

## India - Niger Relations

Bilateral relations between India and Niger are cordial. In the past, our bilateral cooperation was mainly limited to the multilateral fora. India had provided some economic assistance in areas of health and agriculture. Bilateral activities gained momentum after our Mission in Niamey was opened (in May 2009) and the first resident Ambassador of India assumed charge in August, 2010.

India's trade with Niger stood at USD 88.22 million during 2011-12, with Indian exports to Niger being USD88.07 million. The main items being exported from India to Niger included pharmaceuticals, cotton, man-made staple fibres, electrical machinery and equipment, zinc and articles thereof and man-made filaments. India imported mainly mineral fuels/Oils/Waxes & products of their distillation, bituminous substances, project goods(special uses), plastic & plastic articles and pulp of wood or other fibrous cellulosic material from Niger. Potential areas of our bilateral economic cooperation include infrastructure, transport, energy, mining, ICT, health and agriculture. The table below shows the trade between India and Niger [in USD million] :

| Year                     | Indian exports to Niger | Indian imports from Niger | Total trade |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| 2004-05                  | 40.29                   | 0.72                      | 41.01       |
| 2005-06                  | 22.25                   | 0.76                      | 23.01       |
| 2006-07                  | 14.33                   | 5.31                      | 19.64       |
| 2007-08                  | 47.39                   | 0.67                      | 48.06       |
| 2008-09                  | 25.98                   | 0.17                      | 26.15       |
| 2009-10                  | 37.90                   | 0.25                      | 38.15       |
| 2010-11                  | 47.08                   | 10.47                     | 57.55       |
| 2011-12                  | 88.07                   | 0.15                      | 88.22       |
| 2012-13<br>(Up to Sept.) | 23.81                   | 68.99                     | 92.80       |

[Source :Department of Commerce, Government of India]

An LoC of USD 17 million was extended to Niger in July, 2005, under NEPAD for 'procurement of buses, trucks, tractors, flour mills and motor pumps etc.' Another LoC for USD 20 million was extended under TEAM 9 for 'power supply and electrification' in July 2008. Both these LoCs have been utilized.

India provided a relief package of basic medicines to Niger in September 2005 towards assistance for the humanitarian efforts for the food crisis. Indian experts in these areas visited Niger in 2006 to ascertain the requirement for computerization of Niger's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Mines & Energy and Dry-land Agricultural Research. Technical assistance was provided to Niger in ICT and agriculture sectors.

India granted financial assistance of USD 1,00,000/- to Niger in August 2010 to help it tide over the ongoing food crisis. A cash grant of Euro 86452/- was also disbursed to help the Government of Niger towards purchase of two television cameras for the National Television of Niger for use at the investiture ceremony on April 7, 2011, for the newly elected President of the Republic of Niger. Government of India has sanctioned Rs.62 lakh in 2012 for supplying computers and printers to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Niger for capacity building.

India offers training to Niger in human resource development under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) etc., and also under the decisions taken at first and second India Africa Forum Summits (IAFS). During 2010-11, all ten ITEC training slots earmarked to Niger were utilized. Fifteen other Nigerien nationals were sent for training to India under other schemes including India Africa Forum Summits, Special Agriculture Scholarship, K.V. Raman Fellowship, etc.

In 2011-12, 36 ITEC and 63 IAFS training slots were utilized. Two candidates were sent to India under 'Special Agricultural Scholarship Scheme'. Two Nigerien journalists were also sent to India on familiarization visit organized by XP Division from 21 to 28 August, 2011. ITEC slot for Niger for 2012-13 have been increased from 40 to 120 and 107 candidates have already been selected by the Ministry. During 2012-13, 30 slots under IAFS have already been availed by Nigeriens and several application are under process with the Embassy and the Ministry. Two candidates have been sent to India under 'Special Agricultural Scholarship Scheme'. Under the familiarization visits of journalists from African countries organized by XP Division, two Nigerien journalists visited India from 21 to 28 August, 2011 and one from 17-18 March, 2012.

