

India-Equatorial Guinea : Bilateral Brief

Overview

India and Equatorial Guinea (EG) have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations even prior to latter's independence in 1968. EG established its Diplomatic resident Mission in New Delhi in October 2016. The goodwill relations got culminated with the opening of Indian Mission in Malabo in March 2019.

Bilateral

The momentum in the bilateral relations between the two countries picked-up with the visit of the Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M.J. Akbar to Equatorial Guinea on 18 August, 2017. Three agreements viz. Establishment of Joint Commission, Foreign Office Consultations and Exemption from visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service passports were signed. The visa waiver agreement became effective from 01 August 2020.

Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a first-ever high level visit to Equatorial Guinea from April 7-9, 2018. He held fruitful discussions with President H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo in an exceptionally warm environment. President Kovind announced "Establishment of Vocational Training Center & English Language Laboratory in Equatorial Guinea" and "a special English Language Training Course for the officials of EG Foreign Ministry". On 8 April, 2018 Hon'ble President Shri Ram Nath Kovind was conferred with Equatorial Guinea's highest civilian honour "Great Collar of the Order of National Independence" given to the distinguished persons for their contribution in the development of Equatorial Guinea and maintenance of world peace. Opening of Indian resident Mission in Malabo was announced during this visit. Three MOUs on cooperation, respectively in the fields of Traditional Medicine, Medicinal Plants and Information and Communication Technology were signed. A cash grant of USD 15,000/- was presented by the First Lady of India to CANIGE School and Sampaka Psychiatric Care Centre in Malabo. The visit concluded with the issue of a Joint Communique.

MOS (External Affairs) Shri M.J. Akbar again visited EG from 11-13 October, 2018 to attend the 50th anniversary of Equatorial Guinea's independence. A 3-member Agricultural delegation visited Equatorial Guinea from 2-4 April, 2018 to study the scope for cooperation in Agriculture and Allied Sectors. Another 3-member delegation from Ministry of Mines visited EG from 7-17 April, 2018 to explore the possibilities of cooperation. This was followed by a 4-member delegation from Department of Telecommunications from 9-13 July, 2018 who undertook preliminary study to explore areas of cooperation in the field of Telecommunication. HMT(I)'s 2 member delegation visited from 21-25 January, 2019 to make a study-plan for setting up of Vocational Training Centres.

Earlier in May, 2011, MoS (IT & Telecom) Shri Sachin Pilot had visited Equatorial Guinea as Special Envoy of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to extend invitation to H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo for the Second India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-II) at Addis Ababa. President H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, in his capacity as the Chairman of the African Union, attended the IAFS-II Summit at Addis Ababa.

In August 2015, MOS (AYUSH), Shri Shripad Yesso Naik visited EG as Special Envoy of the Hon'ble Prime Minister India to extend invitation to President H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema

Mbasogo for the Third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III). President H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo along with a high level delegation visited India in October 2015 to attend the IAFS-III and held bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Summit. In his address at the summit, he informed that EG is in the process of diversifying its economy and mentioned preferred sectors for Indian investment are Energy, Fishing, Forestry, Livestock farming, Agriculture and Mining. EG Foreign Minister also held bilateral meetings with his Indian counterpart.

President H.E. Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo again visited India on 11 March, 2018 along with an 88-member delegation to attend the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and on the sidelines of this Summit held bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Equatorial Guinea signed and ratified the ISA agreement. In February 2021, H.E. Mr. Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, Vice President of Equatorial Guinea accompanied by Vice Minister of National Defence Mr. Candido Ncogo and senior officials attended Aero India Show 2021 in Bengaluru. EG Vice-Minister for National Defence signed a MoU with the Bharat Electronics Limited in Bengaluru (BEL) on the sidelines. This was followed by a 4-member BEL delegation to EG from 3-10 March, 2021 and later from 25 February to 02 March 2022.

Foreign Minister Shri S Jaishankar held bilateral discussions with EG Foreign Minister Mr. Simeon Oyono in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2019. On 16 October, 2017, Equatorial Guinea Foreign Minister Mr. Agapito led a delegation to India to take part in the First India-Equatorial Guinea Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) held in New Delhi. EG Agriculture Minister, Mr. Victor Grange Meile visited India and had meeting with Minister of Agricultural and Farmer's Welfare on 19 July 2017. The EG Minister sought India's assistance in capacity building and training in the agriculture sector. EG Commerce Minister Mr. Borupu visited India from 7-9 March 2017 to participate in the CII-Exim Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership and had bilateral discussions with MoS (Commerce and Industry) Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on the sidelines of the Conclave. Mr. Borupu had desired India's assistance in setting-up of a Methane Processing and Polymer Manufacturing plant. In January 2016, EG Minister of Mines and Energy visited India to attend the Fourth India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference. During the visit, he signed an MoU with ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) for cooperation in the Petroleum and Natural Gas sector.

