

## **India-South Sudan Bilateral Relations**

### **Background**

South Sudan was a part of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan from 1899 – 1955 under joint British-Egyptian rule. After two civil wars (1962-72 and 1983-2005), it became an autonomous region (“Southern Sudan”) in Sudan. India's position remained neutral in the long-running civil wars for autonomy of Southern Sudan. In 2005, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed [ceremony attended by the then Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. E. Ahmed] between the Government of Sudan and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Nairobi which led to the autonomy for the Southern part with a provision for South Sudanese referendum on independence in six years' time.

2. South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on 09 July 2011, following a referendum in January, 2011. India was one of the first countries to recognize independent South Sudan and the then Vice President Mr. Hamid Ansari attended the Independence Day celebrations in Juba on 9 July 2011. Indian Consulate in Juba, opened in October 2007, was upgraded to the level of Embassy in March 2012. South Sudan also opened its Embassy at New Delhi in August 2012. South Sudan and India have always enjoyed cordial and friendly relations.

Following a civil war that started in December 2013, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was signed among the warring partners in Addis Ababa on 12 September 2018. A transitional government of national unity (i.e. coalition of signatory political partners based on the power sharing formula envisaged in the Agreement) is in place at present. The main mandate of the transitional government is to implement the R-ARCSS and hold elections for a democratic transfer of power by February 2025 (the transition period, which was to end in February 2023, was extended by political partners by consensus in August 2022).

### **Visits / Political Interactions**

3. The then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met South Sudanese President H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit in New York in September 2011 on the side lines of UNGA. Gen. (Rtd) V. K. Singh, Minister of State visited Juba in July 2015, as the then Special Envoy of Prime Minister to deliver invitations to South Sudanese President Salva Kiir and Foreign Minister Dr. Barnaba Marial Benjamin for participation in 3rd India Africa Forum Summit. He again visited Juba in July 2016 to coordinate and oversee evacuation of Indian nationals when civil war was at its peak in South Sudan. Mr. V. Muraleedharan, Ministry of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs visited Juba from 20-22 October 2021 for bilateral talks. The visit gave a fillip to India’s bilateral cooperation with South Sudan.

4. From South Sudanese side, President Salva Kiir led a high-level delegation to attend the 3rd India Africa Summit (IAFS-III) in New Delhi in October 2015. A bilateral interaction of the President Kiir with PM Mr Narendra Modi was also held on 30 October 2015. In March 2016 and July 2022, H.E. Dr. James Wani Igga, Vice President for Economic Cluster of Ministries participated in the CII-EXIM Bank “India-Africa Growth Partnership” Conclaves, with large delegations. The Speaker of Transitional National Legislative Assembly Jemma Nunu Kumba led an 18-member delegation including Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mary Nawai Martin to New Delhi in April, 2023. There have been several other Ministerial-level visits from South Sudan to India, mainly to represent South Sudan in various conferences, EXPOs etc.

## **Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms**

5. An MoU on Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) was signed between the two countries on February 2019. Consultations are to be held on annual basis, alternatively in Juba and New Delhi at the level of Director General or equivalent. The first meeting in Juba is still due.

## **Bilateral Agreements**

6. India has not signed any bilateral agreement with South Sudan [except the MoU on FOC].  
Bilateral Trade

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7. India's trade with South Sudan is sparse. The main items of Indian imports from South Sudan are oil and timber, whereas India's exports mainly comprise consumer and household goods, food items, pharmaceuticals, motor cycles and three wheelers. As the trade is mainly through third countries (Uganda, Kenya, UAE), precise data of the same are not available. Bilateral trade figures with South Sudan over the last five years (from Department of Commerce of India website), are as follows:

(In million US\$)

<b>Year</b>	<b>India's Imports</b>	<b>Indian Exports</b>	<b>Total Trade</b>
2016-17	0.18	3.24	3.42
2017-18	70.56	3.54	74.10
2018-19	89.97	10.53	100.50
2019-20	7.33	20.05	27.38
2020-21	1.59	24.98	26.57
2021-22	1.23	26.91	28.14
2022-23	1.13	32.31	33.44

8. China, Uganda, UAE and Kenya are its major trading partners.

## **Economic and Commercial Relations**

9. ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL) has made an investment of about US\$ 2.5 billion (spread over Sudan and South Sudan) in the hydrocarbon sector since 2003.

