

India- Mali Bilateral Brief

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. After the restoration of democratic order since September 2013, Government of India, while welcoming the development, 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 recognize terrorism as a grave threat to peace and prosperity and agree to cooperation at bilateral, regional and multi-lateral level to combat this menace.

On 25 April 2020, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister of Mali Mr. Tiébilé Dramé held telephonic conversation to discuss various aspects of bilateral relations, including India's support to Mali during this COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, India gave a huge consignment of life-saving medicines to Mali. Ambassador Anjani Kumar handed over the first consignment of India's gift of life-saving medicines to H.E. Michel Sidibe, Ministry of Health & Social Affairs, Govt. of Mali on 19 May 2020. He handed over the second consignment of life-saving medicines to H.E. Dr. Mama Coumaré, Secretary General, Ministry of Health & Social Affairs, Govt. of Mali on 10 June 2020.

On 20 October 2020, Ambassador Anjani Kumar called on H.E. Dr. Zeïni Moulaye, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali to hand over a letter of felicitation and reaffirmation of India's commitment to bilateral relations from H.E. Dr. S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India.

Bilateral Agreements between India and Mali:

1. Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (2009)

2. Agreement on Political, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation (2009)
3. MOU on Cooperation in Geology and Mineral Resources (2012)
4. Cultural Exchange Programme (September 2016)
5. MOU on Standards between the Bureau of Indian Standards and Direction Nationale De Industries, Mali (September 2016)

Bilateral Visits:

(1) The President of the Republic of Mali, accompanied by a high level delegation, attended the founding Conference of International Solar Alliance held in New Delhi in March 2018. In October 2015, the President 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 New Delhi 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.

(2) Hon'ble Vice President of India (HVPI), Shri Hamid Ansari, accompanied by Shri Arjun Meghwal, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs and three Members of Parliament, paid the first high level visit from India to Mali on 29 – 30 September 2016. During the visit, HVPI called on President of Mali, had restricted and delegation level meetings with the Prime Minister of Mali, addressed the National Assembly and interacted with the Indian community in Bamako.

(3) Minister of State for External Affairs (MoS), Mr. M.J.Akbar visited Mali on a bilateral official visit from March 2-3, 2017 and, along with the Foreign Minister of Mali (FM), Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, co-chaired the first ever Joint Commission Meeting between the two countries.

(4) The first India-Mali Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi on 4 November 2019. The Indian delegation was led by Shri T.S Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Relations) and the Malian delegation was led by H. E. Mr. Boubacar Gouro Diall, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. The consultations provided an opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations and to explore new areas for cooperation including trade and commerce, development partnership [projects funded through India's concessional lines of credit], capacity building training programmes, people to people linkages, defence cooperation and security related issues. The two sides agreed to identify capacity building training programmes related to security and

counter terrorism which could be considered for G5 Sahel countries including Mali. The two sides also exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues.

Lines of Credit Projects:

7 projects under Lines of Credit totaling US\$ 303.6 million have been completed. A 225 KV double circuit power transmission project connecting Bamako and Sikasso via Bougouni (395 Kms) at the value of USD 100 million whose construction is in its initial stages and is expected to be completed by August 2022. Completed projects are in the energy sector, agriculture and food processing projects, acquisition of railway coaches and setting up of agro machinery and tractor assembly plant.

During ISA Founding Conference held in New Delhi in March 2018, three solar projects were selected for financing under LOC - two on bilateral basis and one through ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID):

1. Setting up a sustainable village and use of solar photo voltaic technology for irrigation of 2500 ha of agricultural land at the value of US\$ 22 million
2. Construction of 50 MW Solar Photo-Voltaic Power Plant in Fana at the value of US\$ 60.65 million
3. Construction of 2 MW Solar Photovoltaic plants in Mopti (EBID) - US\$ 8 million

The LOC for projects (S.No. 1 & 2) has been offered by the Government of India and is under consideration by the Government of Mali.

Grants Projects:

Gifting of IT Equipment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali - this was announced during the visit of Hon'ble Vice President of India to Mali on September 29-30 2015. These equipment were handed over to MOFA on 14 April 2017. Amount CFA 10,036,500 (Eq Rs. 10,93,074)

Cash assistance of US\$500,000 towards revival of World heritage site of Timbuktu - this was announced during the visit of Hon'ble Vice President of India to Mali on September 29-30 2015. The donation cheque was handed over to the Minister of Culture on 2 March 2017. by Hon'ble MOS (MJA) during his visit to Mali.

Grant assistance of CFA 8,772,251 for procurement of scanning equipment for digitisation of documents of the African House of Photography, Bamako under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Government of Mali. (Eq. Rs. 11,85,263).

