

Gabon

India – Republic of Gabon Relations: India and Gabon have enjoyed warm and friendly relations dating back to pre-independence era of Gabon. Gabon has supported India's candidature at various international forums. Visits from the Gabonese side to India have been regular. Minister for Mining, Oil, Energy and Hydraulic Resources, Mr. Richard Auguste and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, Mr. Jean Ping visited India in May, 2007. Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, then, Senior Minister for National Defence and the current President of Gabon visited India in November, 2007. He held bilateral talks with Raksha Mantri and visited the defence training centres and production facilities. Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Hydrocarbons, Mr. Julian Nkoghe Bekalen visited India in December, 2009 for the 2nd India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference held in New Delhi. Ms. Laure Olga Gondjout, Minister of Communications visited India in May 2010. Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Bunduku Latha visited New Delhi from 27-29 March, 2011 for the 7th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership.

H.E. Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon led an official delegation to the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit, held in New Delhi from 26-30th October, 2015. MOS, Human Resource Development, Mr. Ram Shankar Katheria visited Libreville in September 2015, as Special Envoy of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi to invite President Ali Bongo Ondimba to India for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit, in Delhi. Eight member delegation led by Mr. Mabina Kombila Edgard, Director Exploration, Ministry of Petrol and Hydrocarbon attended the 4th India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference held in New Delhi from January 21–22, 2016. Gabon's Minister of State for Environment and Natural Resources Mr. Crepin Magliore Gwodog visited India in May 2016 to take part in a road show organized to attract Indian investments to Gabon. H E Pacome Mobebe Boubeya, Minister of Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi in June 2017. Foreign Minister Mr. Regis Immongault paid a bilateral visit to India in November 2018 and held detailed discussions with the Minister of External Affairs, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj.

India's Economic Assistance to Gabon: Following Lines of Credit have been accorded to Gabon: (i) LoC worth US\$14.5 million in March, 2007 for a housing project in Bikele near Libreville; (ii) LoC worth US\$ 67.19 million in 2011 to rehabilitate and upgrade the broadcasting facilities of Gabon.

Capacity Building Programme: 26 ITEC slots were utilized from 2016-2019. 3 officials received training under AIFS in 2012-13. 7 slots under ITEC were utilized till August 2017. 5 slots under ICCR Scholarships were allotted for the year 2017-18.

Grant/Assistance: (i) Gabon was among the first 15 African countries to implement the Pan African e-network project. Tele-education, Tele-medicine and VVIP connectivity have been set up in Libreville under this project. (ii) A Vocational Training Centre is proposed to be set up in Gabon, under the Plan of Action agreed with the African Union at the first India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April, 2008.

Indian Investments: (i) Oil India Ltd. [OIL], in partnership with Indian Oil Ltd., is conducting oil exploration in Shakti Block, Lamberele. So far 44 million barrel 'in-place' oil has been discovered by OIL. (ii) Bharti Airtel is present in Gabon following its acquisition of Zain Communications Network in 2010. (iii) More than 20 Indian companies have set up units in Gabon's SEZ since 2016. Most of these companies are into veneer manufacturing. In recent years, Gabon has become an attractive investment destination for those in the wood industry. India's commodity giant, 3F Oil Palm Agrotech Ltd., is looking to invest in a palm oil project in Gabon. MOIL is actively exploring the possibility of acquiring manganese ore mines in Gabon.

Trade and Commercial Relations: The main items of export were meat and edible meat offal, plastic and articles thereof, iron and steel, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical

machinery and equipment. Main items of import comprised ores, slag and ash, mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation, bituminous substances, and mineral waxes.

Bilateral trade figures are given below (USD million, period April-Feb):

Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Exports	42.70	36.79	43.34	45.08	55.17
Imports	793.06	105.63	69.46	395.39	456.01
Total Trade	835.76	142.42	112.80	440.46	511.18

(Source: Department of Commerce, GoI)

Indian community: There are around 800 Indians living in Gabon. They are basically engaged in infrastructure projects, trading, export of timber and metal scrap.

February 2020