



BG reporter

Botswana and India's strong and long standing economic and social ties have in many ways impacted positively to the economies of the two countries, an example being the diamond sector. Botswana, a mineral rich economy has over the years benefited immensely from India's much developed diamond cutting and polishing sector.

The strong relations have resulted in the transfer of skills from India to Botswana, especially technical skills within the highly specialized sector like diamond. "India has developed a close and traditional diamond trading relationship with Botswana. The cities of Surat and Gaborone complement each other in the diamond industry," said a statement. Surat is a major hub of diamond cutting and polishing in India. Botswana is still developing its diamond cutting and polishing sector and India has been one of the countries which its companies have found it fit to establish businesses here. "There are 11 Indian companies in the processing and polishing of diamonds who have established units in Botswana enhancing the local expertise in the cutting & polishing of Diamonds. These diamond companies made the final product Botswana, thus, promoting the localisation and value addition. The diaspora has setup industries in textile sector, hospitality, retail business, construction, pharmaceuticals, hospitals and several others," said a statement.

The presence of India companies in Botswana is expected to also boost diamond beneficiation efforts which the country (Botswana) is still lacking behind with. Furthermore, these companies have employed hundreds of locals. India being one of the key global centres of diamond polishing and processing industry has had more than \$1 billion in annual bilateral trade with Botswana.

In fact, *Botswana Guardian* understands that the diamond cutting and processing companies in Botswana have collectively invested millions of Dollars in setting up operations locally.

On other matters, India is also among the biggest trading partners for Botswana. Some of the products which are shipped from Botswana to India include machineries, pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, electrical among others. Botswana at the same time exports varieties of products to India such as copper, semi-precious stones, ash etc. Fresh data from Statistics Botswana shows that, Indian exports to Botswana totalled P150 million during the month of July 2020. A chart from the Statistical agency shows that, India was the fourth largest trading partner for the same month. "India-Botswana relationship is special and unique in having natural synergies and tremendous potential for a deeper engagement in several critical areas of mutual interest – trade and investment, energy, education, agriculture, security, science and technology defence, skill development and space, to name a few," said a statement.

'Botswana provides ample business opportunities to the Indian investors. A large number of Indian diaspora has already invested in Botswana. Indian companies are engaged in various sectors, including power transmission, infrastructure development projects, IT, education, steel, diamond trading, etc'

Some of the well known India companies which have offices in Botswana include Bank of Baroda, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services, and Mahindra (through a franchise) among others.