10. 92% of South Sudan's budget comes from its oil revenues. Production of crude oil was disrupted from December 2013 due to outbreak of civil war in the country, further deteriorating the economy. Since September, 2018, oil production has been revived at a minimal level. It was expected to reach pre-2018 level of 3,20,000 bpd production by early 2020, but the production on ground remains around 150,000 to 170,000 pbd.

11. A few Indian companies have presence in South Sudan in different fields, like hotel industry, construction, borehole drilling, printing, trading, supplier to UN agencies and oil industry-related services. Indians also run supermarkets and restaurants in Juba.

12. ITEC slots: India offered South Sudan 200 ITEC slots for the year 2018-19 and all of them were utilized. Due to heavy demand and popularity of the Indian capacity building courses among government officials and students in South Sudan, the Ministry decided to increase the slots to 240 from 2019-20. In the aftermath of COVID pandemic, many training courses were conducted online within the Mission premises, some of which are in high demand in South Sudan. Under the ITEC programme, a lady diplomat Ms. Adiang from the local Foreign office had undergone a yoga training course for three months at Bengaluru. She has become the first India trained yoga teacher in the country.

13. ICCR Scholarships: For the academic year 2019-20, ICCR allocated 15 scholarships for South Sudan for higher studies in India and all the slots have been utilized. During 2013-2019, a total of 46 South Sudanese students have been granted ICCR scholarships. Covid-19 restrictions affected travel of students to India for study under ICCR Scholarships in 2020-21. But for the sessions 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, all slots were availed (20, 26 and 30 respectively).

14. Police Training Courses: 50 officers of South Sudan Police Force attended specialized courses in India in 2018 and 2019.

15. Training at SSFSI: In 2016, under country specific programme, 15 diplomats of South Sudan Foreign Ministry attended a specialized course at Foreign Service Institute of India, in New Delhi. In 2017 and 2019 one diplomat was accommodated by FSI each year in the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats. In May 2022, Thirty-one South Sudanese diplomats were trained in SSIFS, New Delhi (twenty-nine diplomats travelled to India and two joined from the South Sudanese Embassy in New Delhi). Total 65 South Sudanese diplomats have been trained in India so far.

16. Courses under IAFS-III scholarship: A total of 43 slots have been availed of by South Sudan officials who attended different capacity building and Post-graduation courses since 2017.

17. Pan Africa E-network/e-VBAB: An MoU has been signed on 7 July 2022 between TCIL and Government of South Sudan for online training in education (e-Vidya Bharti or e-VB) and health (e-Arogya Bharti or e-AB) as part of Pan Africa e-Network (IAFS-III, 2015) viz., e-VBAB. The e-VB has already commenced and 188 students were enrolled for different courses in 2022-23.

#### **Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HA& DR):**

18. In 2008, India donated US\$ 100,000 worth of tents and medicines for flood victims to be shared between Sudan and South Sudan. In February 2020, a consignment of life saving drugs worth Rs.68.8 lakh (approx. US\$1,00,000) was donated to the flood affected people of South Sudan. In December 2020, Government of India donated 70 Metric Tons of food aid consisting of wheat flour, rice and sugar to the flood affected people of South Sudan (USD65,540). In April, 2021, Government of India gifted 6 Metric Tons of life-saving essential medicines to South Sudan (USD1,18,047).

#### **Other Bilateral Assistance**

19. India Provided four handpumps at Mangalla Internally Displaced Persons Camp in June 2022 (at the cost of around US\$ 44900). A 6-week Artificial Limbs (Jaipur Foot) Fitment Camp was also organized by MEA at Juba Military Hospital at the cost of approx. US\$1,80,000 (approx. Rs.1,34,05,370) in June-July 2022.

