

Bilateral Brief (India-DRC)

Overview

India shares a cordial and friendly relationship with DRC. India was among the first countries to establish a diplomatic mission in Kinshasa in 1962. India had sent its Gurkha troops to DRC as far back as the early 60s (1960-62), under ONUC [UN peacekeeping mission], for countering the rebellion in Katanga province. At present, India is among the largest personnel contributors to MONUSCO, the largest peacekeeping mission of the world.

Besides this, our commercial relations, particularly trade and development partnership has been strengthening over the years. Given a large Indian diaspora, bilateral cultural exchanges have been increasing in recent years. DRC also generally supports India on various international for a including our bid for non-permanent membership of UNSC 2021-22.

High-Level Visits

India to DRC

- No VVIP visits from India to DRC so far.
- **June 2010** - MOS for External Affairs, Mrs. Preeti Kaur visited Kinshasa to participate in the 50th independence anniversary of DRC.
- **July 2015** - Special Envoy of Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Manoj Sinha, MOS [Railways] visited Kinshasa to hand over invitations for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi. He met President, Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, and handed.

DRC to India

Date of Visit	Dignitary who visited	Purpose/Outcome
2008	President Joseph	1. Visited India for 1 st India-

(April 8-9)	Kabila Kabange	Africa Forum Summit 2. Held bilateral talks with the then PM Shri Manmohan Singh
October 2009	Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba	He was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Minister of Planning and Minister of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications besides senior advisers from key Ministries
May 2010	Deputy PM and Minister of Posts, Telephones and Telecommunications	He visited Hyderabad to take part in an international conference on telecommunications
Feb 2011	Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba	He visited to participate in the India-Least Developed Countries Ministerial Conference in New Delhi.
Feb 2013	Vice Prime Minister in charge of Budget, Mr. Daniel Mukoko Samba	He was heading a 9-member delegation to the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit
March 2013	Felix Kabange Numbi, Minister of Public Health	Explore co-operation in Health Sector
March 2013	Dismas Swana Emina Monzia Magbengu, Vice Minister for International and Regional Cooperation	Participated in 9 th CII-Exim Bank Conclave
May 2015	Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo	During the visit which extensive talks were held with then EAM on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest. He also met Minister of Health and Family Welfare and Minister of Mines during the visit
October 2015	Mr. Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and	3 rd IAFS

	International Cooperation	
February 2016	Mr. Boyamba Okombo Antoine, Deputy Foreign Minister	He led a 10-member delegation for the “Colors 2016 International Youth Fest” organized by M/s Aditya Group of Educational Institutions, Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh.
March 2016	Ms. Nefertiti Ngudianza BayokisaKisula, Minister of Trade	CII-Exim Bank Conclave
April 2016	Mr Jeannot Matadi Nenga, Minister of Energy &Water Resources	To discuss the Katende Hydroelectric Power Project
June 2016	Boyamba Okombo Antoine, Deputy Foreign Minister	To meet the Congolese diaspora (including students)
August 2016	Raymond Tshibanda N’tungamulongo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	To discuss the Katende Hydroelectric Power Project
March 2017	Mr. Modeste BAHATI LUKWEBO, Minister of Economy	12 th CII-Exim Bank Conclave
June 2017	Kwet Mwan Kwet John, Minister for International Cooperation	---
Nov. 2017	Léonard She Okitundu Lundula, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister	She met with the then EAM and discussed the entire gamut of bilateral and multilateral relations
March 2018	Léonard She Okitundu Lundula, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister	International Solar Alliance Founding Conference in New Delhi

