

## **India-Niger Bilateral Relations**

### **Background**

1. Niger is a land-locked country in sub-Sahara region of West Africa. Bilateral cooperation in the past was mainly limited to the multilateral fora. Bilateral relations between India and Niger are cordial. Bilateral activities gained momentum after opening of Indian resident Diplomatic Mission in Niamey in May 2009. Niger had opened its Embassy in New Delhi in November 2011.

### **Visits from Niger**

2. There have been several visits from Niger to India. President Issoufou Mahamadou had visited India in October 2015 to participate India-Africa Forum Summit, and in March 2018 to attend the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance. During both the visits he had met PM Modi.

3. In addition to this, in 2005 Niger Foreign Minister visited India and a high level government and commercial delegations participated in the CII-EXIM Conclave on "India-Africa Project Partnerships" in New Delhi. In 2006, its Foreign Minister again visited India. In 2010 its Minister of Information and Communication Technology visited Hyderabad to participate in the ITU-World Telecom Development Conference. In 2011 its Foreign Minister participated in the "India-LDC Ministerial Conference" held in New Delhi; Minister of Mines and Energy visited Mumbai for discussions on civil nuclear cooperation with Department of Atomic Energy. In 2012 Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, visited India to attend India-Africa Science & Technology Ministerial Conference; Minister of Energy & Petroleum visited New Delhi to participate in International Seminar on Energy Access; and a 5-member delegation comprising senior government officials and leading importers of pharmaceuticals also attended Reverse Buyer Seller Meet coinciding with 64<sup>th</sup> Indian Pharmaceutical Congress in Chennai. In 2013 Niger Ministerial delegation, led by Minister of Plan, Territorial Planning and Community Development, attended the 9<sup>th</sup> CII EXIM Bank India-Africa Conclave held in New Delhi; Minister of Water Resources and Environment visited New Delhi on the invitation of WAPCOS to sign MOU for PMC for "Potable Water Project", an LOC project under consideration with GOI at that time; and Minister of Plan, Territorial Management and Community Development visited New Delhi for signing the LoC Agreement with EXIM Bank of India for Solar electrification of 30 villages (US\$ 9.84 million) and for setting up Solar Photo Voltaic System of 5 Mega Watt (US\$ 24.70 million). In 2014 Minister of Commerce and Promotion of Private Sector visited New Delhi to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership; Minister of Plan, Land Management and Community Development visited India for signing the EXIM Bank's LoC Agreement of US\$ 25 million for potable water for semi-urban and rural communities in Niger. In 2015 its Minister of Commerce and Promotion of Private Sector participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> African Trade Ministers Meeting held in New Delhi under the auspices of IAFS-III. In 2016 Minister and Special Advisor to the President of Niger visited India and had met with MoS (VKS), MoS (MJA) and MoS in Ministry of Finance. In 2017 Minister of Trade & Private Sector Promotion, and Minister and Special Advisor to the President of Niger, visited India in for attending the 12<sup>th</sup> CII EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership; and Minister

for Planning, Deputy Minister for Budget participated in the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual meeting of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Gandhinagar. In 2018 Secretary General of Ministry of Commerce and Promotion of Private Sector, visited New Delhi to take part in the 13<sup>th</sup> CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership; the Permanent Secretary, Niger Investment Board, visited India to participate in 10<sup>th</sup> CII Industrial Services Training Program along with Representatives from African Chamber of Commerce and Investment Promotion Agencies.

4. Under the Ministry's Familiarization Visit-cum-Training Program of African Journalists, one Journalist from La Sahel had visited India in March 2017 to attend Workshop on 'Writing and Reporting for Print and Electronic Media'. Under another Familiarization Program to enhance young Parliamentarians from Africa to create awareness regarding various aspects of India's development, 2 Nigerien Parliamentarians from Niger National Assembly had visited in July-August 2017.

### **Visits from India**

5. The high level visit from India to Niger so far has happened in the context of India-Africa Forum Summit-III held in October 2015; signing of LoCs with Exim Bank, etc. Bilateral visits at the level of HOS/HOG, Foreign Minister and other senior Cabinet Ministers are yet to take place. However, the following important visits have taken place from India to Niger in the past few years: In 2007 Shri Anand Sharma, MoS for External Affairs, met the then Prime Minister of Niger in Accra during his visit to Ghana to participate in the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Ghana's Independence. In 2012 an 11-member CII trade delegation, led by Joint Secretary (West Africa), visited Niamey and had meetings with Nigerien Prime Minister and several other Ministers. A MoU for Cooperation between CII and Nigerien Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts, was also signed. In 2015 Shri GM Siddeshwara, MoS for Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, visited Niger as the Special Envoy of Prime Minister of India to deliver the letters of invitations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Forum Summit and called on the President Issoufou Mahamadou and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 2016 Shri Amarendra Khatua, Dean (FSI) & Special Envoy of Government of India, visited Niamey and interacted with Nigerien leadership, including President Issoufou Mahamadou, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as Minister of Planning. In 2017 an MEA-EXIM Bank delegation visited Niamey for monitoring the ongoing drinking water project under GoI LoC in Niger; a two-member team visited Niamey in connection with a feasibility study for setting up of CGARD in Niamey.