## **Medical Tourism**

20. Given the top class but affordable medical facilities in India, South Sudanese prefer to travel to India to address their health issues. The number of medical visas issued to South Sudanese nationals have been steadily increasing, and in 2022 over 500 medical visas were issued. In this regard, some India-based medical tourism promoting agencies have also been facilitating their clients to get best treatment at hospitals in Delhi, Gurugram, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, etc.

## **Cultural Interaction**

21. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsored cultural troupe visited South Sudan in 2016 & 2017 and performed in Juba. In 2019, 2020 and 2023, traditional dance groups from South Sudan participated at the International Arts and Crafts Mela in Surajkund.

Prof. John Apuruot Akec, Vice Chancellor, University of Juba, visited India in August 2018, under Academic Visitors Programme (AVP), sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in August 2018.

Hon'ble Atem Garang Deng Dekuek, Member of Parliament, visited India in January 2023, under Distinguished Visitors Programme (AVP), sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

## **Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan**

### A. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

22. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was established based on a UNSC resolution in 2011. India has provided a contingent of over 2,300 defense personnel for the peacekeeping operations in South Sudan out of the total strength of around 17000. The present mandate of UNMISS is until 15 March 2024. Lt Gen Mohan Subramanian from Indian Army is the Force Commander of UNMISS since August, 2022. His predecessor Lt. Gen. S.S. Tinaikar was too an Indian Army officer. Indian peace keepers are deployed in Juba, Jonglei and Upper Nile Regions. Additionally, a police component (UNPOL) of around 28 Indian Police Officers is attached with UNMISS in the country. Apart from the peacekeeping operations, the Indian contingents have also been involved in community welfare activities viz. conducting veterinary camps to help the local community in taking care of their large cattle population in Bor and Malakal, and in helping local youth in capacity building, like repair of computers, diesel gen-sets, etc. To empower women of South Sudan, the peacekeepers have taught them methods of growing vegetables and pulses, and also how to milk cattle in clean, hygienic ways.

23. The battalion in Bor (Jonglei State) installed community solar lights in villages for the benefit of students to enable them to study at night as also for security reasons. Indian army engineers under UNMISS in Malakal re-laid the airstrip, repaired flood affected roads and renovated the defunct Government Hospital in Malakal.

24. In 2013, seven soldiers of the Indian peacekeeping battalion made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of peace in two different attacks in Jonglei State. The bravery and social welfare activities of the Indian peacekeepers are highly commended both by the local population and Government of South Sudan.

## B. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA):

25. UNIFFA is a United Nations peacekeeping force in Abyei, an oil rich border area which is contested between Sudan and South Sudan. The area is being administered jointly by the two countries at present. UNISFA was established through UNSC Resolution in 2011. The Resolution made provision for the deployment of 4,200 Ethiopian troops to provide security and protect civilians under imminent threat of violence in the disputed border region. From January 2022, it has become a multinational force of 3,250 military personnel, 640 police personnel and an appropriate civilian support. The Indian contingent of around 570 soldiers is deployed in UNISFA. The current mandate of UNISFA is valid until 15 November 2023.

### **Indian Community**

26. Presently, about 800 Indian nationals are based in South Sudan. Some of them have set up their businesses in Juba and others are working in various companies. A number of Indians are also working in UN organizations, Christian missionaries and in NGOs. Indians were among the first to open hotels, borehole drilling companies, printing press and departmental stores in Juba in early 2006 after South Sudan was declared an autonomous region.

27. There is an Indian Association of South Sudan (IASS) in Juba, which organizes cultural functions and charitable activities. Indian Association has also been organizing periodic free medical and blood donation camps in the past on important occasions such as on Indian national days.

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*September 2023*

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Juba website: <http://indembjuba.gov.in/>