

BOTSWANA DECIDES TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE: VICE PRESIDENT

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Vice President's Secretariat

Botswana decides to join the International Solar Alliance: Vice President

India decides to enhance defence cooperation by deputing Indian Army Training Team under ITEC;

MoU signed for the exemption of visa for Indian Diplomats visiting Botswana;

Holds delegation level talks with Vice President of Botswana

Posted On: 01 NOV 2018 9:30PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that Botswana announced their decision to join the International Solar Alliance. He was meeting and holding delegation level talks with his Botswana counterpart, the Vice President and the Acting President of Botswana, Mr. Slumber Tsogwane, at the Office of the President of Botswana, in Gaborone, Botswana today. The Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The two Vice Presidents had a one-on-one meeting which was followed by delegation level talks. The Vice President of Botswana, Mr. Slumber Tsogwane warmly recalled India's contribution to the freedom struggle of many Southern African Nations, including Botswana.

Both the leaders referred to the close defence cooperation between the two countries particularly between 1978 till 2012 when Indian Army and Air Force training team were stationed in Botswana. The Vice President conveyed India's willingness to bear most of the expenditure including salaries in order to continue the support to Botswana's defence forces.

Botswana appreciated the assistance being given by India in capacity building, particularly under ITEC. In the last four years, Botswana has utilized more than 600 slots under ITEC, IAFS and ICCR. The Vice President expressed willingness to enhance the ITEC slots to more than the 140 slots that India is currently extending to Botswana.

The Vice President responded positively to the Government of Botswana's request to impart Diplomatic training to Botswana's Junior Diplomats.

Both sides agreed to further develop and diversify trade and economic engagement. The

Botswana side expressed their keenness to have Indian companies, particularly the private sector, to invest in Botswana. Many Indian companies are already present in Botswana including three Indian Banks. Our bilateral trade with Botswana has registered an impressive increase of 26 % last year taking it to US\$ 1.75 billion. Both sides also agreed to enhance cooperation in areas like copper mining etc.

Both sides expressed their determination to take bilateral relations to the next level and enhance cooperation in a range of areas including agricultural, ICT, energy, health, capacity building, judicial cooperation etc.

It was suggested to the Government of Botswana that RITES, a premier Government of India Undertaking, currently implementing a number of projects would be interested to participate in extension of two of Botswana's existing Railway lines.

Botswana also announced their decision to join the International Solar Alliance. This is a very significant development and was welcomed by Indian side. India also expressed happiness over Botswana's continuous support in multilateral fora, reflecting the enduring spirit of friendship between two countries.

Both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as a global menace. The various dimensions of counter terrorism steps, including terror financing were discussed. The Botswana side indicated the various laws enacted to counter terrorism, money laundering, trafficking, cyber crime, etc. Both sides agreed that UNCCIT should be adopted at the earliest.

Both sides agreed that UN Security Council needs to be reformed to make it more representative in response to the geo-political realities of the 21st century.

The Botswana side deeply appreciated the cooperation they are receiving from India and from Indian companies in the area of healthcare. In the context of a request from the Botswana side for India's support in tele-medicine, the Indian side conveyed the decision of the Government of India to extend e-learning and e-health project to all countries in Africa.

The Vice President also indicated India's strength in traditional medicine, particularly Ayurveda and Yoga and offered to extend our cooperation in these important areas. This was welcomed by the Botswana side.

Following the delegation level talks, an MoU between both the Governments for waiving Visa for Diplomatic Passport holders.

This evening, the Vice President will be addressing and interacting with the vibrant Indian Community in Botswana. This is a community of more than 7000 whose contribution to Botswana's development has been deeply appreciated.

Tomorrow, the Vice President will be meeting prominent CEOs of Indian and Botswana entities and companies after which he will be visiting the Diamond Trading Centre in Botswana.

The Vice President is also expected to meet the President of Botswana, Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi before his departure to Zimbabwe.

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