

India-Zimbabwe Relations

Political Relations

India and Zimbabwe have a long history of close and cordial relations. During the era of the Munhumutapa Kingdom, dating back to 14th century and later, Indian merchants established strong links with Zimbabwe, trading in textiles, minerals and metals. India had extended support to liberation movement of Zimbabwe. Then PM Smt. Indira Gandhi participated in the Independence Day celebrations in 1980. Since then, several Indian Prime Ministers and then President of India, Dr. S.D. Sharma has visited Zimbabwe, and President Mugabe has visited India several times. He has also been a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award in 1989. However, since 1996 no bilateral high level visit from India has taken place, though former PM Shri Vajpayee and President Mugabe had met twice on the sidelines of UNGA and NAM Summits in 2003.

India and Zimbabwe share a similarity of views on most international issues and closely cooperate at UN, NAM and other multilateral fora like WTO and G-15. India has supported Zimbabwe in the Human Rights Commission and Zimbabwe supported India for its elections to ECOSOC, UNESCO, and Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and in the UN Human Rights Council elections. India and Zimbabwe are members of G-20 in WTO and having common position on IPRs and agricultural subsidies. Zimbabwe generally supports India in most of the elections in the multilateral fora and our Resolutions in the UN. During the year 2011, Zimbabwe supported India's candidates for election to the UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Question (ACABQ). Zimbabwe also supported our candidature for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC.

One of the premier organisation for sustainable development and poverty alleviation for Africa – Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) is based in Harare. India became the first Asian country to become a full member of ACBF in 2005 by contributing US\$ one million.

India has been a partner in development of Zimbabwe assisting in the field of education, telecommunications and power sectors. During severe drought in 2003, India donated 50,000 tonnes of rice to Zimbabwe. Indian public sector companies have a successful history of engagement with Zimbabwe and companies like Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS), HMT and Telecommunications India Ltd. (TCIL) had executive projects in Zimbabwe. On 14.06.2006, an MoU was signed between India and Zimbabwe in Harare for a grant of US\$5 million for development of SME sector in Zimbabwe. The Indo-Zim SMEs Project was inaugurated by President Mugabe on 4th August, 2008 in Harare Institute of Technology. The final phase of the Indo-Zim SME project got underway with experts from India coordinated by HMT; a 13-member team from HMT organized one day workshop on entrepreneurship in 10 provinces. The SME project was completed in February 2013. Under the the MoU signed on 14th September 2011 for setting up the Hole-in-the-Wall electronic learning stations by HIWEL Delhi, the three children Computer Learning Stations were successfully set up in 2012, one each in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare. These are now fully functional. TCIL – successfully completed installation of all the IT equipments and software at the sites of University of Zimbabwe and Parirenyatwa Hospital. These Centres have been tested end-to-end with Senegal hub and TCIL, New Delhi. TCIL has also completed the setting up

hotline link between the Heads of State. The tele-medicine equipment, except for X-ray digitizer, has become operational and the project is awaiting formal launch.

India is on course to set up a Food Testing Laboratory(FTL) and a Rural Technology Park in Zimbabwe(RTP) under IAFS-II apart from a Vocational Training Centre.

India approved in 2012 a Line of Credit worth US\$28.6 million for upgradation of Deka Pumping Station and River Water Intake System in Zimbabwe. An Agreement to implement the LoC was signed between Exim Bank and Zimbabwean side on 21 June 2013. Since then, WAPCOS have been appointed as Project Management Consultants for the project.

Assistance to Zimbabwe under the **ITEC programme** has been a regular feature of India's assistance to Zimbabwe for capacity building. ITEC is a successful and much sought after programme in Zimbabwe. Starting with 3 Zimbabweans in 1985, over 556 Zimbabweans have been trained in short-term civilian courses in India under the ITEC programme. After the India-Africa Forum Summit in April, 2008, the ITEC slots for Zimbabwe have been increased from 40 in 2008-09 to 150 in 2011-12. The ITEC/ICCR training slots/scholarships extended by India to Zimbabwe were 257 during 2012-13 (Actual utilization in 2013: ITEC 180, ICCR 15 and under IAFS-II 62). These training slots/scholarships may touch 260 in 2013-14. The ITEC programme remains popular and is an important aspect of the bilateral relations.

Commercial Relations

However, the level of bilateral trade and investment is not yet commensurate with political relations. Trade & Investment – Total bilateral trade between the two countries was around US\$178.61 million in the year 2011-12, almost increasing two times and a half in the last five years. However, with Essar Africa Holdings, a subsidiary of Essar Global taking a 54% stake in Zimbabwe Iron & Steel Company, the investment of US\$ 750 million by this company will represent not only the largest single foreign investment in Zimbabwe, but also a fifteen-fold increase in Indian investment into Zimbabwe. Recently two Government of India Public Undertaking Companies WAPCOS and Bharat Earth Mover Ltd.(BEML) entered into Zimbabwe market in the Energy and Mining & Construction sectors. WAPCOS was awarded the job to carry out the Due Diligence studies, feasibility report, tender engineering, design review, project management and site supervision for Zimbabwe power projects. Despite concerns over the indigenization law, smaller Indian companies continued to come in for mining, particularly in gold and chrome and are exploring the possibility of mining coal and diamonds. Indian medicines are readily available in the local market. Some Indian companies are looking for investments in mining (coal, granite, emeralds, gold and diamonds) and power sectors.

