

## **Mexico backs India's bid for NSG membership, PM thanks President Nieto for support**

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**Mexico City:** In a crucial backing to India's NSG membership bid, Mexico today said that it "positively and constructively" supports India's membership to Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

"Mexico supports positively and constructively India's membership of the NSG (Nuclear Suppliers Group)," Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto said at a joint media interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi thanked Mexican President for the support.

PM called Mexico an important partner for India's energy security.

"We are looking to move beyond buyer-seller relationship and into a long-term partnership... We have agreed to develop a roadmap of concrete outcomes to upgrade our ties to a Strategic Partnership," he said.

Mexico's support to India is seen as crucial in its bid to become member of the elite NSG, whose members are allowed to trade in and export nuclear technology, ahead of its plenary meeting. On June 6, Switzerland, an important member of the NSG, extended support to India's membership in the group during Modi's stopover in Geneva en route to the US from Qatar.

Nieto announced his country's support to India after holding wide-ranging talks with Modi, on the last leg of his five-nation tour, on a range of bilateral and global issues.

In their talks, Modi and Nieto explored ways to deepen bilateral cooperation in a number of key areas including in trade and investment, information technology, climate change and energy.

Support of Mexico and Switzerland is seen as important in the wake of China opposing India's NSG membership arguing that it was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The issue had figured prominently during talks between Modi and US President Barack Obama in Washington on Tuesday.

The US and many other NSG member countries have supported India's inclusion based on its non-proliferation track record.

The NSG works under the principle of unanimity and even one country's vote against India will scuttle its bid.

India has been pushing for membership of the bloc for last few years and had formally moved its application on May 12.

The NSG looks after critical issues relating to the nuclear sector and its members are allowed to trade in and export nuclear technology. Its membership will help India significantly expand its atomic energy sector.

The NSG had granted an exclusive waiver for India in 2008 to access civil nuclear technology after China reluctantly backed India's case based on the Indo-US nuclear deal.

- (With inputs from PTI)