

India - Botswana Relations

India's relations with Botswana have been close and friendly. India established diplomatic relations with Botswana immediately after its independence in 1966 and opened its diplomatic mission in Gaborone in 1987. Botswana established its Mission in New Delhi in 2006. Botswana is an active member of Southern African Development Community (SADC), South African Customs Union (SACU), WTO and other International organizations.

Bilateral Visits:

A number of high level visits have been exchanged between the two countries since its independence. These are:

- The former President Festus Mogae visited India twice in May 2005 and December 2006. During his State visit to India in December 2006, a number of areas were identified for enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. A line of credit of US\$20 million and grant-in-aid of Rs.50 million each for health and education sectors were also announced.
- The Vice President of India accompanied by a high level business delegation visited Botswana from January 9 - 11, 2010. During the visit, Agreements on the Educational Exchange Programme and cooperation in the field of Agriculture were signed. The visit of Vice-President of India generated increased awareness about India and was well-received by the Government of Botswana. The Business delegation explored possibilities for increased investments, joint ventures and exports from India of manufactured goods, machinery, pharmaceuticals, ITC equipment, etc.
- The Vice President of Botswana Mompoti Meraphe reciprocated by paying a visit to India in June 2010. During his visit, Botswana's Vice President was accompanied by a high level business delegation. The two countries signed agreements on cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology and MSME/SMME sectors. A MOU between the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) of India and Local Enterprises Authority (LEA) of Botswana was also signed during the visit. Vice President of Botswana during his visit also inaugurated the Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority (BEDIA) office in Mumbai.
- A three-member delegation led by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia visited Botswana from 18 – 19 September, 2011. The visit coincided with a CII-BEDIA Business Conference at the Gaborone International Convention Centre (GICC) which was attended by key business stakeholders from the two countries.
- Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, Mrs Margaret Nasha visited India to participate in the Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference of Women Speakers of Parliament in held on October 3 - 4 October, 2012 in New Delhi. The Conference was organized by the Parliament of India and IPU.
- A three-member delegation was led by Botswana's Minister of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources (MMEWR) Hon Kitso Mokaila visited India from 11 to 16

November, 2013 to explore Indian companies' participation in Botswana's coal mining projects and Trans Kalahari Rail (TKR) Project.

- The then Additional Secretary (E&SA) Shri Ravi Bangar visited Gaborone on 14-17 September 2013 and held discussions with Permanent Secretary in the Botswana Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations.

The two countries have signed the following agreements:

1. Cultural Exchange Agreement signed in May 1997
2. Bilateral Trade Agreement signed in January 2001
3. Protocol for Foreign office consultations signed in October 2002
4. Agreement on Cooperation on Bilateral Cooperation in December 2006.
5. Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation in December 2006
6. Programme for Cultural Cooperation signed in 2007
7. Pan African E-Network Project signed in 2008 and inaugurated by the External Affairs Minister of India on August 16, 2010
8. MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture signed in Jan 2010
9. Educational Exchange Programme signed in Jan 2010
10. MoU on MSME / SMME signed in June 2010
11. MoU on Science & Technology signed in June 2010
12. MOUs between NSIC of India and Local Enterprises Authority of Botswana in 2010
13. Agreement on Establishment of Joint Ministerial Commission in January 2011
14. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between India and Botswana for Secondment of Indian Army personnel for training BDF personnel in September 2014.

Indian Scholarships for Botswana nationals:

ITEC: The Government of India offers about 70 scholarship slots every year under the Indian Technical Economic Cooperation Scheme (ITEC) to Botswana nationals in various fields ranging from Accounting, Management, IT & Communication, etc. which are fully utilized by the Government of Botswana. Training Courses in Defence-related fields are offered to Botswana Defence Force (BDF) under ITEC-II.

India Africa Forum Summit: As part of the decisions taken under the India Africa Forum Summit I & II, fully GOI-funded specialized training courses were offered in various fields viz. agricultural and related fields like food-processing; food preservation, hydrology, small-scale industries sectors; finance, accounting, management, postal management, security, e-governance, and in highly professional fields such as construction of high ways; engineering-related & Information and Communication Technology (ICT). These training programmes are organized at various Government and State/ Private vocational & learning institutions of excellence. About 65 Botswana nominees have benefitted from these special training courses so far.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations: The Government of India offers scholarships to meritorious Botswana students under various scholarship schemes of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. These are in non-medical undergraduate, post graduate and

research degree levels, leading to PhDs at various Indian universities. The number of these slots have been increased to 17 for the academic session 2012-13 onwards.

