

**High Commission of India
Abuja**

PRESS RELEASE

First-ever India-West Africa Regional Conclave in Abuja

1. The first-ever CII and EXIM Bank Regional Conclave on India and West Africa with the theme 'Project Partnership' was organised on 8-9 October 2018 in Abuja (Nigeria) with the support of the Government of India and the ECOWS Commission. H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs of India and H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry along with senior officials represented the official delegation from India. A 70-member Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-led business delegation under the leadership of Mr. Rajesh Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of ION Exchange, attended the Regional Conclave.



H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India addressing the India-West Africa Regional Conclave.

2. The choice of Nigeria as the destination for holding a Regional Conclave in West Africa was guided by the country assuming the Chairmanship of ECOWAS for this year, and also by its pre-eminent position as the largest economy of Africa and India's largest trading partner in Africa.



H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry of India addressing the India-West Africa Regional Conclave.

3. H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi BROU, President ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Dr. Okechukwu Enelamah, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Government of Nigeria together with 6 Ministerial delegations from Mali, Liberia, Niger, Cape Verde, Sierra Leone and Ghana, and the remaining eight West African countries at senior official levels from the Ministries of Trade, Investment and Industry participated in the Regional Conclave. The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) also partnered CII in the success of the event. The CII signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI). The Special Addresses of H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs of India and H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Minister of State in the Ministry of

Commerce & Industry, are available on the High Commission's website <http://www.hciabuja.gov.in/index.php>



H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission addressing the India-West Africa Regional Conclave.

4. The Conclave served as a platform for dialogue between India and the 15 ECOWAS member countries, to strengthen project and developmental partnerships. This Conclave focused on economic and commercial deliberations through Business to Government (B2Gs) and Business to Business (B2Bs) engagements. The presence of leading Chambers of Commerce from 15 West African countries, including NACCIMA and ACCI, with over 300 Indian and West African industry leaders and CEOs, helped in intense deliberations on the way forward to improving trade and investment opportunities in sectors such as Agriculture & Food Processing, Mining, Infrastructure & Transport, Healthcare, Power & Renewable Energy, Services -IT, Education and Finance.

5. The inauguration of the Regional Conclave on India and West Africa took place in the presence of high dignitaries which included the President of ECOWAS Commission, the Nigerian Minister of Trade, Investment and Industry, Ministers of

State of External Affairs and Commerce & Industry from India, visiting Ministers from 6 ECOWAS countries, senior officials from all other ECOWAS countries, High Commissioner of India, Presidents of Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) and Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Executive Secretary of Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), captains of Indian and Nigerian industry from diverse sectors and other invited guests.

6. Apart from Governments-to-Governments meetings, simultaneous B2B and B2G meetings held during the Conclave, and the six Sessions spanning over two days, the Regional Conclave came up with substantive recommendations to qualitatively improve the India-West Africa partnership in core sectors of interest in West African countries with emphasis on investments and technology transfer from India, doubling bilateral trade in next 4 years, and also scaling up the skill development and capacity building.



Signing of MoU between Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and ECOWAS

7. H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of Nigeria received the two Ministers of State from India as well as an eight-member CII-delegation led by Shri Rajesh Sharma. While welcoming the Indian delegation, His Excellency the Vice President of Nigeria recalled the long-standing relationship between India and Nigeria, and characterized both countries as natural partners. He expressed satisfaction in the progress made in bilateral trade, economic and investment relations over the years. He hoped that the visit of CII-led captains of Indian industry will help contribute towards participation of Indian businesses in key priority sectors for Nigeria including agriculture, mining and industrial development with emphasis on technology collaboration and technology transfer. He also conveyed Nigeria's readiness to contribute towards the success of the Conclave.



H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of Nigeria received the two Ministers of State from India as well as an eight-member CII-delegation led by Shri Rajesh Sharma.

8. On the sidelines of the Conclave, H.E. Mr C.R. Chaudhary, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry held bilateral meetings with Ministers from Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Liberia, Niger and Sierra Leone. The Minister of State for Commerce and Industry also held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou President of ECOWAS Commission. Apart from discussing various avenues for cooperation between India and ECOWAS, early utilization of the US \$

500 million Lines of Credit (LOC) offered by India earlier this year, was discussed. President Brou mentioned that India would be a preferred partner of ECOWAS and he was looking at taking the partnership to the next higher level.



H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry of India met with H.E. Mr. Jean-Claude Brou, President of the ECOWAS Commission on the sidelines of India-West Africa Regional Conclave.

9. Minister of State for Commerce and Industry also met JETRO-led Japanese delegation, which has been invited by the CII to participate in the Regional Conclave. The participation of the Japanese Business delegation in the Regional Conclave is part of the collaboration of India and Japan to work together as part of the India-Japan dialogue on Africa.

10. A Photo Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi's life and message was held as part of the ongoing 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. The Photo Exhibition was inaugurated by both the Indian Ministers of State along with the President of ECOWAS Commission, the Nigerian Minister of Trade, Investment and Industry and Ministers from ECOWAS countries. On display was a collection of photographs from Gandhi National Museum, New Delhi. Also on display were

paintings drawn by young children of 6 Nigerian schools and children of the Indian community in Abuja on themes relating Mahatma Gandhi's life and his teachings.



Photo-Exhibition on the sidelines of the India-West Africa Regional Conclave as part of the ongoing 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.
