

India - Cameroon Bilateral Relations

Political Relations

India and Cameroon have friendly and cordial relations dating back to the independence of the latter in 1960. The resident Mission in Yaounde was established on 12 September 2019 with the first High Commissioner of India to Cameroon Shri Rakesh Malhotra presenting his Credentials to President Paul Biya on 24th September, 2019.

India's bilateral engagement with Cameroon gathered momentum through high level visits between the two countries including the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III). Cameroon leadership acknowledges India's contributions to Africa, its secular democracy and economic progress and the leadership it provided to the Non- Aligned Movement.

Bilateral Visits

(I) From Cameroon to India

- President Mr. Paul Biya visited India in March 1983 to attend NAM Summit.
- Prime Minister Mr. Philomen Yang accompanied by seven Ministers and a large business delegation visited India in March 2013 to attend CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on Africa.
- Minister for Economy & Planning Mr Emmanuel Nganou Dogmas and Minister of Social Welfare Mrs. Bankang Mbock Catherine, visited India on September 12-16, 2012 for signing of \$42m Credit Line for the Cassava Plantation Project.
- Defence Minister Mr Edger Alain Mebe Ngo'o visited India in March 2012 to attend DefExpo India 2012 held in New Delhi.
- Minister for External Relations Mr. Mbella Mbella Lejeune, led the Cameroonian delegation that participated in the India-Africa Summit-III from October 26-30, 2015.
- A 8- member delegation comprising of Ministry of Public Health Officials, Doctors and Pharmacists visited India from October 3-5, 2016 to attend the conference - Advantage Health Care India 2016- organised by FICCI in Noida, UP.
- Minister of Economy Mr. Louis Paul Motaze led a Cameroonian delegation to India from 29 January to 4 February 2017 to sign a commercial loan agreement with Exim Bank of India worth USD 93.50 million for construction of 225 kv Nkongsamba - Bafoussam and Yaounde – Abong Mbang Transmission Line.

- Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development Mr. Louis Pal Motaze again visited India to attend AfDB meeting held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat from 22-26 May, 2017.
- President of African Parliamentary Forum on Population Development, Ms. Marie Rose Nguini Effa, attended a conference on 'enhancing role of parliamentarians in the inter-linkage between population issues and the 2030 agenda of sustainable development', held in New Delhi on 13 September 2017.
- Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Mrs. Emilia Mojowa Lifaka, who was also the Vice-Chairperson of Executive Committee of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), visited India, as part of a delegation comprising representatives of African Group of Commonwealth Speakers Forum on 11 October, 2017.
- Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Mrs. Emilia Mojowa Lifaka, visited New Delhi to attend the Commonwealth Youth Parliament Meeting from 24-29 November 2019.
- A 4-member Parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Njaingum Musa Mbutoh, Member of Parliament, visited India from 2-5 December 2019.

(II) From India to Cameroon

- External Affairs Minister of India met with Cameroonian Foreign Minister in New York in September 2002.
- In June 2008, Mr. Anand Sharma, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, met Cameroonian Foreign Minister at AU Summit in Sham Al Sheikh, Egypt.
- A 60-member Indian Parliamentary delegation comprising of MPs, MLAs including Speakers of a few States Assemblies visited Cameroon to attend the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon from October 2-10, 2014.
- Special Envoy to PM, Prof. Ram Shankar Katheria, MOS(HRD) visited Cameroon on July 15-17, 2015 to personally handover invitation letters from Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Cameroonian President Mr. Paul Biya to attend India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III).
- Mr. Rahul Navin, Commissioner of Income Tax, Foreign Tax and Tax Research Division, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Department of Revenue participated in the 10th Plenary Meeting of the General Forum of Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax purposes in November 2017 in Yaoundé.

- Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M. Muraleedharan, visited Yaounde on September 3-4, 2019 and called on the Prime Minister and met Minister for External Relations.
- Minister of External Affairs, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met Minister Delegate for External Relations and in-charge-of Islamic Affairs Mr. AdoumGargoum in 24 October 2019 on the sidelines of NAM Ministerial Meeting in Baku.

Trade and Commercial Relations

India and Cameroon signed a Trade Agreement in February 1968, thus laying the foundations for bilateral trade arrangements.

In 2019-20, India emerged as the 7th trading partner of Cameroon with two-way trade touching US \$ 904.81 million. India's imports were to the tune of US \$ 676.36 million while exports US \$ 228.45 million. This was an increase of 73.52% over the earlier year. However, unfortunately, due to COVID-19, in 2020-21, the bilateral trade has come down to US \$ 481.54 million, which is 46.78% less than 2019-2020.

