

## **Brief on 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-Saharan 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 8<sup>th</sup> largest country in Africa and 24<sup>th</sup> 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 550-590. 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. Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga (since 30 Dec 2017)

Minister for Foreign Affairs: H.E. Ms. Kamissa Camara (since 4 Sep 2018)

### **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. 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 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, 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.

### **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 7 Lines of Credit (LoCs) worth US\$ 303.6 million to Mali mainly in the energy sector. Acquisition of railway coaches, setting up of agro machinery and tractor assembly plant and agriculture and food processing projects have also been completed under LoCs. Work on a major power transmission project from the city of Sikasso to Bamako via Bougouni (for which India has extended LoC of US \$ 150 million) is expected to start shortly.

### **Pan-African e-Network Project:**

The Pan-African e-Network Project, set up by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), has been operational in Bamako. The project remains underutilized due to language problem etc. The next phase of programme in the form of e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project has been offered to Mali which will provide free tele-education courses in various academic disciplines and free Continuing Medical Education to doctors/nurses/para-medical staff including free medical consultancy.

### **Offer of DFTP:**

India had offered Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to Mali. 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.

### **Training Assistance:**

Sixty slots were allotted to Mali under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) during the year 2017-18. For the year 2018-19 also, equal number of slots have been offered for the citizens of the Rep of Mali.

Two Malian military officers had participated in the training programme conducted by the Centre for UN Peacekeeping in Delhi in 2012. Under ITEC Programme, about 15 defence personnel from Mali received training in India.

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 2017-18.

### **Bilateral Trade:**

Total bilateral trade was US\$ 237.74 million in 2017-2018, up from US\$ 206.94 million in 2016-2017. Main items of export from India are pharmaceutical products, tractors, motor vehicles, bicycles etc. Main items of import into India are cotton, gold, gum and cashew nuts in shell. 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 0.02% of India's total global import during 2016-17. 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. 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).

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 legendry 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. 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 24 May – 6 June 2018. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Mail has been signed in September 2016.

### **Indian Community in Mali:**

The number of Indians in Mali is estimated to be 300-350. 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 a number of 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.

Embassy of India, Bamako website: <https://www.embassyofindiabamako.gov.in/>  
Embassy of India, Bamako Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInMali/>  
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