

India-Cook Islands Bilateral Relations

Background

India and the Cook Islands established diplomatic relations in 1998. Formerly, Indian High Commissioner at Wellington was concurrently accredited to the Cook Islands. Since the reopening of the High Commission of India in Suva in 1999, High Commissioner in Suva is concurrently accredited to the Cook Islands.

High-Level Exchanges

FIPIC: The Forum for India-Pacific Island Countries was inaugurated on 19 November 2014 at Suva. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India also hosted the First Summit of the Forum in Suva (Fiji) during his historic visit to Fiji on 19 November 2014. The Forum saw participation of 14 Pacific Island Countries. Cook Islands delegation, led by the Prime Minister Hon. Henry Puna, attended the Summit.

FIPIC-II: As a follow-up of the historic first FIPIC Summit in 2014, India organized the second FIPIC at Jaipur on 21 August 2015, which was hosted by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Building upon the success of the first FIPIC, India announced major initiatives to boost cooperation with the 14 Pacific Island countries. Cook Islands delegation led by Mr. Nandi Glassie, Minister of Health, Justice & Parliamentary Services, Cook Islands, attended the Forum

Interaction with PSIDS at New York: On 24 September 2019, on the sidelines of the UNGA, Prime Minister of India Hon. Narendra Modi held an interaction, first of its kind, with the leaders of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS). This high-level exchange will be followed up with the third Summit meeting of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), which is scheduled to be held in the first half of 2020.

India-Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference (IPISDC): Government of India organized the India-Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference (IPISDC) at Suva, Fiji on 25-26 May 2017. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. (Dr.) V.K.Singh (Retd.) hosted the event, in which Cook Islands Finance Minister Mr. Mark Brown led the delegation. India signed MOU for setting up of Mahatma Gandhi Center of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) with Cook Islands during the Conference.

Other Visits/Exchanges:

- Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Shri E. Ahamed [MOS(EA)] led the Indian delegation for the 24th Post Forum Dialogue Partners Meeting held in the Cook Islands on 31 August 2012.
- Mr. Mark Brown, Minister for Finance, visited India on 2-4 February 2013 for the ADB Asia Leadership Program on Sustainable Development and Climate Change held in Delhi.
- Mr. John Henry, Associate Minister, Ministry of Internal Affairs visited India in connection with the Second High Level Meeting (HLM) on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific, held in New Delhi on 23-25 October, 2013.

Development Partnership Assistance: Government of India provides annual grants for community development projects in the Cook Islands. In addition, training slots are offered to Cook Islands under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme of the Government of India. Diplomats are also offered training at the Foreign Service Institute of India.

Establishment of Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Excellence in IT: Government of India has established a Centre of Excellence in IT at Rarotonga. The Centre has been housed in the Rarotonga Campus of the University of the South Pacific and the project has been implemented by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under an MoU signed between the Governments of India and the Cook Islands.

Cultural Relations

Since its inaugural event in 2015, the **International Day of Yoga** is celebrated with much enthusiasm and fervour every year with participation from all walks of life and the local Government. As part of Namaste Pacifica **Festival of India**, a Kuchipudi Dance Group led by Ms. Yashoda Thakore visited and performed in Rarotonga in January 2018.

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