A virtual (over telephone) bilateral meeting between Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan with EG Foreign Minister Mr. Simeon Oyono was held on 11 December, 2020 in which a wide range of issues including COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact, bilateral relations were reviewed.

From 02-15 March 2022, Bhagwan Mahaveer Vikalang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) popularly known as Jaipur Foot set up a camp in Mongomo for providing artificial limbs and more than 100 Equatorial Guinea's nationals benefited from it. To broaden the development partnership, MoU was signed between Constancia Mangue Nsue Okomo Foundation (FCMNO) and Jaipur Foots for setting up Artificial Limb Fitment Center in Mongomo, Equatorial Guinea. On May 2022, Government of India gifted anti-Tuberculosis medicines to Equatorial Guinea.

On 19-20 July 2022, the Vice-Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons Mr. Santiago Eneme Nsuga participated in the 17th CII Exim Bank Conclave on "India Africa Growth Partnership Creating Shared Future" in New Delhi.

The Minister of Transport, Posts & Telecommunication of EG Mr. Rufino Ovono Ondo Engonga visited India from 24-27 November, 2022 as Special Guest for the prize distribution

ceremony of UNESCO-India-Africa Hackathon on the invitation of the Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

In February 2023, H.E. Mr. Candido Ncogo Engono, Vice-Minister of National Defence accompanied by 5 members delegation attended Aero India Show 2023 in Bengaluru.

On 8 June 2020, Government of India donated medicine and medical equipment to Equatorial Guinea to display her solidarity with Equatorial Guinea in fighting against Covid-19 pandemic.

Trade & Commerce

India's relationship with EG is characterized by strong partnership in the oil and gas sector. Economic and commercial relations between India and Equatorial Guinea, though limited in nature, have been growing steadily in the last few years, primarily due to EG's emergence as an important source of oil and other energy products. Bilateral trade increased from US\$ 11.54 million in 2010–11 to US\$ 898.00 million in 2021-22. Primary items of India's exports to EG are food products, cereals, meat, pharmaceuticals, machinery, apparel etc. Main items of India's imports from EG are oil, gas and timber. EG has expressed interest in Indian investments and transfer of technology in ICT, SMEs, infrastructure development and agriculture development. Bilateral trade figures for the last 5 years are given below: (**US\$ million**)

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
India's Exports	11.89	10.92	12.49	12.44	23.08
India's Imports	634.12	972.88	240.41	885.56	711.96
Total Trade	646.01	983.80	252.90	898.00	735.04

(Department of Commerce, Govt. of India statistics in US\$ million)

Investments

From India: There is only one Indian company viz. Golden Swan which is operating in Malabo in the waste management sector. It was established in 2010.

Training and scholarship

32 slots are allocated under ITEC programme and 4 slots under ICCR's Africa Scholarship Scheme annually. However, a total of 40 ITEC slots have been utilized by EG. 4 Equatoguinean diplomats attended the special course organized by Sushma Swaraj Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi in May 2019 and 4 diplomat in 2022.

Cultural Relations

In March 2022, Equatorial Guinea's cultural troupe "National Ballet Ceiba" participated in the 35th Surajkund International Craft Fair. This is the first-ever participation of an Equatoguinean cultural troupe in India's cultural festival. Another dance troupe from EG viz. Mokom Enam Lugu participated in the Lusophone Cultural Week in Goa from 1 -7 December, 2022. 9th International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 18 June 2023 at Malabo

Sports Club, Malabo with resident diplomats, Equatoguinean Yoga lovers and Indian diaspora. Hindi Diwas was celebrated on 20 September 2023 at Chancery premises with Equatoguinean Hindi lovers and Indian diaspora.

Consular

There are about 250 Indians living in Equatorial Guinea and most of them are employed in the service sectors, Hydrocarbon companies (short-term assignments)/departmental stores, trading, export of metal scrap, travel and tours etc. E-visa facility has been extended to Equatorial Guinea since 27 January 2020.

06 October 2023