

## **India - Dominica Relations**

### **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 72,340. In the recent past, Dominica was hit by two Hurricanes, Dean in August 2007 and Ophelia in December 2011 and tropical storm Erica in August 2015 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. Nearly 50 persons of Indian Origin and a few Indian business families reside in Dominica.

2. 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. GOI provided financial support of US\$ 1 lakh as immediate relief and granted US\$ 1 million for infrastructure re-construction in Dominica under the India-UNDP Fund in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017. Dominica utilized the aid provided by UNDP and South-South Cooperation Schemes for reconstruction of housing sector, which was badly damaged due to the hit of Hurricane Maria. In August 2015, GOI has provided humanitarian relief/assistance of US\$200,000 to the Dominican Government in the wake of damage caused by tropical storm Erica. India also donated US\$100,000 in December 2011 to help alleviate problems caused by Hurricane Ophelia and humanitarian assistance of US\$300,000 in December 2013 in the wake of damage caused by flash floods.

### **Visits:**

3. No high-level bilateral visits have taken place so far. Mrs. Anupriya Patel, Minister of Health & FW visited Dominica on a bilateral visit from May 11-12, 2018. During the visit she called on the President, Prime Minister, and various Ministers and discussed the issues of importance between the two countries.

### **Agreements/MoUs between India and Commonwealth of Dominica:**

4. 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 Governments of India and the Commonwealth of Dominica for setting up an IT Centre for Excellence in Dominica in October 2011.

### **Bilateral Cooperation:**

5. 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. The Government of India has recently increased the number of annual training slots from 5 to 10 for Dominican nationals. Courses mostly sought after by Dominica are in the areas of IT, Accounts and Financial Management, HRD, SMEs, etc. On request of the Dominican Government, an agriculture and horticulture expert Dr. V. Kumar, Sr. Scientist (Horticulture) from National Research Centre for Banana, Thiruchirapalli, India visited Dominica for a month in January 2011 to advise the Dominican Government on horticulture.

6. 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 recently been set up. A 3-member team of IT trainers from Aptech has also reached Dominica in the third week of April, 2016. The Centre was officially inaugurated in May 2016. It organised its first anniversary and awarded Graduation certificates to successful students in a ceremony organised in June 2017. As of now around 600 Dominican students have received various IT trainings at the Centre. The Centre was temporarily closed down due to the devastation caused down in Dominica in the aftermath of Hurricane Dominica in September 2017.

7. Donation of medicines: On a request from the Dominican Government for donation of medicines for their public hospitals, GOI has provided medicines, under GOI Grant-in-aid scheme in 2016.

### **Bilateral Trade:**

8. India exports mainly pharmaceutical products, readymade garments, textiles and home furnishings, food products, etc. to Dominica, while Dominica exports mainly scrap metals. Bilateral trade between India and Dominica during 2017-18 amounted to US\$2.38 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\$2.10 million and Dominica's exports were US\$0.28 million. Bilateral trade during 2018-19 amounted to US\$ 1.61 mn (India's exports: 1.30 mn; India's imports: 0.31 mn), 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:**

9. 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:**

10. 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. The Government of India has approved e-Tourist Visa for Dominican citizens.

**Indian Community:**

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

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