**INDIA-PAPUA NEW GUINEA RELATIONS**

Diplomatic relations between India and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG) were established when the latter got independence from Australia in 1975. Indian resident Mission was opened in Port Moresby in 1996. PNG opened its resident Mission in New Delhi in 2006.

India and PNG are Commonwealth countries and enjoy warm and cordial relations. They share commonality of views on most global issues. The two countries have been working closely in international fora including the Commonwealth, NAM and UN.

**Political Relations**

PNG has been cooperative in issues taken up by India at various international fora including UN, Commonwealth, etc. They have supported our candidature for various bodies and international offices. India has also engaged with PNG as the PIF Dialogue Partner and has announced several grants through this Forum.

Bilaterally, there have been visits both ways at Ministerial/Secretary levels, the last being the visit of the Foreign Minister Mr. Sam Abal in July 2009. He reiterated PNG Government’s desire to intensify political and economic relations with India particularly in the fields of energy, education, telecommunications and IT. The current Prime Minister Hon. Peter O’Neill visited India earlier as Finance Minister. Several other Ministers visited India for multilateral meetings and private purposes.

**Economic & Commercial Relations**

PNG’s population is around 7 million and GDP is US $ 11 billion. It is a resource rich country. India’s engagement has progressively increased with PNG both in trade and investment. India’s exports to PNG were US $ 17.58 million and imports were US $ 100.56 million in 2010-11. The main items exported include textiles, machinery & equipment, food items, manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, surgical items, soap, washing powder, polishes paper, paper pulp, etc. These were not reflective of the actual trade since PNG imports much of Indian goods through third countries. The main imports from PNG are gold, copper ores & concentrates, timber, copra, marine products, coffee, vanilla and cocoa.

Indian companies are now progressively looking at the various projects coming up in PNG, consequent to discovery of Natural Gas in Southern Highland Province, being developed with massive investments by Exxon Mobil. Similarly, gas discoveries in Western and Gulf Provinces are likely to be developed by Indian companies, especially in near future. GAIL is trying for some of the mid and downstream projects associated with these fields. Indian companies are also looking at the abundant non-ferrous metals/ores resources. They are also involved in infrastructure development including roads, airports, telecommunications, etc.
Similarly, growth in commerce and trade, especially in Indian white goods and processed foods is likely to increase as the PNG market expands. Various agreements like Technical Cooperation, Bilateral Investment Promotion & Double Taxes Avoidance (DTAA) are under negotiations.

**Aid/Technical Assistance**

PNG is developing its human resources rapidly to meet its developmental needs. India has contributed to this capacity building in a major way. Over 300 officers/students from PNG have availed training in India under ITEC. Similarly, India has been training members of the PNG Defence Forces at the Military Academy in Pune, Dehradun and New Delhi. Indian academics and scientists are prominently placed in PNG university and research organizations. Agreements with IGNOU, Polytechnique Colleges, etc. are also under implementation. A Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreement is also under consideration.

As part of Regional Assistance Initiative for Pacific Island countries, the GOI has offered grants-in-aid to PNG in 2008-2012 totalling to US $ 0.5 million for supply of equipment and material for social and medical programmes for sustainable development. India also offered humanitarian aid and disaster relief to PNG – prone to natural disasters like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, Tsunami etc. from time to time. In addition, setting up of an IT Centre of Excellence as well as assistance in setting up of three “Hole-in-the-Wall” IT learning stations has also been offered. The Indian Centre for Research and Development in Community Education (ICRDCE) is assisting PNG in establishing 13 vocational training colleges.

**Indian Community**

There are about 1500 Indians in PNG including chartered accountants, university professors, school teachers, doctors, IT and finance professionals, etc. Some Indians are working at Government departments at middle level. The newer projects in LNG sector has recently engaged around 600 personnel in 2011 and some more are likely to come in the next few years.

The Indian Association of PNG has been carrying out charitable activity and developmental work in PNG. Similarly, missionaries from India including Mother Teresa’s Sisters of Charity are helping in social work.

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