

## **India - Djibouti Relations**

### **Introduction:**

Historical links, cultural affinities and people-to-people contacts between India and Djibouti has existed long before India's independence in 1947 and Djibouti's independence in 1977. The Honorary consul of India has been functioning on Djibouti since 1969. Djibouti opened its Embassy in New Delhi in 2004 and a Consulate in Mumbai in 2006.

### **India-Djibouti Relations:**

Contacts between India and Djibouti have existed since ancient times. The port of Adulis was the hub of maritime trade where Indian seafarers have flocked trading in spices and silk for gold and ivory. Djibouti is keen to improve its bilateral relations with India especially in the education and health sectors.

Djibouti has extended extraordinary support during the Operation Rahat while evacuating Indians fleeing Yemen. Djibouti is also hosting our Embassy of India to Yemen in Djibouti till normalcy returns in the strife torn country.

India has long standing historical links and India's contribution to the growth of Djibouti especially Somali speaking population with many having been taught by Indian teachers.

Under the ITEC programme, for the year 2015-16, the 25 slots were allotted to Djibouti, out of which 06 have been utilized. We also offer 11 slots under ICCR Scholarship to Djibouti nationals for studying under various programmes in Universities in India. Djibouti has signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the Telecommunication Consultants of India Ltd. for implementation of the Pan-African e-Network Project on Tele-Medicine and Tele-education. The project is likely to be completed soon. We share similar perceptions on issue of common concern and those that affect developing countries.

### **Bilateral visits:**

H.E. Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti made a state visit to India in May 2003. He was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Minister of Defense, the Ministry of National Education and the Minister of Public work and Public Transport. A 30 member business delegation also accompanied the official entourage.

A delegation led by Mr. Rifki Aboukader Bamakhrama, Minister of Trade and Industry also attended the CII-Exim Bank Meeting at New Delhi on 19-21 March 2008. Two Djiboutian candidates also went to India to attend WTO course under the special ITEC nomination programme in connection with the Summit.

Indian ships make regular calls at the Port of Djibouti on transit and for joint exercise with US and French navies. Djibouti remains very hospitable to the visits of Indian ships. To combat the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and in the Red Sea, India has sent naval ships since November 2008 for Operational Turn Around followed by anti-piracy patrol. Further, a number of Indian Naval Ships have been visiting Djibouti for OTRs for antipiracy operations in the gulf.

H.E. Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti accompanied by the H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Republic of Djibouti visited India in October, 2015 to attend IAFS-III at New Delhi.

### **Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements:**

Bilateral investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) signed at New Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

Civil Aviation Agreement signed at New Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> may 2003.

Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed between India and Djibouti on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1989 and Executive Programme of Cultural, Education and Scientific Cooperation for the year 2003-2005 signed at New Delhi on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2003.

Pan-African e-Network Agreement signed Between TCIL and Djibouti on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006.

**Economic Relation with India:** Djibouti Government generally encourages and promotes Indian investment and business. Given the small size and population of Djibouti, so far there has been no direct Indian investment in Djibouti by Indian companies, except for Indian owned businessmen from Dubai increasingly investing in the logistics sector of Djibouti. Djibouti is keen to develop economic and development partnership with India especially in the areas of education, health, information technology, agriculture, small scale industries, portable electricity generation, fisheries and water resource development. India actively collaborated with the Government of Djibouti in its developmental projects. Government of India has extended four Lines of Credit (LOC) aggregating nearly US \$ 50 million to Djibouti for financing the Ali Sabieh Cement Project being constructed at Ali Sabieh, the second largest city of Djibouti, about 150 kms from Djibouti. The Djiboutian Minister of Economy and Finance visited India from 8-11 March 2015 for signing LoC Agreement with the EXIM Bank of India. In the area of rural electrification, IRCON had conducted feasibility study for rehabilitation works of rural electrification in Djibouti. M/s Kirloskar had supplied generator sets for power production.

**Bilateral trade** is on the increase and is in India's favor. Trade in 2014-15, stood at US\$ 239.43 million (India's exports US \$ 237.96 million and India's imports US \$ 1.47 million). Most of the trade with Djibouti actually serves the growing market in Ethiopia. The main items which have shown increase in Indian exports are: iron & steel products, paper and plastic products.

### **Indian Community:**

The Indian community in Djibouti was around 600 persons including family members. Majority of them belong to Gujarat and Kerala. Late Mr. J.J. Kothari, grandfather of present Honorary Consul of India was one of the 10 persons who initially came to Djibouti in 1910 and initiated shipping and import business. There are also French nationals of Indian School up to Grade –IV level. Ambassador holds regular meetings with the community in Djibouti, whenever he visits the country.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Addis Ababa website:

<http://www.indembassyeth.in/>

Embassy of India, Addis Ababa Facebook page:

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

India Global- AIR FM Gold Program featuring India and Ethiopia Relations:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoitlgLeBS8>

Twitter :IndiaInEthiopia

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