

## **India - Namibia Relations**

### **Political Relations**

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.

Bilateral, political interactions between our two countries have been at the highest levels. Prime Minister V.P. Singh visited Namibia in March 1990 for Namibia's Independence Celebrations, accompanied by Mr. K.R. Narayanan, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi; Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, President of India visited in June 1995; Prime Minister Vajpayee in 1998.

President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee paid a State Visit to Namibia from June 15-17, 2016 at the invitation of Dr. Hage G. Geingob, the President of the Republic of Namibia. The delegation of the President of India included Mr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (IC) in Prime Minister's Office, Members of Parliament Mr. Surendrajeet Singh Ahluwalia and Mr. Mansukh Lakhman Mandaviya.

President Mukherjee held a tete-a tete meeting with President Geingob, followed by official discussions between the two leaders on June 16, 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.

President's programme included address to the students and faculty members of Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) on June 17, visits to the Heroes' Acre & Independence Memorial Museum and address to the Indian community at a reception organized in his honour by the High Commissioner. 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.

From Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma, Founding President of Namibia visited India 13 times in the past since 1983 and the most recent one being from 17-22 November 2015 under the Distinguished Visitors' Programme of ICCR; Prime Minister Dr. Hage Geingob visited India in 1995; President Hifikepunye Pohamba in 2009; and several ministerial delegations.

Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, accompanied by the First Lady, visited India on 28-29 October 2015 to attend the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi. President Geingob met Prime Minister of India on 29 October 2015 and discussed bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The delegation from Namibia included Hon. Ms. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; Hon. Tom Alweendo, Minister of

Economic Planning in the Presidency and Director-General of the National Planning Commission (NPC); Hon. Obeth Kandjoze, Minister of Mines and Energy; and Hon. John Mutorwa, Minister of Agriculture, Water & Forestry.

Other important visits from Namibia in 2016-17 included: Minister of Health and Social Services of Namibia Dr. Bernard Haufiku - to attend India-Africa Health Sciences Meet from 1-3 September 2016, Hon. Sylvia Makgone, Deputy Minister of Rural and Urban Development and Hon. Priscilla Beukes, Deputy Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare from 1-12 September 2016 for studying India's experiences with poverty eradication and rural development, Secretary to Cabinet George Simataa for leading a delegation of Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) from 27 January to 7 February 2016.

Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (Retd.), AVSM, MoS for I&B visited as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister on 28 August 2015 to hand over IAFS-III invitations to Namibian dignitaries.

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.

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, including Hon. Bernadette Jagger, MP, Hon. Clara Gowases, MP, Ms. Lydia Kandetu, Secretary to the National Assembly, Ms. Elizabeth De Wee, Parliamentary clerk and Ms. Ripuree Tjitendero, PA to Speaker. Speaker Katjavivi met with his counterpart Mrs. Sumitra Mahajan on 27 March, 2017 and called on the President of India and the Vice-President of India on 28 March, 2017. His programme included meetings at IGNOU with the Vice-Chancellor & other faculty members and a visit to Agra.

The third round of India-Namibia Foreign Office Consultations was held in Windhoek from 16-18 May 2016.

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, more than 1,200 Namibian candidates have been trained in India so far. In addition, presently two ITEC experts are on deputation to the Namibian government. During the ITEC Day Celebrations on November 10, 2017, more than 200 Namibian ITEC alumni participated and shared their positive experiences. Hon'ble Dr. Peya Mushelenga, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Government of the Republic of Namibia graced the event as Chief Guest.

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.

## **Economic and Commercial Relations**

Bilateral trade and investments, though small, have been increasing over the years. Bilateral trade during 2016-17 was USD 139.64 million with India's exports valued at USD 89.33 million, while India's imports stood at USD 50.31 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 Sitharam, 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 doubling of ITEC slots from almost 100 to 200; donation of 1000 tons of rice for drought relief; 100 tons of essential medicines over three years and announced a cash grant of US\$ 20,000 for the Indira Gandhi Maternity Clinic in Okahao, run by Dr Sam Nujoma Foundation. The grant of US\$ 20,000 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. The Governor of Omusati Region, Councillor of Okahao constituency, several senior officials from the Ministry of Health and the regional government also attended the event.

With the encouragement of the Mission, an 'India-Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry' (INCCI) was established and registered in Windhoek in September 2016.

