

India - Rwanda Bilateral Relations

Since its independence from Belgium in July, 1962, Rwanda was plagued by a protracted and internecine conflict between two dominant groups viz. Hutu & Tutsi. After several failed efforts, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the then Government of Rwanda signed the Arusha Peace Accord in 1993. But with the assassination of the Hutu President of Rwanda in April 1994, Rwanda once again plunged into violence in which an estimated 1 million people died. After the end of the civil war, Rwanda is moving steadily on the path of recovery and national reconciliation.

Political Relations

Bilateral relations between India and Rwanda have been cordial and have grown steadily over the years. In 1999, Rwanda officially opened its Mission in New Delhi and appointed its first resident Ambassador in New Delhi in 2001. (Rwanda opted to become a member of the Commonwealth in 2009 even though it had not been a British protectorate or a British colony). India has opened its resident Mission in Kigali with the arrival of High Commissioner on 15th August, 2018. The country became a full member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2004 and subsequently in 2007 it was admitted to the EAC.

High Level Visits from India

- Shri Arun Yadav, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries visited Rwanda in May 2011 to advance and strengthen sectoral cooperation.
- A high-level delegation led by Smt. Preneet Kaur, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs visited Rwanda in February, 2012. The Minister was accompanied by a multi-sectoral CII business delegation.
- In November 2013, Shri K.H. Muniyappa, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, led a business delegation to Kigali to participate in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Expo and Symposium.
- Shri Kalraj Mishra, Hon'ble Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises visited Kigali in January 2015 to inaugurate the Vocational Training Institute set-up under GOI assistance.
- Shri Sudarshan Bhagat, the Minister of State for Rural Development visited Rwanda in July 2015 as PM's Special Envoy to extend invitation to the President and the Foreign Minister of Rwanda for IAFS-III.
- Shri Anil Madhav Dave, Minister of State of Environment, Forest and Climate Change visited Rwanda in October 2016, to participate in the 28th Meeting of the Montreal Protocol.
- The Vice-President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Rwanda from 19-21 February 2017. During the visit, he called on the President of Rwanda and had meetings with

President of Rwandan Senate (Upper House) and Prime Minister of Rwanda. He also interacted with Indian community at a reception hosted by the High Commissioner, attended a business forum event organized by Rwanda Development Board where representatives from FICCI also participated. An innovators exhibition was also inaugurated by him along with Prime Minister of Rwanda. He also addressed students of the University of Rwanda.

- The first state visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Rwanda took place on 23-24 July, 2018. The following MoUs/Agreements were signed during the visit:
 - (i) MoU on Defence Co-operation.
 - (ii) Bilateral Trade Agreement.
 - (iii) MoU on Dairy Co-operation.
 - (iv) MoU on leather cooperation.
 - (v) MoU on Cultural Exchange.
 - (vi) Amendment to the MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture and Animal Resources.
 - (vii) LoC agreement of US\$ 100 million for development of Industrial Parks and expansion of Kigali SEZ.
 - (viii) LoC agreement of US \$ 100 million for financing components of its Agriculture Project Schemes.

- During the Visit, Hon'ble Prime Minister also made the following announcements:
 - (i) Setting up of a Task Force in the field of digital education including the provision of an e-library.
 - (ii) Gifting of 100,000 books of the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and to provide support for digitalization and online access of education books and related learning material.
 - (iii) Setting up of the Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Kigali.
 - (iv) Fully funded 25 slots for short term- training in the field of Dairy production and processing.
 - (v) Contribution of US \$10,000 each to the Gisozi Genocide Memorial in Kigali and the Imbutu Foundation run by the First Lady of Rwanda towards the Foundation for the education of the girl child.
 - (vi) Gift of 200 cows worth US\$ 200,000/- to Rwandan Girinka programme, a social protection scheme of one cow - one family

High level visits from Rwanda

- Rwandan President Paul Kagame has visited India thrice in private capacity and twice on official visit. In December, 2002 he visited India to receive an Honorary Doctorate from the Vellore Institute of Technology. President Kagame again visited New Delhi in January, 2009 to participate in the India-Africa Business Forum organised by FICCI, as the Chief Guest. He visited New Delhi in November 2014 to participate in the India Economic Forum. He met the Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee during the visit.
- In January 2017, President Kagame visited India to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. He also met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Summit. President Kagame visited Delhi from 9-12 March, 2018 to participate in the founding Conference of International Solar Alliance.

- Former Rwandan Prime Minister, Mr. Bernard Makuza participated in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in January, 2011. During the visit he called on Hon'ble Prime Minister. He again led a 25-member business delegation to India in October, 2011 to explore new investment opportunities.
- In April 2012, Gen. James Kaberebe, Hon'ble Minister of Defence led a three-member delegation to India to attend DefExpo India 2012. During the visit, he met Hon. Defence Minister of India and discussed possible future cooperation between the two countries in the field of defence.
- Hon'ble Speaker of Parliament of Rwanda Ms. Rose Mukantabana attended the 7th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament held in New Delhi in October 2012.
- Dr. Agnes Matilda Kalibata, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources visited India in January, 2013 at the invitation of Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources.
- Hon'ble Minister of Trade and Industry, Francis Kanimba, led a business delegation to the 9th CII- EXIM Bank conclave to New Delhi from 17-19 March, 2013.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. Anastase Murekezi visited India in October 2015 to participate in the India-Africa Forum Summit – III.
- In July, 2018, Hon'ble President of the Senate of Rwanda, Mr. Bernerd Makuza visited India, where he had a meeting with the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Shri Venkaiah Naidu. A MoU for cooperation between the senate of Rwanda and the Rajya Sabha of India was signed during the visit.
- Hon'ble Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda, Mr. Olivier Nduhungirehe, attended the 9th Vibrant Gujarat Summit in January 2019 on behalf of the Hon'ble President of Rwanda, H.E Paul Kagame.

