

- (vi) Evacuation of Indian citizens in conflict zones or regions facing natural calamities or disease is also facilitated by Ministry. Recent instances of such evacuation include those from Iran, Wuhan, Yemen, Libya and othe`

(c) and (d) The Emigration Act 1983 provides for regulation of the emigration of Indian citizens for employment overseas and for their protection from exploitation by unscrupulous agents and employers. The nature, pattern, directions and volume of migration have undergone a paradigm shift since then. Efforts are underway for putting in place a new enabling framework aimed at efficient management of emigration with a holistic approach. In this regard, consultations with relevant Ministries, Associations of Recruitment Agents, International Organizations, Think Tanks, Business Organizations, Academia and all the States and Union Territories were held to draft the new Emigration Bill. The Bill was also placed for wider public consultations through the Ministry's website and its social media platforms. Separately, a bill titled "The Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019" was introduced in Rajya Sabha on February 11, 2019. The Bill is currently under examination of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for External Affairs.

Special initiatives for closer relationship with Africa

2120. SHRI K. J. ALPHONS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the special initiative taken by India to bring Africa closer; and
- (b) the Total assistance provided by India to Africa during the past five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) During the last five years, India's engagement with Africa has intensified in the areas of political, defence, commercial, economy, scientific and technical cooperation. The development partnership between India and Africa is officially structured around India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) through African Union. At 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) held in October 2015, India adopted a truly continental and inclusive approach by inviting all 54 African countries. All African countries including 41 African HOG/HOS attended the Summit. Since IAFS-III, there have been unprecedented 34 outgoing visits by the troika of President, Vice President

and Prime Minister. In order to have a more meaningful diplomatic presence, Government has decided to open 18 new Missions in Africa (nine operational) taking the Total number to 47.

Government of India has taken several steps to strengthen relations with African countries. Our development partnership initiatives have expanded, both in geographical reach and sectoral coverage, and now include Lines of Credit and grants, technical consultancy, educational scholarships and a range of capacity-building programmes. Our partnerships are consultative, non-reciprocal, gestures of solidarity and outcome oriented. The African continent is the 2nd largest recipient of our overseas assistance. 181 Lines of Credit, which are on highly favourable terms, have been extended to 41 countries for a Total amount of more than US\$ 11 billion which is 42% of the Total amount under LOC.

To enhance cooperation in the health and education sector, we have started eVidya Bharati and eAarogya Bharati (e-VBAB) Network Project between India and Africa, which aims to provide tele-education and tele-medicine, thereby putting India's knowledge and technical expertise at the service of African countries. The project aims at providing 15,000 scholarships to African students over the next five years for Certificate, Diploma, Under Graduate and Post Graduate Degree Programmes in various disciplines as well as tele-Medicine services. Thus far, 15 African countries have signed MoUs with TCIL for participating in the project. Several training programmes under ITEC, ICCR and IAFS programmes, are being undertaken for capacity building of Africans.

India has established the Mahatma Gandhi International Convention Center (MGICC) in Niamey, Niger. MGICC is the first center established in Africa by India to honor the memory of Mahatma Gandhi whose 150th Birth Anniversary was observed in 2019. The establishment of the Center is a landmark for India-Africa Friendship and reflects India's firm commitment towards Africa.

India has become the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investments at approx US\$ 54 billion. Sizeable investments have been made in oil and gas, mining, banking, textiles and other sectors.

Today, over 5,400 Indians serve in five peacekeeping operations in Africa. Indian women established a landmark with the first all-female Police Unit of the United Nations in Liberia. Our defence and security cooperation is growing with nations in Africa, as we work together to counter terrorism and piracy, and keep our seas secure.

In order to facilitate increased people-to-people contact e-tourist visa facility has been extended to 33 African countries. An important element of our engagement is our connection with the Indian diaspora in Africa who have played a key role in socio-economic development of their adopted countries.

(b) The Total assistance provided by India to Africa under Aid to Africa fund of Ministry of External Affairs during the past five years is provided below:

Year	Actual expenditure (in ` Cr.)
2015-16	283.00
2016-17	286.40
2017-18	172.72
2018-19	339.98
2019-20	410.40 (till 06th March 2020)

Agreements with the US

2121. SHRI M. P. VEERENDRA KUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has gained some advantages by signing certain agreements with the US during the visit of the US President;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether these agreements signed by India with the US will have any adverse effect on mdo-China relations; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): (a) and (b) The documents concluded during the State Visit