

**High Commission of India  
Accra**

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**India-Sierra Leone Bilateral Brief**

**Political relations**

India and Sierra Leone share cordial and warm relationship which dates back to over five decades. The High Commission of India to Ghana is concurrently accredited to Sierra Leone with residence in Accra. The Honorary Consulate of India is functioning in Freetown since 1993.

**Visits from India**

Bilateral high-level visits and consultations include the visit of Indian Defence Minister, Shri George Fernandes to Sierra Leone in July 2000; Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Anand Sharma, to Sierra Leone in January 2009; Shri Sushil Kumar Modi, Dy. Chief Minister of Bihar, visited Sierra Leone to attend the “Sierra Leone Conference on Development and Transformation” held in Sierra Leone from 30 January to 1 February, 2012. Special Envoy to the PM, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, MoS (Water Resources) visited Sierra Leone on 16-18 July 2016, to deliver PM’s invitation to President Koroma.

**Visits from Sierra Leone**

There have been high level visits from Sierra Leone. President Ernest Bai Koroma, accompanied by Foreign and Trade Ministers visited India (27-29 October 2015) for the 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Forum Summit and had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister. Foreign Minister Dr. Samura Kamara, who was part of the delegation, met with EAM and the Trade Minister of Sierra Leone attended the Trade Ministers’ Meet on 23-24 October 2015, on the sidelines of IAFS-III.

Minister of Finance and Economic Development Momodu Kargbo represented Sierra Leone at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the AFDB held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat (22 – 25 May 2017). Minister of Communications & Information Mohamed Bangura, accompanied by two officials participated in the Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) held in New Delhi on 23-24 November 2017. Dr. Anthony Augustine Sandi, Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, accompanied by Mr. Francis Ahmed Koroma, Principal and Environmental Officer paid a visit to India to attend the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention held at New Delhi from 29 September to 2 October, 2018. The Finance Minister of Sierra Leone, Mr. Jacob Jusu Saffa, led a two-member delegation for CII-EXIM Bank India-West Africa Regional Conclave at Abuja, Nigeria, on 8-9 October, 2018 and met MoS for Commerce and Industry, senior officials of the Indian Government, Deputy MD of EXIM Bank and CEOs of Indian companies. Mr. Alpha O Timbo, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education of Sierra Leone, accompanied by Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education attended Partners’ Forum 2018 on Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health held at New Delhi from 10-14 December, 2018.

## Commercial relations

According to available statistics, during the period 2017-2018, total bilateral trade was US\$117.68, Indian exports to Sierra Leone amounted to US\$93.51 million while India imported goods worth US\$24.17 million from Sierra Leone. Trade figures for past few years are given below:

Period	India's exports to Sierra Leone	India's Imports from Sierra Leone	Total Trade	In US\$ mn	
				Balance of Trade	of
2014-15	80.40	23.59	103.99	<b>56.81</b>	
2015-16	91.17	16.56	107.73	<b>74.61</b>	
2016-17	93.71	12.23	105.94	<b>81.48</b>	
2017-18	93.51	24.17	117.68	<b>69.34</b>	

(Source: Department of Commerce, GOI)

Indian export basket comprises mostly of drugs and pharmaceuticals, textile, eggs, and machine tools, while the major items of imports from Sierra Leone include ferrous waste and scrap, wood pulp, waste paper and small quantities of titanium ores.

There are about 20 Indian NRI/PIO trading companies, based in Sierra Leone. Bharti Airtel, which had acquired Zain Africa for US\$ 10.7 bn in 2010, has recently sold off its operations to Orange Telecom of France.

An Indian Power Sector Technical Team comprising of representatives from Ministry of New & Renewable Energy and NTPC visited Sierra Leone from 8-11 December 2015. The team met with the Minister of Energy and also had field visits to thermal power station outside Freetown and Lunsar iron ore mines and Kenema and Bo substations. A two-member team from EXIM Bank of India paid a visit to Sierra Leone in early October, 2017 to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the LoC projects in Sierra Leone.

Government of India has provided various assistance packages to Sierra Leone. During his visit to Sierra Leone in January 2009, the MoS (EA), Shri Anand Sharma, gifted 200 military barracks to Sierra Leone. India gifted 29 packages of indelible ink in May, 2007 for Sierra Leone's Presidential and Parliamentary elections held in September 2007. India also supplied 40,000 tonnes of non-basmati rice to Sierra Leone in June 2008 to meet urgent requirements.

With a view to assisting Sierra Leone in its socio-economic development, India extended concessional loans through Lines of Credit (LoC) worth US\$ 100 million for various projects in the country. These include (i) Development of Commercial Agriculture; (ii) Rehabilitation of Telecom Sector in Sierra Leone (SIERRATEL); (iii) Rehabilitation of Six Potable Water Projects; and (iv) Solar Street Lighting Project. Two LoCs of US\$ 30 million and US\$ 15 million were approved for Irrigation Development and Expansion of Rehabilitation of existing Potable Water Facilities respectively in Sierra Leone. Government of Sierra Leone signed a fresh Line of Credit Agreement with the EXIM Bank of India of US \$ 78 million in August 2016 for establishment of transmission sub-stations in Sierra Leone.

India is sponsoring a project entitled 'Digital Financial Inclusion' in Sierra Leone. In end-July 2018, the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Board of Directors approved US\$ 1 million out of the IBSA Fund for the project. The project aims to expand digital financial services among women, youth, micro, small & medium enterprises of the country leading to resilient and inclusive economic growth.

### **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)**

Sierra Leone has been a beneficiary of the scholarships awarded by GoI under ITEC and the ICCR Scholarships. India offered specialised training programmes for professionals and officials under the IAFS-III which is also being utilized by Sierra Leone. The ITEC Rural Solar Electrification course, held at the Barefoot College of Tilonia, Rajasthan, was found to be particularly relevant when some Sierra Leonean women upon their return from the course, have successfully installed the solar system in their villages providing inexpensive electricity to the rural households. At present 10 more women are undergoing training at the Barefoot college.

### **Culture**

The International Day of Yoga is being celebrated every year since 2015. As part of Freedom70 celebrations, a Kathak Dance troupe sponsored by Ministry of Culture visited Freetown on 27-28 January 2018.

### **Indian Community**

The Indian community in Sierra Leone is about 1400 strong, of which 500 are on short term contracts. Indians are mostly engaged in trade and manufacturing. A few of them are into mining and trading of gold and diamonds. There are about 60 Indian owned registered companies. Indian Mercantile Association is the only Indian association in Sierra Leone. A Hindu temple is run by the local Temple Committee. Choithram Trust, managed by the Indian owned Choithram Group, runs a Charitable Hospital.

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