

India - Namibia Bilateral Relations

Political

India and Namibia enjoy warm and cordial relations. India was at the forefront of the liberation struggle of Namibia and was indeed among the first nations to raise the question of Namibian independence in the UN. The first SWAPO Embassy abroad was established in New Delhi in 1986 which was closed after independence of Namibia in 1990. This is warmly recalled by all Namibian leaders. Diplomatic relations with independent Namibia were established right from the moment of its independence, with the Indian Observer Mission being 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 Namibian leadership views India as a dependable and trusted friend, to whom it turns to in times of need, which we have reciprocated fully. The strong bonds of friendship and warmth that existed between the two countries when Founding President of Namibia Dr. Sam Nujoma led his country have continued during the times of his successor President Pohamba, and now with President Hage Geingob. The goodwill for India in Namibia is undiminished.

President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee paid a State Visit to Namibia from June 15-17, 2016 at the invitation of Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia. President Mukherjee held a tete-a tete meeting with President Geingob and addressed the Joint Session of Namibian Parliament which was preceded by a brief meeting with Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia and Chairperson of the National Council. Founding President of Namibia Dr. Sam Nujoma and Former President Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba also paid courtesy calls on the President of India.

Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, accompanied by the First Lady, visited India on October 28-29, 2015 to attend the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi. President Geingob met Prime Minister of India on October 29, 2015 and discussed bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest, including cooperation in mining and energy sectors.

Prof. Peter H. Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia, paid an official visit to India from 27-31 March 2017 at the invitation of the Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Smt. Sumitra Mahajan. Speaker Katjavivi was accompanied by several Members of Parliament and Parliamentary officials. Speaker Katjavivi met with his counterpart Mrs. Sumitra Mahajan and called on the President of India and the Vice-President of India during the visit.

Minister of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development, Hon. Tjekero Tweya represented Namibia and SADC at the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit held on 18-20 January 2019 at Gandhinagar.

Minister of Economic Planning and Director General of National Planning Commission Hon. Obeth Kandjoze visited India to participate in the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held in Delhi from 17-19 March 2019.

Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mr. Pohamba Shifeta, visited India on 08 September 2019 to participate in the 14th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP 14) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in New Delhi from 2-13 September 2019.

Ms. Juliet Kavetua, Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services visited New Delhi from 5-9 February 2019 to attend the Preparatory Meeting of the Global Fund's Sixth Replenishment (2020-2022) organised by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Namibia deposited its accession document for the Framework Agreement of International Solar Alliance on 25 June 2018 and became a full member on 25 July 2018.

An MOU between Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) and Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) concerning Technical Cooperation in the Area of Capacity Building of Public Officials was signed in Windhoek on 4 September 2018.

India's continued commitment to capacity building through the ITEC (Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation) and other bilateral programmes in Namibia has been a solid pillar of cooperation, which is very much appreciated in Namibia. Under the ITEC programme, apart from a large number of Namibian candidates trained in India so far, several ITEC experts have also been deputed to Namibia.

A 10-member Namibian Defence Force (NDF) contingent participated in India-Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) held in Pune from 18-27 March 2019.

President Hage Geingob sent a letter to the President of India conveying his condolences to the victims of Pulwama terror attack and expressed solidarity with India in the fight against terrorism. In a strongly worded statement of support issued on 19 February 2019, Deputy PM and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah expressed condolences to the victims and sympathies to those who injured in the terror attack.

Ten representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission (NPC) and civil society groups visited India in June-July 2019 to learn from India's experience of effectively using its social contracting mechanism in its AIDS control programme.

An Indian Navy ship, INS Tarkash of the Western Fleet, made a port call at Walvis Bay from 15-18 September 2019.

Economic and Commercial

Bilateral trade and investments, though small, have been increasing over the years. Bilateral trade during 2017-18 was USD 135.92 million with India's exports valued at USD 82.37 million, while India's imports stood at USD US\$ 53.55 million. Indian products from South Africa are also re-imported into Namibia via the SACU route and shown as imports from South Africa. Similarly, Namibian rough diamonds arrive in India via London and Antwerp and do not get reflected in the bilateral trade figures.

There has been a steady surge of investments by Indian companies in Namibia. Indian investments into Namibia include: (i) In May 2010, Vedanta Resources of India acquired Skorpion Zinc Mine (Namibia) for US\$750 million from Anglo-American Zinc; and (ii) Indian GPT Group of Companies invested N\$18.75 Million (US\$2.68 million approx.) in 2010 in a joint venture with Trans Namibia for producing Concrete Sleepers. Recently, Indian companies Sterling & Wilson, Shapoorji Pallonji Group have established their presence by opening representatives offices in Namibia.

India and Namibia established a Joint Trade Committee in 1995. The third session of India-Namibia Joint Trade Committee was held in New Delhi on September 7, 2016. The two delegations were led by Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, MOS(IC) for Commerce and Industry and Hon. Mr. Piet Van Der Walt, Deputy Minister of Industrialization, Trade and SME Development of Namibia respectively.

The Joint Working Group (JWG) on geology and mineral resources met in New Delhi on 21st May 2012.

GOI made a donation of Rupees two crores (equivalent to Namibian dollars 3.364 millions) to Namibia towards drought relief in August 2013. On earlier two occasions, donations of Rs. 1 crore each time, were given for the flood relief. India granted USD 12.16 million to Namibia for the construction of twin faculties of Mining Engineering and Information Technology at University of Namibia's Ongwediva Campus, which has been named as India Wing. The project was completed and handed over to the University in June 2014. Grants-in-aid worth US\$10 million was announced during the visit of President Pohamba to India, under which India has supplied IT equipment to Namibian Ministry of Health & Social Services.

