

India – Democratic Republic of Congo Relations

India always had cordial and friendly relationship with the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC]. India was among the first countries to establish a diplomatic mission in Kinshasa. India had sent its Gurkha troops to DRC during 1960-62, under ONUC [UN peacekeeping mission], for countering the rebellion in Katanga province. At present, 5,000 plus Indian troops, military observers and police personnel are deployed under the largest ever UN Peacekeeping operation in the country [MONUSCO]. DRC has supported India's candidature at various international forums.

President Joseph Kabila Kabange visited India to participate in the 1st India-Africa Forum Summit on April 8-9, 2008. He also had bilateral talks with former Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba visited Delhi from October 27-30, 2009 accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Minister of Planning and Minister of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications besides senior advisers from key Ministries. Minister of Planning Olivier Kamitatu Etsu visited Delhi in April 2010 and signed a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement on April 13, 2010. Deputy PM and Minister for Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications visited Hyderabad in May 2010 to take part in an international conference on telecommunications. Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba again visited New Delhi to participate in the India-Least Developed Countries Ministerial Conference held on February 18-19, 2011.

Vice Prime Minister in charge of Budget, Mr. Daniel Mukoko Samba led a 9-member delegation for Delhi Sustainable Development Summit on February 5, 2013. Mr. Felix Kabange Numbi, Minister of Public Health visited India in March, 2013 to explore cooperation in health sector. Mr. Dismas Swana Emina Monzia Magbengu, Vice Minister for International and Regional Cooperation visited India to participate in the 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership held in Delhi from March 17-19, 2013.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo led a 9-member delegation to New Delhi from May 13-16, 2015. External Affairs Minister and the DRC Foreign Minister held wide ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest on May 14. He also met Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of Mines.

MOS for External Affairs, Mrs. Preneet Kaur visited Kinshasa on June 29-30, 2010 to represent India at the celebrations to mark 50th Anniversary of Independence of the DRC.

Bilateral Agreements/MOUs:

The following bilateral Agreements/MOUs exist between India and DRC:

- Foreign Office Consultations signed in March, 2010.
- Joint Commission for Political, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Socio-cultural signed in March, 2008.
- Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed in October, 2009.
- Agreement on Mutual Promotion and Protection of Investments signed on April 13, 2010.

India's Economic Assistance to DRC:

Lines of Credit [LOC]: The following GOI LOCs have been extended to the DRC :

- US\$ 33.5 million for setting up a cement plant and acquisition of buses for transport sector (2005-06). The LOCs for supply of Tata and Ashok Leyland buses and spares, etc. have been completed. The work at the cement plant has not yet started.
- US\$ 25 million Rural Water Supply Project was completed in 2011.
- US\$ 42 million Kakobola 9.3 MW Hydro-Electric Project, Bandundu Province (2010). The work on the project started in January 2011 and is progressing well. The power generation is expected to start in December, 2015.
- US\$ 168 million Katende Hydro-Electric Power Project (64 MW), Kasai Occidental Province. The LOC was signed on July 11, 2011 and is progressing well. The power generation is expected to start completed in March, 2016.
- In July, 2014, the GOI has extended additional credit line of US\$ 82 million for Katende Hydro-Electric Project Kasai Occidental Province.
- Agreement for another LOC of US\$ 34.50 million for Development of Power Distribution Project for power generated at Kakobola Hydro-electric Project in Bandundu Province has been signed.
- Agreement for another LOC of US\$ 109.942 million for Transmission Line and Distribution System Project in Kasai provinces for evacuation of electricity from Katende Hydro-electric Project has been signed.

Donation/grants:

- 60 "Sonalika" tractors with accessories & spares worth US\$ 0.66 million [2006-07].
- US\$ 1 million for supply of medicines [2008-09].
- Setting up an IT Centre of Excellence in Kinshasa [MOU was signed in October 2010], process is on to set up the centre.
- Tele-education and Tele-medicine projects have been implemented under the Pan African e-network project. The installation of VVIP connectivity project is awaiting clearance from the DRC government.

