contacts. However, the response of the Ministry regarding the burgeoning Chinese presence in the neighbourhood, is generic and irrelevant. The Committee feel that the Ministry's oblivious attitude to the growing Chinese presence in our neighbourhood is short-sighted and unrealistic. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Ministry should take a well informed position in this regard and ensure that our aid projects in our neighbourhood are given utmost priority with adequate fund allocation and expeditious implementation aimed at strengthening our presence and influence in the neighbourhood.

Reply of the Government

Ministry would like to assure the Hon'ble Committee that it keeps a constant watch on all the developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it. The Government of India attaches high priority to our relationship with our neighbouring countries and considers its relations with its neighbours are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. The Government of India has a well articulated policy of 'Neighbourhood First' with a focus on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented,

regional frameworks for stability and prosperity. These engagements cover a wide canvas of subjects like projects on greater connectivity, improved infrastructure, stronger cooperation in sectoral areas (like education, culture, trade & investments, defence and security) and broader people-to-people contacts. Our close, civilizational ties with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar stand firmly on their own. Our development cooperation is tailored as per the priorities of our development partners and our focus is enhancing connectivity and deepening the economic linkages with our neighbours.

Ministry has noted the recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee of ensuring that our aid projects in the neighbourhood are given utmost priority with adequate fund allocation and expeditious implementation aimed at strengthening our presence and influence in the neighbourhood.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 19)

The Committee observe that the budgetary allocation under the minor head 'Aid to Bangladesh' for the year BE 2021-22 has been kept at Rs. 200 crore which was the same in BE 2020-21. However, at the RE 2020-21 stage, the allocation was reduced to Rs. 125 crore, based on actual pace of project implementation. The slow pace of implementation of projects under this head during the past three years is disconcerting. There are several key ongoing projects in Bangladesh such as Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, dredging of Kushiara and Gomti Rivers, construction of India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Humanitarian assistance and several High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in the area of education, health, water, culture, urban development disaster management and community welfare. Regarding the status of Akhaura Agartala Rail Link, the Ministry has submitted that the project has been delayed by multiple factors including short working period, COVID pandemic and weak financial position of the contractor appointed by the Government of Bangladesh. Till date, physical progress of 42.50% and financial progress of 38.70% has been achieved. The project is likely to be completed by the end of 2021. The Ministry has also informed that the India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline is likely to be completed by September, 2021.

The Committee express their strong disapproval of the utilization by the Ministry under this sub-head. In view of the tardy implementation of the various projects, the Committee would strongly recommend that the Ministry should take adequate measures to ensure full utilization of

budgetary allocation and timely completion of all ongoing projects in Bangladesh, particularly the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to engage with Government of Bangladesh has been taken on board. It may be pointed out that based on the progress of various proposals, the budget allocation under the "Aid to Bangladesh" head was enhanced from Rs 125 crores at RE 2020-21 to Rs 175 crores at the FE 2020-21 stage and was fully utilized.

As far as the implementation of projects in Bangladesh is concerned, Ministry would like to inform the Committee that despite the Covid constraints, progress on 5 HICDPs worth Rs 14 crores during FY 2020-21 has been achieved and project implementation has commenced. The Akhaura-Agartala rail link project on the Bangladeshi side is being executed by Bangladesh Railways with the financial assistance of the Government of India. Progress of the project has been delayed due to lockdown in Bangladesh in light of Covid-19 situation. Revised timeline for completion is December 2021 with present progress of work at 47.65%. Close supervision and periodic reviews are being undertaken to achieve full utilization of allocated funds for the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link Project and for its early completion.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No.20)

India has extensive development partnership with Bhutan and budgetary allocations are provisioned under both Revenue and Capital Heads. An allocation of Rs. 2124.20 crore has been provided under the head 'Aid to Bhutan' for BE 2021-22. Apart from the Hydroelectric projects, Government of India is implementing Project Tied Assistance and Small Development Projects in Bhutan and this allocation has been kept aligned with project implementation progress. The Committee are happy to learn that India and Bhutan are collaborating on joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan. The Committee also observe that in line with our special relations with Bhutan, India has ensured continuous supply of trade and essential items to Bhutan, despite COVID-19 related lockdowns. India's developmental partnership with Bhutan has been multifaceted and unique. The Committee are hopeful that the deepening engagement in traditional as well as non-traditional areas will grow with the inclusion of satellite development. The Committee desire that the Ministry should continue to prioritize our special relationship with

Bhutan by completion of all the ongoing projects in a time bound manner without any parking of funds.

Reply of the Government

The fund requirement for projects under 'Aid-to-Bhutan' budget head are projected after comprehensive discussion with Indian Mission in Thimphu and keeping in view our long-term commitments with Bhutan and as discussed in the annual plan talks. All GoI assisted Hydro-Electric Projects (HEPs) in Bhutan are being continuously reviewed and monitored by the respective Project Authorities comprising senior officials of GoI and the Royal Government of Bhutan. Every effort is made to release funds as and when requested by respective Project Authorities, considering the availability of balance funds with the Project so that parking of funds could be avoided.

Updated status of HEPs:

S. No.	Project/ Scheme	Approved Value	Scheduled date of completion	Current Status
1.	Mangdechhu (720 MW HEP)	INR 5012.63 Cr (as approved in 3 rd RCE in March 2019). Final Completion cost (at August 2019 PL) is under examination by the concerned Govt. Authorities.	Project has been commissioned. It was inaugurated in Aug 2019 by PMs of India and Bhutan.	Physical progress-100%; Fund released so far: INR 5012.63 Cr
2.	Punatsangchhu-I (1200 MW HEP)	RCE of INR 9375.58 Cr (Approved in July 2015)	June 2019	Physical progress-87.22% (as of Apr 2021); Fund released so far: INR 8045.38 Cr <i>*The project has been delayed due to geological surprises.</i>
3	Punatsangchhu-II (1020	RCE of INR 7290.62 Cr	2018-19	Physical progress-

	MW HEP)	(Approved in July 2016) 2nd RCE (at Jan 2020 PL) is under examination by the Ministry.		90.02% (as of Apr 2021); Fund released so far: INR 7235.463 Cr <i>*The project has been delayed due to geological surprises.</i>
4	Kholongchhu (600 MW HEP)	INR 3868.870 Cr (DPR completion cost)	Pre-construction activities in progress.	INR 190.1817 Cr has been released by MEA towards DGPC's equity till date.

Further, in line with India-Bhutan unique and special relations, Government of India has ensured continuous supply of trade and essential items to Bhutan, despite COVID-19 related lock-downs. Government of India also provided essential medicines and medical supplies- including Paracetamol, Hydroxychloroquine, PPEs, N95 masks, test kits and vaccines to the Royal Government of Bhutan.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 21)

The Committee observe that there has been an improvement in budgetary allocation under the head 'Aid to Nepal' from Rs. 800 crore (BE 2020-21) to Rs. 992.00 crore (BE 2021-22). The main reason for enhanced allocation as furnished by the Ministry is that some of the major ongoing development and infrastructure projects in Nepal are in final stages of completion. The Committee are pleased to note that India has gifted one million dose of 'Made in India' COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal on 21 January, 2021 for the immediate requirement of Nepal's healthcare and frontline workers. The Committee are optimistic that the Ministry will utilize the enhanced budgetary allocation for Nepal to complete the projects in their final stages of completion, without any timeand cost overruns.

Reply of the Government

As recommended by the Hon'ble Committee, Ministry will make concerted efforts to fully utilize the budgetary allocation of Rs. 992 crores under this head. The existence of robust oversight mechanism at various levels which monitor and review the progress of the GOI assisted and funded projects Nepal, including high-level mechanism at Ministerial level as well as working level mechanism at senior officials' level and also Joint Project Monitoring Committees held with Government of Nepal will ensure smooth and expeditious implementation of projects and achievement of targets within specified timelines.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 22)

The Committee note that the budgetary allocation under 'Aid to Afghanistan' has been reduced from Rs. 400 crore in BE 2020-21 to Rs. 350 crore during both RE 2020-21 and BE 2021-22. As per the Ministry, the reduction in BE and RE stage was due to unforeseen circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and resultant problems. The Foreign Secretary informed that about one thousand scholarships, training and fellowships were extended to Afghan students in the past year. India also extended grant assistance of 500,000 doses of COVID vaccine to Afghanistan. The Committee note that MoU for construction of the Lalander (Shahtoot) Dam has been signed between India and Afghanistan on 9 February, 2021. The Committee are pleased to note that despite the ongoing pandemic, 76% of BE (2020-21) for Afghanistan has been utilized so far. The Committee know that India has successfully completed various large and small projects in Afghanistan despite daunting logistical and security challenges. In view of our exemplary past record in developmental aid and assistance to Afghanistan, the Committee desire that the Ministry should continue making concerted efforts to fulfill all our commitments to Afghanistan, particularly in the evolving political situation.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry appreciates Hon'ble Committee's acknowledgement of its work in the field of developmental aid and assistance in Afghanistan. The Ministry would like to assure that it will continue making concerted efforts to fulfil all our commitments to Afghanistan, particularly in the evolving political situation.

(Recommendation No 23)

The Committee observe that there has been a substantial reduction in budgetary allocation for Sri Lanka during RE 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry has submitted that the restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 led to a complete halt in progress of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) as well as cancellation of training programmes/courses. The Committee are of the firm view that the reduced allocations for Sri Lanka should not affect our developmental projects in Sri Lanka. With the relaxation in Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions arising out of it, the Committee expect that the pace of implementation of projects, particularly HICDPs and housing, will be restored. The Ministry should re-assess its budgetary requirements on the basis of progress made in the ongoing projects and seek additional finances, if required, at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee with regard to 'Aid to Sri Lanka' is duly noted. While the Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the pace of implementation of our developmental projects in Sri Lanka, this Ministry would make utmost efforts to ensure that as the restrictions related to Covid-19 are lifted, the pace of implementation of these projects is accelerated.

As recommended, the Ministry would re-assess its budgetary requirements on the basis of the progress made in the ongoing projects and seek additional finances, if required, at the RE stage.

(Recommendation No 24)

Like in other countries, the Committee notice that there has been a slowdown in project implementation in Maldives during the last financial year. An allocation of Rs. 200 crore has been provisioned for BE 2021-22. This allocated amount is expected to be utilized for ongoing and proposed projects such as High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP), DPR for Gan Airport Project, Conservation of Friday Mosque, Police Academy in Addu, Construction of the Ministry of Defence Building, etc. The National College for Policing and Law Enforcement

(formerly known as National Police Academy), which was slated to be completed by May 2019, has been delayed due to multiple factors. The Committee note that 88% of the construction of National College for Policing and Law Enforcement has been completed. The Committee strongly recommend that the expected deadline of 2021 for completion of the Police Academy is strictly adhered to. The Ministry should also adhere to the blueprint of all ongoing and proposed projects so as to ensure that the allocated amount is utilized fully.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been well noted. There is a factual error in para 3.59 of the recommendation wherein the BE 2021-22 under the head "Aid to Maldives" has been mentioned as Rs 200 crore whereas it should be Rs 250 cr. The status update of ongoing projects is as below:

12 projects included under the HICDP scheme are at various stages of implementation. All of these projects are expected to be completed by the end of CFY 21-22.

Of the 18 cash-grant assistance projects, 14 projects have been completed. 11 of these have been inaugurated; Another 3 are planned to be inaugurated once lock down restrictions in Maldives are eased. The remaining 4 projects are likely to be completed by August-September 2021.

8 large infrastructure projects have been taken up for implementation under the USD 800 Line of Credit extended to the Maldives.

Contracts for 2 of these projects i.e. 34 Islands Water Supply and Sewerage Network and Addu Roads projects were awarded in February and March, 2021 respectively.

Tender documents are being finalized i.r.o. the Cricket Stadium, Gulhifalhu port and Hanimaadhoo Expansion projects.

Projects related to Gan International Airport Redevelopment, MIFCO Expansion and Cancer Hospital are at the DPR preparation/ approval stages. A team from AAI visited Maldives in April 2021 to conduct preliminary investigations to commence work on the Gan International Airport Redevelopment project.

ASI deputed a 6-member team to Maldives in March 2021 to continue work on the restoration of the Friday mosque in Male'. Tendering process for supply of men and material required for the project is being carried out.

National College for Police and Law Enforcement Studies – Work on the project has continued despite the lethal Covid 19 wave that hit Maldives at the end of April 2021. The current

physical progress is 93.5% and the entire project including finishing work is expected to be completed by July 2021.

Pace of project-implementation was negatively impacted during the months of April-May 2021, due to the sharp rise in Covid 19 cases in the Maldives which resulted in a lockdown being imposed by Govt of Maldives since the beginning of May. Another crippling factor has been the ban put in place by Maldives on entry of all categories of visa-holders, including work-visa holders, from South Asian countries beginning May 13, 2021.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 25)

The budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to Myanmar’ was Rs. 300 crore during Be 2020-21, which was increased to Rs. 350 crore (RE 2020-21) and Rs. 400 crore (BE 2021-22). The Committee have noted the Ministry’s assertion that an enhanced BE 2021-22 allocation would cater to ongoing projects including Kaladan Multimodal transit Transport project (KMTTP), supply and installation of Coastal Surveillance Radars, trilateral highways and so on. The Committee are aware that Myanmar is a vital component of our ‘Neighbourhood First’ and ‘Act East’ policies. Even with the political turmoil in Myanmar, the enhanced allocation is going to serve India’s interests.

