

## **Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)**

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States called CELAC, is a regional bloc of 33 sovereign countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with a population of about 600 million, land area 6 times bigger than India and GDP of US\$ 3 trillion. It was created on 23 February 2010 at a session of the Latin American and Caribbean Unity Summit in Playa del Carmen (Mexico). Subsequently, at the Caracas Summit (Venezuela) held on 2-3 December 2011, the organisation was definitively constituted. The First Celac Summit was held in Chile in January 2013. The bloc forms a political dialogue to deepen Latin American integration. CELAC is the successor of the Rio Group and the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC).

Pro Tempore Presidency (PTP) is the institutional, technical and administrative support body of the CELAC, which is on rotation basis. Argentina holds the pro-tempore presidency of the Community. CELAC is composed of 33 countries, of which 18 are Spanish-speaking, 12 English-speaking, 1 French-speaking and 1 Dutch-speaking, but many inhabitants still preserve their indigenous American languages such as Quechua, Guarani, Aymara, Nahuatl, Shipibo Conibo and others.

**Member countries:** The 33 members CELAC includes Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil\*, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and The Grenadines, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela and Uruguay.

[\*On 16 January 2020, Brazil informed CELAC of its decision to "suspend its participation in activities of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States because it considers that the organisation does not have the conditions to act adequately in the current context of regional crisis".]

The last summit (6<sup>th</sup> CELAC Summit) was held in Mexico City from 16-18 September 2021. It was attended by 31 of its 33 members. The Summit ended with a 44-point joint declaration, approved unanimously, ratifying Argentina's sovereignty over the Malvinas (Falklands) Islands, the decision to establish a plan for health self-sufficiency, the creation of a fund to tackle climate change and to deal with natural disasters, a system of mass production of vaccines against Covid, the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency, as well as questioning the IMF (International Monetary Fund) for unequal access to its resources, and developed countries for abusing their position in the monopolisation of Covid vaccines.

### **India – CELAC**

India is one of the first countries to initiate a dialogue mechanism with CELAC. On the sidelines of UNGA in September 2011, External Affairs Minister of India (EAM) and his Chilean counterpart decided during the India-Rio Group Dialogue, to initiate India-CELAC Dialogue. Accordingly the first India-CELAC Foreign Ministerial Meeting was held on August 7, 2012 in New Delhi in a Troika Format. Foreign Ministers of Chile and Venezuela; and Vice Minister of Cuba participated in the meeting. India-CELAC Foreign Ministers meetings have taken place in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 on the sidelines of UNGA in New York.

CELAC gives India a platform to interact directly with these 33 sovereign countries of this region. Most of the countries are positively disposed towards India. India-CELAC share common democratic values and developmental aspirations; and have common commitment to strengthening South-South Cooperation in the interest of developing countries. Our cooperation with the UN and other multilateral fora has been close and determined by common interests.

August 2022