Grant assistance of CFA 2,806,500 for procurement of basic equipment in the field of obstetrics for a newly built Community Health Centre in Missirikoro, Sikasso,

Mali. (Eq Rs. 3,84,163)

Supply of 5 station wagon vehicles to Govt of Mali
(Announced during Hon'ble Vice President of India visit in Sep 2016)

Supply of 5 Medical Ambulances to Govt of Mali (Announced during Hon'ble Vice President of India visit in Sept 2016)

Assistance for setting up of English Language Learning Lab in Mali. (Announced during Hon'ble Vice President of India visit in Sept 2016)

Training Assistance:

Sixty slots were allotted to Mali under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) during the year 2018-19. For the year 2019-20 and 2020-21, the ITEC slots have been increased to 70.

Under ICCR-Africa Scholarship Scheme, 7 slots are being offered to Mali annually.

Other Scholarships:

- 1.Under various initiatives of the India-Africa Forum Summits.
- 2.Agricultural scholarships administered through the African Union.
- 3.C. V. Raman Fellowship Scheme: 8 slots offered to Mali, 2 have already been availed.
- 4.Two Malian military officers participated in the training programme conducted by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping in Delhi.
- 5.Malian Army had been offered 2 slots in the army training institutes at Non Commissioned Officers Academy (NCO Binaguri) and 1 slot in Junior Leaders Academy (JLA Bareilly) for the year 2020-21.

e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) project: Mali has been offered the e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project to provide free tele-education courses in various academic disciplines and free continuing medical Education to doctors/nurses/para-medical staff including free medical consultancy. A MoU between Mali and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited [TCIL] has been signed on 04 November 2019 in New Delhi for Mali's participation in this project. The learning centre in Bamako would soon be ready. The tele-education portal iLearn provides access to over 500 courses in various disciplines including engineering and technology, education, mathematics and sciences, education, humanities and arts and teacher training. The portal would also offer 15000

scholarships to Africans to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate courses from premier public and private Universities of India. e-VBAB project offers tele-medicine and continuing medical education for African doctors, paramedics and patients. These services will be provided by the Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Center for Development of Advanced Computing and other stakeholders.

Bilateral Trade: Mali is a least developed country (LDC), heavily reliant on external aid. India has extended Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to Mali. Total bilateral trade was US\$ 184.21 million in 2019-20. Main items of export to Mali valued US\$38.07 million (2019-20) and included: pharmaceutical products, cotton, nuclear reactors, boilers, vehicles & parts and accessories thereof etc. Main items of import from Mali valued US\$38.07 million (2019-20) and included: Cotton, lac, gums, resins and other vegetable saps and extracts, edible fruit & nuts, peel, citrus fruit and melons.

Mali can make immense use of Indian expertise in sectors such as power, communications, IT, education, mining, agriculture, automobile and pharmaceuticals etc. Mali has a liberal and friendly investment and trade policy. For Indian investors, investment opportunities exist in the field of agriculture (cotton, food processing, abattoirs and tanneries), automobiles (two-wheeler segment), mining and pharmaceuticals (generic drugs). Infrastructure development especially railway connectivity project could be major business opportunity in Mali (connecting Mali, Senegal, Niger).

Indian Investment/Indian Community/Malian Investment: Indian commodities, pharmaceutical and light engineering products have a significant presence in Mali that otherwise has an abundance of Chinese / EU products. The number of Indians in Mali is estimated to be around 400. They are mainly in import retail business, mining, power, steel, cement, pharmaceuticals and agroindustry sectors. Mali has no known investment enterprise in India.

Culture:

Mali is an old civilizational country of North Western Africa. It has a rich culture and heritage. The nomadic Tuareg, Fulani, Bozo fishers, Bambara, and Dogon farmers, each of Mali's dozens of ethnic groups have their own unique languages and history. These tribes have a vibrant lifestyle very similar to the tribes in India. Malian music and literature have been heavily influenced by the traditional oral storytelling. Malian music is much celebrated throughout the world. Traditional storytellers called griots are called to perform at weddings and other events. The

northern parts of Mali (Timbaktu, Gao and Kidal) are very popular tourist centers but the access has now been restricted due to the jihadists attacks since 2012.

A 2 member cultural delegation visited India during the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in October 2015 for a musical performance and received great appreciation.

In March 2017, India donated US\$ 0.5 million for the reconstruction of the world heritage of Timbuktu which was announced by HVPI during his visit to Mali in September 2016.

An Exhibition hosting Timbuktu manuscripts “Taj Mahal meets Timbuktu” was held at National Museum, New Delhi from 14 May – 6 June 2018.

There are many Indophiles in Mali who regularly conduct programmes on Indian culture, bollywood etc. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his programme “Mann Ki Baat” on 27 September 2020 praised Mr. Seydou Dembélé alias 'Hindustan Ka Babu of Mali' for his passion to Indian culture. This was an unprecedented event in the history of India-Mali relationship. It is the first such occasion when an individual from either country was publicly appreciated by the political leadership at the highest level.

UN / International Solar Alliance

Mali has been supportive of India's line on various international issues. Mali has signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement on 2 October 2017.

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