During the visit of President of India to Namibia in June 2016, India announced increasing of ITEC slots, donation of 1000 tons of rice, 100 tons of medicines and US\$ 20,000 to Indira Gandhi Clinic. The donation of 1000 tons of rice for drought relief was handed over on 6 March 2018. The donation of 100 tons of essential medicines would be done over next three years. The cash grant of US\$ 20,000 for the Indira Gandhi Maternity Clinic in Okahao, initially established by Dr Sam Nujoma Foundation, was handed over by the High Commissioner on 8 August 2017. Dr. Bernard Haufiku, Minister of Health & Social Services of Namibia received the grant on behalf of Indira Gandhi Maternity Clinic.

To help Namibia's fight severe drought this year, a donation of 1000 metric ton of rice was handed over to Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia on 20 September 2019.

An India-Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (INCCI) was established in Windhoek in September 2016.

A 15-member Indian ICT delegation from the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) visited Namibia in November 2016.

A 11-member delegation from CII visited Namibia from 30-31 July 2017.

The Mission facilitated the participation of 19 Namibian companies in India-South Africa Business Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa on April 30, 2018.

A 3-member delegation from the Federation of Indian Granite and Stone Industry (FIGSI) visited Namibia from 9-11 July 2018.

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia in collaboration with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) of India organised a 2-day African Nations Experience Sharing Workshop on Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations in Windhoek on 6 August 2018.

ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) acquired a 15% stake in an oil block in Namibia's offshore Block 2012A from Tullow Oil of UK. This was OVL's second acquisition in Namibia. Earlier, OVL had acquired 30% stake in Namibia's Petroleum Exploration License (PEL) 37, covering three offshore blocks, from Tullow.

Cultural

The multi-faceted relations between India and Namibia are complemented by cultural bonding. Yoga has a dedicated following in Namibia. The High Commission runs regular yoga classes at its premises which are quite popular. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Government of India offers 22 scholarships every year for students from Namibia to pursue undergraduate/postgraduate courses/research work in various Indian Universities.

The Mission organised an event 'India's Day with Windhoek' in partnership with the City of Windhoek on March 28, 2018 at the Municipal City Hall in Windhoek to increase awareness and promote understanding between the Governments and the peoples at State-City levels. The event focused on the art, craft, culture, tourism and cuisine of the State of Bihar.

The Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi was organised by the Mission on 2 October 2018. During the event, the hymn '*Vaishnav Jan To*' rendered by local artiste Sally Boss Madam was released and a documentary on Mahatma Gandhi was screened. A set of stamps on Mahatma Gandhi received from the Department of Post of India was also released during the event. In the run-up to the event, the Mission donated books on Mahatma Gandhi to various educational institutions in Namibia.

The Mission organised a Reception on 25 January 2019 to celebrate the 70th Republic Day of India. Hon. Christine Hoebes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour.

The famous Namibian singer Ms. Sally Boss Madam attended the Kumbh Mela-2019 event in Kumbh, Prayagraj as a representative of Namibia during February 21 - 23 2019. During the visit, along with other foreign delegates, she met and had a dinner with the External Affairs Minister of India, Mrs. Sushma Swaraj. Her visit was sponsored by the Government of India through the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).

The Mission celebrated the ICCR Foundation Day on 9 April 2019 which was attended by more than 70 ICCR alumni. Apart from a number of senior government officials, the event was also graced by Minister of Education, Arts & Culture Hon. Katrina Hanse-Himarwa as guest of honour.

In connection with commemorations of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, Mission donated 15 bicycles on 3 June 2019 to Immanuel Shifidi Secondary School, which is the largest secondary school in Katutura, Windhoek to mark the UN World Bicycle Day. Mission in collaboration with Ministry of Environment and Tourism, University of Namibia (UNAM), City of Windhoek and Intelligence Support against Poaching (ISAP) launched a tree planting campaign on 5 June 2019 and planted 150 indigenous trees in the main campus of the University of Namibia (UNAM). In a separate event at Karasburg, in southern Namibia on June 5, which was jointly organized by the Mission in partnership with Ministry of Environment & Tourism and UNDP, another 150 trees were planted by school students. Mission is also organising a health camp in Rundu with the collaboration of BMVSS from 17 September – 23 October 2019 to provide artificial limbs to about 500 needy persons free of cost under the campaign 'India for Humanity'.

The 5th UN International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Windhoek on 15 June 2019. More than 900 people, the largest gathering of yoga enthusiasts here so far, attended the event. Besides Windhoek, IDY events were also held in Walvis Bay and Otjiwarongo on 22 June 2019 and 06 June 2019 respectively.

The Mission celebrated ITEC Day on 6 September 2019 with the participation of a large number of ITEC alumni.

The Mission will be celebrating Gandhi Jayanti this year in collaboration with Namibia's foreign Ministry, MIRCO, which is organising a special lecture series on this occasion. Special commemoration stamps on Mahatma Gandhi, issued by Nampost will also be launched on that day.

Indian Community

Presently, there are around 260 Indians/NRIs/PIOs in Namibia. Some of them are doctors, professors, catholic priests and some involved in commerce, transport and services industry, etc. Presence of Indian community in Namibia is growing steadily.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Windhoek website:

<http://hciwindhoek.gov.in>

High Commission of India, Windhoek Facebook page:

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

High Commission of India, Windhoek Twitter page:

<https://twitter.com/IndiainNamibia>

September 2019