

India – Cote d'Ivoire Relations

India and Cote d'Ivoire have traditionally enjoyed cordial relations. While India established the Embassy in Abidjan in 1979, Cote d'Ivoire [also called as Ivory Coast in English] opened its Resident Mission in New Delhi in September 2004. After a decade of political instability and armed conflicts, Mr. Alassane Ouattara was inaugurated as the President of Cote d'Ivoire [CI] in May 2011. His government has been desirous of strengthening bilateral relations with India and therefore, declared India as a focus country with emphasis on cooperation in the fields of ICT, Agriculture, Mining and Infrastructure.

Bilateral Visits

2. The high level bilateral visits have been less than desirable. Prime Minister Daniel Kablan Duncan accompanied by Ministers of Trade and Mines & Industry visited India from 3-7 November 2014 to participate in India Economic Summit in New Delhi. He met EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj and also held separate business interactions with CII and FICCI.

3. PM Duncan had earlier visited India from 17-19 March 2013 and addressed the 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave. He was accompanied by five Cabinet Ministers of Industry, Agriculture, Health, Economic Infrastructure and Information & Communication Technology. He met with PM Dr. Manmohan Singh.

4. The then Foreign Minister Youssouf Bakayoko visited India in August 2006, leading a delegation to attend the 2nd meeting of Indo-Ivorian Joint Trade Committee (JTC) in Delhi. The delegation, *inter alia*, included two Ministers – Mines and Energy; and Environment, Water Resources and Forests. An MOU for bilateral Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was signed during the visit. Earlier, Foreign Minister Simeon Aka had participated in the NAM Summit in Delhi in March 1983.

5. There have been visits to India of Ivorian Ministers from time to time to attend international conferences in India. Some of these are the then Minister of Industry and Promotion of Private Sector, Ms. Amah Marie Tehoua in 2007, and again in 2008 to participate in the CII-EXIM Bank Partnership Conclave; the then Minister of New Technologies and Information Communication, Mr. Gohrey Jackues Houga Bi, accompanied by the President of the CI Telecommunications Agency (ATCI) and several other high-ranking telecom officers, to participate in the ITU World Telecom Development Conference held in Hyderabad in May / June 2010.

6. From the Indian side, the Minister of State for Drinking Water and Sanitation Shri Ram Kripal Yadav visited Abidjan from 13-16 July 2015 as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to personally handover the invitation for the third India Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi. He called on President Ouattara, PM Duncan and also met with Foreign Minister Diby.

7. CMD of Exim Bank visited CI from 26-28 May 2015 for the African Development Bank (AfDB) annual meetings. He also called on the President and the

Prime Minister. Additional Secretary, DEA Dinesh Sharma also visited from 24-29 May 2015 to attend AfDB meetings.

8. MOS External Affairs Mrs. Preneet Kaur visited Abidjan from 22-24 January 2014. During the visit, she called on the President and Prime Minister and held bilateral talks with Foreign Minister Charles Koffi Diby. Two agreements were signed during the visit; the establishment of Joint Commission between the two Foreign Ministries and an MOU on Cooperation between the Foreign Service Institutes of the two countries. She, along with PM Duncan, launched the Mahatma Gandhi Technology Park at Grand Bassam on 24 January, for which India has committed a Line of Credit of US\$ 20 million.

9. Earlier major visits from India include the visit of the then MOS External Affairs Shri Anand Sharma from 14-15 January 2009. This bilateral visit from India took place after a long gap of 17 years, lending momentum to the bilateral relationship.

Cooperation in Electoral Matters

10. A Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in electoral matters was signed on 10 September 2004 at New Delhi during the visit of then president of Ivorian Independent Electoral Commission, Camille Hogueie.

Bilateral Trade

11. Total bilateral trade data during the last five years are as follows:

(in million US\$)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total	%age Growth
2010-11	94.15	250.84	344.99	
2011-12	282.53	466.33	748.86	117.07
2012-13	395.97	384.23	780.20	4.19
2013-14	298.95	298.40	597.35	-23.44
2014-15	309.75	532.10	841.85	40.93

12. The bilateral trade, having witnessed a substantial increase post internal disturbance period marking return of peace and political stability since mid 2011, remained steady in the following year and slowed down in the year 2013-14. It has picked up substantially in the last one year.

13. India imports cashew, manganese ore, cotton, wood, scrap metals, rubber, etc. CI is the second largest exporter of cashew in the world and India imports around 80 percent of Ivorian exports of cashew. The main items of India's export are cereals (rice), pharmaceutical products, machinery, articles of iron, chemicals, plastics, rubber products, vehicles, etc.

Indian Investment in Cote d'Ivoire

14. A number of Indian enterprises have acquired presence in CI in recent years making India one of the largest Foreign Director Investor country in CI. Besides an Indian company mining and exporting manganese, there are other 4-5 large companies from India are currently engaged in the exploration activities in iron, manganese and gold mining. A mid-size steel plant King Ivoire is owned and run by Indian business group.

15. There are a large number of Indian companies – small and medium size – involved in trading of cashew, timber and commodities; manufacturing; ICT; agro-processing, etc. However, many of these enterprises, controlled by NRIs / PIOs, are now based out of Dubai, Singapore, etc.

16. ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) had entered into a joint venture with VANCO, a US energy company, for offshore hydrocarbon exploration in CI in 2005, but the consortium pulled out a year later due to lack of encouraging technical data. OVL once again examined the technical data in 2015 of various oil and gas blocks on offer in CI but did not find it appealing enough.

17. Many large Indian pharmaceutical companies, including Ranbaxy, Cadila, Ajanta, Stride, Bharat Serum, Micro Labs, IPCA, etc., have intensified their operations in CI. Several of these companies have opened / expanded their offices in Abidjan in 2013 and 2014 with the objective of covering the entire West African, particularly Francophone countries, from Abidjan.

Economic and Commercial Exchanges

18. A business delegation coordinated by FICCI and Embassy of India, Abidjan visited from 26-29 May 2015. The delegation had separate meetings several Ministers of CI and also called on PM Duncan.

19. At the invitation of PM Duncan, an Indian business and investment delegation comprising 13 Indian companies visited Abidjan from 7-9 December 2014 and had interaction with several Ivorian Ministries as well as personal interaction with the Prime Minister. Another Indian business delegation had visited from 6-9 April 2013 and had B2B meetings.

20. A 9-member ICT delegation from Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) visited CI from 29 Nov – 1 Dec 2012. A 20-member delegation of the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), during its visit in 2010, held a successful Buyer-Seller Meet. In addition, IT business delegations from CI have been visiting India for participation in the annual INDIASOFT event, organized by the Electronic and Computer Software Export Promotion Council of India.

21. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Centre for Promotion of Trade & Investment in Cote d'Ivoire (CEPICI) organized a regional conclave "India-Africa Project Partnership" in 2007 in Abidjan.

Indian Economic Assistance

22. Bilateral ties have been strengthened by the expanding South-South Cooperation between the two countries. CI has received soft credit for development projects in the areas of agro-processing, transport, electricity transmission, fisheries, etc. Following Lines of Credit (LOC) have been extended to CI through Exim Bank of India:

S.No.	LOC Projects	Year and Status
1.	US\$ 26.80 mn for (i) supply of 400 buses; (ii) cashew nut processing plant; (iii) vegetable oil processing plant; and (iv) chip-making, liquid sugar, cassava starch making plants.	2005; Completed
2.	US\$ 25.50 mn to CI for (i) building the Mahatma Gandhi IT and Biotechnology Park (US\$ 20 mn); (ii) Fisheries Processing Plant (US\$ 4 mn); and (iii) Coconut Fibre Processing Plant (US\$ 1.5 mn).	2008; Under implementation
3.	LOC of US\$ 30 mn for Development of Rice production programme	2009; Under implementation
4.	US\$ 54 mn (30 + 24) for supply, erection and commissioning of Laboa-Boundiali-Ferkessedougou 225 KV transmission line	2009; Under implementation
5.	US\$ 102 million for development of lowland agriculture	Final agreement on operationalisation of LOC is yet to be signed

23. India extended a total grant of US\$ 790,000/- for establishment of the Centre for Demonstration and Promotion of Technologies (CDT) situated in Abidjan. CDT is an autonomous institution under Ministry of Industry of CI. The implementing agency on Indian side was National Research Development Corporation, a GOI enterprise, and LA Societe (I2T), Ivoirienne De Technologie Tropicale on the Ivorian side. The project was implemented for a period of three years during 2007-2010 under an MOU signed between two Governments in 2005.

24. **IAFS Process:** Under the PAN African e-Network Project, over 100 Ivorian students have been pursuing higher studies through distant learning faculties at the University of Cocody. A tele-medical consultation facility with prominent hospitals in India has been established at Youpogong Hospital in Abidjan. Since the medium of instructions is not French (*lingua franca* in CI), there is a lack of enthusiasm among students who had registered for the courses. A 3-member team from Ministry of Rural Development and NIRD visited from 18-23 May 2015 to examine establishment of Rural Technology Park in CI as per decision of IAFS –II.

Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

25. India has been providing significant number of training slots to CI under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme; 80 in the current year 2015-16. Government of India through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

have also given 11 fully paid scholarships to Ivorian youth to pursue undergraduate and post graduate studies in India. Apart from this, several Ivorian students have also undergone training courses under the IAFS mechanism.

26. India is fast becoming an important learning center for Ivorian students, particularly for ICT studies besides Commerce and Management degrees. Over 500 Ivorian students went to India for studies on self-financing basis in the last three years.

Culture

27. Indian tele-serials, dubbed in French, have been immensely popular in CI, including Vaidahi and Saloni. An Ivorian band SOTEKA participated at the 29th "International Surajkund Crafts Mela," held in India in February 2015.

Indian Community

28. There are estimated over 1500 Indian nationals residing in CI. Most of them are engaged in mining, manufacturing, trading and general merchandise business. Eight (8) Indian Army officers are working with the UN Operations in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). There are also 17 Indians working with African Development Bank which returned to Abidjan in 2014.

29. ISKCON and Geeta Ashram have their setup in Abidjan.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Abidjan website:
<http://www.eoiabidjan.org/>

July 2015