

India – Republic of Gabon Relations

India and Gabon have enjoyed warm and friendly relations dating back to pre-independence era of Gabon. Gabon has supported India's candidature at various international forums.

Minister for Mining, Oil, Energy and Hydraulic Resources, Mr. Richard Auguste and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, Mr. Jean Ping visited India in May, 2007.

Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, Senior Minister for National Defence of Gabon and the incumbent President of Gabon visited India in November, 2007. He held bilateral talks with Raksha Mantri and visited defence training centres and production facilities.

Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Hydrocarbons, Mr. Julian Nkoghe Bekalen visited India in December, 2009 to participate in the 2nd India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference held in New Delhi.

Ms. Laure Olga Gondjout, Minister of Communications visited India in May 2010.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Bunduku Latha visited New Delhi from 27-29 March, 2011 to participate in the 7th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership.

Special Envoy of Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Ram Shankar Katheria, MOS [HRD] visited Libreville on 16th-17th September, 2015. He met President, Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba on 17th July, 2015 and handed over invitations for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi.

H.E. Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon led a delegation which attended and participated in 3rd India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi from 26-30th October, 2015.

Eight member delegation led by Mr. Mabina Kombila Edgard, Director Exploration, Ministry of Petrol and Hydrocarbon attended 4th India Africa Hydrocarbons Conference held in New Delhi from January 21–22, 2016.

Gabon's Minister of State for Environment and Natural Resources Mr. Crepin Magliore Gwodog visited India in May 2016 to take part in a road show organized to attract Indian investment.

H E Pacome Mobebe Boubeya, Minister of Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi in June 2017.

India's Economic Assistance to Gabon:

- GOI had extended a Line of Credit worth US\$14.5 million in March, 2007 and made effective in January, 2008 for a housing project in Bikele near Libreville. The project consisted of construction of 300 houses and 4 amenities. The project remains incomplete due to differences between the Government of Gabon and the Indian consortium engaged for the project on various issues such as further release of funds, grant of visa/residence permit to Indian workers, etc. Exim Bank has released US\$ 4.35 million for this project. An amount of US\$ 4.35 million was disbursed. The project got stuck shortly after its start and the entire amount drawn and interest thereon was repaid by the Government of Gabon.
- GOI had extended another Line of Credit worth US\$ 67.19 million in 2011 to rehabilitate and upgrade the broadcasting facilities of Gabon. This LOC has still not become effective as the Government of Gabon is yet to provide the necessary documentation for the same to Exim Bank.

Capacity Building Programme:

Gabon was allocated 25 slots under ITEC, out of which 4 were utilised in 2012-13. 3 officials received training under AIFS in 2012-13. 7 slots under ITEC were utilized till August 2017. 5 slots under ICCR Scholarships were allotted for the year 2017-18

Assistance:

- Gabon was among the first 15 African countries to implement the Pan African e-network project. Tele-education, Tele-medicine and VVIP connectivity have been set up in Libreville under this project.
- A Vocational Training Centre would be set up in Gabon, under the Plan of Action agreed with the African Union as a result of the first India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April, 2008.

Indian Investments:

- (i) Oil India Ltd. [OIL], in partnership with Indian Oil Ltd., is conducting oil exploration in Shakti Block, Lamberele. So far 44 million barrel 'in-place' oil has been discovered by the OIL. First phase of the project is expected to be completed in 2017.
- (ii) Bharti Airtel had acquired Zain Communications Network in 2010.
- (iii) 23 Indian companies have been granted licence to set up units in Gabon's

SEZ in 2016. Most of these companies plan to establish veneer manufacturing plant in Gabon, which has become an attractive investment place for wood industry in recent years.

Trade and Commercial Relations:

Gabon has large oil reserves, mineral as well other natural resources. It is the world's second largest producer of manganese. There is a lot of potential for bilateral cooperation. India's commodity giant, 3F Oil Palm Agrotech Ltd. (according to a statement made by the then Gabonese Minister of Agriculture in March 2016) plans to invest \$200 million on a giant palm oil project in Gabon.

Principal items of exports from India to Gabon are meat and meat products, pharmaceuticals, cotton, iron and steel. Imports from Gabon consist of wood and articles of wood, ores, slag and ash.

Bilateral trade figures are given below:

(US\$ million)

Year	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Exports	54.17	52.59	42.67	36.82	43.52
Imports	816.43	868.47	793.06	105.63	69.46
Total	870.60	921.06	835.73	142.45	112.97

Indian community:

There are around 100 Indians living in Gabon. They are basically engaged in infrastructure projects, trading, export of timber and metal scrap.

August, 2017