The Committee are optimistic that the Ministry would be able to utilize the allocated amount for expeditious and timely implementation of ongoing bilateral connectivity and social infrastructure development projects, particularly the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport project during the financial year 2021-22.

Reply of the Government

The enhanced allocation of Rs 400.0 cr in BE 2021-22 under ‘Aid to Myanmar’ would facilitate in completing the activities scheduled to be completed under various ongoing projects. The budget allocation at FE 2020-21 stage was enhanced to Rs 350.0 cr vis-à-vis BE 2020-21 of Rs 300.0 cr, and was fully utilized.

Kaladan is a strategic project linking the mainland with our North East states through Mizoram. A high level committee has been constituted by Ministry of Shipping for

operationalization of Sittwe port by 2022. The Ministry is in constant engagement with the concerned authorities in the Government of Myanmar through our Mission in Yangon to secure their support for smooth and expedited progress, of the stalled road construction due to the political turmoil, security concerns and Covid restrictions.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 26)

The budgetary allocation under ‘Aid to African countries’ caters to setting up of institutes, various scholarships/training programmes; ICCR scholarships; food aid, books, medical aid, cash grants etc. An allocation of Rs. 300 crore has been provisioned for BE 2021-22. India’s partnership with Africa is based on a consultative model of cooperation and sharing of development experiences and is focused on addressing the priorities and needs of African countries. The three India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS-I, II and III) in 2008, 2011 and 2015 have further reinforced development partnership with the country. The Committee note that the progress in various projects under India Africa Summits is reviewed regularly in consultation with concerned Ministries and relevant stakeholders. The Committee notice that so far 17 African countries have joined the e-Vidya Bharti and e-arogya Bharti Network project (e-VBAB) which was approved in 2015 to provide quality education to African students. The declining trend of allocation to African countries has been a source of great discontentment to the Committee. The Foreign Secretary asserted that Africa is a key foreign policy priority and our engagement has been intensifying, albeit the budgetary allocations speak otherwise. The Committee strongly recommend that the budgetary allocation for African countries should be in alignment with the importance, size and extent of the region. There is an urgent need to intensify our diplomatic presence in the region. The Ministry should also take all requisite steps, including seeking enhanced allocation and effective utilization of funds, for expeditious implementation of our diverse ongoing projects in Africa.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has sincerely noted the concerns and recommendations of the Hon’ble Committee. The Ministry would like to reassure the Hon’ble Committee that Africa is receiving very high priority by the Government.

2. India has maintained a vibrant relationship with African countries, which is evident with 34 outgoing visits since 2014 [President (13), Vice President (12) and Prime Minister (9)] and more than 100 incoming visits at ministerial level from African nations. The 10 guiding principles enunciated by honourable Prime Minister in Uganda in 2018, will continue to guide India-Africa relations and take our engagement to the next higher level. These guiding principles have been given ‘top priority’ in identifying key areas of cooperation with Africa including digital & IT, agriculture, trade & investment, development partnership especially designing people-centric projects, building local capacity and assisting African youth through training programmes, cooperation in security, terrorism & maritime issues, international cooperation in climate change, etc. The Ministry is in the process of taking these elements forward in a focused manner. This is reflected in the range of important events completed in previous years and/or planned between India and Africa in near future.

3. In order to expand our diplomatic footprints and outreach in African continent, Government of India has decided in 2018 to open 18 new Missions in African countries. Missions in Republic of Guinea, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Togo, Sao Tome & Principe, Liberia and Sierra Leone have already been opened and the Missions in Somalia, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Chad and Mauritania may be operational by end of 2021. After opening of the 18 new Missions in Africa, India will have resident Missions in 47 out of 54 African countries.

4. The India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)-IV was expected to be held in September 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the run up of the Summit, 1st India-Africa Defence Ministers’ Conclave was held in February 2020 in Lucknow. However, various other scheduled events since then were postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry endeavours to hold the IAFS-IV at the earliest suitable opportunity.

5. Since the spread of COVID-19 pandemic world over, India has signed 5 Air Bubble Agreements with African countries (Rwanda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria) to ease out travel between India and these countries, and has evacuated stranded Indian nationals from various African countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Eswatini, Zambia, Botswana, etc.) and vice versa. During the COVID-19 pandemic, around 150 tonnes of medical aid worth US\$ 5.3

million (Rs. 40 crore) has been delivered by India to the continent of Africa, in the form of supplies of HCQ tablets and 16 other essential life-saving drugs [worth US \$ 0.16 million (Rs. 1.22 crore) each to 32 African countries] on grant basis. India has maintained high level contacts at political level also with various African countries to express our solidarity with them.

6. The Ministry, with the budgetary allocation of Rs. 300 crore for the financial year 2021-22 provisioned under the Head “Aid to African Countries”, would continue to focus on catering to the setting-up of Institutes; running various Scholarships/Training programmes including under IAFS-III; ICCR Scholarships; providing Food Aid, Cash grants, Medical aid including supplying of equipment; Books; Vehicles; organising Events/Seminars/ Studies/Visits, etc. in order to further strengthen our friendly relations with various African countries. The Ministry would vigorously follow up and review the projects announced during IAFS-I, IAFS-II and IAFS-III which are presently at various stages of setting up to have these implemented within the shortest possible time. In order to augment our development partnership with the friendly African countries, India would continue to extend LoCs and Grants to various African countries as per their need basis within the parameters prescribed.

7. India is currently implementing a flagship project in tele-education (e-VidhyaBharti) and tele-medicine (e-ArogyaBharti) for Africa called e-VidyaBharati ArogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB Project). So far, 17 countries have signed the MOU to become partner countries. The enrolments for graduate and post-graduate programmes have commenced since February 2020. The actual expenditure under the project till date is Rs. 24.50 crore. Currently, we are implementing Phase II of the project. An amount of Rs. 20 crores are due for payment under this project. Under e-Vidya Bharati, so far 3570 scholarships have been approved during January 2020, July 2020 and January 2021 academic session. Under this project I-Learn Centres in each of the African country is proposed to be set-up. So far 4 I-learn centres have already been set-up. Each project costs Rs. 1 crore. Twenty more i-learn centres are to be established in the coming months.

8. The Ministry would like to emphasize that this high priority and importance accorded to Africa in our Foreign Policy is sought to be reflected in the development cooperation context. The Ministry will ensure effective utilisation of funds for expeditious implementation of our diverse ongoing projects in Africa and seek enhanced allocation under the budgetary Head “Aid to African

countries” at Revised Estimates (RE) stage, if necessary; and/or on finalisation of the dates of the IAFS-IV. During the fiscal year 2020-21, we were able to spendmost of the funds allocated under the budgetary Head “Aid to African Countries” despite the COVID-19 induced lock down. Nevertheless, due to the ban on international travel out of India, many of our aid projects in Africa could not make optimal progress since our experts were not able to travel, etc. As and when the COVID-19 pandemic subsides and the situation becomes normal, we will move ahead on our grant projects with renewed focus.

9. The Ministry has taken a note of all the recommendations of the Hon’ble Committee and will seek to address them with utmost seriousness.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 27)

The Committee note that under the sub-head ‘Chabahar Port’, an allocation of Rs 100 crore has been provided during BE 2021-22 which is same as BE 2020-21. However, nil allocation was provisioned during RE 2020-21. The justification offered by the Ministry for nil allocation at the RE stage was under utilization of allocated amount due to delay in equipment delivery because of COVID pandemic induced restrictions and the skepticism regarding US sanctions on the port equipment suppliers. The Committee are glad to note that India has proposed to include Chabahar in INSTC project, the first ever transport corridor project envisaged by India.

Keeping in view the strategic importance of Chabahar port as an alternative route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, the Committee strongly feel that the allocation under this head should be steady and predictable. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should base our foreign policy on realistic terms. In the interest of our international credibility on delivering connectivity projects, the Ministry should allocate ample finances and also pursue a pro-active policy to constructively engage the Iranian side to accelerate the construction project on the basis of agreed timelines.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has taken note of the recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee for compliance. An amount of Rs 40.0 crores has been released in May 2021 towards payment obligations of crane & material procurement for Chabahar port. Ministry is optimistic of full utilization of allocated budget for Chabahar port, based on robust Q1 expenditure in CFY and expectation of healthy progress in project. Any additional fund requirement under the head will be duly catered to at RE 2021-22 stage.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 28)

The persistent under staffing of the Ministry of External Affairs have been a source of constant concern. During the course of oral evidence before the Committee, the Foreign Secretary had also underlined the problem of human resource constraints in the Ministry. Vacancies in the Ministry of External Affairs are filled by a combination of direct recruitment through the Civil Services Examination conducted by UPSC, examinations conducted by SSC and promotion from feeder cadres as per extant Rules. The Committee note that there has been revamping of the organizational structure of MEA at the topmost level with an objective to streamline the decision making process. The gap between the sanctioned strength and actual strength has created anomalies not only in promotion but also in meeting the requirements of the Ministry. The Committee observe that the Ministry has taken a series of affirmative action such as placing indent with Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Staff Selection Commission (SSC); reinforcing technical capacity by taking officers with domain expertise on deputation from Line Ministries and Departments of Governments and engaging Consultants with expertise in various fields.

Taking a serious view of this matter, the Committee feel that the justifications and actions taken by the Ministry to fill up the vacant posts are inadequate and unproductive. The Committee urge the Government at the highest levels to consider the human resource requirements of MEA favourably and also direct Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and Union Public Service

Commission (UPSC) to fill up the enhanced number of direct recruitments on priority basis. The Committee would also recommend that the Ministry should continue to create cadre/ induct expertise from other Ministries, academia, think tanks and the private sector, as needed to supplement its human resource with relevant domain expertise.

Reply of the Government

Ministry takes regular and concerted action to ensure adequate human resources in order to meet its functional requirements. Regular indents are placed with SSC, UPSC and DoPT to fill vacancies across various Cadres under the control of the Ministry. In addition to filling vacancies by a combination of direct recruitment, departmental promotion and Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCE) in line with extant Rules, the Ministry also induct officers from various Departments and Ministries of Government of India on deputation to perform specialized roles and fulfill specific functional and technical requirements.

24 IFS officers of the batch of 2020 (CSE-2019) have joined the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in January, 2021 and are completing their Phase-I in mid-June 2021. Ministry has placed an indent of 73 for the years 2021 & 2022 with DoPT and UPSC.

Further, more than 100 ASOs from CGLE 2017 had already joined the Ministry and 89 ASOs from CGLE 2018 have also started joining the Ministry. Requisite indents for ASOs for 2019 & 2020 have already been placed with SSC for which the recruitment process is still underway and is expected to be completed shortly. Indents for the posts of Stenographers 'C' & 'D' grades have also been placed with SSC and action on this front is being followed up regularly. SSC is also in the process of completing the recruitment process for more than 150 MTSs for the Ministry.

There are more than 200 LDCE vacancies of SO and PS for the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019 which remain unfilled as the result for LDCE 2015 has been declared in April 2021 and from years 2016 to 2019 have not been held by UPSC due to an ongoing court case. Recently, the result of LDCE 2015 has been declared by UPSC in April 2021 and it is hoped that the process for conducting LDCE for 2016 onward will soon be initiated by UPSC. Ministry is in consultation with DoPT and UPSC to find ways to fill these vacancies at the earliest.

The process for filling vacant positions in the Legal & Treatise Cadre of the Ministry is also underway by the UPSC and is expected to be completed soon. The Ministry also engages Consultants, including retired Government officials as well as experts hired from the open market via a transparent and competitive recruitment process, with expertise in varied fields including project management, international law, consular services, arbitration, disarmament etc.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 29)

The Committee are appalled to discern the marginal representation of women within the Ministry of External affairs. According to the data furnished by the Ministry, of the 3756 officers (Gazetted as well as non-Gazetted posts) only 612 (16.29%) are women. Of these, there are only 22 women officers holding charge of Ambassadors/High Commissioners in various Missions/Posts abroad. On being enquired about the reason for such gender imbalance, the Ministry stated that the requirement of officers is done by a competitive examination conducted by UPSC and there is no gender-based reservation in direct recruitment or in induction and promotion.

The Committee find that the Ministry's justification for the gender imbalance within the organization attributing it to skewed intake ratio presents a dismal picture of foreign policy being regarded largely as masculine domain. Emphasizing the imperative of a gender balance within MEA, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should ensure improvement in internal practices on occupational equality including careers progression, promotion, training and appointments to higher ranks. The Ministry should also undertake a thorough and comparative cross-service analysis of the reason behind the skewed gender intake ratio and apprise the Committee about the findings of the same.