### **Institutional Dialogues**

6. The following MoU have been signed between India-Niger: (a) an MoU between Indian Council of World Affairs (**ICWA**), New Delhi, and the Promotion of Initiatives for Development Association (APIDB), Niamey, was signed in 2011; (b) another MoU was signed in 2012 between Confederation of Indian Industry (**CII**) and Nigerien Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts, in Niamey. (c) Niger has signed the **Letter of Intent** in April 2017 for inclusion in India's Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme and to avail of its benefits which are extended by Government of India to select LDCs. DFTP allows duty free quota free market access to India which includes 33 African countries, including Niger. In addition, text of following two draft Agreements have been finalized and agreed upon by both sides and are ready for signatures: (i) Agreement for Protocol on Consultations; and (ii) Agreement for Establishment of Joint Commission. Another MoU for setting up a Centre for Geo Informatics Application for Rural Development (CGARD), as well

as an MoU for cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sector, is under consideration.

### **Niger's support to India in UN**

7. Niger has been supporting India's candidature for various posts unilaterally in the international fora. Niger's position on UN reforms is that of African Union's common position.

### **Bilateral Trade**

8. India's trade with Niger which stood in 2016-17 at US\$ 81.27 million, has touched US\$ 130.38 million in 2017-18. The main items being exported from India to Niger include cereals, pharmaceutical products, cotton, sugar, miscellaneous edible preparations, electrical machinery & equipment, and man-made filaments. India imports from Niger mainly mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation, wood and articles of wood, wood charcoal, and electrical machinery and equipment. These figures still do not truly reflect the quantum of trade as a large number of Niger businessmen procure Indian goods and products from Dubai and the actual volume of export of Indian products to Niger may be significantly higher. Bilateral trade between India and Niger is expected to increase with growing awareness about Indian strengths in different sectors of the economy. With Indian companies doing LOC and other projects in Niamey, their footprint in Niger is likely to grow and may provide impetus to bilateral trade.

### **Investments in Niger**

9. There are few Indian companies operating in Niger which have invested in Niger. M/s Airtel Cellular Services is the leading mobile service provider in Niger, having captured 64% of the local mobile market share. It has invested around US\$ 350 million in expansion and diversifying its services in Niger. M/s Euroworld International, a firm owned by Indian nationals registered in Niger, is constructing a four star hotel in Niamey with an investment of around US\$ 64 million. M/s Contec Global has made an investment of approx. US\$ 10 million to operate on BOOT (Build, Own, Operate, and Transfer) basis, a venture for issue of Passport to Niger nationals. M/s Diamond India, a cement manufacturing company which has made an investment of about US\$ 8 million for setting up a cement plant at Malbaza in Tahoua region, having production capacity of about 5,40,000 MT cement per year. M/s Satguru Travels has invested around US\$ 3 million in Niger. They are basically engaged in providing travel services. It has earned good reputation among Niger Government Ministries and is believed to be the most efficient and reliable premier travel agency in Niger. M/s Shivam General Trading Company is the sole distributors of TVS and Bajaj bikes, Mahindra Gensets and vehicles, and of Godrej Locks, in Niger, which has invested US\$ 2.6 million in Niger. They are part of M/s Satguru holding, and own electronic goods shop in Niamey. M/s Belvie Healthcare S.A. has invested US\$ 0.8 million in setting up a plant in Niger for mineral water. M/s Afriplast Niger has invested about US\$ 0.5 million in PVC products and has been manufacturing RPVC pipes for potable water, irrigation and boreholes. Details of Nigerien investments in India are not available and these may be negligible and not much.

### **Development Partnership Cooperation and Capacity Building**

10. In order to strengthen bilateral trade and cooperation India has been extending Lines of Credit (LoC) to Niger from time to time. Following is a brief account of LoCs extended to Niger:

- A Line of Credit (LoC) of US\$ 17 million was extended 2005 for procurement of buses, trucks, tractors, flour mills, motor pumps, etc. In 2008 another LoC for US\$ 20 million was extended (a) rehabilitation of 6 power stations; (b) purchase of 3 power transformers; (c) rehabilitation as well as erection of power lines between various places in Niger. Both these LoC are completed.
- Currently projects under two LoCs are going on: (a) Solar electrification of 30 rural villages (number enhanced to 50 villages) using photovoltaic system (at an estimated cost of US\$ 9.84 million). The completion is expected in September 2018; and (b) Setting up of a Solar Photovoltaic Plant of 5 MW (enhanced to 7 MW) capacity (US\$ 24.70 million) covering 20 hector areas. This project is also likely to complete soon. One more of US\$ 25 million for Potable Water for Semi-Urban and Rural Communities is going on under which 500 boreholes were to be drilled and constructed. This project is also near completion.
- Following LoCs are under consideration: (i) LoC worth US\$ 135 million for setting up a sugar factory in Dosso region of Niger; (ii) LoC of US\$ 30 million for water supply project in Maradi and Tahoua regions of Niger; (iii) Project on electrification of villages in Niger through Photovoltaic Solar System (US\$ 169 million approx.); (iv) Project on Solar electrification of strategy and sensible buildings, hospitals, maternities and blood transfusion centres (US\$ 16 million approx.); (v) Project on development of Solar cookers and dryers (US\$ 12.77 million approx.); and (vi) LoC through EXIM Bank and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) of US\$ 10 million for solar electrification of villages in 3 regions of Niger.

