

## **India – Republic of Gabon Relations**

### **Overview**

India and Gabon enjoy warm and friendly relations dating back to the pre-Independence era of Gabon. The relationship is marked by cooperation in various fields, including trade, economic development, and multilateral forums.

2. Gabonese Embassy in India was established in New Delhi on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008. High Commission of India in Gabon was established in September 2024. (Gabon joined the Commonwealth in June 2022.)

### **I Political Engagements**

#### **India to Gabon**

3. In 30 May – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022, Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu paid an Official visit to Libreville, Gabon. HVPI met with the President (Ali Bongo Ondimba), PM (Ms. Rose Christiane), Foreign Minister (Mr. Michael Moussa Adamo) and the heads of the two Chambers of the Gabonese parliament. During the visit the entire gamut of bilateral relations and global issues of mutual concerns were discussed. Two MOUs were also signed (JCM and MOU between SSIFS and MOFA). During the visit, a CII-Delegation also visited Libreville and an India-Gabon Business Forum was held. CII signed MOU for International Co-operation with ANPI (Investment promotion body of Gabon).

4. In 24-27 September, 2022, Indian Naval Ship INS Tarkash visited Port Gentil, Gabon for a Port Call visit. The Port call was a part of its visit to countries in Gulf of Guinea (and beyond) for anti-piracy cooperation with the countries of the region. This was also the first ever visit of an Indian Navy Ship to Gabon.

5. In December 2020, Virtual bilateral meeting was conducted between Hon'ble MOS V. Muraleedharan & the Foreign Minister of Gabon Mr. Pacome Moubele Boubeya. The two leaders discussed entire spectrum of

bilateral relations. Both leaders undertook a detailed review of bilateral ties including the Covid-19 pandemic and possibilities of cooperation in the post-Covid scenario. Both leaders also reviewed the utilization of ITEC slots and finalization of draft MOU for participating in e-VBAB Project. Both leaders also committed to support each other's candidature at UN & other international forums.

6. In 16th-17th September 2015, Special Envoy of PM Modi, Sh. Ram Shankar Katheria, MOS [HRD] visited Libreville on 16th-17th September 2015 and handed over the invitation to President Ali Bongo Ondimba for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi.

### **Gabon to India**

7. In February 2025, a high level Gabonese delegation led by H. E. ONKANOWA Brigitte, Minister of Defence, Gabon, visited India to participate in the AERO INDIA Show in Bangalore from February 10-14, 2025. During the visit, the Gabonese delegation visited the HAL facility in Bangalore and also held a meeting with Hon'ble Raksha Mantri ji Shri Rajnath Singh.

8. Participation in **Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS):**

- **August 2024:** H.E. Hervé BIBA NZENGUE, Secretary-General, Ministry of Petroleum (via recorded message) Joined Energy Vice-Ministers' Session.
- **November 2023:** H.E. Mays Mouissi, Minister of National Economy Represented Foreign Minister for the FM Session of 2<sup>nd</sup> VoGSS.

9. In June 2023, H.E. Mr. Patrick Taofick MOUGUIAMA DAOUDA, Minister of Higher education, H.E. Mr. Charles MVE ELLAH, Minister of Agriculture, and, H.E. Mr. Hugues Judicael MBANDINGA MADIYA, Minister of Investment Promotion participated in **18<sup>th</sup> CII-Exim Bank Conclave**, New Delhi.

10. In December 2022, H.E. Michel Moussa ADAMO, Minister of Foreign Affairs visited New York for the India's UNSC Presidency Signature events. The event was chaired by Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar.

11. In 19-21 June 2022, Minister of State, Minister of Industry H.E. Mr. Pacome Moubelet-Boubeya, Minister of Investment Promotion H.E. Mr. Hugues Mbadinga Madiya and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ms Yolande Nyonda visited India for **17<sup>th</sup> CII-Exim Bank Conclave**. The Minister of State, Minister of Industry of Gabon held bilateral meeting with Indian Minister of State for Trade and Industry. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed on diversification of trade basket.

12. In October 2022, Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Michel Moussa ADAMO, visited Mumbai and Delhi. He participated in UN Counter Terrorism Committee meeting hosted by India. Bilateral talks between EAM and FM of Gabon was held.

13. In March 2018, President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba Visited New Delhi for the International Solar Alliance Meet and met Prime Minister on the sidelines.

14. In November 2018, the then Foreign Minister Regis Immongault visited India and met with then EAM Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, CIM Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Steel, Mr. Chaudhary Birender Singh and MoS for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mr. Rao Inderjeet Singh.