Reply of the Government

The recruitment of IFS officers is via a competitive examination conducted by UPSC. There is no gender based reservation in direct recruitment to IFS or in induction and promotion to IFS from the feeder grade of Grade I of IFS Branch B. However, the Service has been open to both men and women in equal measure since its inception and have good gender balance with more and more women officers entering the Service in recent years. Gender equality is more a common practice than an exception as far as the IFS is concerned. At present, nearly 25% of the Cadre

strength of IFS is composed of women officers. Similarly, recruitment to General Cadre of IFS 'B', Stenographers' Cadre of IFS'B' and other cadres in the Ministry is done via competitive examination conducted by UPSC/SSC and there is again non-gender based reservation in direct recruitment or in promotion.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 30)

The Committee observe that the budgetary allocation under the sub-head 'Training' was Rs. 25.95 crore during BE 2020-21, which was reduced to Rs. 16.77 crore during RE 2020-21. An outlay of Rs. 25.76 crore has been provisioned during BE 2021- 22. Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) is tasked with training of IFS Officers, Foreign Diplomats and members of Indian Civil Services in foreign policy and diplomatic skills through various training programmes and modules. There has been an increasing demand for training programmes, both for Indian civil servants and foreign diplomats. Like other heads, the utilization of budget under this sub head has manifested a declining trend due to COVID-19 lockdown during the current financial year 2020-21. The Ministry has informed that there are some proposals to introduce new training programmes during 2021-22 after the COVID-19 subsidies. The Committee also observe that a feedback mechanism regarding training module has been established. Recognizing the need for enriching human capital, the Committee feel that training should be given adequate fiscal space. The Committee desire that a continuous system of evaluation be established so that the inputs and feedback received from the trainees are suitably incorporated at regular intervals for value addition of the training programmes and accordingly the number of training programmes should also be enhanced with adequate budget allocation.

Reply of the Government

During current FY 2020-21, SSIFS has been allotted budget (B.E.) of Rs.25.95 crores. On the specific point raised by the Standing Committee on External Affairs, SSIFS inputs are as follows:

(a) New training programmes during 2021-22 in the post Covid-19 period include the Fellowship Programme on Environment and Climate Change for foreign diplomats, and continuation of new training programmes like Familiarisation Programme for Resident Foreign Diplomats and Special Training Programmes for Officers of States & Union Territories on Economic & Commercial Diplomacy.

(b) SSIFS is implementing a very elaborate feedback mechanism at two levels: (i) Every participant formally provides written feedback/evaluation of every session; and (ii) At the end of each course, feedback session is conducted by Dean with participation of Joint Secretary and Course Coordinators. The feedback received is considered carefully and factored-in to the extent possible for improving and upgrading the programmes in future.

(c) SSIFS has been provided with adequate 'fiscal space', i.e. sufficient funds, for conducting of all training programmes envisaged during 2021-22; and

(d) The training programmes have been consistently increasing both in scope of coverage and in numbers for both Indian officers and foreign diplomats. For example, during 2019 and 2020, a new Fellowship Programme on Disarmament and Security Affairs has been introduced in this important area. Similarly, the number of foreign training programmes have gone up from 9 in 2017-18 to 16 in 2018-19 and to 36 in 2019-20. In 2020-21, new courses were organised for resident foreign diplomats based in New Delhi. Similarly, in 2020-21, new courses were introduced for Indian officers from States and Union Territories on economic and commercial matters.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 31)

The Committee are aware that the Indian Diaspora has an impact on Indian foreign policy and they play a constructive role in facilitating India's developmental agenda and soft power projection. There are institutionalized mechanisms for regular engagement with the Indian Diaspora. Various schemes and programmes such as Know Inda Programme (KIP), Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC), Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra, Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY), Global Pravasi Rishta Portal

(Rishta Portal) etc are being executed for the welfare of Indian Diaspora. While comparing the budgetary allocation to various schemes and programmes that are being implemented for welfare of Indian Diaspora by erstwhile MOIA and by MEA now, the Committee observe a set pattern of arbitrary and constant allocation of funds. The Committee are also discerned that India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI), Study India Programme (SIP), Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), Tracing the Roots Scheme were closed during 2014 to 2018, without citing any valid justification. Schemes and programmes are effective only when those reach the target audience. The Ministry has submitted that IT is making efforts to spread awareness about the various schemes and programmes through its website and Missions, social media platforms, State outreach programmes and recently launched Global Pravasi Rishta Portal (RISHTA).

In the considered view of the Committee, the objectives behind the merger of erstwhile Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs with MEA gets compromised, if adequate attention and fiscal space is not provided to the Diasporic community. The Committee would, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry should constitute a working group to assess all schemes and programmes for welfare of overseas Indians and apprise them about its outcome within six months. The Committee also desire that the Ministry proactively engage with the State Governments to deepen the impact of information and awareness campaigns related to various schemes and programmes for engaging Indian Diaspora.

Reply of the Government

Ministry is highly sensitive to the needs of the Indian Diaspora and has been giving adequate attention to them. The policy of the Government of India towards Diaspora is of making the engagement deeper, continuous and comprehensive. In pursuance of its policy, the Ministry has been consistently evaluating and examining its initiatives and programmes for the welfare of the Indian community abroad. Therefore, on merger of MOIA with MEA, the Ministry, under the guidance of EAM, had re-examined all the initiatives which had been undertaken by erstwhile MOIA and has strengthened the once which have had encouraging response from the Diaspora. It has also shelved a few schemes because of either duplication of work or for poor response and some new initiatives have been introduced. This has been done to bring more efficiency and effectiveness in the system and for better engagement with the diaspora. The changes brought

about such as introduction of technology, comprehensive partnership with various State Governments, wider outreach, etc are not arbitrary but well thought out initiatives.

It is reiterated that the endeavour of the Ministry is to improve the existing schemes and to roll out new initiatives using modern technological tools which are low cost but highly effective in greater engagement with persons dispersed across the Globe. The increased use of cost effective technologies and enhanced outreach and interaction with the diaspora have been found very useful during the last over one year of the pandemic when there has been largely virtual interaction. The Ministry has been able to rise to the occasion during the pandemic by assisting millions of Indians abroad through Vande Bharat Mission and also in extending help to the members of the community by providing food, shelter and medicines from ICWF. This is the best example of the Ministry being on the right path in making changes to its strategies on evaluating its programmes for the welfare of the Indian community on the real time basis and has been able to rise to the occasion at the critical time of need. Further, Ministry has been able to engage with various State Governments in different schemes for the Diaspora and will work pro-actively to enhance this engagement.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 32)

The Committee have noted that several Indian nationals were stranded due to Covid-19 pandemic related global lockdowns and cancellation of International flights and are glad to recognize the fact that over 3.2 million Indians have been evacuated to return to India under the Vande Bharat Mission. An online platform (REPAT portal) has also been developed by the Ministry to monitor the developments. MEA has worked closely with the Ministry of Skill Development to map the skills of the returnees. Indian Missions/Posts abroad proactively helped the distressed/stranded Indian nationals through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). The Committee note that ICWF is a self sustaining fund outside Consolidated Fund of India with no budgetary support. The Foreign Secretary drew attention of the Committee towards the possibility of using the money earned through e visas under ICWF. Currently, the payment of electronic visa goes to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The Committee want to put it on record that the Ministry of External Affairs has played a commendable role in bringing back the Indian nationals during the Covid-19 pandemic. Through the Vande Bharat Mission, REPAT portal, usage of ICWF Funds and active involvement of Indian Missions/Posts, the Ministry has manifested exemplary sense of responsibility towards our Diaspora during such tough time. The Committee strongly endorse the Ministry's suggestion of

channelizing the money earned through electronic visa into the ICWF so that more finances are at the disposal of the Ministry to extend support to Indian Diaspora and desire that steps should be taken to achieve the same.

Reply of the Government

Ministry appreciates the Hon'ble Committee's recognition of its efforts in bringing back the Indian nationals during the Covid-19 pandemic.

With regard to the channelizing of money earned through electronic visa into the ICWF, Ministry would like to apprise the Hon'ble Committee that the matter has already been taken up with MHA for collection of ICWF Service Charge from eVISA applicants and its transfer to the respective Missions/Posts ICWF accounts.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 33)

The Committee are aware that the Know India Programme (KIP) is a flagship initiative of MEA to help familiarize Indian Diaspora youth, in the age group of 18-26 years, with developments and achievements made by the country and bringing them closer to the land of their ancestors. An allocation of Rs. 6 crore was made under this programme during BE 2020-21 which has been increased to Rs. 7 crore for BE 2021-22. The Ministry has informed that the enhanced allocation has been made due to addition of Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY). This Yojana was started by the Ministry in 2018-19 as a special edition for elderly diaspora from the seven Giritiya countries (Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Reunion Islands) in the age group of 45-65 years under the Know India Programme series to connect them to the spiritual and religious heritage of India. The Committee are happy to learn that based on inputs from relevant stakeholders, new elements such as Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY) has been added to KIP. Given the limited budgetary allocation, the Committee fail to understand the manner in which the expansion will be incorporated. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should seek more funds for Know India Programmes that have been received warmly by the Indian Diaspora at RE stage.

Reply of the Government

The Standing Committee has duly appreciated the incorporation of PTDY in KIP and in fact recommends additional allocation of fund in Budget. Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic situation, particularly the second wave in India, the programmes under KIP could not be initiated so far in the Current Financial Year. These programmes can only be undertaken once the conditions in the country become safe for travel. In case the situation turns around soon and additional funds are required after the utilization of the allocated amount in the Budget, the Ministry will seek additional allocations aligned with KIP objectives and recommendations of the Committee.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 34)

Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is a joint collaborative partnership between MEA and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) with the objective of enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate their overseas employment. The Committee observe that this Yojana has two components- technical top- up training, to be provided by MSDE and Pre-Departure Orientation and Training (PDOT) imparted by MEA. The Committee are astonished to note an MoU was signed between MEA and MSDE in 2016 to provide institutionalized training and PDOT to migrant workers under this scheme and Rs. 10 Cr. Was released to MSDE in March 2017 but the said fund is yet to be utilized and since then, the budgetary allocation for PKVY has been made till date. The performance review Report of PKVY is also awaited. The Ministry has informed that a new scheme is being considered by MSDE with new provisions of skill training under different value chain in due alignment with need for skilled manpower in different countries. This all shows that the Government is not genuinely serious towards the requirement of enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers. The Committee, therefore, desire that MEA should make sincere efforts in collaboration with MSDE and prepare a time-bound programme with set objectives to provide training to potential emigrant workers in specific sectors and job rules in line with international standards. The Committee also desire that sufficient fund should also be allocated for Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana at RE stage so that targets fixed in this regard are achieved and the

scheme does not suffer more. The Committee also desire that as on January 2021, PDOT is operational in 27 cities of 12 States (Delhi, UP, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar and Karnataka) The Ministry has informed that there are plans to open many more PDOT centres at major overseas Migration specific places in the country. The Committee desire that MEA should take all initiatives to meet the target of imparting training to 5 Lakh workers by 2022 through online or offline classroom training models for Pre-departure Orientation Training Programme.

Reply of the Government

1. Utilisation of funds under Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana: This Ministry has been informed by NSDC, the implementing partner of MSDE for PKVY, that between FY 2017-18 and FY 2020-21, under the Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) program, NSDC has received a total of Rs. 7.50 Crores from MSDE through NSDF, out of which Rs. 5.57 Crores have been utilised. Following is the FY – wise break-up of the funds received vs. utilised:

Particulars	Funds received from MSDE (In Rs Cr.)	Funds utilised by NSDC (In Rs Cr.)
FY 2017-18	3.00	0.89
FY 2018-19	-	2.00
FY 2019-20	0.50	0.52
FY 2020-21*	4.00	2.16
Total	7.50	5.57

**Provisional since balance sheet of NSDC for FY 2020-21 is still under process*

As of May 2021, PDOT has been imparted to 91,152 emigrants. PDOT centres were closed between 17th March - 15th November 2020 in view of the GoI Advisory to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. PDOT was re-initiated from 16th November 2020. Since then, slow return of potential emigrants for PDOT has been observed which has resulted in training being imparted to 1,957 candidates between November 2020 and 31st March 2021.

2. Update on PDOT centres

Based on MEA's recommendations for locations, there are 14 NSDC affiliated Training Partners that have been empanelled as PDOT centres at 12 locations, as of May 2021:

S.No	PDOT Centre Name	Location
1	Asmacs Skill Development Pvt. Ltd., Videsh Bhawan	Mumbai
2	Asmacs Skill Development Pvt. Ltd., Sakinaka	Mumbai
3	Don Bosco Technical Institute, Okhla	Delhi
4	Orion Edutech Pvt. Ltd, Mandir Marg	Delhi
5	Espoir Academy, Eram Technologies Pvt. Ltd.	Cochin
6	Mahendra Skills Training & Development Pvt. Ltd.	Lucknow
7	Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Model Career Centre (MCC)	Chennai
8	PMKK Gorakhpur (Learnet Institute of Skills)	Gorakhpur
9	Regional Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, Mohali	Chandigarh
10	Quivan Skill Empowerment Private Limited	Kolkata
11	ASMACS Skill Development Limited – BRMIT	Bhubaneswar
12	Learnet institute of Skills	Jalandhar
13	Datapro	Amritsar
14	Learnet Institute of Skills, Kowdiar	Thiruvananthapuram

Aim of PDOT is to enhance emigrant workers' soft skills vis-à-vis culture, language, tradition and local rules & regulations of the countries of destination as well as to sensitize them about benefits of safe and legal migration and various GOI programmes and schemes for their welfare and protection. Since January 2018, one-day PDOT program has been rolled out by the Ministry in a structured manner, starting with two centers each at Mumbai and New Delhi. Gradually, it has been expanded to 30 centers in 27 cities across the country.

