

Mozambique invites Indian tea entrepreneurs to invest in their country

May 2, Kolkata: Mozambique has sought India's help to realise the full potential of tea plantations there, as the country is rich in natural resources and can yield great results.

A delegation of senior ministers, led by H.E. Mr. Jose Maria Morais, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mozambique, held a meeting with key stakeholders of the Indian tea industry, led by Shri M.G.V.K. Bhanu, Chairman, Tea Board, here today. This meeting was a follow-up of the earlier meeting held at the Tea Board headquarters on 3rd September 2012, where the Minister of Agriculture, Mozambique, H.E. Mr. Jose Pacheco, had given the Indian tea industry an overview of the situation with regard to tea cultivation in Mozambique.

The High Commissioner, Mr. Morais, informed the members present at the meeting that there is already an ingrained tea culture in Mozambique since the 1970s and 80s.

"We really believe that there is huge potential in Mozambique. There are around 39,000 hectares of old tea plantations in Mozambique, out of which only 6,000 are under private ownership currently. We need tea expertise, we need investment," Mr. Morais stated.

According to Mr. Morais, this sharing of expertise and knowledge on tea cultivation can become a very good pivot of cooperation between the two countries, following which, India can explore further avenues of investment in the Mozambique tea industry.

Various queries were raised to the delegation from Mozambique by the Indian tea industry stakeholders, to get a better idea of the situation prevailing there, and to gauge its suitability for investment. The Chairman, Tea Board, enquired about the current status of the existing plantations in Mozambique, are they completely abandoned, or of low productivity, is there vacant land fit for cultivation in and around the existing plantations, the condition of the labour force, is it economical, and whether training needs to be imparted, and the availability of power. H.E. Mr. Morais replied that most of these plantations are abandoned, but they can provide an excellent opportunity to India to invest. He informed that the labour force in his country is very hard-working and economical. The wages are in the range of USD 35 per month. He added that Mozambique has abundant hydro-power supply.

The High Commissioner invited the industry stakeholders to visit Mozambique and see for themselves the current status. He also informed that land can be leased to the Indian entrepreneurs for a period of 99 years for the purpose of tea cultivation.

At the meeting, Mr. Mohit Agarwal of the Calcutta Tea Traders Association (CTTA) shared his experience of working in Mozambique. Mr. Agarwal gave a very positive feedback about the situation in Mozambique and encouraged the industry people to invest in some of the tea plantations.

The Chairman, Tea Board, informed the visitors that a delegation of the Indian tea industry, led by Tea Board, will visit Mozambique tentatively in August this year, to gather in-depth knowledge about the investment opportunities there.

The Mozambique delegation comprised of Dr. Vicente Paulo Chihale, Commercial Counsellor, and Mr. Joao Antonio Xerinda, besides H.E. Mr. Jose Maria Morais. The Indian tea industry was represented by Mr. Bobby Bhargava of the Apeejay Surendra Group, Mr. Percy Sigantoria, Advisor, Tea Board, Mr. Monojit Dasgupta, Secretary General, Indian Tea Association (ITA), Mr. Kalyan Basu, President, Tea Association of India (TAI), Mr. Prabhat Bezboruah of the Bokahola Tea Company and Mr. Mohit Agarwal of the Calcutta Tea Traders Association (CTTA).



Shri M.G.V.K. Bhanu, Chairman, and Shrimati Neelam Meena, Deputy Chairman, Tea Board, at the meeting with the Mozambique delegation, led by H.E. Mr. Jose Maria Morais, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mozambique.



Various stakeholders of the tea industry at the meeting with the Mozambique delegation.



Shri M.G.V.K. Bhanu, Chairman, Tea Board in discussion with H.E. Mr. Jose Maria Morais, High Commissioner of the Republic of Mozambique.