

India-Liberia Relations

India-Liberia relations, going back over six decades, are warm and friendly. Liberia has concurrent accreditation of Ambassador of India to Cote d'Ivoire with residence in Abidjan. Liberia too does not have a resident Mission in New Delhi.

President of Liberia, H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was conferred the Indira Gandhi Prize 2012 for Peace, Disarmament and Development by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust. President Sirleaf became the first Head of State from Liberia to visit India on a State Visit in September 2013. The only earlier visit was by President Samuel K Doe to attend the NAM Summit in Delhi in 1983. She held delegation level talks with Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

Four Agreements / MOUs were signed during the visit of President Sirleaf. These include the establishment of Joint Commission between the Foreign Ministries of two countries; cooperation between the Foreign Service Institutes; MOU to establish a cooperative institutional framework to facilitate and to enhance bilateral cooperation in the oil and gas sector, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit; and Line of Credit of US\$ 144 million for transmission and distribution project. President Sirleaf made a categorical statement on Liberia's support to India's candidature for a permanent seat in the expanded UN Security Council.

India's contribution of two contingents, both 125-member strong has been well appreciated by Liberia. The Female Formed Police Unit (FFPU) of the CRPF to the United Nations Mission in Liberia since 2007, represents the first-ever women contingent in the history of UN peacekeeping. This contingent has been a source of inspiration for Liberian women.

Important Visits from India to Liberia

The then MOS (External Affairs) Dr. Shashi Tharoor visited Liberia from 16-19 September 2009, accompanied by a CII business delegation. It was the first visit by an Indian Foreign Minister since Sardar Swaran Singh's visit to the country 38 years ago. President Sirleaf characterized the visit of Dr. Tharoor as "a landmark visit" which was closely followed by another official visit by Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Valayar Ravi in February 2010. These visits have provided substance and depth to bilateral relationship.

Important Visits from Liberia to India

Vice President Joseph Nyuma Boakai led the Liberian delegation, including Minister for Public Works, to the 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held in New Delhi from 17-19 March 2013. This was the first visit to India by a Vice President of Liberia. Earlier, Liberian Commerce Minister Ms. Miata Beysolow participated in the 8th CIIEXIM Bank Conclave and the 2nd India-Africa Trade Ministers' Conference in March 2012. Dr. Richard Tolbert, Chairman of the National Investment Commission of Liberia, and Dr. Frederick Norkey, Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry attended the 5th CII-EXIM Bank conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in Delhi in March 2009.

Mr. Robert Sirleaf, President's Adviser, visited India in 2011 under the ICCR's Distinguished Visitor's Program. Liberia participated in the 11th COP to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) held in Hyderabad in October 2012.

India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)

PAN African e-network project has been completed and is operational. Under IAFS I and II, India has committed to set up an Information Technology Centre, a Farm Science Centre and a training centre for women in the Solar Energy sector. India has also offered to set up an additional Vocational Training Centre (NSIC) in Liberia.

Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

India has been contributing towards human resource development, capacity building and skills up-gradation of Liberians. India had provided 35 training slots to Liberia under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme in the current year 2014-15. However, the slots have been reduced to 10 due to ongoing Ebola. Additionally, ICCR had granted 8 fully paid scholarships in 2013-14 for undergraduate and post graduate studies. Liberians have also been benefiting from other capacity building trainings in India under the decisions of IAFS as well as under the US-Liberia-India trilateral cooperation programme.

Indian Community

There are about 3000 Indian nationals residing in Liberia. The Indian community was mainly engaged in trading and providing services but now it is venturing into manufacturing too. It is well respected by Liberia due to their substantial contribution to the Liberian economy. There is a Sikh Gurudwara, a Hindu Temple and also a cremation ground in Liberia.

Indo-Liberian bilateral trade during the last five years is as follows:

(In million US\$)

Year	Exports	Imports	Total	%age Growth
2009-10	29.58	19.05	48.63	
2010-11	43.96	17.75	61.71	+26.89
2011-12	78.78	9.09	87.87	+42.39
2012-13	127.02	21.02	148.04	+68.48
2013-14	253.45	26.86	280.31	+89.35

The overall bilateral trade has seen substantial rise in the last five years. It rose to US\$ 280.31 in 2013-14 from US\$ 148.04 in the previous year registering an impressive growth of 89.35%. The main items of export from India are food stuff particularly cereals (rice), engineering goods, pharmaceuticals products, two wheelers, transport equipments, steel and iron, and plastic and rubber products. Imports from Liberia mainly include wood and articles of wood, metals scrap and natural rubber.

In 2012, Liberia acceded to India's Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Under the scheme, India provided preferential market access for Liberia's exports, covering 94% of total tariff lines.

Assistance to Liberia

India gifted 15 buses to Liberia which were formally received on 11 December 2014 by the Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan in the presence President Sirleaf. India's gift of 25 buses in 2010 became the most eloquent and visible example of India's assistance, improving daily lives of thousands of Liberians.

India provided agricultural assistance package consisting of pesticides and sprayers to the Liberian government in 2009 to help it combat an emergency situation, caused by the caterpillar infestation. India has also announced gifting a CT scan machine and two IT literacy projects for children as well as US\$ 2 million aid for the medical and educational sectors in Liberia. India contributed SDR 11.15 mn towards the IMF's Financial Package for Liberia's Debt Relief in October 2007.

Liberia has been severely affected by Ebola Virus outbreak during last year. GOI extended bilateral assistance of US\$ 50,000 to Liberia to fight Ebola. In addition, GOI provided cash assistance of US\$ 500,000 to WHO as well as contribution of US\$ 10 million to UN Fund for Ebola and additional US\$ 2 million for purchase of protective gear to tackle Ebola for the three Ebola affected countries of West Africa including Liberia and Guinea.

In August 2014, the Indian Community in Liberia also donated assorted anti-Ebola related material worth more than US\$ 200,000 to the National Task Force on Ebola. The donation was received by the Liberian President personally. This is in addition to the GOI assistance.

Indian Investment

A PIO company, ArcelorMittal, started exporting iron ore from Liminco mine since July 2011. Vedanta also has presence in Liberia. There are about 150 Indian companies operating in Liberia, ranging from small trading firms to medium manufacturing enterprises. During the visit of President Sirleaf to India, JSPL signed an MoU to build 175 MW Power Plant in Liberia, which is yet to take off.

Line of Credit

A Line of Credit (LOC) for US\$ 144 million for a power transmission and distribution project was signed during the State Visit of President of Liberia to India in September 2013. Exim Bank has recently signed the final agreement on this the first LOC to Liberia, after it was ratified by Liberian National Assembly in October 2014.

Useful Resources

Embassy of India, Abidjan website:
<http://www.eoiabidjan.org/>

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