Bilateral Trade

Year (April-March)	Exports to Zimbabwe (in million US\$)	Imports from Zimbabwe (in million US\$)	Total Trade (in million US\$)
2005-06	23.99	25.55	49.54
2006-07	31.90	32.18	64.08

2007-08	31.91	22.24	54.15
2008-09	58.99	13.77	72.76
2009-10	48.70	21.87	70.57
2010-11	113.95	11.56	125.51
2011-12*	171.72	6.89	178.61
2012-13*	147.65	1.71	149.36

* Zim Trade

Breaking the gap of 15 years Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia visited Harare along with a large Indian Business delegation to Harare from 19-21 September, 2011 to explore business opportunity. Hon'ble Shri Anand Sharma, Minister Commerce, Industry and Textile visited Harare from 9-10 January, 2012 accompanied by 24-member business delegation from CII. The visit of Finance Minister Tendai Biti in February 2011 was expected to see renewed interest in economic cooperation, with Zimbabwe keen on Indian investment in energy, railways, health and other sectors. Zimbabwe is today looking at India as an emerging superpower, from whose developmental experiences they have much to learn, and one with the potential to provide credit lines and invest in Zimbabwe's development. The visit of Vice-President Mrs. Joice T.R. Mujuru along with a large business delegation to participate in the 8th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership held in New Delhi in March 2012 was a step in the same direction. The year 2013 witnessed a flurry of visits with Prof. Welshman Ncube, Minister of Industry and Commerce of Zimbabwe leading a delegation to participate in 9th CII Exim Bank Conclave in New Delhi. Before that Prof. Ncube had visited India in January 2013 to participate in India-Africa Commerce Ministers' Conference. Shri Anand Sharma, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Industry and Textiles led Indian delegation to the Second Session of the India-Zimbabwe Joint Trade Committee meeting held in Harare on 27-28 March 2013. A delegation led by Shri Beni Prasad Verma, Hon'ble Minister of Steel visited Zimbabwe from 8-10 April 2013. Yet another delegation led by Shri Harish Rawat, Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources visited Zimbabwe from 14-18 April 2013. A 20-member NDC delegation led by Major General Sanjaya Saran visited Zimbabwe from 12th -18th May 2013. Similarly, an NDC delegation from Zimbabwe also visited India in July 2013.

India-Zimbabwe signed Joint Commission Agreement in January 1987. However, no Joint Commission meeting has been held since 1996 mainly due to Zimbabwe's economic turmoil. Ratification of BIPPA signed in February 1999, could not be completed. Zimbabwean side has now confirmed that BIPPA has been approved by the Parliament and submitted for approval of President. In April 2008, Zimbabwe had submitted a draft of Air Services Agreement between India and Zimbabwe. The two sides have finally agreed to the draft and Air Services Agreement is ready for signing. A draft MoU on Science & Technology was submitted to Zimbabwe Government. Zimbabwe Government response is awaited.

Cultural Relations

Agreement on Cultural Cooperation between India and Zimbabwe was last signed in May 1981. Though the last CEP expired in 1994, it continues provisionally until the next Programme is concluded. Due to lack of capacity to reciprocate on the part of Zimbabwe, cultural interaction has become somewhat unidirectional thereafter. Owing to its economic difficulties, the Government of Zimbabwe has not

been able to send any cultural troupe to India for the last many years. ICCR-sponsored cultural troupes from India have been regularly visiting Zimbabwe. A 12-member Bhangra troupe, sponsored by ICCR, gave six performances in and outside Harare during in May 2012. Another ICCR-sponsored Gujarati dance troupe gave around half a dozen performances in Zimbabwe in November 2012. We have also regularly been participating in cultural events in Zimbabwe like Harare International Festival of Arts (HIFA), Zimbabwe International Film Festival (ZIFF) and International Images Film Festival for Women (IIFF). Indian films have won awards in the Zimbabwe International Film Festivals.

An Exhibition of Indian handicrafts was held from 21-26 November 2012 in Harare by Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts, India. 2nd edition of the Handicrafts BSM-cum-Exhibition was successfully held from September 28, 2013 to October 6, 2013 and was joined by 14 companies and inaugurated by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Indian Tourist Office, Johannesburg opened a Tourist Stall in Harare, at the venue of the aforementioned Handicrafts Exhibition, from 21-26 November 2012 and organized a Work-Shop for Tour Operators in Zimbabwe on 25 November 2012. The Embassy of India in Harare, in collaboration with the Indian Tourist Office, Johannesburg, organized an Indian Food Festival organized in Hotel Meikles, Harare from 21-25 November 2012. The 2nd edition of the Food Festival held in the same hotel in Harare from October 7-11, 2013 with one chef and one cook coming from Janpath Hotel, was equally successful

Indian Community

Another important dimension of India-Zimbabwe relations is the presence of around 10,000 Zimbabweans of Indian origin. The beginning of Indian presence in Zimbabwe goes back to about 1890 when Indian plantation workers in apartheid South Africa crossed over to the then Southern Rhodesia. Most of them belong to Gujarat and are in trading business. This PIO community has mainly engaged itself in retail trade or export-import business, while the younger generations have mostly moved out of the country for better opportunities as professionals. Some members of the community hold US/Canadian/British/Australian passports. The expatriate Indian community, mostly business professionals, number is around 500. To the credit of the government in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean-Indian community has, since independence, never faced any of the discrimination and hardships imposed in other African countries. By and large, the Indian community is well respected in Zimbabwe and has maintained cordial relations with the majority community. Senator K.G Patel, who died in 2011, was a member of the Politburo and Central Committee of the ruling party. He was accorded the status of a national hero in 2012. Mr. Bharat Patel is now a Supreme Court judge; and Justices Ahmed Ebrahim and Adam have retired as Supreme Court and High Court judges, respectively. Justice (Retd.) Ahmed Ebrahim, awarded Pravasi Bhartiya Samman in 2004, actively participated in all PBD. Under Know India Programme quite a few Zimbabweans of Indian origin have participated in the 12th, 13th, 16th, 20th and 22nd KIP programmes.

December 2013