Trade & Commerce:

Botswana offers a business friendly atmosphere and welcomes foreign investment. Botswana is heavily dependent on diamonds which forms approx. 40% of its GDP and almost 70% of its export earnings come from this single natural resource.

Botswana State Enterprises like Local Enterprise Authority (LEA), Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) and Botswana Chamber of Commerce and Industry have played an important role in the development of Small Scale Industries in Botswana, while CII, FICCI have been playing an important role in creating investment opportunities between the two countries.

The main items of exports from India in recent years have been manufactured goods, metals, machinery and equipment, cotton yarn, fabrics, ready-made garments, drugs & pharmaceuticals and transport equipment. Although not very significant in terms of percentage of India's exports and imports, bilateral trade has shown marked improvement for the year 2013-14 as compared to previous years. [According to GOI's DGFT data, there has been a 564.82% growth for the year 2013-14].

Figures in US\$ million

Two-way Trade	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14*
Exports to Botswana	51.49	110.76	94.97	72.2
Imports from Botswana	49.02	86.49	69.30	1105.9

*[Source: Central Statistics Office, Government of Botswana]*Nov 2013 to Oct 2014*

The opening of Botswana's Mission in New Delhi in 2006 and Botswana Export Development and Investment Authority (BEDIA), now called BITC representative office in Mumbai in 2010 gave impetus to the bilateral trade and investment.

The first branch of Bank of India was set up in Gaborone on 9 August 2013; while the State Bank of India opened its branch on 26 November 2013 in Gaborone. Bank of Baroda has been operating in Botswana for more than forty years.

Cooperation in the Diamond & other minerals:

Botswana is mineral-rich country and offers great potential for investment in the mining sector which has hitherto been predominantly under the control of De Beers and Government of Botswana through 50:50 partnership in two companies.

The Indian diamond companies and businessmen, especially from Gujarat (Surat) have always shown keen interest in buying rough diamonds as well as in investment in the downstream industries in the diamond sector, mainly in the cutting and polishing of the rough diamonds. Two Mumbai-based Indian sightholder companies - Suashish and Shrenuj already have established offices and factories in Botswana. A new Brussels-based Indian company Blue Star is amongst the new licence awardees. M/S Shrenuj Diamonds was formally inaugurated in Gaborone on May 7, 2010 by the of Botswana. Shrenuj has also set up a diamond jewellery-designing and manufacturing unit in Gaborone.

Besides, diamonds, Botswana also has huge deposits of coal, copper, nickel, soda ash, salt, and uranium. The mineral sector roughly forms 23% of its economy. With huge coal deposits, the Government of Botswana has announced a “Coal Roadmap” in early 2012. A number of Indian companies have shown interest in exploring potential for viable investment in the mining sector for export of coal to India for power generation.

M/s Jindal Steel & Power Limited (JSPL) took over CIC Energy (a Canadian company) for beneficiation of coal mining and power production. JSPL has plans to set up two coal-fired 300 MW power in the Mamambula coal blocks areas where huge coal deposits have been found.

Indian Community:

There are roughly 7000 to 8000 people of Indian origin settled in Botswana, out of which approx. 3000 to 4,000 people have acquired the Botswana nationality. The Indian community has played a significant role in the economic growth of Botswana and has also been supporting a number of social welfare projects. The Indian community in Botswana is mostly engaged in the services sectors viz. retail, manufacturing and in the teaching and accounting professions. Most of the Indian immigrants have migrated from the States of Gujarat and Southern Indian States of Kerala, Andhra and Tamil Nadu. They have maintained their linguistic, religious and cultural traditions. Botswana is considered to have strong secular credentials. The country has been liberal in allowing all religions to practice and establish their places of worship.

Cultural activities:

The Indian community in Botswana is fairly active. There are five Hindu temples, two Gurudwaras and three mosques. There are about 12 Indian socio-cultural community associations which actively engage themselves in the celebration of various Indian cultural festivals/ events. Prominent socio-cultural functions observed by the Indian community in Botswana are: Holi, Ram Navmi, Shivaratri, Dandia, Diwali, Onam, Durga Puja, Baisakhi & Guru Nanak Devji’s birth anniversary. The Indian socio-cultural events attract a large gatherings. There is also a Sai Temple and a newly built ISKCON Temple in Gaborone. The High Commission of India closely involves in the cultural activities organized by the Indian Community.

The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated at Gaborone in association with Art of Living, Gaborone Centre on 21st June 2015 with large participation from local population including expatriates from different countries and the Indian community.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Gaborone’s website:
<http://www.hcigaborone.org.bw>

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