Secretary (CPV & OIA) launched first ever online PDOT Programme on 7 April 2021, as an additional mechanism for the prospective overseas emigrants, who cannot attend the training programme in person. Emigrants have now both offline and online options for obtaining the Pre-Departure Orientation Training. We have noticed that since launching online PDOT, more women immigrants have participated for obtaining PDO Training.

Ministry is also in the process to open around 100 PDOT centres across the country so that maximum prospective overseas emigrant workers could get Pre-Departure Orientation Training. In

this regard, letters to all State Governments have been issued to identify the additional places where new PDOT centres could be established. As on 25 May 2021, **98324 emigrant workers** have been imparted PDO training through **30 PDOT Centers** (14 centres managed by NSDC and 16 centres by State Governments) details of centre-wise training imparted are as follows:-

S.No	Name of the PDOT Centre	Date of Opening	Centers	Total
1	Videsh Bhawan	10.01.2018	NSDC	26629
2	ASMACS, Mumbai	10.01.2018	NSDC	27204
3	Orion	10.01.2018	NSDC	11009
4	Don Bosco	10.01.2018	NSDC	14544
5	Espoir	22.11.2018	NSDC	4713
6	Mahendra	26.12.2018	NSDC	3097
7	Gorakhpur	23.09.2019	NSDC	1311
8	Mohali	23.09.2019	NSDC	528
9	Chennai	23.09.2019	NSDC	1165
10	Bhubneshwar	16.03.2021	NSDC	3
11	Kolkata	22.03.2021	NSDC	93
12	Amritsar	02.04.2021	NSDC	0
13	Jalandhar	25.03.2021	NSDC	0
14	Trivandrum	25.03.2021	NSDC	20
			Total	90316
1	Jaipur	25.05.2019	State Govt	1759
2	TomCom, Hyderabad	08.08.2019	State Govt	1063
3	Karimnagar	08.08.2019	State Govt	138
4	Nizamabad	08.08.2019	State Govt	380
5	Patna	29.07.2019	State Govt	563
6	Gaya	29.07.2019	State Govt	434
7	Muzaffarpur	29.07.2019	State Govt	466
8	Darbhanga	29.07.2019	State Govt	165
9	Sikar	08.08.2019	State Govt	1113
10	Vizag	07.01.2021	State Govt	1
11	Tamil Nadu	03.01.2020	State Govt	465
12	Vijaywada	24.09.2019	State Govt	897
13	Kadapa	24.09.2019	State Govt	391
14	Nagaur	27.11.2019	State Govt	127
15	Bengaluru	24.02.2020	State Govt	32
16	Kakinada	11.01.2021	State Govt	14
			Total	8008

	Total no. of Emigrants imparted PDOT as on date 26.05.2021	98324		
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India International Skill Centre (IISC) Pilot

In order to provide skills training in accordance with international standards to Indians aspiring to work overseas, the India International Skill Centre (IISC) program was conceptualized by MSDE and NSDC. An IISC pilot was launched across 14 training centres empanelled for the same, where 583 candidates were trained and 63 placed overseas. For the pilot, the candidates were provided skills training under MSDE's Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and pre-departure orientation training under MEA's Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and was successfully completed in 2018.

Going forward, based on the learnings from the pilot, MSDE is working on a new scheme for skills training for overseas placement. The PDOT scheme continues in coordination with MEA.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 35)

As the principal organ for soft and cultural diplomacy of the Government of India, ICCR's activities are spread across the globe ranging from providing scholarships, organizing exhibitions, to performing and visual arts programmes. The Committee note that Rs 300 crore has been provisioned for ICCR for BE 2021-22 (as compared to Rs. 290 cr. in BE 2020-21). The Ministry has informed that the enhanced allocation has been made for scholarship, welfare activities, incoming Exhibitions, Distinguished Visitors Programmes, Academic Visitors Programmes, festivals abroad and Multimedia & Website. Based on the fact that ICCR activities have been affected in the wake of global Covid-19 lockdown, the budgetary allocation during RE 2020-21 was decreased. The Ministry clarified that no substantial efforts have been made by ICCR for generating additional resources to run its activities. Despite the limited allocation, the Committee found that it was not fully utilized. Keeping in view the broad spectrum of activities undertaken by ICCR, the Committee strongly feel the need for enhanced budgetary allocation of ICCR. The Ministry is encouraged to explore the possibility of Partnerships and PPP Models for ICCR where the partners also put in resources for executing projects. ICCR should establish a mechanism for ensuring that the pace of expenditure is improved for better requisition of budgetary demands in the next fiscal. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government

should further increase the budgetary allocation for ICCR at RE 2021-22 and BE 2021-22 stage justifying the increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and central role of ICCR in it.

Reply of the Government

Ministry has taken note of Hon'ble Committee's recommendation and assures that to ensure pace of expenditure and effective utilization of allocation of Grant-in-Aid, ICCR has prepared Revised Plan of Action for Financial Year 2021-22 which is based on proposals/inputs received from more than 125 Missions/ Posts, in addition to programmes planned/to be executed at ICCR headquarters. ICCR would also be exploring avenues for generating additional fund in future by organizing event on PPP model and renting its infrastructural spaces.

Ministry would also like to add that in line with the increasing significance of soft power projection of the country and ICCR's central role in it, BE 2021-22 has been provisioned higher at Rs 300 crore (as compared to Rs. 255 cr. in RE 2020-21).

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 37)

ICWA performs three principal functions – carry out Research with a Foreign Policy focus; act as a platform for discourse on foreign policy and international affairs and maintains a robust publication programme. It also conducts outreach activities with like-minded institutions nationally and internationally. An outlay of Rs. 16 crore has been provided for ICWA during BE 2021-22 that is slightly lower than the budgetary allocation during BE 2020-21. The reasons attributed by the Ministry for reduction during BE 2021-22 and RE 2020-21 was fewer requirements of funds to CPWD for renovation work of Library, which is in alignment with assessed pace of work. The Committee note that during the period April 2020- Feb 2021, the Council has organized a total of 100 Seminars/ Conferences/ Panel discussions and Book discussions. The Committee desire that the Ministry should ensure that adequate funds are provisioned for ICWA to carry out the functions entrusted to it. The Committee also suggest that the extensive research carried out by ICWA need to be well publicized and more research collaboration be established with national and foreign think tanks/research organizations.

Reply of the Government

We have taken note of the Committee's observation that the Ministry should ensure adequate funds to be provisioned for ICWA to carry out its functions, and welcome the

Committee's suggestions to increase publicity of its extensive research and establish more research collaborations with national and foreign think tanks / research organizations.

ICWA has been making efforts to publicize its research publications which include books, Sapru House research papers, articles in its journal India Quarterly, Issue Briefs, Policy Briefs, Viewpoints, Special Reports, and Commissioned Special studies papers by experts. Its publications are made publicly available at the ICWA website and are being sent electronically to think tanks, MoU partners (national and international), Members of the Governing Body & Council, Consultative Committee on External Affairs and Officers of MEA and other concerned GoI departments. These are also being regularly uploaded on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook for wider dissemination. MEA is regularly receiving ICWA research publications.

Last year, ICWA has come out with 5 book publications which have been distributed to libraries, universities, think tanks, research organizations, national MoU partners, and experts in the subject area. The process of distribution of ICWA's research publications, particularly books, and journal articles, to its international MoU partners is also being worked out. Besides ICWA has been making a conscious attempt to reach out to the public through translation of its academic publications in Hindi and other regional languages.

As far as establishing research collaboration with national and international MoU partners is concerned, ICWA has 53 international and 18 National MoU partners. Recently, it has undertaken joint research projects with two of the national MoU partners. Efforts are underway to establish more research collaboration with national and international MoU partners.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No 38)

Research and Information System (RIS) is a think tank specializing in international economic relations and development cooperation, serving as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue among think tanks of developing countries. An outlay of Rs. 12.62 crore has been earmarked for RIS for BE 2021-22 while an allocation of Rs. 12.46 crore was made at RE 2020-21. The Ministry submitted that the reduced grant by the MEA was due to the anticipated under-utilization of funds by RIS largely on account of the unforeseen impact of COVID 19 on its planned activities. The Committee note that there are four thrust areas of RIS Work Programme - Global Economic Issues and South-South Cooperation; Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation; Connectivity and Regional Cooperation; and New Technologies and Development

Issues. The expertise of RIS on issues pertaining to Global South, including the evolving architecture on international trade, investment, finance, development, IPR and STI as well as on WTO issues provides vital and policy relevant inputs to MEA and other departments of the Government. In view of the far reaching implications of the RIS initiatives, the Committee would recommend that suitable enhancement of the budgetary allocations as per their requirements at the RE stage. They also recommend proper channelizing of research inputs of RIS into foreign policy.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry concurs with the observation of the Committee that the “expertise of RIS on issues pertaining to Global South, including the evolving architecture on international trade, investment, finance, development, Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as well as on WTO issues provides vital and policy relevant inputs to MEA and other departments of the Government.”

During the past couple of years, the Ministry has ensured higher financial allocations to meet the financial requirements of RIS. MEA is also putting in place a robust mechanism for properly channelizing the research inputs of RIS into foreign policy on a constant basis by way of enhanced dialogue and engagement at the level of Heads of Division and by regularly inviting RIS at the meetings of Heads of Missions for disseminating their research outcomes on contemporary issues. MEA also supports and integrates RIS’s policy research inputs on emerging issues of critical importance to India and the developing world. MEA and RIS are working on appropriate changes in RIS Byelaws to give added dynamism and synergy to the working of RIS.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No. 39)

The Policy Planning & Research Division of the Ministry of External Affairs is entrusted with four primary functions – organization of collaborative conferences and seminars with various think tanks; conduct of bilateral and multilateral policy planning dialogues with other Foreign Offices; preparation of research papers, policy briefs and situation reports pertaining to global developments and international affairs in general and India’s foreign policy in particular; and preparation of the Annual Report of the Ministry. The Committee observe that there are multiple mechanisms for engagement with academics, which *inter alia* includes funding of

national/international seminars and thematic conferences through its autonomous bodies – ICWA and RIS, commissioning of research projects through think tanks, etc. The Ministry has also submitted that the research output of the academic activities is compiled into reports and compendia. The Ministry is also utilizing external expertise in the form of subject specialist consultants for the purpose of research and policy planning. The Committee were surprised to note that there are no established research collaborations with other countries on issues pertaining to foreign policy.

The Committee are pleased to learn that the Policy Planning & Research Division along with its network of autonomous bodies (Indian Council of World Affairs and Research and Information Systems), think tanks and collaborations with academia undertakes a continuous analysis of our principal foreign policy objectives as well as provides research-based perspectives to the Ministry on various regional and global developments. The Committee, however, feel that the interface between policy and academia require greater synergy. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Policy Planning and Research Division should make persistent efforts to incorporate academic and policy analysis into the process of foreign policy formulation. There is also a need for wider dissemination of the publications of Reports, Briefs and compendia of the Ministry and its network of think tanks and autonomous bodies. The Committee also desire that the Ministry should reach out to established think tanks in partner countries for a deeper exchange of ideas and policies.

Reply of the Government

Policy dialogues is an established diplomatic mechanism that facilitates exchange of perceptions and ideas. The purpose of these dialogues, within the broader bilateral relationship, is to focus on long-term trends and develop a deeper and more wide-based understanding on important bilateral, regional, and global issues. They usually complement and supplement other dialogue mechanisms such as Foreign Office Consultations and subject-specific dialogue mechanisms that have a more immediate and tactical focus.

Policy Planning Division has initiated and conducted Policy dialogues with several partners with robust policy units. They have been instituted with the assistance of Missions abroad which

maintain contact with policy units in their countries of accreditation. Agendas for dialogues are decided based on consultations through diplomatic channels.

The themes usually include broad surveys of the international scene with an analysis of geo-political, geo-economic, and increasingly, geo-technical trends. Multilateral issues, particularly the evolution and impact of long-term trends, are invariably discussed. Bilateral and regional issues of interest to either partner, particularly those with strategic implications over a longer timeframe, are included on the agenda on the basis of mutual discussions.

The output of the talks is circulated with the relevant diplomatic stakeholders and inform the policy formulation process within the Ministry by bringing in longer-term, historical, and strategic perspectives.

Many of the dialogues have moved to virtual platforms following the pandemic. This has also facilitated more sustained and regular interaction between Policy units.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2018

The following table lists the PPDs held in the year 2018.

