

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, followed by official discussions between the two leaders on June 16, 2016 during which they exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. President Mukherjee addressed the Joint Session of Namibian Parliament on June 16, 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. Two MOUs/agreements were signed during the visit: (i) MOU on establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology in Namibia; and (ii) MOU between Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) and Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

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.

A delegation from the Election Commission of Namibia led by Chairperson, Adv. Notemba Tjipueja visited India from 12-17 February 2017. The visit took place under the Election Visitor Programme (EVP) of the Election Commission of India.

An Indian Navy ship, INS Tarkash, of the Western Fleet, made a port call at Walvis Bay from 15-18 June 2017. During the visit, the Commanding Officer of the ship, Capt. Rituraj Sahu paid courtesy calls on Namibian dignitaries and senior defence officers, including the Governor of the Erongo Region, Mayor of Walvis Bay and Commander Naval Operations of the Namibian Navy. The crew also interacted with the Namibian Navy personnel, including through participation in friendly sports activities. The ship was open for public visit on June 17, 2017.

A 4-member delegation led by Deputy Minister of Finance, Paulus N. Ithete attended the 52nd Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank at Gandhinagar on 22-26 May 2017.

Former President of Namibia, Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba visited India in his personal capacity from 24-28 July 2017. During his visit, Dr. Pohamba also saw some of the Indian agricultural entities in Coimbatore, Chandigarh and Baddi to explore areas of cooperation with the University of Namibia.

Namibia deposited its accession document for the Framework Agreement of ISA 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.

Economic and Commercial

Bilateral trade and investments, though small, have been increasing over the years. Bilateral trade during 2017-18 was USD 106.06 million with India's exports valued at USD 43.87 million, while India's imports stood at USD 62.20 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.

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.

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 delegation comprised representatives of Airports Authority of India, L&T, Sterling & Wilson, Ingoz International, Kirloskar Brothers, Hughes Network Systems India Ltd and Acreaty Management Consultant Ltd. Prime Minister of Namibia Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila met the delegation. The delegation also had meetings with Ministries of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development, Agriculture, Works and Transport, and Mines & Energy apart from holding meetings with Telecom Namibia, Nampower, Agribusidev and Namibia Airports Authority. A business-to-business interaction with the Namibian companies was also arranged during the visit.

The Mission facilitated the participation of 19 Namibian companies in India-South Africa Business Summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa on April 30, 2018. The Business summit was organized by the High Commission of India in Pretoria, in collaboration with Confederation of India Industries (CII) and Gauteng Growth and Development Agency, South Africa.

A 3-member delegation from the Federation of Indian Granite and Stone Industry (FIGSI) visited Namibia from 9-11 July 2018. The delegation met the Mining Commissioner in the Ministry of Mines and Energy and visited Damara Granite quarry as well as a stone cutting and polishing plant in Walvis Bay.

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. The Workshop was inaugurated by Minister of Environment and Tourism Pohamba Shifeta and was attended by senior government officials and policy-makers from 14 African countries. The Workshop was preceded by signing of an MOU signed between the two institutions in 2017.

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 ICCR sponsored 'Bhangra & Giddha' troupe visited Namibia in October 2015. The troupe rendered its performance at Windhoek City Zoo Park Amphitheatre and International University of Management. The dance performances were widely welcomed in Namibia.

Prime Minister of Namibia Ms. Saara Kuugongelwa Amadhila attended the Indian classical dance performance on October 21, 2016 organized by the High Commission as part of 'India Week' celebrations from October 17-24, 2016. A six-member Kathak dance troupe led by Ms. Pratima Roy Chaudhury was sponsored by the ICCR for this occasion, which also performed in Swakopmund apart from Windhoek. Other events organized as part of 'India Week' celebrations included Yoga/meditation sessions, Indian cuisine & henna classes, screening of Indian movies and documentary on Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. Dance workshops for the Kathak Dance Troupe were organised at Namibian College of Arts, Windhoek and Indian Cultural Centre.

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 Mission organized a yoga demonstration-cum-practice session at Chairman Mao Zedong School in Khomasdal constituency in Windhoek on 21 April 2018. Hon. Margaret Mensah Williams, Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia and MP from the Khomasdal constituency attended the event.

The Mission celebrated the Fourth International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 23 June 2018. More than 500 persons participated in the event, including Mayor of Windhoek Muesee Kazapua, Deputy Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Christine Hoebes, Namibian Gold Medalist in the last Commonwealth Games Helalia Johannes, members of Indian community, yoga teachers based in different cities of Namibia, school children, etc. The Mission also organized several other yoga events in the run up to the main event.

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.

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>

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