

India - Rwanda Relations

Since its independence from Belgium in July, 1962, Rwanda was plagued by a protracted and internecine conflict between the three dominant groups viz. *Hutu*, *Tutsi* and *Twa*. After several failed efforts, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the 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 posted a Charge d' Affaires. Rwanda appointed its first resident Ambassador in New Delhi in 2001. India has taken a decision to open a Diplomatic Mission in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda and the modalities are being worked out. 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. India's bilateral relations with Rwanda got a fillip with Rwanda becoming member of these African Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Rwanda opted to become a member of the Commonwealth in 2009 even though it has not been a British protectorate or a British colony.

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 addressed students of the University of Rwanda.

From Rwanda

HE President Paul Kagame has visited India four times during his tenure. Thrice he has been to India in private capacity. 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.

Former Rwandan Prime Minister 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, 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. 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, 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.

Rwandan Prime Minister H.E. Anastase Murekezi visited India in October 2015 to participate in the India-Africa Forum Summit – III.

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.

Moreover, India's engagement with Rwanda has been consultative, response-based and focused on developing Rwandan capacities and human capital. Indian assistance to Rwanda has been guided mainly 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 a part of its initiatives under IAFS-II, India is 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. The Centre aims to foster business culture among the youth, both educated and not-so-educated, by orienting them to think in terms of entrepreneurship as a viable career option. A MoU has also been signed.

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.

A 28 MW hydroelectric power project on the Nyabarongo River in Rwanda was constructed with a Line of Credit worth US\$ 80 million from the Government of India. This project augmented Rwanda's electricity generation capacity substantially.

India has extended a US\$120.05 million EXIM Bank Line of Credit to Rwanda for an irrigation project in Rwanda. The agreement for the same was signed in October 2013 between EXIM Bank of India and Government of Rwanda.

In February 2017, India and Rwanda also signed Bilateral Air Services Agreement and an agreement for the exemption of visa for diplomatic and official passport holders.

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. The initiative will help Rwandan access medical care and education from India at a fraction of cost. The project is operating successfully.

Scholarships and capacity building programmes

India is seen as a destination for quality and affordable education by Rwandans. In 2011 alone, around 700 Rwandan students joined Indian universities. Indian teachers serve various institutions in Rwanda, including the Kigali Institute of Science & Technology (KIST) and the Butare University. KIST and the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) signed an MOU in 2001 to facilitate training of KIST faculty members in VIT and deputation of teachers from VIT to KIST. VIT also provides education to Rwandan students at its institute in undergraduate, postgraduate and IT courses as per an MOU with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, Government of Rwanda since 2002.

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, 15 slots were allotted to Rwanda for 2016-17. Three participants availed of training courses at the Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE), under IAFS during 2016-17. One participant was also trained in traditional medicine course under IAFS-III initiatives.

During 2015-16, 25 officers from the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) travelled to India to avail scholarships at various prestigious Indian Army training institutions. 4 Rwandan officers travelled to India for training at the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK), New Delhi.

India's effort to contribute in process of Rwanda's Capacity Building and Human Resource Development is well appreciated by Rwanda.

Commercial Relations

Bilateral Trade

Indian has consistently been one of the top import sources for Rwanda. The major items of India's exports to Rwanda include, among others, pharmaceuticals, vehicles, textiles, electrical machinery, optical and other precision instruments and plastics. Major imports from Rwanda include coffee, tea, mate, spices, salt, sulphur, earths and stones, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones and miscellaneous goods.

Annual Bilateral Trade Statistics

(Value in US \$ Million)

Year	Exports from India to Rwanda	Imports from Rwanda to India
2014	139.65	0.62
2015	124.97	1.93
2016	87.58	0.95

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India

President Paul Kagame has emphasized Rwanda's readiness to discuss and engage in business with investors from India and all across the world as the country seeks to be a business hub. The president made the remarks while speaking at the opening ceremony of the 8th Vibrant Gujarat Summit, a global business forum in India. One of the things highlighted in a joint statement issued during the visit of President Paul Kagame to India early this year was the development of the Export Targeted Irrigated Agriculture Project and its expansion under India's line of credit to the tune of \$120 million. The project will bring irrigation facilities to Mpanga and Mahama sectors of Kirehe District. It will see the construction of watersheds works, farm mechanization and establishment of post-harvest processing units for agricultural produce.

In June 2016, an Indian company, M/s Aroma International, announced an investment of about USD 1 million in the laundry and detergent sector of Rwanda.

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. 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.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Kampala website:

<http://hci.gov.in/kampala/>

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