

## **India-Botswana – Bilateral Brief**

Botswana is a landlocked country sharing borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Up to 70% of the land is covered by the Kalahari Desert. A democracy since its independence on 30 September 1966, it has stayed politically stable and grown from one of the poorest to an upper middle income country by mining its diamond resources discovered in 1967. Botswana is the top producer of rough diamonds in value terms and the second largest in volume. Botswana's physical volume of rough diamond production was 25 million Carats in 2023 (up from 24 million Carats in 2022). However, in value terms, diamond exports fell from US\$ 6.4 billion in 2022 to US\$ 4.4 billion in 2023. India is one of the major export destinations of rough diamonds of Botswana.

India established diplomatic relations with Botswana immediately after its independence in 1966 and opened resident diplomatic mission in Gaborone in 1987. Botswana established its Mission in New Delhi in 2006. Bilateral relations with Botswana have been close and friendly, with a new thrust in mutual trust over the last few years. Both the countries share the highest ideals of democracy and rule of law.

### **Bilateral Visits**

Bilateral visits at the highest level have contributed significantly in strengthening of the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations.

Some important visits from Botswana side include:

- President Mr. Festus Mogae – May 2005 and December 2006
- Former President Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi (as Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration – June 2012 to attend Science and Technology Ministerial Conference; and as Vice President of Botswana – October 2015 to attend the Third India-Africa Forum Summit.

From India's side, key visits include:

- Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari – 2010,
- Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu – 2018.

Recent high-level visits/engagements:

- Foreign Minister Dr. Lemogang Kwappe met EAM in Kevadia, Gujarat on 19 Oct 2022.
- Minister of Defence & Security, Mr. Thomas Kagiso Mmusi attended Interpol General Assembly held in New Delhi in October 2022
- Dr. Edwin G. Dikoloti, Minister of Health led a five member delegation and visited Ahmedabad and New Delhi from 28 Nov to 1 Dec 2022 for negotiations/discussions with the medical suppliers in India.
- Mr. Macdonald Tumiso Rakgare, Minister of Youth, Gender, Sports and Culture, along with Ms. Bogolo Kenewendo, (presently Minister of Minerals and Energy) a former Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry and Mr. Simon Nikosana Moabi, Member of Parliament attended the Gen Next Democracy Network Programme 2023 organised by the ICCR in January 2023.

- Minister of Minerals and Energy Mr. Lefoko Moagi visited Mumbai and Delhi from 17 to 25 April 2023. In Mumbai he met with diamond cutting and polishing industry, and in Delhi visited Jindal Energy Power and Steel Plants.
- On the sidelines of Third South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, held in Kampala on 21-22 January 2024, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan met with Foreign Minister of Botswana, Dr. Lemogang Kwape and discussed issues of mutual interest.

### **Virtual Interactions**

Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan and Botswana Minister of International Affairs and Cooperation Dr. Lemogang Kwape held a virtual interaction on 17 June 2021 on matters of mutual bilateral interest. Vice President (VP) Slumber Tsogwane participated in the (virtual) 16th Edition of the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership (13 to 15 July 2021), along with Agricultural Development and Food Security Minister, Mr. Karabo S. Gare and Health and Wellness Minister Dr. Edwin G. Dikoloti. Minister of Education and Skills Development, Dr. Douglas Letsholathebe, participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 2.0) held in New Delhi on 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

### **Bilateral Mechanisms**

The fourth Foreign Office Consultations were held in Gaborone on 14 December 2023, when the two sides exchanged views on political, development cooperation, trade and investment, defence, agriculture, consular, cultural and establishment related matters between the two countries. There are other bilateral mechanism like Joint Ministerial Committee Meeting (JMC) and more than a dozen MoUs/agreements including on visa, culture, trade, double taxation, agriculture, education, science & technology etc.

### **Capacity Building**

India's assistance and cooperation with Botswana in institutional capacity building has been a strong pillar in our bilateral relations. ICCR scholarships are very popular in Botswana. During 2024-25, 54 Botswana students were selected for scholarship from 500 applicants. Since the last ten years, more than 1300 Botswana candidates have been awarded scholarships / trained under ITEC, ICCR, IAFS, Agriculture scholarships etc. Around 11 researchers/scholars from Botswana have been granted C.V. Raman International Fellowship since 2010 to pursue research under guidance of host scientists in India.

