

## **India-Namibia Bilateral Brief**

### **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.

### **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 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S Jaishankar met Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) 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 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 for Excellence in Information Technology (INCEIT) in Windhoek.

On 17 September 2022, PM Modi 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.

DPM and Minister of International Relations of Namibia 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.

A 3-member delegation from Election Commission of Namibia led by its Chairperson Dr. Elsie T Nghikembua visited New Delhi from 23-26 January 2025 to attend the International Conference on theme "2024: A Global Election Year – Reiteration and Reclaiming of Democratic Spaces.

### **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 5th World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna, Austria on 9 September 2021.

Speaker, Lok Sabha Shri Om Birla and former Speaker of the National Assembly of Namibia Dr. Peter Katjavivi met during the 149<sup>th</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union meeting at Geneva on 14 October 2024

## **Capacity building programmes**

India provides numerous scholarships to Namibians under ITEC and ICCR 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. 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.

India has also 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 and ICCR scholarship schemes for 2024-25.

Government of India gifted Namibia 1000 tonnes of rice and 1000 tonnes of maize during end December 2024 as humanitarian assistance to support the people of Namibia who were affected by drought situation.

## **Economic and Commercial**

The bilateral trade has shown a steady growth in recent years. It was US\$ 813 million in 2023-24 with India's exports amounting to US\$ 453 million. In the year 2024-25, the two-way trade touched US\$ 568. India's exports were at US\$327 million and imports from Namibia amounted to US\$241 million.

Sectors of mining, energy, infrastructure development, health, education, agriculture and trade and investment offer potential for bilateral cooperation. 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. India and SACU with Namibia as coordinator are negotiating a Preferential Trade Arrangement (PTA).

## **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 150th 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.

Yoga is popular in Namibia. In addition to regular free yoga classes at High Commission, several sessions, workshops and special programs were conducted at various locations in Namibia during 2024-25.

## **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.

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