

## **India - Namibia Bilateral Relations**

India and Namibia enjoy warm and cordial relations. The Namibian people and leadership view India as a dependable and trusted friend. Indian support during their liberation struggle is warmly recalled by Namibian leaders. We have reciprocated fully, endeavouring to strengthen relations further.

### **Background of the relationship**

India was among the first nations to raise the question of Namibian independence in the UN, way back in 1946. The first SWAPO (which led Namibia's liberation struggle) Embassy abroad was established in New Delhi in 1986. Accordance of full diplomatic status and support at NAM was also accompanied by material assistance and military training.

Lt. Gen. Dewan Prem Chand of Indian Army headed the UN peacekeeping force (UNTAG) deployed in Namibia (1989-90) to monitor the peace process and elections.

After Namibian independence, the Indian Observer Mission was upgraded to a full-fledged High Commission on 21 March 1990. Namibia opened a full-fledged resident Mission in New Delhi in March 1994.

The 4th round of India-Namibia Foreign Office Consultations took place on 3rd November 2022 in Windhoek wherein the two sides carried out a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral relations.

The first meeting of India-Namibia Joint Commission was held on 5 June 2023 in Windhoek. A comprehensive review of cooperation was undertaken in several areas, including trade and economic cooperation, education and capacity building, forensic science, health, biodiversity, arts and culture, defence, agriculture, infrastructure development and energy among others.

### **High-Level visits/meetings**

High-level visits at HoS/HoG/FM level have taken place from both sides regularly in the past (since 1990) as also in recent times. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Namibia Dr Hage Geingob met on the sidelines of UNGA session in New York in September 2019.

President Pranab Mukherjee paid a State visit to Namibia in June 2016. President of Namibia Dr Hage Geingob visited India in October 2015 to attend 3<sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Forum Summit.

External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar met Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah in Kigali on the sidelines of CHOGM in June 2022.

EAM paid a three day official visit to Namibia from 4-6 June 2023, during which he called on H.E. President Dr. Hage G Geingob, held talks with DPM, co-chaired the first Joint Commission Meeting, and together with the Namibian dignitaries inaugurated the India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (INCEIT) in Windhoek.

DPM and Minister of International Relations visited India to take part in the 17th CII-India Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership held from 19-20 July 2022 and held bilateral talks with EAM. The visit saw signing of three bilateral agreements.

On 17 September 2022, Hon'ble PM released eight cheetahs translocated from Namibia to India at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh as part of Cheetah's reintroduction into India's wilds. This transfer was the world's first ever intercontinental trans-location of a major carnivore species and attracted global interest and attention.

Namibian Minister of Higher Education and IT Ms. Itah Kandji Murangi led a six member delegation to India to participate in the 7th edition of Asian Summit on Education and Skills held in Bengaluru from 18-24 Sept 2022.

Minister of Health and Social Services Dr Kalumbi Shangula, accompanied by the Registrar of the Namibian Medical Regulatory Council (NMRC) visited India from 14-16 June 2023 to take part in the 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership.

### **Parliamentary exchanges**

Speaker of Namibian National Assembly (lower house) Prof. Peter Katjavivi, accompanied by several members of Parliament, paid an official visit to India from 27-31 March 2017 at the invitation of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha Sumitra Mahajan.

Two young parliamentarians from Namibia, Ezekile Kuhanga and Nephilian Kasuka, participated in the 10th session of the CPA Youth Parliament attended by parliamentarians from 29 Commonwealth countries in New Delhi from 25-28 November 2019.

Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla met with Chairperson of Namibian National Council Mr Lukas Sinimbo Muha on the sidelines of 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna, Austria on 9 September 2021.

### **Capacity building programmes**

India provides numerous scholarships to Namibians under ITEC, ICCR and IAFS programmes. Besides, training slots for their defence personnel are also offered every year.