15. In June 2017, a bilateral talks was held between the then Foreign Minister Pacome Moubelet Bouveya and EAM. The entire gamut of bilateral relations and international issues of mutual concern including cross-border terrorism, climate change was discussed. The focus of the Gabonese side was to invite Indian investments in Gabon in agriculture, information technology, construction and mining. He also invited EAM to visit Gabon. During the visit, a Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was also signed. The first India-Gabon FOC was held on 22 November 2022 in New Delhi.

16. In January 2016, Eight-member delegation led by Mr. Mabina Kombila Edgard, Director Exploration, Ministry of Petrol and Hydrocarbon attended the **4th India Africa Hydrocarbons Conference** held in New Delhi.

17. In May 2016, Minister of State for Environment and Natural Resources Mr. Crepin Magliore Gwodog took part in a road show organized to attract Indian investment.

18. In 26-30th Oct 2015, President of Gabon, Ali Bongo Ondimba led a delegation for 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Forum Summit New Delhi. In his meeting with Prime Minister Modi during the visit, President Ondimba described Gabon as a promising country in Africa and a gateway to that continent and called for greater Indian investments. He requested for opening an Indian Mission in Libreville and for a high-level visit from India for increased bilateral engagement.

19. In March 2011, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Paul Bunduku Latha participated in the **7th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave** on India Africa Project Partnership.

20. In May 2010, Ms. Laure Olga Gondjout, Minister of Communications visited India.

21. In December 2009, Minister for Mines, Petroleum and Hydrocarbons, Mr. Julian Nkoghe Bekalen participated in the 2nd India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference held in New Delhi.

22. In may 2007, Minister for Mining, Oil, Energy and Hydraulic Resources, Mr. Richard Auguste and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration, Mr. Jean Ping paid a visit to India.

23. In November 2007, Ali Bongo Ondimba, then Senior Minister for National Defence of Gabon and incumbent President met Raksha Mantri for bilateral talks and visited the defence training centres and production facilities.

### **MOUs/ Agreements**

**24.** During the bilateral visit of the then Foreign Minister of Gabon, Mr. Pacome Moubélet Bouveya, to India in June 2017 (As mentioned in bilateral

visits), a **Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations** was signed. The first ever India-Gabon FOC took place in New Delhi on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022.

25. During the visit of Hon'ble Vice President of India to Libreville on 30<sup>th</sup> May – 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022, two MOUs were signed between India and Gabon.

- MOU between SSIFS and Gabonese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for training of their diplomats.
- Agreement for establishing JCM was also signed.

### **Cooperation in multilateral forums**

26. Gabon has collaborated with India in international forums and regularly supported our candidatures whenever required. It was one among the first countries to sign and ratify the ISA framework agreement. Both India and Gabon supported each other's bid for non-permanent membership of UNSC (India (2021-22) & Gabon (2022-23)). Gabon also supported India during the International Law Commission's elections in November 2021, for which India's candidate was Dr. Bimal Patel.

### **Lines of Credit**

27. In March 2007, GOI approved a Line of Credit of \$14.5 million for a housing project in Bikele near Libreville to construct 300 houses and 4 amenities. Currently, there is no active (live) LOC to Gabon.

### **Capacity Building Programme**

#### **SSIFS**

**28.** Gabonese diplomats participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> special course for Diplomats from Francophone Central & West African Countries held at FSI in October 2019. In October 2022, one Gabonese diplomat participated in the 3-weeks long 69<sup>th</sup> PCFD course for Foreign Diplomats at SSIFS, New Delhi.

#### **ITEC**

29. Under the ITEC scheme, 24 ITEC slots have been utilized by Gabon so far.

### **ICCR**

30. With respect to ICCR scholarships, in the last 5 years, 13 slots had been offered to Gabon.

### **Other development projects**

31. In September 2018, GoI announced a grant-aid of USD one million for Gabon's project for Strengthening climate information and early warning systems, under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

32. Gabon was among the first 15 African countries to implement the Pan African e-network project. Tele-education, Tele-medicine and VVIP connectivity have been set up in Libreville under this project. Hon'ble MOS V Muraleedharan and the then Gabon's Foreign Minister reviewed the finalization process the draft MOU on e-VBAB project during their virtual bilateral meet in Dec. 2020.

33. A Vocational Training Centre was to be set up in Gabon, under the Plan of Action agreed with the African Union following the first India Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008.

## **II Economic and Commercial relations**

34. Gabon has large oil reserves, mineral and other natural resources. It is the world's second largest producer of manganese. There is a lot of potential for bilateral cooperation.