Bilateral Cooperation

- India's engagement with Rwanda is at three levels viz. at the African Union (AU) level, at level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and at the bilateral level. India's engagement with Rwanda has been consultative, response-based and focused on developing Rwandan capacities and human capital. Indian assistance to Rwanda has also been guided by the announcements made by India at the India-Africa Forum Summits in 2008, 2011, and 2015.
- Following the first India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-I), Rwanda was nominated by the AU as one of the recipients to host the India-Africa Vocational Training Centre (VTC). Shri Kalraj Mishra, the Hon'ble Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises visited Kigali in January 2015 to inaugurate the Vocational Training Institute.
- During IAFS-II, India announced establishment of several institutions in Africa. As part of its initiatives under IAFS-II, India is in the process of establishing the India-Africa Entrepreneurship Development Centre (IAEDC) in Rwanda. While recognizing that entrepreneurship is one of the most important factors in the development of a country's economy and an antidote to unemployment, the centre will be committed to nurture the spirit of entrepreneurship in the country through education, training and business advisory services. At IAFS-II, India also offered, among other things, eight Agricultural Seed

Production-cum Demonstration Centre, one each for the 8 RECs. The EAC has decided to locate one centre in Rwanda. The centre is a testimony to India's effort to help the region achieve food security. Another institute is a Food Testing Laboratory (FTL) which India is setting-up in Rwanda as per announcements made under IAFS-II. ICRISAT, the Indian implementing agency and Rwanda Bureau of Standards (RBS) are working towards establishment of the institute.

Other development cooperation

- Under the Pan Africa e-Network project, tele-medicine and tele-education centres were established in Rwanda in 2009 with an aim to enable Rwandan doctors consult their Indian counterparts, and ensure world-class medical consultation and treatment for patients and education for students.
- Solar electrification of 35 schools in Rural Rwanda was completed in 2014 under a grant of Rs. 2.59 Crore from Government of India.
- India has extended in 2013 LoCs totalling US \$ 120 million for the development of Export Targeted Irrigated Agriculture Project and its expansion.
- A 28 MW Hydroelectric Project on the Nyabarongo River was completed and commissioned in early 2016 under a Government of India assisted Line of Credit of US \$ 80 million. The project has substantially augmented Rwanda's total electricity generation capacity.
- An MoU for LOCs worth US \$ 81 million for establishment of 10 vocational training centres and 4 business incubation centres was signed between the EXIM Bank of India and Government of Rwanda on 24 May 2017.
- LOC worth US \$ 66.6 million for upgradation of Base-Butaro-Kideho road was signed between EXIM Bank of India and Govt. of Rwanda on 14 May 2018.
- The total volume of LoCs extended to Rwanda so far till date (including two LoCs announced by Hon'ble PM Modi during visit to Rwanda in July, 2018) are US \$ 547 million.
- In February 2017, India and Rwanda also signed Bilateral Air Services Agreement (Rwandair has already started commercial operations to Mumbai) and an agreement for the exemption of visa for diplomatic and official passport holders.
- Medicines worth US \$ 2 million were gifted to Rwanda in early 2019 to fight against HIV AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.
- 1,00,000 NCERT books were also gifted to Rwanda in late 2019 to support education in Rwanda.
- Kigali is increasingly being viewed by the Indian organizations/institutions as a place to host/organize conferences. In July 2019, Indian think tank, Observer Research Foundation (ORF) organized the Kigali Global Dialogue in Kigali. In August, 2019, Telecom Equipments and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) organized the India-Africa ICT Expo 2019 in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda in Kigali.

Scholarships and capacity building programmes

The Government of India offers scholarships and fellowships to Rwandans from the Government and private sector to enable them to pursue under-graduate, post-graduate and research courses in India. Training courses in highly specialised areas are also conducted for officers of public institutions. Under ITEC/SCAAP 17 training slots are allotted to Rwanda during 2018-19. Under ICCR, 13 scholarship slots were allotted to Rwanda during 2018-19. In addition, under IAFS also training slots are offered to Rwanda. Officers from the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) have also been availing of training slots in India.

A MoU on Cooperation in Forensic Sciences was signed between the Government of Rwanda and Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in January 2017. Under the MoU signed, several Rwandan officials have undergone training in the field of Forensic Science.

Commercial Relations and Bilateral Trade

The volume of bilateral trade is small with India's exports to Rwanda during 2018-19 being US \$ 144.90 million whereas India's imports from Rwanda stood at US\$ 6.68 million for the same period. Major items of India's exports to Rwanda include electrical and mechanical machinery, pharmaceuticals and vehicles. Major imports from Rwanda include Metallic Articles (Lead, Aluminum and Copper), Precious, Semi Precious Stones, Tea and Coffee.

Indian Community

There are approximately 3000 Indian nationals and PIOs in Rwanda. Rwanda's only sugar refinery, its only modern textile mill as well as a soap and cosmetic factory are PIO-owned. Investments from India are in tea sector by Assam's Luxmi Tea, a Kolkata based company. TVS motorbikes are quite popular in Rwanda. Airtel Rwanda is one of the major players in telecom sector in Rwanda. Sahasra Lighting is also a key player in supply of LED lighting and solar panels. The Government of Rwanda has a positive attitude towards the Indian community. During the genocide of 1994, no Indian national was killed or injured. The evacuation of Indian nationals by the Indian Government from Rwanda to Bujumbura and Nairobi was also not interfered with by RPF or the Government forces. The positive role that the Indian community plays in the Rwandan economy is well appreciated by the Rwandan Government.

(February 2020)