

India- Mali Relations

General: Republic of Mali achieved its independence from France on 22 September 1960. It is a proclaimed secular state. A landlocked country, Mali is located in West Africa in the southern sub-Sahara region. Almost 60 percent of the country is desert (north-eastern part). The estimated population is 16-18 million; overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims (around 95%). Most of the high density population centers are located in the south which is blessed with two perennially flowing rivers Niger, the lifeline of the country, and the Senegal in the west. Mali is the 8th largest country in Africa and 24th in the world. The lingua franca is Bambara (with around 80% speakers). The currency is Communauté Financière Africaine Franc (CFA Franc or FCFA). One US\$ is equivalent to roughly between FCFA 575-600. French is the official language. The capital city is Bamako.

The Leadership:

President: H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta (since 4 Sep 2013)

Prime Minister: H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga (since 8 April 2017)

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Mr. Abdoulaye Diop (since 11 April 2014)

Main Foreign Policy Priorities for the Country:

- i) Strengthening of good neighborly relations, bilateral relations with non-border African countries and promotion of world peace.
- ii) Promotion of economic integration of the sub-region, unity and development of Africa.
- iii) Contribution towards the economic and social development of Mali.
- iv) More effective and coordinated management towards better and effective representation of Malians at International fora.

Political Relations:

India and Mali have traditionally maintained friendly relations and have no geo-political conflicts. The Government of India established its Embassy in Bamako in May 2009. Mali followed soon by opening its Embassy in New Delhi in August 2009. During the political and security crisis in Mali and consequent upon a military coup in March 2012, India strongly supported efforts for restoration of constitutional order in Mali and preservation of its territorial integrity. India also contributed US\$ 1 million for strengthening of Malian forces at the Donors Conference held in Addis Ababa. Now that democratic order has been restored since September 2013, Government of India, while welcoming the development, has reiterated its willingness to further strengthening its development cooperation partnership with Mali. India has consistently opposed colonialism and liberally extended developmental assistance under various schemes to Mali over the years. Mali too has been supportive of India's line on various international issues. The Government of Mali acknowledges India's contribution and looks forward to further strengthening its relationship with India. Both the countries have identified terrorism as a grave threat to peace and prosperity and agree to cooperation at bilateral, regional and multi-lateral level to combat this menace.

Bilateral Agreements between India and Mali:

- i) Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (2009)
- ii) Agreement on Political, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation (2009)
- iii) MOU on Cooperation in Geology and Mineral Resources (2012)
- iv) Cultural Exchange Programme (September 2016)
- v) MOU on Standards between the Bureau of Indian Standards and Direction Nationale De Industries, Mali (September 2016)

Bilateral Visits:

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Republic of Mali Hon'ble Vice President of India (HVPI) Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Mali from 29-30 September 2016. On this first ever high level visit from India, Vice President was accompanied by Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, three members of Parliament and senior officials.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. MJ Akbar visited Mali on a bilateral official visit from March 2-3, 2017. During his visit to Mali, he co-chaired the first ever Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) between India and Mali along with the Foreign Minister of Mali H.E Mr. Abdoulaye Diop.

The President of the Republic of Mali, accompanied by a high level delegation, including several Ministers and high level officials, attended the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in October 2015 at the invitation of the Indian Prime Minister. The First Lady of Mali had earlier visited India in August 2015 to attend the Global 'Call to Action Summit 2015'. She also briefly met the Prime Minister during that visit.

Direct and Indirect Assistance:

Apart from direct bilateral assistance, Mali has availed Indian assistance through TEAM-9 (Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement aimed at 9 West African States), NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Bank.

Lines of Credit:

India has so far extended Lines of Credit worth US\$ 303.62 million to Mali for rural electrification, tractors and tractor assembly plant, railway coaches and locomotives, power-grid interconnection between Cote d'Ivoire and Mali and power distribution, agriculture and food processing. A major power transmission project from the city of Sikasso to Bamako via Bougouni, for which India has extended LoC of US\$ 100 million, is at the tendering stage under the revised LoC Guidelines.

Pan-African e-Network Project:

This project is operational in Mali. This project, which aims to connect all the Africans through a satellite and optical fibre network with a view to providing educational

programmes, is operational in Bamako, Mali, with the assistance of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), the implementing agency.

Offer of DFTP:

India had offered Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to Mali. Mali has completed required formalities and Indian importers are already availing the benefit of this dispensation.

Offer of Food Processing Business Incubation Centre:

India has offered to establish a Food Processing Business Incubation Centre in Mali. Implementing Agencies from both the sides have been selected and MoU has been shared with the Government of Mali.

Spread of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) 2014:

Mali was affected by Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in late 2014. India made a financial contribution of over US\$ 12.55 million towards containment of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the West African region, though not Mali-specific.