### **Trade**

India and Botswana share a strong trade relationship, with diamonds being the major commodity in both imports and exports. Botswana exports rough diamonds to India, while India's exports to Botswana include a mix of pharmaceuticals, machinery, iron & steel, electrical equipment in addition to precious stones such as diamonds. India has opportunities to expand exports in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, tyres, agricultural equipment, digital technology, textiles etc.

**Trade Figures in US\$ million (Source: Dept. of Commerce, GOI):**

<b>FY</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25 (Apr- Nov)</b>
<b>India's total exports to Botswana</b>	178.31	178.74	172.69	278.87	171.27	109.26	119.95
<b>FY</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25 (Apr- Nov)</b>
<b>India's total imports from Botswana</b>	974.48	744.00	461.72	527.96	459.97	326.75	240.39
<b>Total Trade</b>	<b>1152.79</b>	<b>922.74</b>	<b>634.41</b>	<b>806.83</b>	<b>631.24</b>	<b>436.01</b>	<b>360</b>

### **Investment**

Indian businesses have a notable presence in Botswana, contributing to local employment and skill development. Key areas of Indian investment include banking, diamond cutting and polishing, and infrastructure projects.

Banking: The Bank of Baroda has been operating in Botswana since 2001 and has four branches across the country.

Diamond Industry: Over 45 diamond cutting and polishing businesses operate in Botswana, with majority of them owned by Indian diamond companies as part of their multinational operations. Prominent among them are: M. Suresh Company Private Limited, KGK Diamonds, Aurostar Diamonds, Arjav Diamonds, Dia-Rough Botswana, Urostar Botswana, Karp Impex, Mohit Diamonds, Dharma Diamonds, WTM Botswana. These companies have generated employment opportunities and imparted training skills (diamond cutting and polishing) to local Botswana.

### Infrastructure, Power, Automobile Sector:

- RITES Ltd, an Indian company, has its office in Gaborone.
- Mahindra has its presence in Botswana through franchises.
- Jindal Steel and Power Ltd. signed an initial power purchase agreement with Botswana Power Corporation on July 25, 2023 for a 300 MW greenfield coal-fired power plant, expected to be completed by 2028. The Botswana Cabinet has approved an additional 300 MW to this greenfield project. A ground breaking ceremony for the plant took place on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

Botswana presents several promising investment opportunities for Indian businesses across various sectors like healthcare, mining (copper, nickel, coal, uranium etc), renewable energy projects, digital banking, insurance, farming, small and medium enterprises, entertainment industry, medical tourism, automobile and tyre industry etc.

### **Donation of COVISHIELD and Anti-Tuberculosis Drugs**

India donated 30,000 doses of COVISHIELD vaccine manufactured by Serum Institute of India to Botswana in March 2021. This was the first consignment of COVID19 vaccines in Botswana. India also donated anti-tuberculosis drugs to the Government of Botswana in 2022.

### **Recent Cultural/ Sports Exchanges**

The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) hosted a 15 member Botswana Women's cricket team in Bangalore in November 2023. With the aid of latest technological tools and under the mentorship of experts in the game, the team was assisted. The High Commission of India in partnership with the Botswana Cricket Association and the KSCA facilitated the visit.

A 14-member delegation from Botswana Scouts Association visited India to participate in the Youth Exchange Programme held from in January 2024 during the Republic Day Camp.

iii) A 20-member culture troupe from Botswana participated in the 37th edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela – 2024 at Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana in February, 2024.

### **Indian Diaspora**

Indian diaspora (approx. 10,000 Indian nationals and PIOs) contributes significantly to Botswana's economy and form a prosperous segment of the society. They are engaged in service and retail sectors viz. teaching, accounting, insurance and finance, medicine and pharmaceuticals. Indian origin diaspora also owns several grocery stores, supermarket chains and has presence in hospitality, construction and hospital industry. Most of them are from the states of Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. Indian / Diaspora community celebrates all prominent Indian festivals like *Diwali*, *Holi*, *Onam*, *Baisakhi* etc. which attracts enthusiastic participation, including by local dignitaries.

*January 2025*

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