

Bilateral Relations-Commonwealth of Dominica

Historical Perspective:

The Commonwealth of Dominica is known as the "Nature's Island of the Caribbean" for its lush green mountains and serene beauty. It has a land area of 750 square kilometres and a population of approximately 72,500. In the recent past, Dominica was hit by two Hurricanes, Dean in August 2007 and Ophelia in December 2011, which caused extensive damage to its crops and infrastructure. Dominica is a member of both CARICOM and OECS and permanently hosts the Small Business Development Office of OECS.

India enjoys traditionally cordial bilateral relations with Commonwealth of Dominica since the diplomatic relations established in 1981. Commonwealth of Dominica is concurrently accredited to our Mission in Port of Spain and it does not have a diplomatic Mission in India. In December 2011, India donated US\$100,000 to Dominica to help alleviate problems caused by Hurricane Ophelia. Likewise, India recently provided humanitarian assistance of US\$300,000 to Dominica in the wake of damage caused by flash floods in December 2013. Nearly 50 persons of Indian Origin and a few Indian business families reside in Dominica.

Visits:

No high-level bilateral visits have taken place so far. However, Prime Minister Dr. Roosevelt Skerrit visited India from 22-26 February, 2016 on a private visit to attend Convocation of the Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar as Chief Guest. During his visit, MOS(VK) hosted a lunch for him in Delhi on 25th February, 2016.

Agreements / MoUs between India and Commonwealth of Dominica:

- A MoU was signed between the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and the Division of Agriculture (DOA), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Commonwealth of Dominica for cooperation in the field of education and research in agriculture and allied areas in October 2011.
- A MoU was signed between the Government of India (GOI) and the Government of Commonwealth of Dominica for setting up an IT Centre for Excellence in Dominica in October 2011.

Bilateral Cooperation Assistance:

Capacity Building: India has been contributing to capacity building of the Commonwealth of Dominica (CD) by providing training to its personnel under the ITEC programme at various training institutions in India. Presently we offer 5 ITEC training slots for Dominican nationals. Courses mostly sought after by Dominica are in the areas of IT, Accounts and Financial Management, HRD, SMEs, etc.

Centre for Excellence in IT: Following the signing of MoU on setting up of a Centre of Excellence in IT in Dominica in October 2011 under bilateral cooperation programme between Dominica and India, the Centre has been set up at the Dominica State College, Roseau amounting to US\$0.7 million. The IT Centre was officially inaugurated by the Dominican PM Dr. Roosevelt Skerrit at an impressive ceremony on 3rd June, 2016. Three IT trainers from India are in place to provide training and manage the Centre.

Donation of medicines: On a request from the Dominican Government for donation of medicines for their public hospitals, GOI has conveyed its approval under GOI Grant-in-aid scheme. The medicines have been procured by GOI and are under despatch. The matter is being pursued.

Bilateral Trade:

India exports mainly pharmaceutical products, jewellery, readymade garments, textiles and home furnishings etc. to Dominica, while Dominica exports mainly scrap metals and plastic articles. Bilateral trade between India and Dominica during 2013-14 amounted to US\$2.48 million. Given the distance and small size of Dominica market, volume of our bilateral trade is comparatively small. India's exports to Dominica were US\$2.41 million and Dominica's exports were US\$0.07 million. There are areas of potential cooperation include agro-industries, food processing and small scale manufacturing, renewable energy, pharmaceuticals, eco-tourism/Ayurvedic system of holistic health care, education and sports.

Gujarat Apollo Industries Company Ltd. has installed an Asphalt Separation plant in Dominica recently.

Culture:

A 9-member Percussion Group "Drums of India" led by Shri Jaya Bhaskar Peravali sponsored by ICCR visited the Commonwealth of Dominica for participation in the Dominica Festival of Arts "DOMFESTA" from 18 to 20 May 2012. The group gave performances throughout the country and they were honorary guests at the "Night of the Classics" on 18 May 2012. The performances of the troupe were warmly welcomed.

Visa waiver for Indian nationals:

The Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica has waived visa requirement for Indian nationals visiting Dominica for tourism and business purposes for a period of six months. GOI has approved e-Tourist Visa for Dominican citizens.

Indian Community:

The Indian community consists of a few Sindhi business families, professionals and faculty members of the Ross Medical University.

Useful Resources:

Website: <http://www.hcipoos.in>

Facebook link: India in Trinidad and Tobago

Twitter link: @IndiainTandT

5th December, 2016