



High Commission of India
Windhoek

PRESS RELEASE

The High Commission of India in Windhoek organized a roundtable discussion on “**India – Namibia Cooperation in Health and Medical Sectors**” on February 29, 2016. The event was organized in partnership with Indus Healthcare -an Indian hospital group providing services in southern Africa, including Namibia, Botswana and Lesotho.

Honble 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, etc. The roundtable was organized with a view to bringing the concerned stakeholders in India and Namibia together to brainstorm, not only to take stock of current status of bilateral cooperation but also come up with suggestions to take the bilateral cooperation in the health and medical sectors to a higher level.

In his opening remarks, India’s High Commissioner to Namibia HE Mr. Kumar Tuhin provided a broad overview of bilateral cooperation in these sectors. He drew attention to the Pan Africa e-Network project, which provides a telemedicine link between the central hospital in Windhoek and the Apollo Hospital in India. The High Commissioner highlighted the strengths of Indian health and pharmaceutical companies and noted that a number of Indian companies already had presence in Namibia. Several Namibian students are also pursuing medical studies in India. The High Commissioner referred to the India Africa Health Fund which has been set up as an outcome of the India Africa Forum Summit-III meeting in New Delhi in October 2015 and suggested that the Namibian side take advantage of this Fund to further strengthen the capacity of health and medical sectors.

Honble Minister of Health and Social Services Dr. Bernard Haufiku, in his remarks, inter alia, conveyed appreciation to the Government of India for gifting ICT equipment worth US\$5 million, comprising of 1600 computers and other IT equipment, to Namibia and emphasized that these would go a long way in strengthening the ICT capacity, especially in digitizing the Namibian medical records. He said there was a need for increased and effective use of information technology so as to make the domestic health system more efficient. A case in point being the replacement of health cards/passports with a paper-less system. Hon’ble Minister also spoke about the potential for strengthening cooperation with India in diverse health related areas such as training and capacity building of Namibian health professionals, drug procurement especially ARVs, etc.

The roundtable had active participation from other attendees who brought forth their own perspectives. A case study on specialty health services delivery in district hospitals in Botswana was presented. Also, a presentation was made by an Indian company having established a manufacturing unit in Namibia. A scholar on Ayurveda (Indian traditional system of medicine) Mr. K N Prabhakar participated in the discussions through Video/Voice link.

The interactive discussions touched upon a broad spectrum of topics such as health services delivery models/options, skill upgradation and capacity building of health professionals, strengthening capacity of public health centres, effective use of information technology, sourcing/importing of pharmaceuticals, drug regulation, manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in Namibia, cooperation under the India Africa Health Fund, etc. These will be taken up for further deliberation and action.

In their concluding remarks, the High Commission of India conveyed sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Health and Social Services of Namibia for their cooperation, especially Hon'ble Minister Dr. Bernard Haufiku for gracing the roundtable and providing his insights and suggestions.