Sept-Oct 2018	Mr. Ingele Ifoto, Minister of Energy and Hydraulic Resources	International Solar Alliance meeting in New Delhi
March 2019	Mr. Ileka Atoki, Secretary General of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo	14 th CII-Exim Bank Conclave, on the sidelines of which he also signed LoC Agreements for implementing three Solar Power Projects in the DRC.
23 September 2020 Virtual	H.E. Mr. Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Jean-Lucien Bussa Tongba, Minister of External Trade	15 th CII-Exim Bank Conclave The Minister of External Trade also participated & addressed the Ministerial Session on enhancing India's trade and investment in Africa.
October 2022	H.E. Mr. Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga, the Minister of Defense and War Veterans	The Minister participated in the DefExpo 2022 (18-22 October 2022) and the 2 nd India Africa Defence Dialogue. His delegation also had the Chief of Air Force, Chief of Land Forces and the Secretary General of Ministry of Defence. Mr. Gilbert also had a bilateral meeting with Hon'ble Raksha Mantri of India, Shri Rajnath Singh. <i>ROD of the meeting may be sought from C&WA division</i>
January 2023 (Virtual)	H.E. Mr. Julien Paluku, Minister of Industry of DRC	The Minister participated in the Virtual Voice of South Summit organized by MEA and CIM and chaired by Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Shri Piyush Goyal.
January 29 – February 04	H.E. Mr. Nicolas Kazadi, Minister of Finance, along with Governor of Kasai Province, visited	Meetings were held with Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, MOS (VM), and Officials from RITES. Discussions were held on India's LOC to DRC - Katende HEP and 6-

	New Delhi	Solar Photovoltaic projects.
14-16 June, 2023	H.E. Mr. Vital Kamerhe KAHONGYA, Deputy PM & Minister of National Economy H.E. Mr.	

Bilateral Institutional mechanisms

1. Joint Commission for Political, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Socio-cultural: An Agreement for setting up JCM was signed in March 2008. However, no meeting of the Joint Commission has been held ever.

2. Cultural Cooperation Agreement: This was signed in October 2009 and gets renewed every 5 years.

3. Foreign Office Consultations: A MoU on FOCs was signed in May 2010. No meeting has been held so far under this.

Pending MOUs/ Agreements

4. MOU to set up an IT Center of Excellence: Signed in October 2010 but no Progress yet.

5. Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement: This Agreement was signed on April 13, 2010. In 2015, following a revision of the standard text by GoI, a draft of the new text was shared with DRC for negotiation. A response from DRC side has been pending, despite several reminders.

6. Agreement for Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection of Taxes: This Agreement was approved for signing by the Indian Union Cabinet on 5th Sept. 2011. However, despite several reminders, there has been no response from DRC, though the Foreign Secretary has conveyed verbally that DRC is not ready to sign any agreement on taxes.

Co-operation at international fora

1. International Solar Agreement: DRC was one of the first countries to sign the Agreement. The Agreement was ratified by the DRC Parliament in Sept. 2018, but the ratification has not been officially conveyed by the DRC government yet.

2. DRC has generally supported India at various international fora including recently for India's candidature for non-permanent membership of UNSC for 2021-22, and for India's candidature for re-election as a member of the international Telecommunication Union (ITU) Council and of Ms. M. Revathi from India for the position of Member, Radio Regulation Board (RRB) for the period of 2023-2026.

Trade and Commerce Relations

Bilateral trade (made up more or less of Indian exports) has been growing in the past 3 years despite COVID-19. The table below depicts the trade in past few Financial Years:

Year	(US\$ million)				
	FY 2019-20	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-22	FY 2022 - 23	FY 2023-24 (April - July)
India's imports from DRC	32.13	10.16	31.21	214	183
India's exports to DRC	352.77	430.33	568.17	631	219
Total Trade	384.90	440.49	599.38	845	402

(Source: Department of Commerce, GoI)

Major items of India's imports from DRC (FY 2022 - 23)

S. No	HS CODE	Commodity	Value (USD million)
01	27	MINERAL FUELS, MINERAL OILS AND PRODUCTS OF THEIR DISTILLATION; BITUMINOUS SUBSTANCES; MINERAL WAXES.	164.78

02	18	COCOA AND COCOA PREPARATIONS	29
03	76	ALUMINUM AND ARTICLES THEREOF	7.59
04	74	COPPER AND ARTICLES THEREOF	6.14
05	72	IRON AND STEEL	2.87
06	85	ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT AND PARTS THEREOF;	1.22

Major items of India's exports to DRC (FY 2022 – 23)

S. No	HS Code	Commodity	Value (USD million)
01	30	PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS	150
02	87	VEHICLES OTHER THAN RAILWAY OR TRAMWAY ROLLING STOCK, AND PARTS AND ACCESSORIES THEREOF	135.02
03	63	OTHER MADE-UP TEXTILE ARTICLES, SETS, WORN CLOTHING AND WORN TEXTILE ARTICLES, RAGS	47.76
04	84	NUCLEAR REACTORS, BOILERS, MACHINERY AND MECHANICAL APPLIANCES, PARTS THEREOF	50.19
05	39	PLASTIC AND ARTICLES THEREOF	25.55
06	10	CEREALS	33.26

Indian investments in DRC

Indian private sector has large presence in DRC, especially in Pharmaceuticals, FMCG goods, telecom, construction & real estate, mining etc. Although the exact number of private investments is unknown, it is estimated to be at least \$2 - 3 billion.