11. India has also been providing assistance to Niger to enhance its capacity building. Following are details of assistances provided to Niger:

- In 2005 India provided a relief package of basic medicines to Niger towards assistance for the humanitarian efforts for the food crisis. In 2006 Indian experts visited Niger to ascertain the requirement for computerization of Niger's (a) Ministries of Foreign Affairs, (b) Mines & Energy; and (c) Dry-land Agricultural Research. Technical assistance was provided to Niger in ICT and agriculture sectors. In 2010 a cash grant of US\$ 1,00,000 was provided to Niger to help it tide over the on-going food crisis. In 2011 a cash grant of Euro 86,452 was also provided to help the Government of Niger towards purchase of two Television Cameras for the National Television of Niger. In 2012 GoI supplied 100 Computers and 100 Printers (worth Rs. 67 lakh) to Niger Ministry of Foreign Affairs for enhancing capacity building. In 2015 India gifted 10 Laptops (worth Rs. 12,98,120) to the Office of the Director General, Radio Broadcasting and Television of Niger (ONEP), as part of Government of India's assistance. The Pan African e-Network Project Phase-1 (PAeNP), funded by India, was successfully completed by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) in September 2017 in Niamey. The DPR of the Phase-II is under examination in MEA. Niger has expressed its interest in the Digital India Programs in the context of its own Programs for Smart Villages and development of a Technology City, and possible cooperation with India.

- India also offers training to Niger in the areas of human resource development under Indian Technical Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program and also under the decisions taken at the Indian Africa Forum Summits (IAFS). Following is a brief account of slots allocated to Niger under different Programs and utilizations thereof: In 2017-18 154 slots were availed by Nigerien candidates under ITEC. For 2018-19 following slots have been allocated to Niger: 160 slots under ITEC; 15 ICCR Scholarships; 15 slots for Defence training courses; and 2 slots for CV Raman Special Agriculture Scheme.

12. As part of development cooperation and capacity building, the following are under consideration:

- Construction of a fully equipped Convention Centre on grant basis which Niger needs for organizing African Union Summit scheduled to be held in Niamey in July 2019. Estimated cost of Project is US\$ 50 million (equivalent to Rs. 325 crores). M/s Shapoorji Pallon ji is to construct Centre in Niamey and National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC) is appointed Project Management Consultants.
- Setting up of a Centre for Geo-Informatics Applications in Rural Development (CGARD) in Niamey as grant project at an estimated cost of Rs. 17 crores.
- Establishing of a Technology Development Centre by the National Research Development Corporation (NRDC);
- Renovation of the sound and simultaneous translation system of main Conference Center of Sani Bako Auditorium located at the Nigerian Foreign Ministry Affairs' main building;
- Providing of tailor-made two week duration courses for 25 Nigerien Diplomats at Foreign Service Institute Campus at New Delhi;
- Setting up of a Vocational Training Centres by HMT (international) in Niger;
- Setting of Indian Corners (Bharat Parichay Prakoshth) at prestigious universities/educational institutions in Niger. One Corner is already in process in the Library of Oumarou Ganda Cultural Centre (OGCC) in Niamey; and
- Providing of some MittiCool Refrigerators as gifts/grants to Niger.

## **Culture**

13. With a view to promote Indian Yoga, in June every year the International Day of Yoga (IDY) have been celebrated in Niamey since 2015. In the 2016 IDY Nigerian Minister of Youth & Sports was the Chief Guest, and the Minister of Domain & Housing was the Guest of Honour. The Day of Yoga witnessed more than 100 participants, including Diplomats and members of the Indian community. The event generated considerable interest and enthusiasm and was well covered by local media. In 2017 IDY Minister of Secondary Education was the Chief Guest, and Minister of Culture was the Guest of Honour. Among others, there was active

participation by the NRI/PIO community along with Niger's Under-17 National Football Team in the event. In 2018 IDY Minister of Culture was the Chief Guest and over 80 Yoga enthusiasts participated in it.

14. Apart from the National Days, Embassy celebrated the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and also commemorated Birth Anniversaries of (i) Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya; and (ii) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The ITEC Day was also celebrated in 2017 with the active participation from the Nigeriens and Indian NRI community in Niger.

### **Indian Community**

15. There are about 150 Indian nationals residing in Niger. Most of them are residing here without their families. They are largely engaged in trading and hospitality related business. There is no Person of Indian Overseas (PIO) or Indian student in Niger, registered with the Mission.

### **Useful Resources**

16. Following are the details of Mission's website etc.:

- Mission's Website: <http://www.indembniamey.org/>
- Mission's Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiainNiger>
- Mission's Twitter Account: <https://twitter.com/indiainniger>

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