

## India - Namibia 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. Since 1946, in every international forum, especially the UN Committee on Decolonisation, India took the lead in supporting the Namibian liberation struggle and provided all possible moral, material and diplomatic support to the Namibian leadership in exile. The first SWAPO Embassy abroad was established in New Delhi in 1986. The SWAPO Mission was closed after independence of Namibia. Diplomatic relations with independent Namibia were established right from the moment of its independence, with the 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.

Since Namibia's independence, bilateral relations have been active, marked by warmth and understanding. India's continued commitment to HRD and capacity building through the ITEC and other bilateral programmes in Namibia has been a solid pillar of cooperation, which is very much appreciated in Namibia. Under the ITEC scheme, more than 1,000 Namibian candidates have been trained in India so far. For the year 2015-16, India has allotted 136 civilian ITEC slots and 12 defence slots to Namibia. In addition, two ITEC experts from the Indian Army are on deputation with the Namibian Ministry of Defence as Advisors in civil and ICT related works; and another ITEC expert is on deputation to the Namibian Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM). Since 1995, an Indian Air Force Training Team has been based in Namibia, providing training to Namibian Air Force.

Bilateral, political interactions between our two countries have been at the highest levels. High level visits between the two countries underscore the importance and value attached to the close relations. From India, Prime Minister V.P. Singh visited Namibia in March 1990 for Namibia's Independence Celebrations, accompanied by Shri K.R. Narayanan, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri H.S. Surjeet, and the then Leader of the Opposition, Shri Rajiv Gandhi; Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, Hon'ble President of India in June 1995; Prime Minister Vajpayee in 1998; and numerous ministerial delegations. From Namibia, Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of Namibia visited India 11 times in the past since 1983; Prime Minister Dr. Hage Geingob in 1995; President Hifikepunye Pohamba in 2009; and several ministerial delegations.

The India-Namibia Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi in November 2012. The two sides made a comprehensive review of bilateral relations and exchanged regional and global perspectives. The next meeting is proposed to be held in Namibia later this year.

New pillars of cooperation between India and Namibia were put in place after the successful visit of President Pohamba to India in 2009. A number of important MOU/Agreements were signed during the visit viz., i) Agreement on Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy; ii) MOU on Pan-African e-Network; iii) MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Geology and Mineral Resources; iv) MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Defence; and v) MOU on Waiver of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passports.

The two countries have worked closely in the UN, NAM, Commonwealth, SADC, AU and IPU fora. Namibia's support for India's bid for permanent membership of UNSC was reiterated during President Pohamba's State visit to India in August/September 2009. Namibia has also largely supported our candidates to UN bodies and other international

organisations. Namibia supported India's candidature for non-permanent seat of UNSC for 2011-12.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations**

Bilateral trade and investments, though small, has been steadily increasing over the years. The principal commodities of export from India to Namibia are drugs and pharmaceuticals, inorganic/organic/agro chemicals, glass/glassware, plastic and linoleum products, manufactures of metals, machine tools, machinery & instruments, transport equipments, rubber manufactured products and electronic goods. The principal commodities of import from Namibia to India are non-ferrous metals, metalifiers ores & metal scrap, transport equipment, machinery except electrical & electronic. 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.

The volume of trade between the two countries, though small, is in India's favour. The trade figures (in million US dollars) for the last four years are as follows:

Year	Imports from Namibia	Export to Namibia
2010-11	36.76	55.41
2011-12	9.95	64.33
2012-13	9.19	56.82
2013-14	13.00	212.39

*(Source: Department of Commerce, GOI)*

Indian investments have been flowing into Namibia since last five years. In May 2010, Vedanta Resources of India acquired Skorpion Zinc Mine (Namibia) for N\$5 billion (US\$707 million approx.) from Anglo-American Zinc. A Tsumeb-based joint venture, GPT-Trans Namibia Concrete Sleepers (Pty), of approx. N\$ 50 million between Indian GPT Group of Companies and Trans-Namib for producing 120000 concrete railway sleepers per year for local use, was inaugurated in September 2011. Indian GPT Group of Companies has invested 37.5% of N\$50 Million which is N\$18.75 Million (US\$2.68 million approx.). M/S Jindal Steel and Power are planning investment of over US \$ 400 million in Namibia.

India and Namibia established a Joint Trade Committee in 1995 and the last meeting was held in February 2008 in Walvis Bay in Namibia. The next round of meetings will be held later in New Delhi at a mutually convenient date. The Joint Working Group (JWG) on geology and mineral resources met in New Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012. Under the India-Africa Forum Summit decisions, India has offered Namibia to set up two institutes in Namibia – i) ICT Training Institute; and (ii) Africa-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre.

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 US\$12.16 Millions to Namibia for Construction of Twin Faculties of Mining Engineering and Information Technology at University of Namibia's North 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 is supplying IT equipment to Namibian Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health & Social Services.

### **Cultural Relations**

A Cultural Agreement between the two countries was signed in 1991. The agreement inter alia facilitates and encourages cooperation in the fields of art and culture in order to contribute towards a better knowledge of respective cultures and activities in these fields. In the recent past, a 7-day long Indian Film Festival titled “Bollywood Comes to Namibia” was held in Windhoek in February 2014 with the support of the Ministry of Culture 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 High Commission of India organized the first International Yoga Day on 21st June 2015 at the University of Namibia and at the Parliament Gardens. The programme included practice session on Basic Yogic Postures & Meditation, Screening of Documentary on Yogic Practices, and a panel discussion on benefits of Yoga, which was widely welcomed by the local population.

### **Indian Community**

There are very few Indians or people of Indian origin in Namibia. Presently, there is a total of around 200 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:

[www.highcommissionofindia.web.na/#&panel1-1](http://www.highcommissionofindia.web.na/#&panel1-1)

High Commission of India, Windhoek facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/IndiaInNamibia](https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInNamibia)

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