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Date and Year
1.	India-Indonesia Policy-Planning Dialogue	15.01.2018
2.	India-Japan Policy Planning Dialogue	18.07.2018
3.	India-Iran Policy Planning Dialogue	04.09.2018

These dialogues involved a productive exchange of views on themes such as foreign policy priorities of the respective countries, relations with the major powers of the world, issues of global governance, terrorism, connectivity in Asia, etc.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2019

The following table lists the PPDs held in the year 2019.

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Date and Year
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1.	India-Russia Policy-Planning Dialogue	07.06.2019
2.	India-Indonesia Policy-Planning Dialogue	11.07.2019
3.	India-Germany Policy-Planning Dialogue	10.09.2019

Themes discussed included regional issues such as developments in the EU, India and its evolving neighbourhood, Multilateralism in times of Great Power Competition, Indo-Pacific, Transatlantic relations, US-China, China-Russia, crisis hotspots, ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, BRI and indebtedness of recipient nations, to name a few.

Policy dialogues conducted in 2020-21

The following table lists the PPDs held in 2020-21:

S.No	Policy Planning Dialogue	Session I	Session II
1.	India-Vietnam	15/09/20	--
2.	India-Germany	29/09/20	--
3.	India-EU	19/10/20	28/01/21
4.	India-Israel	21/10/20	22/12/20
5.	India-Turkey	22/10/20	--
6.	India-Australia	23/10/20	04/02/21
7.	India-Denmark	10/11/20	--
8.	India-BRICS	10/12/20	--
9.	India-UK	17/12/20	--
10.	India-Poland	28/01/21	24/03/21

11.	India-Russia	16/02/21	--
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Relations with US, China, Europe, Middle East and Indo-Pacific, geo-technological and geo-energy trends, multilateral cooperation and international architecture, global multilateral trends - counter-terrorism, climate change, health, migration and demographics, UNSC- India's Priorities, perspectives on the post COVID-19 world order, Conflicts- emerging trends and fault lines, future of globalization, emerging economic and trade issues including supply chain resilience, big tech, great powers and their relations, etc., were discussed during these dialogues.

Policy Planning Division has been funding various research projects, with a view to fulfil its mandate of encouraging research in the foreign policy domain. Research projects are regularly commissioned in Think Tanks and academic institutions. Officers in the Division maintain regular contact with academics and researchers working on areas of interest to the Ministry.

The Ministry supports Track 1.5 Dialogues with the participation of prominent think-tanks. Regular interactions of academics with senior officials are facilitated by this Division. The four flagship annual conferences - Raisina Dialogue, Global Technology Summit, Asian Economic Dialogue, and Indian Ocean Conference - are supported by the Ministry in collaboration with prominent think-tanks to facilitate greater interaction of academia with the policy-making community.

The following is the list of Conferences/Track 1.5 Dialogues and Other Conferences supported by this Division in FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21:

S.No.	Conference/Track 1.5 Dialogue	Partner Institute
Flagship Conferences		
1.	Raisina Dialogue	Observer Research Foundation
2.	Global Technology Summit	Carnegie India
3.	Asia Economic Dialogue	Pune International Centre
4.	Indian Ocean Conference	India Foundation

Track 1.5 Dialogues		
5.	India-Republic of Korea	Ananta Aspen Centre
6.	India-Japan Forum	
7.	Indo-US Forum	
8.	India-Japan	Delhi Policy Group
9.	India-Canada	Gateway House
Track 2 Dialogues		
10.	India-Myanmar Conference	India Foundation
11.	India-Bangladesh Conference	Jadavpur Association of International Relations (JAIR)
12.	West Asia Conference	Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA)
13.	Kolkata-Dhaka Dialogue	HP Ghosh Research Centre, Jadavpur University
Other Conferences		
14.	Dialogue on Strategic Security Threats	National Institute of Advanced Studies NIAS-CISAC
15.	Conference on India's Neighbourhood Policy	Vidya Prasarak Mandal
16.	Conference on Indo-Pacific	Madurai Kamaraj University
17.	IAAPS Conference	Indian Association for Asian and Pacific Studies

The following table lists thematic research projects supported by the Division in FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21

S. No.	Financial Year	Institute	Project
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1.	2019-20	Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Pakistan
		Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Bangladesh
		Association of Indian Diplomats	A quarterly journal of Foreign Policy
		Chennai Centre for China Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on China
		Centre for China Analysis and Strategy	Analytical and Research Studies on China
2.	2020-21	Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Pakistan
		Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies	Analytical and Research Studies on Bangladesh
		Association of Indian Diplomats	A quarterly journal of Foreign Policy
		Chennai Centre for China Studies (CCCS)	Analytical and Research Studies on China
		Centre for China Analysis and Strategy	Analytical and Research Studies on China

The Ministry has a system of circulating policy papers within the larger policy community both within the government and outside. Policy Planning Division has circulated papers on the following topics in the last 12 months:

COVID series non-papers

Think-Tank Survey in India

The Legal Implications of Brexit for India

Geo-political and Geo-economic Impact of Coronavirus and the Implications for India

Coronavirus Pandemic, Global Supply Chain input on India

Radical Islamic Terrorism in Africa

Mapping of Think Tank and Track 1.5 Linkages

Paper on “Emerging Contours of Health Diplomacy

Disruptive Trends in Economic Diplomacy

The Division regularly produces a Think-Tank compendium which is shared extensively with various stakeholders. The Compendium comprises the output of select Indian think-tanks dealing with diplomacy, international trade, and national security. Several relevant webinars/seminars and conferences organized by think-tanks are monitored by Policy Planning and Research Division and an attempt is made to identify broad trends in foreign policy thinking and analysis

The Ministry ensures that the deliberations of conferences and Track 1.5 dialogues supported by it are widely disseminated to the academic community and public. It has also intensified its presence in social media and other channels to better communicate with stakeholders of foreign policy.

Ministry of External Affairs and its network of Missions and Posts abroad interacts extensively with the foreign policy research community at headquarters and abroad. Several formal and informal connections have developed that promote collaboration amongst think-tanks and research/ academic institutions. These have been mapped by the Policy Planning Division.

The Policy Planning Division supports research collaborations/academic conferences organised by various universities and think-tanks on a case-to-case basis. Some of these collaborations through think-tanks and universities involve foreign partners as well. The annually

organised India-South Korea and India-Japan Track 1.5 Dialogues are supported by the Ministry which has collaboration between Indian think-tanks and think-tanks from South Korea and Japan to cite a few examples.

RIS and ICWA have established research collaborations with think tanks, research institutes, and academic institutes of foreign countries, on issues pertaining to foreign policy. The details are available at **Annexure I and II**, respectively.

The Think Tank space in India is expanding rapidly. Think tanks are connectivity rich and the Indian think-tank space is organically linked and growing with a larger global public diplomacy space. The Policy Planning Division is in regular contact with many research organisations and Think Tanks based in New Delhi and all over India. These organisations have robust collaboration mechanisms with important opinion makers and stakeholders all over the world. To know more about these collaborations, the Division undertook an exercise to map Think Tanks and 1.5 linkages between India and 20 select countries. 19 India-based Think Tanks active in this space were identified. This exercise helped Ministry gain domain awareness and a database about this vital public diplomacy sphere. It also helped formulate a working database of the think-tank space in India and their linkages abroad while giving Ministry a sense of their evolution over time.

One of the mandates of Indian Missions and Posts across the world is to establish and maintain exchanges with Think Tanks and research institutions in the host countries. Indian Missions and Posts across the world regularly and systematically maintain contact with Think Tanks and academic/ research institutions in their countries of accreditation. They regularly meet with such Think Tanks, participate in events, and interact with Think Tank and academic personnel and researchers. The results of these interactions are reported to Ministry through its system of diplomatic reporting. Ministry, through its Missions and Posts, is therefore in regular contact with established Think Tanks in countries in the world. Further, a large number of these Think Tanks and institutions conduct visits to India. Meetings with Ministry officials are a regular feature of their programs. Ministry through participation of growing number Track 1.5 dialogues interacts frequently with a growing number of international Think Tanks.

The two organisations supported by the Ministry, ICWA and RIS have regular programs of interactions, academic and research collaborations with partner institutions in several countries and academic bodies in other countries. The research resulting from such collaborations is published in

various academic journals. As far as establishing research collaboration with national and international MoU partners is concerned, ICWA has 53 international and 18 National MoU partners. Efforts are underway to establish more research collaboration with national and international MoU partners.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

(Recommendation No. 41)

Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted all aspects of world politics. The Committee are pleased to note that during the COVID pandemic, India generated a lot of goodwill for ensuring supply of essential medicines, even while meeting its own domestic requirements and has thereby cemented India's reputation as the "Pharmacy of the World" and as a responsible stakeholder in global health supply chains. India has also provided medical assistance in the form of essential drugs, test kits, protection gear, etc., to over 150 countries. In wake of this pandemic, the Government of India launched the Vande Bharat Mission that brought back 4.2 million Indians under 9 VBM Phases with 8240 Air India flights and 9115 chartered and 'Air Bubble' flights. It was the largest and most complex exercise ever undertaken by the Government in close coordination with MEA and Ministries of Civil Aviation, Home Affairs, Health & Family Welfare as well as the concerned State governments. Multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral meetings have taken place at all levels using virtual platforms and voice communications.

The Committee are extremely impressed by the resilience shown by the Ministry of External Affairs in responding to the uncertainties that accompanied the Covid 19 pandemic and related restrictions. India acted as a responsible international actor during the crisis by providing Covid-related medical supplies to more than 150 countries, standing for its Diasporic Community and increasing use of innovative tools for conducting diplomacy and interaction with foreign governments. The Committee applaud the Ministry's efforts in responding valiantly during such uncertain times and are hopeful that India would continue to advocate reformed multilateralism and globalization based on principles of fairness, equality and humanity in the post-Covid world.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation of the Committee has been duly noted.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/20/2021]

CHAPTER- III

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT’S REPLY

NIL

CHAPTER – IV

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

(Recommendation No 17)

The Committee note that development partnership projects are rooted firmly in the underlying principle of South-South Cooperation, *viz.* mutual benefit, solidarity, free of conditionality, voluntary and demand driven cooperation. The assistance is implemented with the long-term goal of generating goodwill and generating a positive leverage to drive foreign policy objectives. The Committee, however, feel that the fluctuating budgetary demands and allocations convey a different picture. The Committee are happy to note that international projects are being reviewed and monitored through institutional mechanisms such as Joint Project Monitoring Committees (JPMCs) and Project steering Committees as well as to effectively handle India's developmental aid project Development Partnership Administration (DPA) has been created. The Committee also note that various challenges often impede the execution of international projects, including delays in land acquisitions and approval of local permits; procurement challenges; occasional reluctance and apathy of host governments; political uncertainties security threats; natural calamity, etc. Keeping these extraneous challenges in mind, the Committee desire that the Ministry should undertake an assessment and accordingly re-orient our approach for project formulation, appraisal, implementation monitoring and evaluation, to overcome such challenges. In the firm opinion of the Committee, the Ministry should frame a developmental aid policy alongwith a separate aid disbursal body/subsidiary organ within DPA with a specialized and focused mandate of streamlining and evaluating the various projects.

Reply of the Government

India's development partnership cooperation is integral part of India's foreign policy. The inalienable component of our development cooperation is "partnership". India's economic cooperation through development partnership is demand driven. For example, India's Grants-in-aid projects and capacity building programs are demand driven and are based on local demand/priority

of the partner countries. Through development cooperation, Government aims to give fillip to South-South Cooperation.

Development assistance is offered on the request of the host government, which is scrutinized by the Ministry in consultation with concerned Territorial Division from foreign policy perspective and also the line ministries. Feasibility study / DPR is undertaken by the project implementation agency, which is vetted by the line ministries. Physical and financial progress is monitored at various levels, including our Missions abroad as well as Project Monitoring Committees (PMC) constituted for this specific purpose. Additionally, expert advice of consultants and technical advisors on deputation from other specialized organizations outside the Ministry is also taken regarding implementation of these projects. Moreover, period reviews of the development assistance programs, viz., comprehensive review of ITEC, CEITs, etc are undertaken to attune these programs from impact and outcome perspective. Budgetary outlays are pre-fixed and payments are released on milestone basis.

Delay in the implementation schedule in some of the development assistance projects is apparently due to extraneous factors, viz., lack of appropriate interest / alacrity demonstrated by the host government in implementation of the project, once MoU is signed, non-identification and non-availability of project site for a considerable period of time, civil wars / internal strife prevalent in some of the African countries, local epidemics, inability to identify and nominate local project implementation agency for the project by the host government, etc. These factors lead to delay in the implementation schedule of the project and non-utilization of budget allocated for the relevant FY. However, efforts are made to periodically update and revise our budget projections and requirement for development assistance to other countries taking into account the overall perspectives of a dynamic and fluid nature. All efforts are being made to limit delays to only extraneous factors and due diligence is done at every stage of the process.