Sector	Name of Company	Remarks
Mining	RUBAMIN SARL	Copper
	CHEMAF SA	Copper and Cobalt, part of Shalina

		Resources Group
	SOMIKA GROUP	Copper & Cobalt
	Golden African Resources SARL	Copper & Cobalt
	SAMTA MINES	Copper
Pharmaceuticals & Medical Sector	HJ Group	Hospitals, Cargo Airline (SERVE AIR), Real Estate
	Shalina Pharma	Part of Shalina Resources Group
	Unique Pharma	---
	ZENUFA Pharma	---
	Prince Pharma	Part of BNB Group
Telecom	Bharti Airtel	3rd largest telecom company in DRC, Has invested over \$1 billion
Other Major companies	KENNY'S Group	Real Estate, Travel Agency, Retail of luxury goods, Restaurants
	BNB Group	Manufacturing, trading & distribution of FMCG & pharma, construction
	Sté Gay Impex	Import, distribution & Wholesale of FMCG & alcoholic drinks
	Laxmi Group	OM Metals and Chemicals
	Jemi Jewels	Gold and Industrial diamond trading
	Laxman Congo Company	Trading of construction material, recycling iron & other metals

Development Partnership Co-operation

India's LOC Projects in DRC

(1) \$33.5 millions for setting up of **cement plant** (not started yet) & supply of TATA and Ashok Leyland buses and spare parts (completed)

(2) \$25 millions for **Rural water supply** (completed in 2011)

(3) **Kakobola HEP Project**

USD 42 million for 9.3 MW Kakabola HEP project in Bandundu Province. Indian company, Angélique International Limited completed the work in October 2016.

Another **LOC of US\$ 34.50 million** was signed on 28th May 2015 for Development of Power Distribution Project for power generated at Kakobola HEP. The implementation of the project has been awarded to the consortium of Mohan Energy Corporation (MEC) and Associated Power Structure Private Limited (APSPL).

Recently in September 2023, a team from EXIM Bank, along with Mission officials visited the project site in Kakobola to assess the progress of the project. The power distribution project is **expected to be completed in 2023-24**. There were delays in completion due to COVID-19 restrictions. Also, the consortium has faced delays related to pending payments from the DRC side. Once completed, it will provide electricity and drinking water to almost 8 Lakhs Congolese living in towns of Kikwit, Gungu and Idiofa in the province of Bandundu.

(4) **Katende Project**

LOC of **USD 168 million** for Katende HEP project in Kasai Occidental Province (64 MW) was signed on 11 July 2011, followed by an additional LOC of **USD 82 million**. The project has been halted since 2016, after GOI removed Angelique International Limited (AIL) from the project.

The project holds importance for DRC, not only because it would provide drinking water and electricity in the Kasai Central province, but also due to being located around hometown of President Tshisekedi. Several bilateral visits took place in 2022 and 2023 regarding the project including visit of team of BHEL, Exim Bank and WAPCOS in March 2022 to the project site and visit of DRC's Minister of Finance to New Delhi in January 2023.

Recently, in **May 2023**, EAM's approval for new LOC of \$180 million and Grant of \$20 million, for completion of Katende HEP was conveyed officially to DRC. The next step is for the DRC govt. to sign the LOC agreement with EXIM Bank.

Agreement for another LOC of **US\$ 109.942 million** for Transmission Line and Distribution System Project in Kasai provinces for evacuation of electricity from Katende Hydro-electric Project was signed on 28th May 2015. Tendering was under process, but now completely halted.