Training Assistance:

Total 61 candidates attended various courses under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) during the year 2016-17. For the year 2017-18 also, equal number of slots have been offered for the citizens of the Rep of Mali. Setting up of a Centre for English Language Training in Mali has been announced during the HVPI's Visit to Mali on 29-30 Sep 2016.

Other Scholarships:

- i) Under various initiatives of the India-Africa Forum Summits.
- ii) Agricultural scholarships administered through the African Union.
- iii) C. V. Raman Fellowship Scheme: 8 slots offered to Mali, 2 have already been availed.
- iv) Two Malian military officers have participated in the training programme conducted by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping in Delhi.
- v) ICCR-Africa Scholarship Scheme: 8 slots offered to Mali during 2016-17.

Other Sectoral Cooperation:

The Central Electronics Limited (CEL) had executed a contract for the Malian National Centre of Solar and Renewable Energy for the manufacture of Solar Photo Voltaic Modules and Systems which has since been renewed for another five years in June 2014.

Bilateral Trade:

The volume and value of bilateral trade between the two countries is not very high. However, it has steadily grown in past few years. During the year 2015-16, the bilateral trade figure reached to US\$ 350.72 million which was 64.87 percent more than the previous year. Mali can make immense use of Indian expertise in sectors such as power, communications, IT, education, mining, agriculture, automobile and pharmaceuticals etc. It is amongst the poorest countries in the world, heavily reliant on external aid. Gold, livestock and agriculture account for almost 85% of Mali's exports. In monetary terms, the value of Indian exports to Mali was 0.04% of India's total global export, whereas Indian imports from Mali were 0.06% of India's total global import during 2015-16. Mali has a liberal and friendly investment and trade policy. Tremendous investment opportunities exist in the field of agriculture (cotton food processing, abattoirs and tanneries), automobiles (two-wheeler segment), mining (gold, iron ore, phosphates, uranium, bauxite, zinc, manganese, tin and copper) and pharmaceuticals (generic drugs). The country has proven existence of other minerals like granite, gypsum, kaolin, limestone, lithium, rock salt, silver, etc. waiting to be exploited.

Indian exports to Mali:

Equipment for electricity transmission, cotton fabrics and made-ups, cycle parts, machinery, machine parts, transport equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, construction material and processed food items.

Malian exports to India:

Raw cotton wood products and some agricultural products like shea nuts. Mali looks forward to further infrastructural and human resource developmental aid from India, especially in the mining, power, agricultural, pharmaceuticals, engineering and educational sectors.

Indian Investments in Mali:

Indian commodities, pharmaceutical and light engineering products have a significant presence in this country that otherwise has abundance of Chinese/EU products. Indians in Mali are engaged primarily in business, mining, power, steel, cement, pharmaceuticals and agro industry sectors. Additionally, Indian companies also have presence in execution of Lines of Credit (LoC)-related activities in Mali - power transmission, agricultural and food processing etc.

Malian Investments in India:

Mali has no known investment enterprise in India. It is amongst the poorest countries in the world, heavily reliant on external aid in almost every field.

Culture:

Both the countries have rich cultural heritage that could be shared with cultural exchange visits. Bollywood movies, Indian television serials and Indian attires are popular amongst the populace and an average Malian appears to hold India in high esteem. A 2-member cultural delegation visited India during the 3rd India-Africa

Forum Summit (IAFS-III) for a musical performance and received great appreciation. Perhaps the only notable, but remote, link between Mali and India is the famed city of Timbuktu. For a distant Indian, Timbuktu in Mali is a legendary place at the supposed end of the world. In reality, however, this city, located on the southern edge of the Sahara desert, has historically been a simmering commercial, educational and cultural hub for centuries. The Mission celebrated Republic Day 2017 and 70th anniversary of India's Independence at the Chancery. Chef de Cabinet of the Minister of Sports of Mali was the Chief Guest at the 3rd International Day of Yoga (IDY-2017) celebration at Palais des Sports of Bamako on 18 June 2017. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Mali has been signed in September 2016. In March 2017, India donated USD 0.5 million for the reconstruction of the world heritage of Timbuktu which was announced by Hon'ble Vice President of India during his visit to Mali in Sept 2016.

Indian Community in Mali:

The number of Indians in Mali is estimated to be 200-250. They are mainly in import retail business, mining, power, steel, cement, pharmaceuticals and agro industry sectors. LoC project employees and other professionals with foreign companies constitute a significant chunk. There are around 35 Indian civilian contractors/employees for UN peacekeeping mission UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). There is no known social organization/association of the sparse Indian community in Mali.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Bamako website:

<http://www.amb-inde-bamako.org/>

Embassy of India, Bamako Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInMali>

Embassy of India, Bamako Twitter handle:

@IndianEmbassyML

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