

## India-Botswana Relations

### **Background**

Botswana is a landlocked country sharing borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Up to 70% of the land is covered by the Kalahari Desert. A democracy since its independence on 30 September 1966, it has stayed politically stable and grown from one of the poorest to an upper middle income country by mining its diamond resources discovered in 1967. Botswana is the top producer of rough diamonds in value terms and the second largest in volume. Botswana's physical volume of rough diamond production was 22.696 million Carats in 2021 (up from 16.868 million Carats in 2020). In value terms, Diamond exports rose from US\$ 3.396 billion in 2020 to US\$ 5.803 billion in 2021. India is one of the major export destinations of rough diamonds of Botswana.

2. India established diplomatic relations with Botswana immediately after its independence in 1966 and opened resident diplomatic mission in Gaborone in 1987. Botswana established its Mission in New Delhi in 2006. Bilateral relations with Botswana have been close and friendly, with a new thrust in mutual trust over the last few years through high levels visits to each other's countries. Both the countries share the highest ideals of democracy and rule of law.

### **Bilateral Visits**

3. Bilateral visits at the highest level have contributed significantly in strengthening of the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations. Some important visits from Botswana side included that of President Mr. Festus Mogae - May 2005 and Dec 2006, incumbent President Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi (as Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration) - June 2012 to attend Science and Technology Ministerial Conference; and as Vice President of Botswana - Oct 2015 to attend the Third India-Africa Forum Summit. From the Indian side important visits were by Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari – 2010 and Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu - 31 Oct to 02 Nov 2018. In recent visits (i) Foreign Minister Dr. Lemogang Kwape met EAM in Kevadia, Gujarat on 19 Oct 2022; (ii) Minister of Defence & Security, Mr. Thomas Kagiso Mmusi attended Interpol General Assembly held in New Delhi from 28 Nov. to 1 Dec 2022; and (iii) Dr. Edwin G. Dikoloti, Minister of Health led a five member delegation and visited Ahmedabad and New Delhi from 28 Nov to 1 Dec 2022 for negotiations/discussions with the medical suppliers in India.

### **Virtual Interaction**

4. During the period of the Covid-19 pandemic also Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan and Botswana Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation Dr. Lemogang

Kwape held a virtual interaction on 17 June 2021 on matters of mutual bilateral interest. Vice President Slumber Tsogwane participated in the (virtual) 16th Edition of the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership (13 to 15 July 2021), along with Agricultural Development and Food Security Minister, Mr. Karabo S. Gare and Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Edwin G. Dikoloti.

## Bilateral Mechanisms

5. There are bilateral mechanisms between the two countries including Foreign Office Consultations, Joint Ministerial Committee Meeting (JMC) and more than a dozen MOUs/agreements including on visa, culture, trade, double taxation, agriculture, education, science & Technology, etc.

## Capacity Building

6. India's assistance and cooperation with Botswana in institutional capacity building has been a strong pillar in our bilateral relations. Under this bilateral cooperation, since the last six years, close to 1000 Botswana candidates have been awarded scholarships / trained under ITEC/ IAFS/ ICCR, Agriculture scholarships, etc.

## Trade & Commerce

7. The major exports to India are rough diamonds and major imports from India to Botswana are also dominated by diamonds, with small volumes/value in manufactured goods, machinery, generic drugs etc. Opportunities lie for Indian businesses in the field of pharmaceuticals, medical devices, tires, agriculture equipment, education, infrastructure projects, entertainment industry, digital world, banking sector and medical tourism

8. **Import-export:** Figures in US\$ million (Source: Dept. of Commerce, GOI):

<b>India's total exports to Botswana:</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23 (Apr to Sep)</b>
Including pharmaceuticals, machineries, iron & steel, electrical equipment, precious stones varieties of diamonds, related jewellery etc.	108.58	178.31	178.74	172.69	278.87	132.67
<b>India's total imports from Botswana:</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23 (Apr to Sep)</b>
Including varieties of diamonds, semi-precious stones, copper, ores, ash etc.	1638.29	974.48	744.00	461.72	527.96	291.28
<b>Total Trade</b>	<b>1746.87</b>	<b>1152.79</b>	<b>922.74</b>	<b>634.41</b>	<b>806.83</b>	<b>423.95</b>

9. Indian companies in various sectors including engineering & machinery, IT, manufacturing, trade, spinning and textile machinery, agriculture & food processing, gems and jewelry have been participating in the Annual Global

Expo of Botswana (GEB), which is the largest local trade event. Indian Companies like TCS, RITES have their offices in Gaborone while Indian majors TATA Motors and Mahindra have their presence through franchises. Bank of Baroda with four branches has been operating in Botswana since 2001.

### **Donation of COVISHIELD and Anti-Tuberculosis Drugs**

10. India donated 30,000 doses of COVISHIELD vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India in March 2021. This was the first consignment of COVID19 vaccines in Botswana. India also donated anti-tuberculosis drugs to the Government of Botswana in 2022.

### **Indian Diaspora**

11. Indian Diaspora (approx. 6,000 Indian nationals and PIOs) contributes significantly to Botswana's economy and form a prosperous segment of the society. They are engaged in service and retail sectors viz. teaching, accounting, insurance and finance, medicine and pharmaceuticals. Indian Origin Diaspora also owns several grocery stores, supermarket chains and has presence in hospitality, construction and hospital industry. Most of them are from the States of Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. Out of 31 diamond cutting and polishing businesses, majority of them have been established by the Indian diamond companies as part of their multinational operations. Indian/Diaspora community celebrates all prominent Indian festivals like *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Onam*, *Baisakhi* etc. which attract huge and enthusiastic participation, including by local dignitaries.

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