(5) 6 Solar Photo-Voltaic power projects

1. USD 33.29 million for financing installation of 15 MW Solar Photovoltaic Power Project at Karawa, Province – North Ubangi.
2. USD 25.27 million for financing installation of 10 MW Solar Photovoltaic Power Project at Lusambo, Province – Sankuru; and
3. USD 24.55 million for financing installation of 10 MW Solar Photovoltaic Power Project at Mbandaka, Province – Equator.
4. USD 56.824 million for 15 MW Photovoltaic Power Plant and Electrical Network Solar Project at Tshilenge (to be installed at Mbuji-Mayi)
5. USD 56.824 million for 15 MW Photovoltaic Power Plant and Electrical Network Solar Project at Gemena and
6. USD 26.68 million for 10 MW Photovoltaic Power Plant and Electrical Network Solar Project at Manono.

These LOCs were approved by DEA in July 2019 and MEA approval was conveyed to DRC in the same month. The final draft of LOC agreement was shared by Exim Bank in May 2022. In June 2022, DRC government requested renegotiation of agreements related to 6 LOCs, both from the point of view of individual plant cost as well as overall financial conditions.

Recently, GOI approved the extension of the time limit up to **June 30, 2023**, for signing of the LOC agreements. The financing agreements remain **unsigned** till date. While EXIM Bank has requested the DRC side for early signing of the agreement, a response is pending from DRC side (They must accept the rate of interest offered under IDEAS).

Other 'Potential areas' of Development Partnership cooperation

(7) Digital Services

Financial inclusion was one of the key aspects of President Tshisekedi's 2018 Presidential Elections' agenda and is likely to gain momentum in 2023. India may consider transferring AADHAR, UPI, E-Voting Machine technology to DRC.

In March 2022, a delegation led by Special Advisor to President Tshisekedi visited Mumbai and Delhi and Embassy arranged their meetings with NPCI, UIDAI, Election Commission of India officials.

In July 2022, an NPCI team visited Kinshasa and held discussions with the representatives of Congo Central Bank as well as with the Presidential Advisor on Digital matters.

(8) Railways: In March 2023, a 2-member RITES delegation also visited Kinshasa and met with Hon'ble Minister of Transport of DRC to discuss co-operation in Railways sector.

(9) Agriculture: The Director for Agriculture Extension of National Institute of Agriculture Extension Management (MANAGE)- an organization of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, GOI, had visited DRC in **October 2017**.

(10) Mining: Mission arranged visit of a three-member delegation from MIDHANI (Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited) to Kinshasa from 5-7 November 2019. Meetings with the Minister of Mines, Mr. Willy Kitobe Samsoni; President's Principal Adviser on Mines and Energy, Mr. Eboma Ablavi Michel, Investment Promotion Agency (ANAPI) and the Economic Federation of Congo (FEC) were arranged.

(11) MSMEs: A team from the Ministry of Small-Scale Industries had visited DR Congo in **December 2015** and met with concerned local officials. In **October 2019**, the DRC Minister of SMEs had expressed interest in exploring possibilities of bilateral cooperation in the sector.

There had also been a proposal for setting up a food processing unit by HMT, mooted in 2017. Due to political uncertainties in DRC, the project could not commence.

Donations/ Grants

- (1) 60 "Sonalika" tractors with accessories & spares worth US\$ 0.66 million [2006-07].
- (2) US\$ 1 million for supply of medicines [2008-09]
- (3) In **March 2021**, India also donated 50,000 made-in-India COVID vaccines to DRC to fight COVID-19.

- (4) In July 2022, MEA announced donation of 1000 MT of rice for DR Congo for post-COVID recovery. The same is yet to be materialized.

Capacity Building Programs

- (1) Over **630 ITEC** slots have been utilised (2007 - Present) under India's ITEC program and around **55 ICCR** scholarships (2012 – Present)
- (2) Tele-education and Tele-medicine projects were implemented under the Pan African e-network project. The agreement on e-Vidya Bharti and e-Arogya Bharti (e-VBAB) was signed with the DRC Government in August 2019. The DRC Government has since nominated two universities – University of Kinshasa and Protestant University. Around 50 Congolese students have benefitted from the courses so far.
- (3) 7 Congolese Solar Mamas trained in solar electrification in Rajasthan in Barefoot college under ITEC (2010-15).
- (4) Two scholars availed of the prestigious CV Raman International Fellowship (One in 2014 and other in 2017)
- (5) 24 DRC officials benefited from various training courses offered under IAFS - I, II, III (2010-14). Also, there was establishment of Human Resource center during IAFS – I. Decision was also taken to establish IT Centre of Excellence and Vocational Centre during IAFS-II, but no progress yet.
- (6) Two members of the Military Court took part as observers in the first ever Multinational India-Africa Field training exercise in February 2019.

