

India-Vanuatu Brief

Diplomatic relations with Vanuatu were established in 1986. Till mid-2000, the Indian High Commission in Canberra was accredited to Vanuatu. The accreditation was transferred to HCI, Port Moresby in August 2000 and to HCI Suva in June 2014.

Political Set-up

Vanuatu is a democratic republic. The President is elected for a five-year term through secret ballot by an electoral college comprising the Parliament and the chiefs of Vanuatu's six provincial governments. Vanuatu joined the Commonwealth and the Pacific Islands Forum at the time of its independence in 1980. It is also a member of the Francophone Community, the United Nations and several specialised agencies, and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Bilateral Relations

In 1983, the Deputy PM of Vanuatu met Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the Non-aligned Summit meeting in New Delhi. The Transport Minister of Vanuatu attended the World Infrastructural Forum in New Delhi in October 1996. Former Prime Minister Barak Sope visited India in 1983 as a member of the Vanuatu delegation to the Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted the India-Pacific Island Countries Forum Summit in Suva (Fiji) during the visit on 19 November 2014 with the participation of 14 Pacific countries. Vanuatu delegation was led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Meltek Sato Kilman, attended the Summit. The announcements made by Hon'ble PM on 19 November 2014 with respect to Pacific countries (including Vanuatu) were the following: (i) Setting up of a Special Adaptation Fund of \$ 1 million, (ii) Development of Pan Pacific Islands Project for telemedicine and tele-education, (iii) Indian Visa on arrival for Pacific Island Countries – “Cook Islands, Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu, Republic of Nauru, Republic of Kiribati, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Niue, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea”, (iv) Increase in Grant-in-Aid to Pacific Island Countries to \$ 200,000 annually to be rolled over to provide for a wider scope for our development cooperation, (v) Establishment of Trade Office for Pacific Island Forum countries in India, (vi) Providing complimentary space to Pacific Island Forum countries during exhibitions, organized by ITPO, (vii) Deputation of ITEC experts to Pacific Island countries, including in the areas of agriculture, healthcare and IT, (viii) Organizing Training to Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries, (ix) Starting a Distinguished Visitors Programme for Pacific Island Countries, (x) Holding of the next Summit Meeting of India and Pacific Island Leaders in India in 2015, (xi) Cooperation in the use of Space technology applications for improving the quality of life of people and communications, (xii) Explore possibilities of sharing data for monitoring climate change, disaster risk reduction and management and resource management, and (xiii) Undertake joint research in traditional medicine; developing healthcare facilities for the benefit of people in the region.

Bilateral Trade and Investments

While India's exports to Vanuatu was US\$ 2.67 million in 2012-13, its imports stood at US\$ 5.37 million. Asian Paints had set up a paints factory in Vanuatu. Tatas have exported some 'Sierra' vehicles. 3 Indian nationals are residing in Vanuatu.

ITEC

India has been offering 10 training slots under the ITEC Programme, which are being well- received and appreciated.

Grant-in-Aid

As part of Government of India's Regional Assistance Initiatives for Pacific Island countries, India offers annual grant-in-aid for development projects in Vanuatu.

Two diplomats from Vanuatu attended the training for diplomats of Pacific Island countries organised by the Foreign Service Institute in Nadi, Fiji in May 2015.

Following "Cyclone Pam" in March 2015, India gave a grant of US\$ 2,50,000 as humanitarian assistance.

International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Vanuatu on 21st June 2015.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Suva website:

<http://www.indianhighcommissionfiji.org>

High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HicomindSuva>

Indian Cultural Centre, High Commission of India, Suva Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ICCHighcomindSuva>

June 2015