India – Cameroon Bilateral Trade Statistics (Value in US \$ million)

Year	India's Exports to Cameroon	India's Imports from Cameroon	Total Trade
2015-16	191	558	749
2016-17	149	359	508
2017-18	194	213	407
2018-19	179	344	523
2019-20	228	676	904
2020-21	279	202	481

There are about 60 Indian companies having their presence in Cameroon, mostly engaged in trading of general merchandise. Some of the prominent companies include Mahima group (general trading and retailing), Deelite group (manufacturing of biscuits, plastics, supermarkets) Sonam group (Stallion group from Nigeria, engaged in import of rice), Reddy Global (manufacturing of alcohol) and Africure (manufacture of pharmaceuticals). Indians have invested to the tune of US\$10-15 million in plastics, carton, biscuits, smelting of scrap, bottling and distribution of alcohol. Jindal group has got concession in the area of Iron Ore mining from a South Korean company. This Project involves a sizeable amount of investment. Indian company Africure Pharmaceuticals invested USD 29.8 million in Douala, to produce essential drugs for local consumption.

Key potential areas for cooperation and investment are - Oil & gas, agriculture & food processing, fertilizers, forestry, mining, telecom, IT, railways and Indian exports of consumer and light engineering goods.

Cameroon is the largest economy in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). GDP of Cameroon was 39.04 Billion USD in 2020. According to IMF, in 2019, Cameroon's growth fell to 3.7% from 4.1% a year earlier. This was mainly due to lower than anticipated performance in the non-oil sector. This decline was partially offset by the rebound in the oil and gas sector. According to the IMF forecasts, in 2020, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, GDP growth is expected to fall to -1.2% and pick up to 4.1% in 2021, subject to the post-pandemic global economic recovery.

Defence Cooperation

India has been providing various training slots for the Cameroonian Armed Forces in Indian Armed Forces Training establishments under the ITEC program. Focus of our Defence Cooperation is to provide training in counter terrorism, anti-piracy operations and in UN peace keeping operations. Defence cooperation forms an important facet of our bilateral engagement. A senior representative from the Cameroon Ministry of Defence attended the DefExpo held in Bengaluru in April 2018.

Projects and related activities

In 2007, Government of India gifted 60 tractors and agricultural implements to Government of Cameroon.

Development Cooperation

(I) Lines of Credit & Commercial Loan Agreements

In May 2009, a \$ 37.65 million Indian Line of Credit (LoC) for Cameroon funding a project each of Rice and Maize Farm Plantation was operationalized.

In September 2012, India and Cameroon signed on a new LOC of \$ 42 million for Cassava plantation project in Cameroon.

During the visit of Cameroon Minister of Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Mr. Louis Paul Motaze, to New Delhi from 29 January to 4 February 2017, Cameroon signed a commercial loan agreement with Exim Bank of India worth USD 93.50 million for construction of 225 kV Nkongsamba - Bafoussam and Yaounde – AbongMbang Transmission Line. The project started in November 2019.

(II) Capacity Building

India has been supporting Cameroon's efforts in Capacity building under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme since 1964. India offers 32 training slots under ITEC to Cameroon annually.

3 slots have been allocated to Cameroon under the Africa Scholarship Scheme of ICCR.

Consequent to the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) held in New Delhi in October 2015, India has been offering additional training programmes to Cameroon in diverse subjects ranging from Agriculture to Hydropower. In 2017-18, 4 Cameroonians have been trained under India-Africa Forum Summit-III (IAFS-III) Programmes in the prominent training Institutes in India.

Ten Cameroonian Diplomats visited India for the 1st Special Course for Francophone and Central and West African Countries from 25 November to 7 December, 2019.

Culture

Cameroon is officially a French-English bilingual country, even though most official work is in French language. Indian films are popular in Cameroon. A Rajasthani folk dance troupe sponsored by ICCR performed in Douala, Cameroon in November 2010. An Indian Film Festival was organized by Honorary Consul of India in 2013. To commemorate 100 years of Indian cinema in Cameroon, an Indian Film Festival was organized in 2013 by the Honorary Consul of India to Cameroon and the Indian Community in collaboration with the Institut Francais du Cameroun, with French subtitles.

After the establishment of the High Commission in September 2019, International Yoga Day is being celebrated every year. Similarly, other festivals like Holi, Ambedkar Jayanti, Gandhi Jayanti, Hindi Day etc. are being celebrated by the Mission. The Mission also celebrated 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji.

Indian Community

There are about 800 Indian expatriates in Cameroon, engaged mostly in trading and small business apart from some professionals. Indians are generally well-regarded. Majority of Indian nationals are living Douala, financial city and a port city of Cameroon

Air Connectivity

There are no direct air links with India. Indian nationals largely use the Ethiopian Airlines which connects to Indian cities of Mumbai and New Delhi via Addis Ababa.

Visa Procedures

Indians travelling to Cameroon require visa. As there is still no resident Cameroonian High Commission in India, visa needs to be obtained from elsewhere or through DGSN.

Cameroonians travelling to India need to obtain visa. The visa can be obtained through the High Commission in Yaounde. India also extends e-Visa facility for Cameroon nationals as per extant guidelines.

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