35. In August 2022, the Indian Economic and Trade Organization and the Gabonese Embassy in India launched the India-Gabon Business Council in New Delhi to accelerate the bilateral trade relations.

### **Exports from India (2023-24):**

**36. (i)** Meat and Edible Meat OFFAL (\$12.5 million) **(ii)** Nuclear Reactors, Boilers, Machinery and Mechanical Appliances (\$9.74 million) **(iii)** Vehicles other than Railway or Tramway Rolling Stock (\$9.59 million) **(iv)** Plastic & Articles (\$6.8 million) (v) Electrical Machinery and Equipment and Parts (\$4.5 million)

### **Imports from Gabon**

37. (i) Ores, Slag and Ash. (\$216.28 million) **(ii)** Wood and Articles of Wood; Wood Charcoal (\$ 98.82 million), **(iii)** Animal or Vegetable Fats and Oils and their Cleavage Products (\$ 16.59 million), (iv) Iron and Steel (\$ 1.44 million) (v) Lead and Articles (\$ 1.08 million)

<b>Year</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>FY 2023-24 (April – December)</b>
<b>Exports</b>	55.17	45.55	58.70	53	80	72.6
<b>Imports</b>	456.01	138.40	405.46	1070	398	317.8
<b>Total Trade</b>	511.18	183.94	464.17	1123	480	390.4

**(Source: Department of Commerce, GoI)**

### **Indian Investments**

38. It is estimated that the Indian public and private sector have invested over \$2.5 billion in Gabon till date in several sectors.

(i) Oil India Ltd. [OIL], in partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL), has formed a consortium and is conducting oil exploration in Gabon since 2006. It has invested approximately USD 170 million in the region.

ii) In 2010, Bharti Airtel acquired Zain Communications Network.

(iii) Around 54 Indian companies are said to be operating out of the Special Economic Zone NKOK mainly in the areas of mining, wood

processing and pharmaceuticals manufacturing and FMCG. Prominent Indian/ Indian owned companies include Bhartel Airtel, Greenply, Centauri Mining, La Sante Pharmatique, ReGabon, etc.

(iv) A sizable number of the Indian companies are working in veneer manufacturing. Gabon has become an attractive investment destination for the wood industry, in recent years.

(v) Gabon is interested in Indian investments in other fields including Agriculture, Railways, Mining and local processing of raw materials Gabon is also interested in developing an Ammonia-Urea Fertilizer Project. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Ltd. (*RCF*) visited Gabon in 2018.

### **III Defence Cooperation:**

39. Apart from the Ministerial visit of the Defense Minister in February 2025, a Gabonese delegation composed of Military officials also visited India for techno-commercial visit to HAL sites in February 2024.

40. In September 2022, INS Tarkash visited Port Gentil, Gabon for a Port Call visit. The visit was a part of its visit to countries in Gulf of Guinea (and beyond) for anti-piracy cooperation with the countries of the region. This was also the first ever visit of an Indian Navy Ship to Gabon.

### **IV Consular Cooperation:**

41. Gabon opened its Mission in New Delhi in 2008. India also recently opened its Mission (HCI) in Libreville in September 2024 and is in the process of starting Visa and Consular services soon. Presently, India extends e-Visa facility to the Gabonese nationals (holding ordinary passports). Another way for the Gabonese people to apply for Indian visa and for Indian nationals to apply for Passports and other Consular services is through the Honorary Consul General's office in Libreville, till the commencement of Passport/Visa/Consular services by HCI Libreville. The Honorary Consulate General's Office then sends the Visa/Passport/Consular applications to the Embassy of India, Kinshasa via courier for processing and issue of documents.

42. During Covid-19, both countries cooperated in organizing two chartered flights in 2020, for evacuation of around 300 Indians from Libreville to India. With regards to the mutual recognition of vaccine certificates, Gabonese Foreign Ministry accorded recognition to Indian vaccination certificates.

### **Indian Community**

43. There are around 1000-1200 Indians living in Gabon; most of them are engaged mainly in infrastructure projects, agriculture, trading, export of timber and metal scrap, mining, travel and tours etc. Indian Community is welcomed in Gabon and held in high regard.

### **V Cultural Cooperation:**

44. On the occasion of the 74<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of India, a Gujarati Folk Dance Group, **Kalpath**, visited Libreville on **January 31, 2023** (after its tour to DRC and Republic of Congo) and performed in the presence of around 200 people from Indian diaspora, and local Gabonese authorities.

**March 2025**