(7) **SSIFS, New Delhi**

In October 2022, one Congolese diplomat (Banza Mukalay Papy) participated in the 3-weeks **long 69th PCFD course**

In January 2023, Mr. Benjamin Muhigwa OMBENI, participated in the 3rd Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Program.

Defense and Security Cooperation

So far, India's defense export to DRC is NIL. Given the security situation in DRC, recent lifting of arm embargo, and challenging terrain, there is a potential to enhance Indian defense exports to DRC, especially products such as military vehicles, Rifles, equipment such as night-vision goggles, radar systems etc.

DRC is also yet to take benefit of India's Defense ITEC courses as so far, as per Mission's record, no Congolese has attended these courses.

In October 2022, H.E. Mr. Gilbert Kabanda Kurhenga, Minister of Defense of DRC visited India for DefExpo-2022 and 2nd IADD. A bilateral meeting was also held with Hon'ble Raksha Mantri of India.

India and Peacekeeping in DRC

Given India's long history of troop contribution for peacekeeping in DRC. As far back as March 1961, Indian troops participated in the 99th Infantry brigade during the Katanga secession crisis. India also contributed thousands of troops to the United Missions in 1964 and 2000.

Currently, India is the 2nd largest troop contributor (Bangladesh is 1st) in MONUSCO with over 1,800 military personnel, around 140 police personnel, and 40 military observers. Till date, around 40 Indian peacekeepers have been martyred in DRC, including two Indian peacekeepers (BSF Head Constables) on July 26, 2022, in Butembo, North Kivu, during anti-MONUSCO protests.

Consular and People to people ties

Indian diaspora

Indian diaspora is among the largest expats' community in DRC, with around 10-15000 Indian nationals. Most of the Indian community is of Gujarati origin and from the Ismaili community. They are engaged mainly in service sector, business, trading, and manufacturing. Bulk of the Indian community is from Gujarat. Others are mainly from Kerala, other South Indian states, and a small number from North India.

A Hindu temple has been built by the Congo Hindu Mandal comprising Indian community in Kinshasa, and a Jamaat Khana by Ismaili community. The Jamaat Khana, however, has members from both Indian and Pak origin.

Cultural exchanges

- (1) India and DRC signed an **Agreement on Cultural Cooperation on 29 October 2009**, which is automatically renewed every 5 years.
- (2) A dance and music group from the National Festival of Gungu [FESNAG] visited India from February 1-15, 2012, February 1-15, 2013, and February 1-15, 2016, to participate in the Surajkund Crafts Mela.
- (3) A 12-member 'Rajasthani Music and Dance group' visited DRC from July 17-27, 2012, and performed in Kinshasa and FESNAG, Gungu, Bandundu Province.
- (4) A 15-member Manipuri Dance troupe from ICCR, along with local dancers, performed to packed audiences in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi in June 2016.
- (5) On the occasion of 75th Independence Day of India, Mission invited ICCR-sponsored Kathak dance group led by Ms. Swati Wangnoo to Kinshasa on **August 15, 2022**.
- (6) On the occasion of 74th Republic Day of India, Mission invited an ICCR-sponsored **Kalapath Gujarati Folk dance group** to perform in Kinshasa (DR Congo) and Libreville (Gabon).
- (7) 15 Congolese artists, sponsored by Government of India, participated in the **Suraj Kund Mela 2023** and showcased their art.

Recent Incidents

In August 2021, the death of a Congolese national, Joel Shindani Malu, in Bengaluru (staying illegally in India) sparked violent protests against Indians, which continued for two weeks (which also turned against Chinese, Lebanese etc.) and led to stone pelting, looting of shops, violence etc. The issue was sorted later following intervention by the Mission and the Indian community leaders.

September 2023