Capacity Building Programme:

- (i) 93 ITEC slots were utilised in 2012-13. 16 and 4 slots were utilised in 2013-14 and 2014-15.
- (ii) 9 DRC officials benefited from various training courses offered under IAFS-I during 2010-11. 8, 5 and 2 officials attended training under AIFS-II during 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively.
- (iii) 7 Congolese women were trained in solar electrification and rooftop water harvesting course at Barefoot College, Rajasthan under ITEC Programme during 2010-11, 2013-14 and 2014-15.
- (iv) 13 ICCR scholarships were utilized during 2012-13 and 14 during 2013-14.
- (v) Two scholars availed of the prestigious CV Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers in 2014.

Trade and Commercial Relations:

Trade and Commercial linkages between both countries are limited - distance and infrastructure being the main constraints. DRC is very rich in natural resources such as cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, germanium, uranium, radium, bauxite, iron ore, coal, hydropower and timber. There is tremendous possibility of enhanced bilateral cooperation.

There are a few Indian companies engaged in the mining of copper, cobalt and diamond in DRC. A large portion of DRC's pharmaceutical imports is sourced from India, some for re-export to neighbouring countries like Republic of Congo, Gabon and the Central African Republic. Over 60 trading companies in the country belong to persons of Asian origin; mostly Indians. An Indo-Congolese Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been in existence from pre-civil war days, but has not been active.

Commerce Secretary led a multi sectoral team to DRC in June, 2008 to identify possible areas of cooperation. A 16-member delegation from Engineering Export Promotion Council visited Kinshasa from March 4-6, 2010.

On November 22, 2010, a contract of US\$ 76.9 million to lay down power transmission lines of 400 KV over a distance of 260 Kms. from Inga in Bas Congo Province to Kinshasa was signed between Kalpa Taru Power Transmission Ltd., India and the Congolese National Electricity Company [SNEL]. The project is funded by European Investment Bank. Work on the project started in June, 2011. Kalpa Taru Power Transmission Ltd. has won another project worth US\$ 185 million financed by the World Bank for DC transmission line of 2,200 Kms. KEC International signed a US\$ 40 million agreement with SNEL for supply and installation of 2,200 Kms. optical power ground wire [OPGW], on the existing 220 KV and 500 KV transmission lines.

TATA Motors and Mahindra have distribution centres in the DRC. Bharti Airtel had acquired Zain Communications Network in 2010 and invested around US\$ 300 million to expand the services in the country. It has around 7 million subscribers.

Bilateral trade figures are given below:

(US\$ million)									
Year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Exports	1.21	4.19	15.26	10.12	6.68	6.88	147.29	181.45	254.16
Imports	17.03	13.79	117.06	144.71	9.82	8.41	19.85	47.29	126.45

Cultural Cooperation:

India and DRC signed Agreement on Cultural Cooperation on 29 October, 2009. A 12-member dance and music group from the National Festival of Gungu [FESNAG] visited India from February 1-15, 2012 and February 1-15, 2013 to participate in the Surajkund Crafts Mela. A 12-member 'Rajasthani Music and Dance group' visited DRC from July 17-27, 2012 and performed in Kinshasa and FESNAG, Gungu, Bandundu Province. The performances of the group were attended in large numbers and well appreciated.

Indian Community:

DRC has the largest concentration of Indians in this sub-region. There are about 9,000 Indians and PIOs [holding British, Canadian, Kenyan and Tanzanian nationalities], living in the country. They are engaged mainly in service sector, business, trading and manufacturing. Bulk of the Indian community is from Gujarat. Others are mainly from Kerala, other South Indian states and a small number from North India. Ismaili community, with estimated 2,000 members, is the single largest Indian community in the DRC. No Indian association or society exists though such associations on region/community basis are there. A Hindu temple has been built by the Congo Hindu Mandal comprising Indian community in Kinshasa.

Useful Resources

Embassy of India, Kinshasa website

<http://eoi.gov.in/kinshasa/>

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