As regards Hon'ble Committee's recommendation of instituting an autonomous aid disbursal body similar to USAID for development assistance partnership, the Ministry is fully seized of the matter and is periodically reviewing all aspects of development cooperation and aid delivery.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2020]

(Recommendation No 40)

According to the Ministry, the key principles shaping and guiding Indian foreign policy are to pursue pragmatic and outcome oriented engagements, build influence in key global forums, creation of mutually beneficial, people oriented regional frameworks for stability and prosperity, working out reformed multilateralism and globalization and strengthening bonds of Indian Diaspora with their homeland. The Ministry has also informed that there is no single overarching and formalized strategic document that can delineate a roadmap for India's foreign policy apparatus and that the underlying principles of our diplomatic strategy are long established and enduring. The Ministry continually assesses and refines its diplomatic stance and policies in response to evolving global challenges. India's positions on relevant issues and its interests, in the context of these principles, have been articulated through various platforms. The Committee observe that frequent consultations are held with concerned Ministries/Departments and other organizations of the Government while formulating specific foreign policy goals. The Committee also note that mechanism of Foreign Office consultations exists with all countries for consultations on foreign policy. The Committee also note that the Ministry is utilizing subject specialist consultants.

Over the years, the Committee have been encouraging the Ministry to articulate India's grand strategy encompassing short term, medium term and long term objectives of our foreign policy. The Committee are unimpressed by the Ministry's justification for not having a grand strategy. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry of External Affairs should take all necessary steps to spell out a coherent and balanced Grand Foreign Policy strategy for India on priority basis.

Reply of the Government:

India's foreign policy is articulated, in accordance with precedent, law and parliamentary rules in documents that are available in the public domain. Continuity and change have been one of the defining characteristics of India's foreign policy. The ends of our foreign policy are deeply intertwined with national developmental priorities. Correspondingly, the means and strategies devised to achieve those ends have been attuned such that there is maximum convergence between India's global diplomatic engagement and domestic development. In effect, India's foreign policy strategy is aimed to diversify and expand the country's political, economic, and geo-strategic

options to ensure that India continues moving on an upward trajectory as a fast-growing inclusive economy, with a rising profile in global affairs.

A changing world requires a dynamic foreign policy. Over the decades, India has rapidly grown in economic, political, and military strength. Consequently, India's global footprint has expanded remarkably. There is greater integration of Indian economy with regional and global economies. Our commerce, trade and energy linkages have grown substantially. Connectivity – physical, digital, and financial – with our neighbouring partners and beyond is a fast-emerging reality. Our diaspora has grown in stature and profile and has expanded vertically and horizontally across the world. We have much stake in global governance regimes that shape our climate, technology, health, and other socio-economic policies.

While no single overarching policy document can capture all aspects of India's foreign policy, the principles of India's diplomatic strategy are long-established and enduring. The underlying principles and priorities have been disseminated by the Ministry through various channels of public communication.

The Annual Report of the Ministry contains a comprehensive statement of policies followed in the diplomatic sphere and their implementation. Replies to Parliamentary Questions, submissions to Parliamentary Committees and Ministerial statements also articulate foreign policy strategy in accordance with the rules of parliamentary democracy.

Public statements by the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs, the Minister of State in the Ministry, and senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs which are collated on the website of the Ministry are also utilized to articulate Indian diplomatic and foreign policy objectives. This is supplemented by other diplomatic documents which contain the public expression of foreign policy priorities. This is in accordance with international practice as followed by the foreign offices of major powers.

The Ministry would also like to draw attention of the Committee to its Recommendation no. 40 of the Seventh Report on action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Second Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2020-21 whereby the committee recommended that the Ministry conduct a comparative study of countries' grand strategy. In

accordance with the recommendations of the Standing Committee, Indian Missions across the world were asked to provide information about the existence of grand foreign policy documents/strategy in their countries of accreditation and whether such documents, if they exist, are brought out by Foreign Offices.

The responses received are tabulated as **Annexure III**.

The main findings of the survey are as follows :

- a. Out of the 171 countries surveyed, 86%, i.e.,148 countries, do not have any single comprehensive strategy document. (Table A)
- b. countries and the EU publish comprehensive strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives. 17 of these documents are published by Foreign Offices. 6 of them are published by offices of Heads of Government (PMO equivalent).
- c. The 17 countries where the Foreign Office publishes strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives are:
 1. Australia
 2. Costa Rica
 3. Czech Republic
 4. Ecuador
 5. Ireland
 6. New Zealand
 7. Poland
 8. Peru
 9. Russia
 10. Spain
 11. Switzerland
 12. South Africa
 13. Thailand
 14. Turkey
 15. Finland
 16. Estonia

17. Slovenia

d. The EU document is published by European External Action Service.

e. The 6 countries where strategy documents about strategic and foreign policy objectives are published by offices of Heads of Government are:

Azerbaijan: (Azerbaijan in the International Arena/Office of the President)

Belgium: (Comprehensive Approach-Strategy Note/Council of Ministers)

Bosnia and Herzegovina: (The Foreign Policy Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2023/Office of the President)

Nigeria: (National Security Strategy/Office of the President)

USA (National Security Strategic Guidance/ White House)

UK (Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy/ UK PMO)

Ministry's practise of articulation of foreign policy through Annual Reports, Parliament discussions, statements of high functionaries etc is therefore in line with international practice of the vast majority of foreign offices

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

CHAPTER V

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

(Recommendation No 4)

While examining the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the past four years, the Committee have been recommending that the Ministry should conduct a cross-country comparative study of budgetary allocations of Ministries/Departments entrusted with the task of managing foreign affairs. In their initial replies, the Ministry submitted that the preliminary report of a study conducted by Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under examination. On further probing, the Ministry informed that a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report has been completed and more comparative study variables are being included in the report.

The Committee do not approve such casual approach of the Ministry in furnishing replies to the Committee on such serious matters. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the findings of the preliminary Report should be furnished to the Committee instantly and final report should be compiled within three months. The Ministry should also ensure that the comparative data and figures are used to bolster its case for enhanced budgetary allocation in the next financial year.

Reply of the Government

The recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee have been duly noted. Ministry would like to assure the Committee that the Report of the study conducted by the Research and Information System for economic development (RIS) is under active consideration. As submitted earlier, a comprehensive assessment of the preliminary report has been completed. Further, Ministry has convened a few rounds of meetings with representatives of RIS to exchange views on the areas which need further work and the addition of more parameters to make the Study more relevant and contemporary. The Ministry will endeavour to complete the final draft of the Study in the current calendar year.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

(Recommendation No 9)

Highlighting the significance of Missions and Posts, the Committee opine that opening of Indian Missions help in expanding India's diplomatic footprint, deepen political relations, enable growth of bilateral trade, investments and economic engagements, facilitate stronger people-to-people contacts, bolster political outreach in multilateral fora and help garner support for India's foreign policy objectives. The Union Cabinet had accorded approval for opening up of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa in a phased manner between 2018-2021. Of these 15 Missions - Conakry (Guinea), Djibouti (Djibouti), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) and Kigali (Rwanda), Yaounde (Cameroon), Asmara (Eritrea) and Mbabane (Eswatini), Monrovia (Liberia), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Sao Tome (Sao Tome and Principe), Nouakchott (Mauritania), Lomé (Togo) and N'djamena (Chad) are in various stages of functioning. Efforts are ongoing to operationalize the last three remaining Missions viz., Mogadishu (Somalia), Bissau (Guinea Bissau) and Praia (Cape Verde). Ministry has also informed that there are 48 countries where India does not have resident Indian Missions. Furthermore, the Committee also note that in December 2020, the Cabinet has approved opening of three new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.

Standing by the Ministry's own admission about the imperative of having presence in all UN countries for attaining our goal of UNSC permanent seat, the Committee strongly feel that India should have a resident Mission in all UN Member countries. The Committee appreciate that opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise which entails internal planning and approvals as well as coordination and liaising with the host Government. While lauding the timely completion of the 15 Missions in African countries, the Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry should complete the remaining three Missions in Africa and the newly approved 3 Missions in Latin America in 2021. The Ministry should also seek additional finances to that end, if required, at the RE stage.

Reply of the Government

Among the 18 Missions approved by Cabinet in March, 2018, 15 Missions are in various stages of functioning and all efforts are being made to operationalize the last 3 Missions viz: Mogadishu, Bissau and Praia. Appropriate budgetary provisions are projected as per the expected

timeline of operationalization of the Missions, in consultation with the Internal Finance Division of the Ministry.

Cabinet approval has been received in December, 2020 to open 3 new Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic and administrative processes for implementation of these decisions are underway. Recently on 25 May, 2021, Cabinet has approved opening of Consulate in Addu, Maldives. Opening of a resident Indian Mission or Post is a time-taking exercise requiring internal planning for logistics, deployment, infrastructure and approvals as well as coordination and liaisoning with the host Government and Ministry would follow it up closely with the relevant authorities. As recommended by Hon'ble Committee, Ministry would seek additional budgetary allocations under head Embassies & Missions, if necessary, for early operationalization of newly approved Missions/Posts.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

(Recommendation No 10)

The Committee observe that the Directorate General of Inspections (DGI) was set up in 2014 in the system of regular inspection of Indian Missions/Posts abroad and in 2016 also introduced a web portal named Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS) for selection of Missions/Posts for on-site inspections. But the Committee are astonished to note that after all these efforts, only eight Missions/Posts were inspected in 2018 and two in 2019 and during 2020 not a single on-site or off-site inspection took place. The Committee are not at all satisfied with such tardy progress in such an important process of performance evaluation and monitoring.

Emphasizing the imperative of periodic inspection and monitoring in increasing the efficacy of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should launch the revamped PEMS portal at the earliest since it has already missed several timelines. The Ministry should also compile an annual data on country- specific challenges faced by the Missions/Posts abroad so that the evaluation exercise could result in positive outcomes and suggestions.

Reply of the Government

Due to various reasons, only eight Missions/Posts could be inspected in 2018 and two Missions/Posts were inspected in 2019. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and revamping process of PEMS portal, inspection could not be conducted during 2020.

The Ministry has launched the revamped portal of Performance Evaluation and Monitoring System (PEMS-2.0) on 07.06.2021. The evaluation exercise will be done in a time-bound manner followed up by off-site and on-site inspection, where required, for improving the functioning of our Missions/Posts.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

(Recommendation No 11)

The Committee observe that the budget head 'Passport and Emigration' caters to expenditure on Passport offices, printing of travel documents, lease/purchase of passport printers, payments to State and Union territories Governments for verification, expenses of pre-departure orientation and skill up-gradation of emigrant workers. The budgetary allocation under this sub-head has witnessed a decline from Rs. 1348.59 crore (BE 2020- 21) to Rs. 1328.63 crore (BE 2021-22). As per the Ministry the reduction in projections and allocation is primarily on account of slow progress due to COVID-19 pandemic under printing and procurement of travel documents, Postal and Freight charges, Office Expenses and Information Technology head.

The Committee observe that the budget sub-head 'Passport and Emigration' caters to two diverse but crucial set of items and directly affect on public services delivery and welfare of Overseas Indians. Keeping this in mind, the Committee feel that provision of adequate funds is essential. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure timely delivery of public services in terms of passport and emigration support and if required, seek additional funds at the RE stage. The Committee also desire that Videsh Bhawans should be established as a one stop service center in every state capital. The Ministry should work out a detailed proposal in this regard and apprise the Committee at the soonest.

Reply of the Government

The observation of the Committee have been noted and based on need assessment of funds and efficient utilization pattern, Ministry shall seek additional funds at the RE stage for passport and emigration services.

Ministry initiated process for establishment of Videsh Bhawans (VB) in Indian States capitals in June, 2016. The proposal was to bring all subordinate offices of MEA such as Branch Secretariat, Passport office, ICCR Centre and POE under one roof to enhance the efficiency of service to be provided to the public of the respective state/ union territory (UT) and also for better coordination among the State/ UT administration and the Ministry. Initially, efforts were made to identify the places where space is available in the existing RPO that can be used for VB after making required modifications and rest of the state governments were requested to allot suitable land (free of cost) for construction of VB. Presently, all proposals for Videsh Bhawan have been put on hold where no construction has commenced so far. The construction on only those projects which commenced as RPO (Bhopal, Kolkata, Ranchi) and were later modified as Videsh Bhawan are being continued.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

(Recommendation No 36)

ICCR Cultural Centres constitute a key tool of India's cultural outreach abroad through their wide range of cultural, academic and intellectual activities. The Ministry has informed that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are expected to be operational by the end of this year. The Ministry has submitted that establishment of a new cultural centres is dependent on a variety of factors which includes local formalities for opening of a new Cultural Centre, background information of Mission, information about the city where a Cultural Centre is proposed, details of Foreign Cultural Centres set up by other major countries, interest of general public about India in terms of art, culture, Bollywood, other Art forms and India-centric activities proposed for a Cultural Centre, etc. The Committee would recommend that the Ministry should ensure that the Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are operational by end of 2021 positively. The Ministry should also empanel artists from the widest possible variety of Indian languages/dialects and cultures so that India's diversity is richly showcased abroad.

