

India-Burkina Faso Relations

Political Relations:

Bilateral relations between India and Burkina Faso have been cordial. Bilateral activities began in March 1976 when an official delegation led by Burkina Faso's Commerce & Industry Minister visited India and signed a Protocol on Economic and Technical Cooperation. Since then, there have been a number of High-Level visits from Burkina Faso to India including the visits of President of Burkina Faso, late Capt. Thomas Sankara, in 1983 to attend the NAM Summit and Minister of External Relations and Cooperation in 1989.

From India, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Burkina Faso in 1987. Bilateral relations got a boost in May-June 1993, when President Blaise Compaore visited India. During this visit, India and Burkina Faso decided to establish the Joint Commission to foster cooperation between the two countries. India offered to assist Burkina Faso in its economic development particularly in the areas of agriculture, handlooms, mining, irrigation, small scale industries etc.

During the two-day transit visit of President Comapaore to Delhi in July 1994, India extended Rs. 250 million aid to Burkina Faso in the agricultural field, comprising a package of agricultural aid under the Integrated Agricultural Project. Under the package, 200 tractors and several other accessories, including seeds, implements, water pumps etc., were given. The Joint Commission on economic, cultural, political and technical cooperation between the two countries was established after an agreement signed in October 1994. President Compaore visited India again in 1997.

Former Prime Minister Tertius Zongo visited India in April 2008 to attend the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi. He met Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and discussed matters of mutual interest. His visit gave further impetus to bilateral ties between the two countries.

Mr. Lene Sebgo, Minister of Health, led the Burkinabe delegation to the 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held in Delhi in March, 2013. Mr. Yacouba Barry, Minister of Housing & Urbanization, Mr. Mahama Zoungrana, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security and Mr. Jean Koulidiati, Minister of Development of Digital Economy and Post were part of the delegation.

An official Burkinabe delegation comprising of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Minister of Mines and Energy and Director General in the Ministry of Mines and Energy amongst others, participated in the 10th EXIM Bank – CII Conclave held in New Delhi in March 2014.

From the Indian side, Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao paid a State Visit to Ouagadougou on 2-4 November 1995. This first ever Prime Ministerial visit to Burkina Faso was highly successful. The Prime Minister met the President of Burkina Faso and also addressed the Parliament. PM was awarded with the highest civil award of Burkina Faso. The visit paved the way for a more intensive interaction in several fields. The Prime Minister inaugurated the new Indian Embassy with a resident C'dA. The Indian Mission was closed in July 2002.

Recently, a 3-member Indian delegation led by Shri Arvind Kaushal, Additional Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education visited Burkina Faso in December 2013 in connection with the establishment of Water & Soil Tissue Test Laboratory in Burkina Faso under IAFS decisions.

The Embassy of Burkina Faso was opened in New Delhi in 1996 and elevated to the level of Ambassador in 2011.

Commercial Relations:

According to available statistics, total bilateral trade between the two countries registered US\$ 103.21 million in 2011-12 and US\$ 100.76 million in 2012-13. In 2013-14, bilateral trade between the two countries stood at US\$ 119.63 with export from India at US\$ 103.08 million and import from Burkina Faso at US\$ 16.55 million.

India's major exports to Burkina Faso are pharmaceutical products, vehicles and parts thereof, iron and steel and articles thereof, machinery and mechanical appliances, rubber and articles thereof. Imports from Burkina Faso include cotton, iron & steel, wood and articles of wood, raw hides and skins, and leather.

An Indian Farmers Project, which was launched in Burkina Faso in 1999 for three years, was completed in 2002. Under the project, India had supplied expert farmers to demonstrate to Burkinabe farmers Indian practices of rice growing, including the use of ergonomically designed hand tools, tractors etc. and to train local farmers in this technology, related consumable inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. Farm machinery, equipments, vehicles and other necessary support were donated to Burkina Faso government after the completion of the project.

LoC:

Burkina Faso was included as one of the nine West African countries under the GOI's TEAM-9 initiative and Pan African e-Network Project. GOI extended a Line of Credit (LOC) of US\$ 30.97 million, under TEAM- 9, for Agricultural Projects and for Construction/Equipping of National Post Office in Burkina Faso. Lines of Credit were

also approved for rural electrification in 2008; for setting up a Tomato Processing Factory in 2010; for Public Housing Project; and supply of 135 buses for universities and other institutions of higher education, construction of two workshops, construction of covered parking lot, procurement of spare parts etc. in the first half of 2012.

IAFS:

India has also offered to set up two projects viz., Vocational Training Centre / Incubation Centre (VTC/IC), a Vocational Training Centre of Barefoot College and a Soil and Water Tissue Testing Laboratory in Burkina Faso under the decisions of IAFS (I & II). A two member delegation from National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) visited Ouagadougou in October 2013 for signing of agreement between Ministry of Youth, Vocational Training and Employment (MYVTE), Government of Burkina Faso and NSIC for setting up VTC/IC in Burkina Faso. A 3-member delegation led by Secretary, ICAR visited Burkina Faso in December 2013 for discussions and site inspection for establishment of the Soil and Water Tissue Testing Laboratory.

Three participants from Burkina Faso visited India for a 5-day Exposure Visit for Policy Makers, organized by IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative in December, 2012 under the Cotton-Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) implemented under the IAFS-II. A second group of five persons visited India in January, 2013 for a training programme on Post Harvest Management and Crop Residue. A two-member IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative Ltd., Noida, visited Burkina Faso in November 2013 for discussions with stakeholders in the cotton sector in Burkina Faso under the Cotton TAP for Africa.

ITEC:

India has rendered technical assistance to Burkina Faso in its human resource development through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Burkina Faso utilized 22 ITEC slots each during FY 2012-13 and 2013-14 respectively. It has been allotted 30 ITEC slots for the FY 2014-15. Five Burkinabe scientists were awarded CV Raman Fellowships for carrying out research activities in India between June and December 2013.

Humanitarian Assistance:

To alleviate the suffering of the Burkinabe people due to severe floods in 2008, India had sent a consignment of medicines required by the affected people. The consignment of medicines was handed over by India's Hon. Consul in Ougadougou to Secretary General of Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity on 18 June 2008. Another donation of US\$ 213,356 was made to Burkina Faso as India's contribution towards flood relief assistance following the devastating floods in September 2009.

Indian Community:

The Indian community in Burkina Faso is around 200-300. Some of them are engaged in manufacturing and trading business and restaurants while the rest are their employees. Some are also doing business in cotton and gold.

Recommended Reading References

1.	Burkina Faso, 2nd (Bradt Travel Guide) by Katrina Manson and James Knight
2.	Freedom in Fulani Social Life: An introspective Ethnography by Paul Riesman
3.	Political Reform in Francophone Africa by John F. Clark; David E. Gardinier (Westview Press, 1997)

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