

ADDRESS - B2B ON HANDLOOM SECTOR

8 AUG 2022 1030 HRS

Shri Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Handlooms Export Promotion Council, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Members of the Association of Textiles Importers in Nigeria, Indian Exporters of Handloom materials, Members of NIBC, friends, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to invite all of you for this online Business-to-Business meeting between Indian and Nigerian businesses involved in textiles. I sincerely thank both sides for bringing in serious companies who are interested in trading in this sector.

The Indian handloom sector has been one of the strong areas of production and trade. Cotton and Silk made items from India were the most sought after, historically. Earliest evidence of spinning and weaving are found at the Indus Valley Civilization sites. Trade in these items to Europe had started immediately after Vasco da Gama's visit in the fifteenth century. Before the Industrial Revolution, 83% of East India Company's trade from India to England were in cloth items. Subsequently, owing to the trade practices of the East India Company in getting raw material from India and dumping finished products into India, the handloom sector was hit.

However, Indian artisans have stood the test of time and have kept this great craft alive. Over the centuries, handlooms have come to be associated with excellence in India's artistry in fabrics. Fabrics and designs were influenced by geographic, religious and social customs of a region. Different parts of India have produced distinct styles - muslin of Chanderi, Varanasi brocades, tie & dye products from Rajasthan and Orissa, Patola sarees from Patan, Himroos of Hyderabad, Phulkari and Khes from Punjab, Daccai and Jamdani from Bengal, Phenekand Tongam from Assam and Manipur. Indian handloom designs and weaves have been famous world over.

This B2B is our way of paying respect **to** these artisans for sustaining their tradecraft and making the Indian handloom famous and popular world over through their unstinting hard work and craftsmanship. What better way to commemorate the National Handloom Day, than bringing the commercial entities closer together with the potential to meet the requirements of both the Sides?

India and Nigeria have a robust trade relation. Nigeria is the largest trading partner of India in Africa. It has the largest GDP and population in Africa. As in 2019, Nigeria imported about

USD 4 billion worth of textiles and clothing. However, contribution of Indian cotton yarn, fabrics, made ups, Handloom products and textiles to this market has been USD 348 million in the year 2021-22. This amounts to only about 10% of the total import. Thus, it can be immediately seen that there is a large opportunity for both the countries to significantly increase this component in their trade basket.

Today's VC, although is restricted to the Handloom sector in India, indeed provides an excellent opportunity for both sides to get to know each other, project their respective wares for trading, establish contact and to take it further for improving the trade in this sector between India and Nigeria.

I would now request Shri Gopalakrishnan, Chairman HEPC to say a few words and have the Council make the presentation on the handloom sector, the opportunity it presents as well as the incentives/trade promotional activities that would pave the way for mutually beneficial cooperation in this sector between India and Nigeria.

Thank you.

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