There have been several ministerial visits from Niger to India. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Niger visited India in March, 2005 and in April & August 2006. High level government and commercial delegations participated in the CII-EXIM Conclave on "India-Africa Project Partnerships" held in March and November 2005 and in October 2006 in New Delhi, and in May 2006 in Accra. Shri Anand Sharma, the then Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs met the then Prime Minister of Niger in March 2007 in Accra during his visit to Ghana to participate in the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Ghana's Independence. Various issues of mutual interest were discussed in these meetings. The Minister of Information and Communication Technologies, Her Excellency Ms. Takoubakoye Aminata Boureima, visited Hyderabad to participate in the ITU-World Telecom Development Conference (WTDC-10) from 24<sup>th</sup> May to 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2010. The Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Madame Aminata D. Maiga Toure, participated in the "India-LDC Ministerial Conference" held in New Delhi on 18-19 February, 2011. H.E. Mr. Foumakoye Gado, Minister of Mines and Energy, visited India from 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2011. H.E. Mr. Mamadou Diallo, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research visited India to attend India-Africa Science and technology Ministerial Conference from 1-2 March, 2012. During 2012-13 H.E. Mr. Foumakoye Gado, Minister of Energy and Petroleum visited India to participate in *International Seminar on Energy Access*, held in New Delhi from 9 to 10 October 2012. H.E. Mr. Issoufou Issaka, Minister of Hydraulic and Environment visited India to participate in High Level Segment of 11<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity held at Hyderabad from 17 to 19 October 2012. A five-member delegation comprising senior government officials and leading importers of pharmaceuticals in Niger attended *Reverse Byer Seller Meet* coinciding with 64<sup>th</sup> *Indian Pharmaceutical Congress* during 7 to 9 December 2012 at Chennai.

An 11-member CII trade delegation, led by Joint Secretary (West Africa), visited Niamey from 28 to 30 May 2012. The delegation held meetings with the Prime Minister and several other Ministers

of the Government of Niger. A Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation between CII and Nigerien Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts was also signed.

The activities of AQIM [Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb] in Niger continue to remain a cause of concern. In one of the incidents, that took place in 2011, some westerners, including French nationals, in Niger and in the region comprising Mali, Mauritania and Niger, were kidnapped and killed. Besides, the Tuareg rebels in northern Niger have been resisting exploitation of mineral resources, particularly uranium, from that part of the country by foreign countries viz. France and China. In the aftermath of Libya crisis, there has been infiltration of Gaddafi supporter Libyan soldiers with huge weaponry into Niger. There has also been an exodus of Nigerien and other nationals from Libya to Niger, worsening the food security crisis in Niger. The President of Niger has raised Niger's concern on the matter in international fora and sought support to cope with the problem. Shelter to Saadi Gaddafi by Niger has further exacerbated its relations with Libya.

After a coup in Mali, in March, 2012, Niger has been raising its concern at regional and international fora to prevent spill over affects in Niger. Niger has been demanding intervention for restoring territorial integrity and reinstatement of secular democratic government in Mali, fearing spread of Islamic fundamentalism by AQIM & Ansar-dine, and revival of the old threat to its own territorial integrity by Tuareg rebels in the northern Niger. Military intervention by ECOWAS countries, with international help has been agreed to by the UNSC in December 2012 on the request of interim government of Mali to liberate northern Mali from the clutches of Tuaregs and international terrorist organizations. Niger being a neighbour with significant presence of Tuaregs in the country, is playing an important role towards resolution of this problem, including military intervention in Mali led by ECOWAS.

Niger opened its Embassy in New Delhi in November, 2011 and the first resident Ambassador of Niger to India assumed charge in January, 2012.

There are about 60 Indian nationals in Niger. Only a few stay with their families. They are mostly engaged in trading and hospitality business.

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