

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:364

ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005

STRENGTHENING OF INDO-AFRICAN BILATERAL TIES

Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Swain Shri M.A. Kharabela

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether recently the officials of the Ministry visited African Countries to firm up bilateral ties with them;
- (b) if so, whether this is likely to boost our claim for a permanent seat in the UNSC;
- (c) if so, the details of various discussions held and the bilateral agreements signed on the occasion, countrywise;
- (d) the outcome thereof alongwith the benefits likely to accrue to India by these agreements; and
- (e) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to improve business as well as foreign relations with African Countries?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJEET SINGH)

(a) to (e) A statement is placed on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED IN REPLY TO PARTS (a to e) TO THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 364 (PRIORITY IV) FOR ANSWER ON 20.04.05 REGARDING STRENGTHENING OF INDO-AFRICAN BILATERAL TIES

Senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs have been visiting African countries from time to time in order to review our relations with them at the bilateral and multilateral level as well as to discuss how these relations can be further strengthened. We have a close rapport with African countries and there is a great similarity in our views vis-à-vis international issues, including the need to bring about restructuring of the UN so that it can reflect the new realities which have come into existence after the end of the Second World War. The discussions held by our officials in various African countries also covered the question of our candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. There is recognition in Africa that India has emerged as a major regional power and our candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council is generally endorsed.

During recent months following visits to African countries were paid by officers of this Ministry:

(i) Nigeria & Angola - Additional Secretary (Admn.) &
Joint Secretary (West Africa)

(ii) Namibia & Zambia - Secretary (West)

(iii) Mauritius - Secretary (West) &
Joint Secretary (E&SA)
Accompanied Prime Minister

(iv) South Africa - Additional Secretary (ER) &
Joint Secretary (MER)
Accompanied EAM for IBSA meeting

(v) South Africa - Joint Secretary (E&SA)
Accompanied MOS (RIS)

(vi) Guinea - Deputy Secretary (WAF)

(vii) Senegal - Deputy Secretary (WAF) accompanied
MOS (RIS)

During the visit of Secretary (West) to Namibia a Memorandum of Understanding was signed for cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Foreign Office of Namibia. During the visit of Prime Minister to Mauritius following MOUs/agreements were signed:

- i. Agreement for setting up of a Joint Working Group on combating international Terrorism,
- ii. MOU relating to Bilateral Air Services between India and Mauritius
- iii. MOU on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment.
- iv. MOU on offering a fresh line of Credit of US\$10 million for the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project.

During MOS (RIS)'s visit to Senegal, an agreement to conduct a feasibility study for the railway line linking Dakar and Ziguinchor was signed.

It is hoped that the agreements signed with Mauritius and Namibia will further strengthen India's relationship with these countries and would help to enhance economic and commercial interaction with them.

Our Government during recent years has been paying great importance to improving India's relations with Africa. The Ministry of Commerce in 2003 adopted 'Focus Africa Initiative' to foster our economic and commercial links with Africa. Earlier we announced a credit line of US\$ 200 million to New Economic Partnership for African Development and US\$ 500 million to TEAM-9 which comprises West African countries. A number of lines of credit on a bilateral basis have been extended to countries of Africa. During the last two years, we have disbursed considerable assistance in terms of foodgrains and medicines to African countries. We facilitate and encourage meetings between African officials and ministers with our leading companies and chambers of commerce. A conclave organized by the CII recently in Delhi was attended by over 100 African dignitaries and a large number of prominent Indian companies.