

India-Cote d'Ivoire Relations

Relations between India and Cote d'Ivoire have traditionally been cordial. The Indian Embassy in Abidjan was established in 1979, while Cote d'Ivoire (Cd'I) opened its Resident Mission in New Delhi in September 2004. The then MOS, Shri Anand Sharma's visit to Cd'I from January 14-15, 2009, in what was a bilateral visit from India after a long gap of 17 years, lent momentum to our bilateral relationship. Following the inauguration of Mr. Alassane Ouattara as the President of Cote d'Ivoire in May, 2011, his new government has expressed desire to strengthen the bilateral relations further.

Bilateral Visits:

Major visits from Cd'I in the past include that of the then Foreign Minister Bakayoko to India in August 2006, leading a delegation to attend the 2nd Indo-Ivorian Joint Trade Committee (JTC) Meeting in Delhi. The delegation, inter alia, included two Ministers – representing Mines and Energy, and Environment, Water Resources and Forests. The then Minister of Industry and Promotion of Private Sector, Ms. Amah Marie Tehoua visited India in 2007, and again in 2008 to participate in the CII-EXIM Bank Partnership Conclave. Mr. Kipre Gnogbo, Technical Adviser to Minister of Mines and Energy, attended India-Africa Hydro Carbon Conference in 2007. The Minister of New Technologies and Information Communication, Mr. Gohrey Jackues Houga Bi, accompanied by the President of the Cd'I Telecommunications Agency (ATCI), and several other high-ranking telecom officers, visited India to participate in the ITU World Telecom Development Conference held in Hyderabad from May 24-June, 2010. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs and African Integration, Mr. Jean-Marie Kacou Gervais, held a meeting with Shri Vivek Katju, Secretary(West), on the sidelines of the AU's mid-Year Summit, held in Kampala from July 21-24, 2010. The Exim Bank Chairman, Shri T.C.A. Ranganathan, and a Joint Secretary from Ministry of Finance, along with other officials, attended the Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Development Fund, held in Abidjan in May 2010. India is a member of the AfDB Board of Governors. The officers from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the LOC Conference held in New Delhi in November, 2011. Senior officers from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cote d'Ivoire attended the 8th CII-Exim Bank Conclave held in Delhi in March, 2012.

Foreign Office Consultations

An MoU for bilateral Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was signed during Mr. Bakayoko's visit to India in August 2006. The FOC was held in Delhi, back-to-back with the 2nd JTC in 2006. The 1st JTC had taken place in 1997. Ivorian Foreign Minister, Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan (former Prime Minister from 1993-1999), has held a comprehensive review of Indo-Ivorian relations with the Ambassador this month, expressing his desire to convene the 3rd JTC and 2nd FOC at the earliest.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Total trade turnover for the last four years as follows:-

US\$345.09 million (India's export US\$94.26 mn and imports US\$250.84 mn) (**2010-11**), US\$ 420.50 mn (India's exports: US\$ 122.33 mn and imports: US\$ 298.17 mn)(**2009-10**); US\$ 416.42 (India's exports: US\$ 94.78 mn and imports: US\$ 321.63 mn)(**2008-09**), and US\$ 456.48 mn in **2007-08**.

The major items of Indian exports are: pharmaceuticals, transport equipment, engineering goods, steel products, rice, meat, jute hessian, jute bags, rubber manufactured products, plastic & linoleum products, cotton yarn and fabrics. Indian imports consist of raw cashew nut, teak wood, and metal scrap. Cd'I, the second largest exporter of cashew nut globally, supplies around 70-80 per cent of its exports to India.

A number of Indian enterprises have acquired a presence in Cd'I in recent years, including Tata Steel. Indian companies have shown interest in the sectors of hydrocarbons and mining iron ore, manganese, nickel, and gold, etc. Some Indian pharmaceutical companies have their offices in Abidjan. Indian businessmen are engaged in cashew nut, teak, and scrap metal trade. There are major PIO companies, such as Olam Ivoire, Dincom-CI and SOSACO, dealing in agricultural commodities, and Metal Ivoire producing iron sheets.

The CII and CEPICI (the Centre for Promotion of Trade & Investment in Cote d'Ivoire, headed by Prime Minister) organized a regional conclave "India-Africa Project Partnership" in 2007 in Abidjan. IT business delegations from Cd'I have been visiting India for participation in the annual INDIASOFT event, organized by the Electronic and Computer Software Export Promotion Council of India. An Association of IT companies of Cd'I (GIMI), led a 22-member business delegation to India in September 2006 and held wide-ranging discussions with IT industry, including NASSCOM.

A 20-member delegation of the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), during its visit to Abidjan last year, held a successful Buyer-Seller Meet, with the cooperation of the CEPICI and two leading business organizations.

ITEC Programme and Other Assistance

Bilateral ties have been strengthened by the widening South-South cooperation between the two countries. Cd'I, as one of the nine West African countries under the GOI's Team-9 initiative, has received soft credit for development projects in the areas of agro-processing, transport, electricity transmission, and fisheries, etc. TATA buses, provided under this initiative, have eased transport difficulties for common people substantially.

India provided 50 training slots to Ivorians under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme for the year 2011-12. Out of this only 14 slots have been utilized due to the political crises during 2011-12. A couple of ICCR scholarships are also offered annually. The Indo-Ivorian ITEC Association has been set up with more than 294 former trainees as members. Under the India-Africa Forum Summit 9

candidates have been sent to India for various training programmes in the year 2011-12.

Under the PAN African e-Network Project, Ivorian students have been pursuing M.Sc. (IT) and BBA courses.

Cultural and Education

India is emerging as a popular destination for college and university level education. There are over 950 Ivorian students in India, mostly in Bangalore and Pune. The most popular courses are in the fields of IT, engineering, and pharmacology.

An Ivorian school in Abidjan, named after Mahatma Gandhi - "Groupe Scolaire Gandhi", has around 300 students on its rolls.

Indian community

There are approximately 530 Indian nationals residing in Cd'I. Most of them are engaged in trading and general merchandise business. Eight Indian Army officers are working with the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). There are two Indian restaurants and a Hindu temple.

March 2012