

India-Mauritania Relations

General: Located in the north-west of the African continent on the Atlantic coast, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania inhabits less than 3.5 million people of different ethnicities, mainly Arabs, in a vast but largely desert territory of 1,030,700 Sq. Kms. The country got its independence from France in 1960, and currently has a democratically elected President in Mr (Gen). Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz since July 2009 who was re-elected with a landslide victory in presidential elections held in June 2014. Neither India, nor Mauritania, has their resident Embassy in each others' country. India, however, has a token representation in the form of an Honorary Consulate in Nouakchott.

Recent Exchange of Visits – There has not been any bilateral visit between the two countries in the recent past.

Trade and Investment- The Mauritanian exports primarily comprise fishing, gold copper and iron ore. Mauritania exported 13.4 million tonnes of iron ore in 2013, a record volume in the country's history. The import items include machinery, equipment, petroleum products, capital goods, food stuff and consumer goods. There exists considerable potential for economic cooperation with Mauritania. The mining, fishing, agricultural, banking, petroleum, technology and tourism sectors are actively seeking foreign direct investment. The Mauritanian government has, on numerous occasions, conveyed its eagerness to increase bilateral cooperation with India. In the recent past, a few private Indian groups have been able to secure mining concessions in Mauritania.

The government's investment and development strategy emphasizes private sector development, which is seen as the main engine of economic growth. Privatization, liberalization, and investment incentives figure prominently in Mauritania's previous World Bank and IMF structural reform programs. Foreign investment is welcome in most sectors. The Investment Code uses privatization and liberalization to encourage foreign investors and guarantees companies the freedom to transfer most capital and wages abroad. The government of Mauritania has recently embarked on a programme for the large scale integrated development of Nouadhibou Free Zone for development of Nouadhibou Bay and is offering huge incentives.

The existing trade balance is heavily in favour of India. There is tremendous scope for improvement on the bilateral trade between the two countries. **The trade figures for 2013-14 , as available on the website of the Department of Commerce of the Government of India are:**

Indian Exports: 58.02 Million US dollars (0.0185 % of India's total exports)

Mauritanian Exports: 7.35 Million US dollars (0.0016 % of India's total imports)

Extension of Lines of Credit by India: India has extended two lines of credit to

Mauritania- US\$ 15 million towards agro-industries and US\$ 6.8 million towards a drinking water project. The balance amount out of the total of US\$ 21.8 million is proposed to be spent on acquisition of harvesters and agricultural machinery by the Government of Mauritania. The Government of India, recently, approved another Line of Credit [LOC] of USD 65.68 million to the Government of Mauritania for Solar- Diesel Hybrid Rural Electrification Project in Mauritania..

Status of IAFS Initiatives: India has also offered Mauritania an **English Language Training Institute** in September 2011. Mauritania had also been selected by the African Union as one of the five countries in Africa for establishment of **Human Settlement Center**.

ITEC slots: Around 35 Mauritians have already availed training in various technical institutions in India till date. The number of slots for 2014-15 is 15

Pan-African e-Network Project: This project, which aims to connect all the Africans through a satellite and optical fiber network with a view to providing educational programmes, is operational in Mauritania with the assistance of Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), the implementing agency

Indian Community in Mauritania: With the increased mining activity in the country, the number of Indians in Mauritania has gone up during the last year or so. The number of Indians in Mauritania is estimated to be around 200.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Bamako website:

<http://www.amb-inde-bamako.org/>

Embassy of India, Bamako Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/indembassybamako>

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