

Bilateral Relations between India and Equatorial Guinea

Overview

India and Equatorial Guinea (EG) have enjoyed warm and friendly relations dating back to pre-independence era of Equatorial Guinea, prior to 1968.

Political

MOS (External Affairs) M.J. Akbar visited Equatorial Guinea on a first ever bilateral visit from India to Equatorial Guinea on August 18, 2017. The momentum of the bilateral relations picked up with time. Three agreements, namely Establishment of Joint Commission, Exemption from visa requirement for Diplomatic and Official/Service passport holders and Foreign Office Consultations, were signed during the visit.

President Ram Nath Kovind, visited Equatorial Guinea on April 7-9, 2018. He held discussion with President Obiang on April, 2018. Action plan on ICT, MOU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine and MOU on Cooperation on Medicinal plants were signed during the visit. A Joint Communiqué was also issued after the visit. Establishment of Vocational Training Center, Establishment of English Language Laboratory, Establishment of Diplomatic Mission and English Language Training Course for officials of Foreign Ministry of EG were announced during the visit.

MOS (External Affairs) M.J. Akbar again visited the country from 11-13 October, 2018 to attend the 50th anniversary of country's independence. A 3-member Agricultural delegation visited Equatorial Guinea on 2-4 April, 2018 to study the cooperation in Agriculture and Allied Sectors. Another 3-member delegation from Ministry of Mines visited Equatorial Guinea from April 7-17, 2018 to study the possibilities of cooperation.. A 4-member delegation from Department of telecommunications visited Equatorial Guinea from July 9-13, 2018 to undertake initial study for possible areas of cooperation in the field of Telecommunication. A 2-member delegation from HMT(I) visited Equatorial Guinea from 21-25 January, 2019 to study the possibilities of setting up of Vocational Training Centre. MOS (AYUSH), Shripad Yesso Naik, visited Equatorial

Guinea from 24-25 August , 2015 as the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister and called on to the President and Foreign Minister of EG. He conveyed the invitation to President for the Third India-Africa Forum Summit.

Foreign Minister Agapito led a delegation to India and participated in the First India-Equatorial Guinea Joint Commission Meeting held in New Delhi on 16 March, 2018. The President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo visited India for the first time in October 2015 to attend the Third India-Africa Summit. He led a high level delegation for the summit. In his address, he said that Equatorial Guinea is in the process of diversification of its economy and cited the preferred sectors for the investment in Equatorial Guinea including energy, fishing, forestry, livestock farming, agriculture and mining. President and Foreign Minister had bilateral meetings with their Indian counterparts. President Obiang led a 88-member delegation to India to participate in the ISA Summit on March 11, 2018. The Commerce Minister of Equatorial Guinea, Mr. Borupu visited India from 7-9 March 2017 to participate in the CII-Exim Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership. During the visit, he met with MoS (Commerce and Industry) Nirmala Sitharaman. The discussions centred on enhancing economic cooperation and bilateral trade between the two countries. Mr. Borupu mentioned that EG would be interested in India's assistance in setting-up of a Methane Processing and Polymer Manufacturing plant. Earlier, the Minister of Mines and Energy of EG had visited India in January 2016 to attend the Fourth India-Africa Hydrocarbon conference. During the visit, he signed an MoU with ONGC Videsh Ltd for cooperation in the Petroleum and Natural Gas sector.

Earlier, in May 2011, MoS (IT & Telecom) Sachin Pilot had visited Equatorial Guinea as the Special Envoy of the PM. He had called on President Obiang and extended invitation from PM to attend the Second Africa-India Forum Summit at Addis Ababa. The President of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as the Chairman of the African Union, attended the 2nd AIFS summit at Addis Ababa.

In Oct 2015, India conveyed to EG its approval for their opening a resident Mission in New Delhi and reciprocated by opening its Mission in Malabo in March 2019. The first

Resident Ambassador of India to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea presented his credentials in September 2019 to President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasago.

Economic

India's relationship with EG is characterized by strong partnership in the oil and gas sector. EG is the fourth largest supplier of natural gas to India, after Qatar, Nigeria and Australia. In 2015, India's gas imports from Africa doubled compared to 2013; India accounted for eight per cent of Africa's gas exports in 2015, compared to four per cent in 2013 (Business Standard - 20 Jan 2016). Economic and commercial relations between India and Equatorial Guinea, though limited in nature, have been growing in the last few years, primarily due to its emergence as an important source of oil and other energy products. Bilateral trade increased from US\$ 11.54 million in 2010–11 to US\$ 809.10 million in 2016-17. However in 2017-18 the bilateral trade decreased to US\$766.41 million. Main items of India's exports to Equatorial Guinea are food products, cereals, meat, pharmaceuticals, machinery, apparel etc. Main items of India's imports from Equatorial Guinea are oil & gas, timber etc. Equatorial Guinea has expressed interest in Indian investments and transfer of technology in ICT, SMEs, infrastructure development and agriculture development.

Bilateral trade figures for the last 5 years are given below: (**US\$ million**)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Indian Exports	15.01	17.53	11.24	10.77	11.89
Indian Imports	749.38	457.30	797.85	755.64	514
Total Trade	764.39	474.83	809.10	766.41	525.89

Line of Credit

A Line of Credit of US\$ 15 million extended by EXIM Bank of India in 2005 for a potable drinking water project lapsed as it could not be utilized by EG.

Training and scholarships

Five slots have been allocated to Equatorial Guinea under ITEC programme and 4 slots under ICCR's Africa Scholarship Scheme. 31 Equatorial Guinea government officials have undertaken training in India as on date.

Consular

About 250 Indian nationals are working in the capital city of Malabo in departmental stores and hotels etc. Occasionally, the oil companies bring in Indians on short-term assignments in offshore oil installations.

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