

HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA WINDHOEK

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 UN GA session in New York on 23 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. President Geingob is expected to travel to India later this year to attend 4th IAFS.

In 2019, there have been numerous incoming Ministerial-level and other visits from Namibia to India. Since 2020, exchanges have been virtual due to Covid19.

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.

Development Assistance and Partnership

India partnered Namibia in our common fight against Covid19 through providing 30,000 doses of Covishield (AZ) produced by Serum Institute of India. These arrived in Namibia on March 20, 2021. India donated 1,000 MT rice for drought relief in 2019 as also in 2017. Previously as well, India has supported Namibia multiple times to fight natural calamities like drought and floods.

An India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in IT (INCEIT) has been established 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 had also provided assistance for establishment of a Maternity Clinic in the country and twin faculties of Mining Engineering and Information Technology at University of Namibia.

Economic and Commercial

During 2019-20, bilateral trade (Total USD 94.72 million, India's exports USD 66.18 million, imports USD 28.54 million) suffered a slowdown, partly due to Covid19. Bilateral trade during 2018-19 was US\$ 135.92 million (India's exports US\$ 82.37 million, India's imports US\$ 53.55 million).

Mining sector is an area of mutual interest. Namibia is rich in uranium, diamonds, copper, phosphates and other minerals. Indian expertise in IT, pharmaceuticals, renewables and SMEs is of interest to Namibia. Bilateral cooperation in the energy and agricultural sectors also has good prospects.

India and Namibia established a Joint Trade Committee in 1995. Its 3rd session was held in New Delhi in September 2016. 4th meeting is expected to take place virtually later this year. SACU-India Preferential Trade Arrangement (PTA) talks were resumed in July 2020.

Defence and Security Cooperation

Indian Naval Ship Tarkash made a port call at Walvis Bay from 15-18 September 2019. The ship had earlier visited Walvis Bay in July 2017. A 10-member Namibian Defence Force contingent participated in the first ever India-Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) held in Pune from 18-27 March 2019.

President Dr Hage Geingob sent a letter to President of India conveying his condolences to the victims of Pulwama terror attack and expressed solidarity with India's fight against terrorism.

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. Yoga is popular in Namibia. Regular free of cost yoga sessions are conducted by High Commission, depending on Covid19 situation. 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 34th Surajkund Mela 2020.

Indian Community

Presently, there are about three to four hundred Indians/NRIs/PIOs in Namibia. Presence of Indian community in Namibia is growing steadily. An India-Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (INCCI) was established in Windhoek in September 2016. The first and only pan Indian community association India Namibia Friendship Association (INFA) was registered in December 2020.

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