Reply of the Government

The renovation work of Cultural Centres in Washington and Paris are underway. The Ministry acknowledges recommendation of Hon'ble Committee for empanelment of artists in widest possible way and is committed to represent India's rich diversity through its programmes/schemes.

[O.M. No. AA/Parl/125/17/2021]

NEW DELHI
August, 2021

Sravana, 1943 (Saka)

P.P. CHAUDHARY,
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21) HELD ON 11 AUGUST, 2021

The Committee sat on Wednesday, 11 August, 2021 from 1013 hrs. to 1027 hrs. in Committee Room No. B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

1. Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
3. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
4. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
5. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
6. Shri P. C. Mohan
7. Dr. K. C. Patel
8. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana

Rajya Sabha

9. Shri K. J. Alphons
10. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
11. Shri Abdul Wahab
12. Shri Brijlal

Secretariat

1. Shri P.C. Koul - Additional Secretary
2. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
3. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members to the Sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee took up for consideration the following two draft Reports:-

LIST OF RIS INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES
(LAST THREE YEARS)

A. MoU with Foreign Institutes	
1	Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI) Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
2	International Cooperation Deptt., Development Research Centre (DRC) of the State Council of China, Beijing, China
3	Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, Indonesia
4	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with NeST
5	Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, (JETO) Japan
6	Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Ebene, Mauriuis
7	Policy Analysis and Department Agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia
8	Institute for Strategic and Socio-Economic Research Nepal
9	The Centre for Foreign Relations (CFR) of the United Republic of Tanzania
10	Department for International Relations (DFID) now FCDO, The Government of United Kingdom
11	South Africa Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) Johannesburg, South Africa
12	The National Institute of Strategic Studies Kyrgyz Republic (NISS KR), Bishkek
13	Presidential Agency of International Cooperatin of Colombia (APC- Colombia)
14	Michigan State University (MSU), East Lansing, Michigan, USA
15	Chile Pacific Foundation (FCHP)
16	The Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) of The Korea National Diplomatic Academy, Republic of Korea; The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIPP), Republic of Korea
17	Biruni Institute, Kabul, Afghanistan

B. TRADITIONAL PARTNERS

1	Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, Bangladesh
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2	Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) Bhutan
3	Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
4	China Agricultural University (CAU), Beijing, China
5	Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC), Beijing, China
6	Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Emerging Market Sustainability Dialogues, EMSD, Berlin, Germany
7	German Development Institute (DIE), Bonn, Germany
8	Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta, Indonesia
9	Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Jakarta, Indonesia
10	UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Tokyo, Japan
11	Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS), Yangon, Myanmar
12	South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE), Kathmandu, Nepal
13	Institute for Strategic and Socio-Economic Research (ISSR), Kathmandu, Nepal
14	Neeti Anusandhan Pratishthan, Nepal
15	Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Kathmandu, Nepal
16	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Lahore, Pakistan
17	Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Islamabad, Pakistan
18	Marga Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka
19	National University of Singapore, Singapore
20	Institute for Global Dialogue, Pretoria, South Africa
21	Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Pretoria, South Africa
22	Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka
23	Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Bangkok, Thailand
24	Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, Brighton, UK
25	Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions, Bangkok, Thailand
26	Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
27	Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore
28	Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Sri Lanka
29	Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), Seoul, Korea

Multilateral and Regional Institutions

1	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Beijing, China
2	New Development Bank (NDB), Shanghai, China
3	OECD, Paris, France

4	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris, France
5	World Food Programme (WFP), Rome, Italy
6	Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Rome, Italy
7	Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Ebene, Republic of Mauritius
8	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Nepal
9	Asian Development Bank (ADB), Manila, Philippines
10	Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Arabia
11	African Development Bank, South Africa
12	International Labour Organization (ILO), Switzerland
13	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Geneva, Switzerland
14	World Trade Organization (WTO), Geneva, Switzerland
15	UN ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand
16	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), USA
17	The World Bank, Washington D. C., USA
18	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington, DC, USA
19	Commonwealth Secretariat, London, UK
20	Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), Argentina
21	Argentine Council for International Relations (CARI)
22	Latin American Social Sciences Institute (FLACSO), Argentina
23	Chile Pacific Foundation
24	Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies, University of Nairobi.
25	Nigerian Institute for international Affairs (NIIA)
26	Dublin City University, Ireland
27	Paris Peace Forum (PPF)
28	New York University,
29	Yale University, New Haven, United States
30	Brookings India
31	BRICS Policy Centre, Brazil
32	African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya
33	The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), New York
34	Institute Mora, MEXICO
35	UN Foundation
36	Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
37	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China
38	The Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP), CASS, China
39	The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Japan

40	Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
41	The National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan
42	The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
43	Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), Moscow
44	The National Committee for BRICS Research (BRICS NKI) , Russia

LIST OF ICWA INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Please find below the list of research collaborations that ICWA established with think tanks, research and academic institutes of foreign countries, on issues pertaining to foreign policy, during the last three years. (2018-2021)

I. List of Foreign Think Tanks/Research and Academic Institution on Foreign Policy with which MoUs have been signed between 2018-2021

1.	Center for International Relations (CIRS),Uzbekistan, September 14, 2018
2.	Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS),Tashkent, Uzbekistan, September 28, 2018
3.	Russia International Affairs Council,(RIAC), Moscow, Russia ,14-15 November, 2018
4.	Asia New Zealand Foundation (ANZF), Wellington 10 April 2019
5.	The SCO Centre for Public Diplomacy in Uzbekistan February 13, 2020
6.	The Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic named after Kazy Dikambaev, February 26, 2020
7.	Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), Seouland Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP), Seoul, October 22, 2020
8.	Institute of International Politics and Economics, (IIPE) Belgrade, December 10, 2020

II. ICWA research collaboration during (2018-2021) with Foreign Think Tanks/Research and Academic Institution on Foreign Policy which are not MoU partners.

1.	Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS), Bhutan, 4 December 2018.
2.	The German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) and German Institute for International and

	Security Affairs (SWP), 1 November 2019
3.	Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies, Vietnam, 7 October 2020
4.	The Wilson Centre, Washington D.C, 19 November 2020

SURVEY OF GRAND FOREIGN POLICY DOCUMENTS/ STRATEGY IN COUNTRIES

Table A - Survey of Countries Publishing Grand Strategy Documents

S.No	Country	Grand Strategy Y/N	Remarks
1	Afghanistan	N	Nil
2	Albania	N	Nil
3	Algeria	N	Nil
4	Angola	N	Nil
5	Antigua and Barbuda	N	Nil
6	Argentina	N	Nil
7	Armenia	N	Nil
8	Australia	Y	<p>Australian Government released the Foreign Policy White Paper in 2017. The White Paper "sets out a comprehensive framework to advance Australia's security and prosperity in a contested and competitive world.</p> <p>However, the White Paper does not mention "Grand Strategy" anywhere in the document. It presents an overview of the challenges and priorities of Australia's foreign policy, encompassing a wide array of subjects such as defence, trade, investments, internal security etc.</p> <p>The document primarily has inter-ministerial task-cutting.</p>
9	Austria	Y	<p>Austria's Department of Security Policy Affairs has published "Austrian Security Strategy" - a document primarily consisting of internal and external security matters.</p>
10	Azerbaijan	Y	<p>The Administrative Department of the President has prepared a document "Azerbaijan in the International Arena" - primarily enlisting goals and means of Azerbaijan's foreign policy and its relations with international actors.</p> <p>However, the document does not mention the word "Grand Strategy".</p>
11	Bahamas	N	Nil
12	Bahrain	N	Nil
13	Bangladesh	N	Nil

14	Belarus	N	Nil
			The Council of Ministers of Belgium has prepared a document titled "Comprehensive Approach - Strategy Note". It enlists the guiding principles of Belgium foreign policy, the challenges it faces and the means to resolve them.
15	Belgium	Y	The document does not mention the word "Grand Strategy".
16	Belize	N	Nil
17	Benin	N	
18	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Y	It has a Foreign policy strategy document (2018-23). This has been released by the Head of the State.
19	Botswana	N	Nil
20	Bhutan	N	Nil
21	Bolivia	N	Nil
22	Brazil	N	Nil
23	Brunei Darussalam	N	Nil
24	Bulgaria	N	Nil
25	Burundi	N	Nil
26	Burkina Faso	N	Nil
27	Cabo Verde	N	Nil
28	Cambodia	N	Nil
29	Cameroon	N	Nil
30	Canada	N	The Canadian government does, from time to time, produce white papers on its foreign policy goals and objectives as well as general directions. In January 2020, the then Foreign Minister of Canada had made a public announcement that the government would soon be producing a white paper on "Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy", however, this document has so far not been made public.
31	Central African Republic (CAR)	N	Nil
32	Chad	N	
33	Chile	N	Nil
34	China	N	China does not have a publicly articulated cogent and comprehensive grand strategy.

35	Colombia	N	<p>The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published “ Principles and guidelines of Colombian foreign policy - Responsible, innovative and constructive foreign policy 2018-2022”.</p> <p>It outlines the goals and principles of colombian foreign policy and is not an elaborative document.</p> <p>The document does not mention “Grand Strategy”.</p> <p>Mission has shared three links: https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/principios-y-lineamientos-la-politica-exterior-colombiana</p> <p>https://www.cancilleria.gov.co/en/principles-and-outlines-colombian-foreign-policy.</p>
36	Comoros	N	Nil
37	Commonwealth of Dominica	N	Nil
38	Cote d’ Ivoire	N	Nil
39	Costa Rica	Y	<p>The Ministry of External Relations has published “Institutional Strategic Plan 2021-2025” - a guiding document for the government on foreign policy matters.</p> <p>The document does not mention “grand strategy”.</p>
40	Croatia	N	Nil
41	Cuba	N	Mission has shared a document containing the vision of the Ministry
42	Cyprus	N	Mission has shared a document containing the Mission statement of the Ministry
43	Czech Republic	Y	<p>The Czech Republic has Foreign Policy document. The details of this document is available at: https://www.mzv.cz/file/1574645/Concept_of_the_Czech_Republic_s_Foreign_Policy.pdf.</p>
44	Denmark	N	The mission mentioned that the country is in the process of formulating one.
45	Djibouti	N	Nil
46	Dominican Republic	N	Nil
47	DPRK	N	The Mission has shared a link in this regard, https://www.mfa.gov.kp/en/overview/ .
48	Estonia	Y	The Foreign Policy Strategy of Estonia has been drawn up for the first time and it covers the state’s foreign policy activities up to 2030. It was released in May 2020 .

			https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/Estonia_for_UN/Rasmus/estonian_foreign_policy_strategy_2030_final.pdf
49	Finland	Y	On 29 October 2020, the Finnish Government adopted the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy and submitted it to Parliament. The report, being drawn up once during each government term, assesses Finland's foreign and security policy operating environment and defines the goals and priorities for Finland's actions within the next few years. The Report is available at https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/162515
50	Ireland	Y	<p>The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has prepared a short document called “ Statement of Strategy”.</p> <p>It outlines the broad objectives, underlying principles and targets of the Ministry.</p> <p>However, it does not mention the word “Grand Strategy”</p> <p>The mission has shared following links in this regard:</p> <p>The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Statement of Strategy - 2017-2020 may be seen at the following link: https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebstitemedia/aboutus/DFAT-Statement-of-Strategy-2017-2020.pdf</p> <p>The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs Roles and Policies (including strategies) may be seen at: https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/</p>
51	DR Congo	N	Nil
52	Ecuador	Y	Mission has shared a link: https://www.cancilleria.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/agenda_politica_2017baja.pdf
53	Egypt	N	Nil
54	El Salvador	N	
55	Equatorial Guinea	N	Nil
56	The European Union	Y	Mission remarked that European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) adopted on 28 June 2016, replaced European Security Strategy. Mission furnished a document titled "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe".
57	Fiji	N	Nil
58	France	N	Nil
59	Gabon	N	Nil
60	Guyana	N	Nil

