

India - Somalia Relations

Somalia is located on the Horn of Africa, bordered by Djibouti to the northwest, Ethiopia to the west and Kenya to the southeast. It has the longest coastline in Africa. Somalia's 10 million population is largely homogenous with respect to religion and language.

After the outbreak of civil war in 1991, a multinational United Task Force (UNITAF) was deployed ahead of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) till 1994 followed by the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers in 1995. Indian peacekeepers served with distinction in both UNITAF and UNOSOM.

Indian traders have been trading with the Horn of Africa since ancient times. In 1940s-50s many Indians were recruited by Italians to work on their plantations in Somalia, mainly around Qoryoley. Other Indians established businesses in Somalia. It is estimated that there were nearly 200 Indian families in Somalia, mainly engaged in cloth dying in Mogadishu and Merka. Indian families in Kismayo left for Mogadishu in the early 1980s. After 1991 most Indians left Somalia, many relocating to Mombasa in Kenya.

Political Relations

A year after the independence of Somalia in 1960, the Commissioner of India to Mauritius was accredited as Ambassador of India to Somalia and presented Credentials in 1961.

Prime Minister of Somalia H.E. Dr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke accompanied by Minister of Information visited India in 1963. H. E. Dr. Shermarke visited India again in 1968 as President of Somalia. Somalia's Foreign Minister H. E. Dr. Abdurahman Jama Barre visited India in 1979. This was followed by the visits of Somalia's Minister of Commerce & Industry in 1986 and of a Special Envoy of the President of Somalia in 1989.

After the outbreak of civil war in 1991, the Indian Embassy in Mogadishu was closed. Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Eduardo Faleiro visited Somalia in 1992.

Somalia maintains an Embassy in India. The High Commissioner of India to Kenya is concurrently accredited to Somalia. Former High Commissioner visited Mogadishu from March 6-7 2011 to present credentials to H.E. President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. He also met the TFG Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and Deputy Prime Minister H. E. Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali as well as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Omaar during the visit. High Commissioner met H. E. President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, Prime Minister H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi and Deputy Prime Minister H. E. Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali in Nairobi on 25 May 2011. He met TFG Foreign Minister H. E. Mohamed Mohamud Haji Ibrahim in Nairobi on October 25 2011.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and International Cooperation H.E. Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali visited India in March 2011 to attend the 7th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership. During the visit he met Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs Shri S. M. Krishna and Hon'ble Commerce & Industry Minister Shri Anand Sharma.

The Mission was represented at the signing ceremony of the Roadmap for ending the Transition that was held in Mogadishu on September 6 2011.

Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Shri E Ahamed led the Indian delegation at the London Conference on Somalia on February 23 2012. He met the TFG President H. E. Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, President of Puntland H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud Farole and President of Galmudug H. E. Mohamed Ahmed Alin on the sidelines of the Conference.

The TFG Minister for Education, Culture and Higher Studies Prof. Ahmed Aidid Ibrahim visited India to participate in the India-Africa Science & Technology Ministerial Conference and Tech Expo held in New Delhi on March 1-2 2012. During the visit he met Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Kapil Sibal on March 9 2012.

The President of state of Puntland H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Farole visited India on May 15-16 2012. He met Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Shri E. Ahamed and Hon'ble Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas Shri R. P. N. Singh.

High Commissioner led the Indian delegation at the Istanbul II Conference on Somalia held on May 31-June 2 2012.

High Commissioner met the TFG Foreign Minister H.E. Abdullahi Haji Hassan Mohamed Nuur in Nairobi on July 9 2012 and the Minister for Fisheries and Environment H.E. Abdurrahman Ibrahim in Nairobi on June 15 2012.

High Commissioner called on President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in Mogadishu on October 7 2012. High Commissioner handed over a congratulatory letter from Hon'ble President Shri Pranab Mukherjee. During the visit he also met Speaker Mohamed Osman Jawari and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hamid Ali Masheye. President Mohamud has since replied to the letter from Hon'ble President.

Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Smt. Preneet Kaur addressed the debate on Somalia held at the UN Security Council on October 16 2012. She congratulated the new Somali leadership noting that President Mohamud had studied in India during 1980s.

Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Environment Abdirahman Ibrahim visited India to attend the High Level Segment of the 11th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity held in Hyderabad in October 2012.

High Commissioner visited Mogadishu from December 16-19 2012. During the visit he called on Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Fawzia Yusuf Haji Adam. He also met Minister for Defence Abdihakim Haji Mohamud Fiqi and Internal Security Minister Abdikarim Hussein Guled.

The Minister of Trade of the Federal Republic of Somalia Mohamud Ahmed Hassan visited India during January 2013 to attend the Vibrant Gujarat business summit.

High Commissioner led the Indian delegation at the Somalia Conference held in London on 7 May 2013.

The new Ambassador of India to Somalia Shri Yogeshwar Varma presented Credentials to the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia Mr. Hassan Sheikh

Mohamud on August 24, 2014 in Mogadishu. He also met separately Somalia Foreign Minister (Mr. Abdirahman Dualeh Beileh), Somalia Minister of Security (Mr. Herick), Somalia Finance Minister (Mr. Hussein A. Halane), Somalia Minister of Ports and Marine Transport (Mr. Yusuf Mo'allim Amin), Somalia Minister of Post and Telecommunication (Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim), Somalia Minister of Information (Mr. Mustafa Duhulow) and Permanent Secretary in the Somalia Foreign Ministry (Mr. Abdullahi Dool). Amb. Varma also met Somalia Prime Minister, Mr. Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed on August 21, 2014 in Nairobi.

Special Envoy of Prime Minister and MOS for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh visited Mogadishu on 7 July, 2015. He met Somali President Hassan Shiekh Mohamoud and handed over PM's invitation to Somali President to attend the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit scheduled to be held in October, 2015. He also met Somali Foreign Minister and Somali MOS for Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Yogeshwar Varma accompanied MOS V.K. Singh.

Development Cooperation

India offers Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training scholarships and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships to Somalia. During 2014-15, 10 ITEC and 16 ICCR slots were offered to Somalia.

Somalia is among the partner countries of Pan African e-Network project. The project was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs Shri S. M. Krishna on August 16 2010 along with the Vice Minister of Education of State of Puntland.

Somalis travel to India for studies and medical attention. Small numbers of Indians work in various Regions of Somalia.

Trade Links

During 2014-15, India-Somalia trade was US\$ 391.05 million showing more than 51% increase over the figure of US\$ 257.27 million during 2013-14.

Somalia qualifies for India's offer of unilateral duty free tariff preferential market access for export of goods and services to India. The scheme, introduced in 2008, offers duty free access to exports from LDCs on 84% of India's tariff lines and preferential access for another 9%.

India-Somalia Trade (US\$ million)

Year	Indian Exports	Indian Imports	Total Trade
2012-13	182.32	12.54	194.86
2013-14	206.53	46.39	252.92
2014-15	352.81	38.25	391.05

Source : Department of Commerce, India

Indian Participation in UN Peacekeeping in Somalia

4,600 Indian peacekeepers, led by Brigadier M. P. Bhagat, participated in UNOSOM II during 1993-94. The contingent was headquartered in Baidoa. It included armour and helicopters. The troops also engaged in reconstruction and humanitarian work. They distributed medicines and seeds worth Rs. 10 lakh which were provided by the Indian government. 12 Indian soldiers laid down their lives during the deployment. The Indian Navy played a major part in the Indian contribution to the UN task force in Somalia.

India was the Chair of the United Nations Security Council's Somalia-Eritrea Sanctions Committee during the last tenure as a non-permanent member of the Council (2011-12).

Following Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's announcement at the 2nd Africa India Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa in May 2011, India provided US\$ 2 million to the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM). India announced a further contribution of US\$ 1 million to AMISOM in March 2012.

The Indian Navy has been involved in anti-piracy patrolling in the Gulf of Aden since 2008. India is a member of the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Nairobi Website:

<http://www.hcinairobi.co.ke>

High Commission of India, Nairobi Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/India-in-Kenya-High-Commission-of-India-Nairobi/894496970596247?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

High Commission of India, Nairobi Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/IndiainKenya>

July 2015