The High Commission of India organized a roundtable discussion on "India – Namibia Cooperation in Health and Medical Sectors" on February 29, 2016. Hon. Minister of Health

and Social Services of Namibia Dr. Bernard Haufiku graced the event as the Chief Guest. Participants at the roundtable included health service providers, pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, hospital representatives, health and ICT professionals.

A 15-member Indian ICT delegation from the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) of India visited Namibia from 6-8 November 2016. In cooperation with the India-Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a buyer-seller meeting was organized by the High Commission of India on 7 November 2016, which was attended by several dozen Namibian business persons. The meeting was inaugurated by Hon. Simataa Mutumba Stanley, Deputy Minister of Information & Communication Technology of Namibia.

The High Commission of India participated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Namibia Tourism Expo in Windhoek from 31 May to 3 June 2017. The focus of HCI's stalls was on medial tourism. The High Commission's stand was adjudged the "Most Popular Stand" by the organisers of the Exhibition.

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.

## **Cultural Relations**

The multi-faceted relations between India and Namibia are complemented by cultural bonding. Yoga has a dedicated following in Namibia. 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 from 11-13 October 2015. The troupe rendered its performance at the Windhoek City Zoo Park Amphitheatre on 13 October 2015. Hon. Charles Namoloh, Minister of Safety and Security lit the traditional Indian lamp to formally inaugurate the event. A special performance was organized for the benefit of the Namibian students on 12 October 2015 at the International University of Management. The dance performances were widely welcomed in Namibia.

A newly refurbished and renovated Annexe Complex within the Chancery premises of the High Commission of India, Windhoek was inaugurated by Mr. Amar Sinha, Secretary (ER) in the Ministry of External Affairs of India on 16 June 2016. Secretary (ER) also visited the refurbished Culture Centre in the Chancery, which is being utilised for holding Yoga Classes and other official, community and cultural events.

The 125<sup>th</sup> birth Anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar was celebrated at the Chancery Culture Centre on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Indian community members and officials from the HCI attended the event. On this occasion, a Documentary on Dr. Ambedkar was screened and a quiz was organized on Dr. Ambedkar and on the Constitution of India.

The S.R.C. High School, Dobra in Namibia organized an event titled “Turning Challenges into Opportunities - The Journey Continues” on September 9, 2016 during which the students were briefed about the life and contributions of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Meritorious students from disadvantaged backgrounds were gifted academic books. The Mission also organised, in collaboration with Dorado Primary School CC in Windhoek, an event to celebrate the Constitution Day of India and the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 25 November 2016 which was attended by faculty members and about 200 children from the school.

Prime Minister of Namibia Ms. Saara Kuugongelwa Amadhila attended the Indian classical dance performance on October 21, 2016 organized by the High Commission of India 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 on 22.10.2016 and at Indian Cultural Centre on 24.10.2016.

The High Commission of India in collaboration with the International University of Management (IUM) organised a seminar on India’s Constitution Day (26 November) and 70 years of India’s independence on 06 December 2016. In addition to the Vice Chancellor and senior academics from IUM and other universities, Hon’ble Peya Mushelenga, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, IUM Founder and Chairman of IUM Governing Council, Hon’ble Nahas Angula, senior politician & the Third Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Professor Joseph Diescho, famous writer, political Analyst and former Executive Director of NIPAM, members of diplomatic community and media persons participated in the event.

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.

The Mission celebrated the Third International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 25 June 2017. More than 400 persons participated in the event, including Mayor of Windhoek Muesee Kazapua, Member of Parliament Bernadette Jagger, 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, including an event on June 21 at Dorado School and yoga demonstration at Franco Namibian Culture Centre on May 13, 2017.

On 25 October 2017, the High Commission of India celebrated “Paryatan Parv” in conjunction with Diwali function with theme “Dekho Apna Desh” where more than 200 members of Indian community participated to appreciate its spirit.

Birth Anniversary of Sardar Patel was celebrated as National Unity Day on October 31, 2017 which included administering a pledge for “Rashtriya Ekta Diwas” by the High Commissioner to all members of Mission, highlighting the life and contribution of Sardar Patel. A small photo exhibition on Sardar Patel was also displayed as a part of the event joined by a quiz competition based on life and contribution of Sardar Patel and screening of a documentary film “Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel – A recalling”.

### **Indian Community**

There are very few Indians or people of Indian origin in Namibia. 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.in/>

High Commission of India, Windhoek Facebook page:

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

High Commission of India, Windhoek Twitter Page:

<https://twitter.com/IndiainNamibia>

\*\*\*

December 2017