61	Germany	N	<p>The website of the German Foreign Office contains a webpage titled 'Germany's foreign and European policy principles' (https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussepolitik/themen/policy-principles/229790), which contains information regarding the guiding principles of Germany's foreign policy on various issues such as relations with Europe, transatlantic partnership, commitment to multilateral international order, democracy, rule of law and human rights, etc. The individual sections have summarised information on the subject and contain links which direct to more detailed information.</p> <p>This is the only official resource available on Germany's overall foreign policy strategy as per our information. No document or policy paper on Germany's grand foreign policy strategy could be found.</p>
62	Ghana	N	Mission said that Ghana's foreign policy guidelines are enshrined in their Constitution
63	Greece	N	The Mission communicated that The Greek Foreign Ministry was requested to confirm whether they have Foreign Policy Strategy/document. Their response is that they are not in a position to give any definite answer on this.
64	Grenada	N	Nil
65	Guatemala	N	Nil
66	Guinea Bissau	N	Nil
67	Haiti	N	Nil
68	Honduras	N	Nil
69	Hungary	N	Nil
70	Iceland	N	Nil
71	Israel	N	Nil
72	Indonesia	N	Nil
73	Iran	N	Nil
74	Iraq	N	Nil
75	Italy	N	Nil
76	Jamaica	N	Nil
77	Japan	N	<p>Japan does not have any grand Foreign Policy document/strategy. Instead, Japan has annual Foreign Policy Report; "Diplomatic Bluebook " (https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/index.html) that details its Foreign Policy priorities and engagement with respective countries/regions. There is no other such official document on Foreign Policy, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Our interlocutors from MOFA, Japan, have also shared that there is so-called National Security Strategy. Please see links below for details.</p>

			https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/nss-e.pdf https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/siryou/131217anzenhoshou/pamphlet_en.pdf
78	Jordan	N	Jordan has been a strong US ally in the region and believes in tactical understandings with major powers/countries instead of an independent and strong foreign policy strategy.
79	Kazakhstan	N	Nil
80	Kenya	N	Nil
81	Kyrgyz Republic	N	Nil
82	Kuwait	N	<p>Kuwait does not have a single document articulating grand strategy or foreign policy strategy; however New Kuwait Vision 2035 is a strategic vision focused on developmental plan with elements of regional and global foreign policy and strategy incorporated in it. An official Summary of the New Kuwait Vision 2035 is given at: https://www.mofa.gov.kw/en/kuwait-state/kuwait-vision-2035/.</p> <p>The plan may be accessed at: https://issuu.com/pbc_kuwait/docs/nk2035.</p>
83	Lao PDR	N	Nil
84	Latvia	N	Nil
85	Lebanon	N	Nil
86	Lesotho	N	The strategy document has been shared on the facebook page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
87	Liberia	N	Nil
88	Luxembourg	N	The MFEA, Luxembourg does not have any standing note/approach/policy document guiding or shaping its foreign policy. <i>Each year, the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs delivers the foreign policy statement to the Chamber of Deputies (Luxembourgish Parliament). This speech enables the head of Luxembourg's diplomatic service to present the broad outline of the country's foreign and European policy.</i>
89	Madagascar	N	Nil
90	Malaysia	N	Nil
91	Malawi	Y	Mission has forwarded a document on the Foreign & Diaspora Policy received by local Foreign Office.
92	Maldives	N	Nil
93	Malta	N	Malta does not have any Grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy. A link to the Strategic Objectives as mentioned on the website of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs of Malta is as follows: https://foreignandeu.gov.mt/en/Pages/Strategic-Objectives.aspx

94	Mauritius	N	Nil
95	Mexico	N	Nil
96	Moldova	N	Nil
97	Mongolia	N	Nil
98	Montenegro	N	Nil
99	Morocco	N	Nil
100	Mozambique	N	Mozambique does not have any Grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy
101	Myanmar	N	Nil
102	Namibia	N	Nil
103	Nepal	N	The Mission has attached Nepal's Foreign Policy document in original (Nepali) and in-house English translation of the same. The document looks more like an annual report.
104	New Zealand	Y	New Zealand has a foreign policy strategy document called “Strategic Intentions”.
105	Netherlands	N	Nil
106	Nicaragua	N	Nicaragua does not seem to have any grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy and as per their Foreign Office the fundamental rules guiding their foreign policy are respect for sovereignty, neither interference nor acceptance of pressure from other states, friendship, solidarity and cooperation.
107	Niger	N	Nil
108	Nigeria	Y	Nigeria has a National Security Strategy document. The document appears to be a all of Government approach with the preface and foreward penned by the President and National Security Advisor
109	North Macedonia	N	North Macedonia is awaiting the commencement of EU accession negotiations this year and also does not seem to have a grand foreign policy document or strategy either, as per our research and enquiries.
110	Norway	N	The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued a document titled 'Norway-India 2030' detailing the government's strategy for cooperation with India. As far as foreign policy strategy in general is concerned, the Foreign Minister of Norway, Ms. Ine Eriksen Soreide, had presented a speech to the Storting (Parliament) in March 2020 in this regard.

111	Oman	N	Mission has sent a document titled "Principles - A good Neighbour".
112	Pakistan	N	Nil
113	Palestine	N	Nil
114	Panama	N	<p>In Panama each government lays out the way forward for its five years of governance in various strategic plan documents . The last government of President Varela had made a five year plan for the Ministry of External Affairs of Panama (MIRE), a 52 page document with is enclosed along with the translation of the most relevant pages for perusal.</p> <p>In 2015 the Foreign Ministry also issued two major documents. The first being Panama Cooperates 2030, which was the National plan of International Cooperation of the Republic of Panama. It listed the Strategies, Objectives and Instruments of International Cooperation of Panama in the era of the sustainable Development Objectives. MIRE also published a national strategy for cultural diplomacy to expand the traditional scope of diplomacy. A copy each of both these documents in English is attached for ready reference.</p> <p>The new government under President Laurentino Cortizo took over in July 2019 and a new Foreign Policy strategy is being finalized. The local interlocutors have been approached for the same and the Mission will forward it to the Ministry as soon as the same is received.</p>
115	Papua New Guinea	N	Nil
116	Paraguay	N	Nil
117	Philippines	N	Nil
118	Poland	Y	The Mission has attached a document titled “the Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021”
119	Portugal	N	The Mission tried to search for Portugal's 'Grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy' but was not able to find any specific document in this regard.
120	Peru	Y	Peru has a five-year foreign policy document titled "Multi-annual Strategic Plan for Foreign Affairs of Peru for 2015-2021"
121	Qatar	N	Nil
122	Republic of Congo	N	Nil
123	Republic of Guinea	N	Nil
124	Republic of Korea	N	The Republic of Korea publishes a Diplomatic White Paper on an annual basis.

125	Romania	N	Nil
126	Russia	Y	Russia has a Foreign Policy Concept (approved by President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on November 30, 2016).
127	Rwanda	N	Nil
128	Saudi Arabia	N	Nil
129	Senegal	N	Nil
130	Serbia	Y	No document by this name has been issued by the Government of Serbia. However, Serbia adopted a National Security Strategy in December 2019, which has plenty of foreign policy component. A copy of the document (National Security Strategy of Serbia) is attached.
131	Seychelles	N	Mission has stated that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has updated its website on April 5 th 2021 and has added a document titled, “Executive Summary of the Seychelles Foreign Policy 2021-25. The document provides guiding principles. However, a detailed strategy document is not available in public domain.
132	Sierra Leone	N	Nil
133	Singapore	N	Nil
134	Slovenia	Y	The document is called: Safe, Successful, Globally respected. The Foreign Policy of Republic of Slovenia.
135	Slovakia	N	Nil
136	Spain	Y	Spain has a four year External Action Strategy, recently released for 2021-24. The original plan is in Spanish but the translated Executive Summary is attached.
137	Solomon Islands	N	Nil
138	Somalia	N	Nil
139	South Africa	Y	Mission has shared two documents namely, “Strategic Plan 2020-2025” by Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and "The Diplomacy of Ubuntu”- White Paper on South Africa’s Foreign Policy.
140	South Sudan	N	Nil
141	Sri Lanka	N	Nil
142	Sudan	N	Nil
143	St. Kitts & Nevis	N	Nil
144	Sweden	N	Nil
145	Switzerland	Y	Mission shared 8 documents containing:

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign Policy Strategy 2020-23 of the Foreign Ministry; ● Foreign policy vision for Switzerland till 2028; ● Strategy for Communication abroad 2021-24; ● Mena strategy 2020-2024 ● China strategy 2021-24 ● Switzerland's International cooperation strategy 2021-24 ● Sub-Saharan Africa strategy 2021-24 Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021-24
146	Syria	N	Nil
147	Tajikistan	N	Nil
148	Tanzania	N	The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania does have a Foreign Policy Document - the "New Foreign Policy of 2001". However, this document is not available in the public domain except a gist as given in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website at the link https://www.foreign.go.tz/index.php/about/category/foreign-policy .
149	Thailand	Y	Thailand has a <u>20-YEAR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MASTERPLAN</u> for the period <u>2018-2037</u> . A synoptic version of the master-plan, in English language, is available on Thai MoFA's website at the following link: https://image.mfa.go.th/mfa/0/mkKfL2iULZ/%E0%B9%80%E0%B8%AD%E0%B8%81%E0%B8%AA%E0%B8%B2%E0%B8%A3/mfa-s-strategy.pdf .
150	The Gambia	N	Nil
151	The Holy See	N	Nil
152	Togo	N	Nil
153	Trinidad & Tobago	N	Nil
154	Tunisia	N	The mission has shared a 1.5-page document titled "Outline of Tunisian Diplomacy". This is an outline document
155	Turkey	Y	Mission has shared two documents in Turkish language namely, "2019-2023 Strategic Plan" for the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs & "Turkey's Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy - A Synopsis". The "2019-23 Strategic Plan" document (available only in Turkish) looks like a Grand Strategy document.
156	Turkmenistan	N	While President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov had outlined the "Concept of foreign policy of Turkmenistan for 2017-2023" in February 2017, it appears there is no "Grand Foreign Policy Document / Strategy" that the country has devised / developed
157	UAE	N	Nil
158	Uganda	N	Nil

159	Ukraine	N	Ukraine does not have any Grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy as sought in the query. However, a broad based Foreign Policy “Mission and Strategy” is published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, which outlines key functions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, as well as the goals and strategic priorities of the Foreign Office. The link to the same is placed below for kind information: https://mfa.gov.ua/en/misiya-ta-strategiya
160	Uruguay	N	Uruguay does not have any Grand Foreign Policy Document/Strategy. The Uruguayan Foreign Ministry has, however, published a Five-Year Strategic Plan (2020-2025) for the country.
161	United Kingdom	Y	UK has an document titled, Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. It is presented to the President by the Prime Minister and has been formulated by the PM’s office.
162	USA	Y	Mission informed that the US, however, publishes a "National Security Strategy Report", a comprehensive statement articulating the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are important to its national security. Under the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986, the US President is required to submit a report on the national security strategy of the United States to Congress each year. In recent years, however, the reports have been made late or not made at all.
163	Uzbekistan	N	Uzbekistan has a foreign policy document that is an overview/Mission/Vision statement. This cannot be called as a Grand strategy document
164	Venezuela	N	Nil
165	Vietnam	N	Vietnam does not have any long term foreign policy document. However, the Vietnamese foreign policy is guided by the Party Resolution adopted every five years at the National Party Congress. The recently held 13th Party Congress’ Resolution for the term 2021-2026 has the following broad foreign policy guidelines: “Implementation of the foreign policy of independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation and development, diversification and multilateralization; proactively integrating into the world in a comprehensive, extensive and effective manner; maintain a peaceful and stable environment; constantly improve Vietnam's international status and reputation”.
166	Zambia	N	Nil
167	Zimbabwe	N	Nil

Table B - List of Countries that produce strategy documents

S.no	Country	Name of Document	Issuing Authority
1.	Australia	Foreign Policy White Paper 2017	Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
2.	Austria	Austrian Security Strategy	Office of Head of Government(Chancellor)
2.	Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan in the International Arena	Administrative Department of the President
3.	Belgium	Comprehensive Approach - Strategy Note	Council of Ministers
4.	Bosnia & Herzegovina	The foreign policy strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018 – 2023	Office of Head of State
5.	Costa Rica	Institutional Strategic Plan 2021-2025	Ministry of External Affairs
6.	Czech Republic	Concept of the Czech Republic's Foreign Policy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7.	Ireland	Statement of Strategy	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (Such statements are released by various ministries)
8.	Ecuador	Agenda De Politica Exterior	Ministry for External Relations
9.	European Union	Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe	European External Action Service
10.	Estonia	Estonian Foreign Policy Strategy 2030	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
11.	Finland	Finnish Foreign and Security Policy	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
12.	Malawi	Malawi Foreign Policy: A Catalyst for Sustainable	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Foreword by President)

		Development	
13.	New Zealand	Strategic Intentions	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
14.	Nigeria	National Security Strategy	Office of the President
15.	Poland	The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017-2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
16.	Peru	Multi-annual Strategic Plan for Foreign Affairs of Peru for 2015-2021	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
17.	Russia	Foreign Policy Concept	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	Serbia	Strategy of National Security of Republic of Serbia	National Assembly
18.	Slovenia	Safe, Successful, globally respected. The Foreign Policy of Republic of Slovenia	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
19.	Spain	External Action Strategy	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
20.	South Africa	Strategic Plan 2020-25	Department of International Relations and Cooperation (Made separately by various Ministries)
21.	Switzerland	Foreign Policy Strategy 2020-23	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
22.	Thailand	20-year foreign affairs masterplan (2018-2037)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
23.	Turkey	2019-23 Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
24.	United Kingdom	Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence,	Prime Minister's office.

		Development and Foreign Policy	
25.	United States of America	National Security Strategy Report	Office of the President

(As on 23 June 2021)

APPENDIX-I

(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)

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

- (i) **Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -**
Recommendation Nos.1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39 and 41.
Total- 34
Percentage: 82.92%
- (ii) **Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:-**
NIL
Total- Nil
Percentage: 0 %
- (iii) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -**
Recommendation Nos. 17 and 40
Total- 2
Percentage: 4.87 %
- (iv) **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited: -**
Recommendation Nos. 4, 9, 10, 11 and 36
Total- 5
Percentage: 12.19 %