

India - Lesotho Relations

Since 1996, the High Commission in Pretoria has been concurrently accredited to Lesotho. (Earlier, Lesotho was concurrently accredited to the High Commission of India in Botswana). Following the visit of Prime Minister Mosisili to India in August 2003, Lesotho opened a resident Mission in New Delhi in 2005.

India and Lesotho enjoy a strong relationship that has stood the test of time and is based on shared values and principles, underpinned by the noble objective of South-South cooperation.

High-level Visits:

From Lesotho

Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. Letsema Adonts'i, attended the virtual Environment Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit which was chaired by Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change of India on 17 November 2023.

Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane MP, virtually participated and delivered her remarks as one of the panelists in the Finance Ministers' Session on 12 January 2023 as part of the virtual 'Voice of the Global South Summit' on 12-13 January 2023 during India's G20 Presidency.

Minister of Education and Training of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Dr. Ntoi Rapapa, MP, accompanied by Deputy Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Training, Mr. Ratsiu Majara, visited India in connection with the UNESCO-India-Africa Hackathon held from 22-25 November 2022 in Greater Noida, India.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr Keketso Sello, visited India from 19-24 September 2022 for attending the 9th Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) in New Delhi.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Ms Matsepo Molise Ramakoe, visited India (a private visit) and during her visit the Minister met EAM on 1 June and was conferred 'Honoris Causa' degree by G.D. Goenka University in India on 3 June 2022.

Deputy Minister in Prime Minister's office, Mr. Tsehlo Moses Ramarou, participated in the India Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave (IADMC) on 6 February 2020.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Malaha Molapo, along with nine other officials from his Ministry visited India in August-September 2019 in connection with a study tour of major irrigation and agriculture infrastructures in India.

Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Monyane Moleleki, accompanied by Minister of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing, Mr Chalane Letus Phori, and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Relations, Mr Halebonoe Setsabi, visited India to attend the 14th CII Exim Bank Africa Conclave held in New Delhi from 17-19 March 2019.

Minister of Water Affairs, Mr. Samonyane Ezekiel Ntsekele, accompanied by Commissioner of Water, Government of Lesotho, Mr Mokake Mojakisane, visited India to attend the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGSIC) in New Delhi from 29 September to 2 October 2018.

Minister of Health, Mr. Nkaku Kabi, Lesotho visited India from 30 June – 6 July 2018 and Deputy Minister of Health, Ms. Manthabiseng Arcylia Pholeli, Government of Lesotho visited India on 2 September 2018 to follow-up on the MoU signed between Apollo Hospital, India and the Ministry of Health, Government of Lesotho.

His Majesty King Letsie III and his family visited India (a private visit) from 27 December 2017-2 January 2018.

From India

Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) Culture, Tourism & MoS for Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, visited Lesotho on 9 July 2015 as Special Envoy of Hon'ble Prime Minister to deliver invitations for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit to the leadership of the Government of Lesotho. During the visit, Minister met with the Prime Minister of Lesotho, Dr. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Mr. Tlohang Sekhamane.

Joint Bilateral Cooperation Commission Meeting (JBCC)

The Agreement establishing the Joint Commission was signed in March 2004. First session of JBCC was held in New Delhi in March 2009. The fourth meeting of the JBCC was held in Lesotho on 1 October 2019. The 5th round of Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation was held in Maseru, Lesotho on 2 August 2023.

Defence

A number of officials of the Lesotho Defence Forces (LDF) have been trained in Indian defence training establishments. Lieutenant General ET Motanyane, Commander, LDF visited India along with other senior officers in October 2007. Mr. Moshoeshe David Sehloho, Principal Secretary, Defence & National Security, Lesotho visited New Delhi in August 2013 and met with the Defence Secretary and Deputy Chief of Army Staff, in addition to visiting Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. Chief of Defence Staff of the Lesotho Force Lt Gen Mojalefa Letsoela visited India from 17-21 October 2022 in connection with DefExpo 2022 (18-22 October) and also attended India-Africa Defence Dialogue on 18 October 2022. From India, Lt Gen JP Nehra, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army visited Lesotho on 17–19 July 2014.

Agreements / MOUs

Agreement for LOC of US\$ 5 million for procurement of agricultural equipment from India. (2004) – project completed in 2007.

Agreement for LOC of US\$ 4.7 million for setting up of Vocational Training Centres in Lesotho. (2010) – project completed in 2024.

Agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports. (December 2020).

India's Assistance in other areas

Under a tripartite agreement signed by India and Lesotho in October 2001, 4 Indian agricultural experts / technicians were deputed to Lesotho under FAO's special programme for Food Security in Low Income Food Deficit countries. Subsequently, an Indian Expert was deputed in January 2004 to render assistance for drawing up an irrigation master plan.

National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO) signed an MOU in January 2004 for Mutual Cooperation for the Development of Small Industries in Lesotho. This envisaged strengthening the capacity of BEDCO for development sustenance and growth of small enterprises in Lesotho,

facilitating transfer of technologies from India to Lesotho, assistance in setting up a Common Facility-cum-Training Center to meet the skill and technology needs of small enterprises in Lesotho and facilitating enterprise-to-enterprise contacts with a view to promote Indian investment and industrial partnerships in Lesotho. The Indian Ministry of Textiles sent a team of experts to assess Lesotho's training needs in the textile sector.

An India-Lesotho Centre for Advanced Education in Information Technology has been set up by India at Lerotholi Polytechnic, Maseru on 29 November 2017, which is a fully funded Government of India project.

A two-member delegation from the Election Commission of India visited Lesotho on 29-31 January 2015 to provide Technical Assistance in different aspect of election management to the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho.

On 29 November 2017, 500 metric tonnes of rice were formally donated by India to Lesotho as a gesture of goodwill and friendship between the two countries and to mitigate the devastating effect of food shortages caused by famine and other acts of nature.

Trade & Economic Cooperation

The bilateral trade between the two countries is minimal. India's import data from Lesotho is not available. However, the figure for Indian exports for 2023-24 is US\$5.62 million. Major item of Indian exports include pharmaceuticals.

The Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme announced by the Prime Minister at the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008 has been offered and accepted by Lesotho.

Indian Community

There are about 4000 Indian expatriates and PIOs in Lesotho working as teachers, accountants and other professionals. Some of them are engaged in business as well. The community has a reasonably high economic profile in the country. There is an Indian Association which organises periodic functions and has hosted well-attended cultural performances by troupes sent by ICCR from time to time.

Consular Services camp

Consular Services Camp for rendering CPV services to Indian nationals living in Lesotho are organized regularly by the High Commission in Lesotho.

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