Two ITEC experts from Indian Army are deputed to Namibian Ministry of Defence while another ITEC expert is deputed as an advisor to Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management, where Namibian civil servants are trained. Since 1996, an Indian Air Force Technical Team (IAFTT) is stationed in Namibia to train Namibian Air Force helicopter pilots and hone their technical skills. India has given 2 Chetak and 2 Cheetah helicopters to Namibia.

In the recent past, India has assisted Namibia in training of their diplomats, health officials working for AIDS-control, a Namibian cricketer, among others. Vice Chancellor of University of Namibia, Prof Kenneth Matengu, visited India in September-October 2019 under ICCR's Academic Visitor's Programme. Namibian guests participated in Gen Next.

### **Development Assistance and Partnership**

India gifted 30,000 doses of Covishield Vaccines in March 2021 to combat Covid-19 pandemic. India gifted 1,000 MT rice for drought relief in 2019 as also in 2017. Previously as well, India supported Namibia multiple times to fight natural calamities like drought and floods.

An India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT (INCEIT) was set up at Namibia University of Science & Technology (NUST) with Indian support, including provision of a super-computer. An 'India Wing' was established at University of Namibia's Ongwediwa campus through a grant support of about USD 12 million by India. India also provided assistance to improve health infrastructure.

Under Development Partnership, a Forensic Expert was deputed to Namibian Police Forensic Science Institute for a period of three months as part of ITEC programme from June-August 2022. A number of Namibian civilian professionals and defence personnel visited India to attend various training courses under ITEC programme.

### **Economic and Commercial**

The bilateral trade has been experiencing a positive growth in recent years. It was US\$ 278 million in 2022-23 with India's exports amounting to US\$ 240 million. Between April and November 2023, the two-way trade touched US\$654 million, after registering a 178% growth. India's exports were at US\$418 million and imports from Namibia amounted to US\$235 million.

Sectors of mining, energy, infrastructure development, health, education, agriculture and trade and investment offer potential for bilateral cooperation. Namibia is rich in uranium, diamonds, copper, phosphates and other minerals. Indian expertise in IT, pharmaceuticals, renewables and SMEs is of interest to Namibia. The recent visits by multi-sector business delegations from India to Namibia took place in May/June and October 2023. Virtual business session on engineering goods held in September 2023 attracted considerable interest.

India and Namibia established a Joint Trade Committee in 1995. Its 3<sup>rd</sup> session was held in New Delhi in September 2016 and next meeting is under consideration. India and SACU are negotiating a draft Preferential Trade Arrangement (PTA).

A joint event to promote production and consumption of millets was held in November 2023 by High Commission of India and Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation. Several experts took part in the event and highlighted the role of millets in global search for food and nutritional security.

### **Cultural**

Multi-faceted relations between India and Namibia are complemented by cultural bonding. Celebrations are held of important days/anniversaries together with Indian community and friends of India in Namibia. Several activities and events were held to commemorate 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, including release of special commemorative stamp set and planting of trees. Namibian cultural artists and craftspersons participated in 34<sup>th</sup> Surajkund Mela 2020. AKAM was celebrated in Namibia by organising several cultural, business, political, diplomatic, media and Indian community events/engagements. Special AKAM week, special commemorative stamp release, fashion show and film festival were held.

Yoga is popular in Namibia. In addition to regular free yoga classes at High Commission, several sessions, workshops and special programs, including 100 hours introductory course on Yoga, 10 hours Yoga therapy and a month-long therapy through Yoga and Ayurveda were held in 2023.

### **Indian Community**

Presently, there are about four hundred and fifty Indians/NRIs/PIOs in Namibia. Presence of Indian community in Namibia is growing steadily. India-Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (INCCI) and India Namibia Friendship Association (INFA) established in 2016 and 2020 respectively are engaged in business and community matters. An event to celebrate India's unity in diversity and cultural connection with motherland titled "Ekatvam: A Cultural Passage" was held in October 2023.

### **Useful Resources:**

Website: <https://hciwindhoek.gov.in>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiainNamibia>

X: @IndiainNamibia

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiainnamibia>

You Tube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@indiainnamibia>

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