

## INDIA - VANUATU BILATERAL BRIEF

Diplomatic relations with Vanuatu were established in 1986. Till mid-2000, the HCI, Canberra was accredited to Vanuatu. The accreditation was transferred to HCI, Port Moresby in August 2000 and to HCI Suva in June 2014. Since February 2022, High Commission of India in Wellington is accredited to Vanuatu.

2. India and Vanuatu maintain diplomatic relations characterized by goodwill and cooperation, with India providing developmental assistance to Vanuatu in areas such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The two nations share common values in promoting democracy, multiculturalism, and addressing climate change concerns, enhancing their partnership in international forums. Despite the geographical distance between them, the bilateral relationship continues to grow, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration in various fields.

3. **The Forum for India-Pacific Island Countries Summit (FIPIC-III):** The 3rd Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation Summit was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on May 22, 2023. It was co-chaired by Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister James Marape and attended by 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The Vanuatu delegation, led by the Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau, attended the Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation Summit (FIPIC-III) in Port Moresby (PNG) on 22 May 2023. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted the Summit with the participation of 14 Pacific countries.

4. **The Forum for India-Pacific Island Countries Summit (FIPIC-II):** A Vanuatu delegation led by Prime Minister Hon. Meltek Sato Kilman, visited India to attend 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit of Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) held at Jaipur on 21 August 2015.

5. **The Forum for India-Pacific Island Countries Summit (FIPIC-I):** 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, led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon. Meltek Sato Kilman, attended the Summit.

6. **India-Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference (IPI-SDC):** Under the umbrella of FIPIC, Government of India organized the India-Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference (IPI-SDC) which was held at Suva, Fiji on 25-26 May 2017. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd.) hosted the event. The Conference saw the participation of several high-profile leaders from the 14 Pacific Island Nations. From Vanuatu Mr Ham Lini Vanuaroroa, Minister of Climate Change Adaptation, Meteorology, Geo-Hazard, Environment, Energy and Disaster Management led the delegation. Prasar Bharati of India gifted programmatic content on India for telecast to all the Pacific Island Countries.

7. **Voice of Global South Summit:** The Voice of South Summit was held virtually on 12-13 January 2023, with 10 sessions in total. PM Narendra Modi hosted the first session and inaugurated the summit. This was followed by sessions at Ministerial level, each dedicated to address and find solutions to the most pressing concerns of the developing world. Vanuatu's Minister of state, responsible for portfolio of Climate Change, Adaptation, Meteorology and Geo-Hazards, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management Mr. Ralph John Regenvanu participated in the Summit and spoke in the 'Energy/Petroleum Ministers' session on 13 January, 2023. The theme of the session was 'Energy Security and Development: Roadmap to Prosperity', and the main topics of discussion included 'ensuring access to energy sources

amidst increasing global instability, energy diversification, un-tapping the energy potential of the developing world, renewables, international solar alliance, etc.'

### **Visits:**

8. **From India to Vanuatu:** Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines visited Vanuatu from 25-26 October 2016. This was a first ever Ministerial visit from India to Vanuatu. He had meetings with Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimamas, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Leingkone Tau. Minister of State for Power presented a cheque of US\$1,90,000 to Bruno Leingkone Tau for procurement of IT equipment for 76 schools in Vanuatu. Both Ministers had signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Establishing India-Vanuatu Centre of Excellence in IT (CEIT). Delegation from PSUs (PGCIL, CDAC, NTPC, EESL, SECI) also visited Vanuatu along with Minister.

9. Minister Goyal offered India's assistance to supply LED bulbs and energy efficient equipment (worth US\$ 200,000) to Vanuatu as part of annual grant to Vanuatu. The US\$ 200,000 assistance for LED bulbs and energy efficient equipment has been delivered on 31 January 2018, by handing over a cheque to President of Vanuatu H.E. Pastor Tallis Obed Moses by High Commissioner at Nauru (on the sidelines of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Nauru's independence).

10. Vanuatu expressed in favour of expansion of UNSC and supported India's position for its candidature to permanent membership to the UNSC. Vanuatu Foreign Minister also conveyed its support to India's candidature for non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the year 2021-22.

### **From Vanuatu to India:**

11. Alberick Jean Jacques Rory, Senior Health Officer, attended the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) held in New Delhi from 7-12 November 2016.

12. Michael Ligo, Custom Audit Officer, from Department of Customs and Inland Revenue, visited India, to attend World Customs Organisation's Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on Intelligence-led Risk Management held at Faridabad, from 21-25 November 2016.

13. In 1983, the Deputy PM of Vanuatu met Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the NAM 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 NAM in New Delhi.

14. **MULTILATERAL COOPERATION:** Recently Vanuatu supported Indian candidatures at various international forums:

- (i) Indian Candidature to The World Customs Organisation (WCO) in June 2019.
- (ii) Indian Candidature to the non-permanent seat in UNSC in 2020.
- (iii) India's candidature to Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for 2021-2023.
- (iv) Election for the International Law Commission (ILC) for the term 2023-27 held on 12 November 2021 in New York for India's candidate Professor Dr. Bimal Prasad.
- (v) Election for the post of Vice-president /delegate for Asia in the executive committee of the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO-INTERPOL) for India's

candidature of Mr. Parveen Sinha, Additional Director, CBI held in Istanbul, Turkey from 23-25 November 2021.

- (vi) Written confirmation for Re-election for the membership of the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO in Paris in November 2021.

15. **Human Resources Development:** India has been offering 05 training slots under the ITEC Programme until 2018-2019. In the year 2018-19, Vanuatu utilized only 1 slot. Since 2019-20, Vanuatu has been offered 01 ITEC slot which has remained unutilised due till date despite Mission's best effort.

16. Kemson Tavdey, Foreign Service Officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu participated in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) held at Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi from 29 March to 28 April 2017. Mr. Dero Tawi, Senior Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Course for Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries held at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, New Delhi from 20 February – 03 March 2023.

17. **Indian Assistance:** 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. Following "Cyclone Pam" in March 2015, India gave a grant of US\$ 250,000 as a humanitarian assistance. India gave a grant of US\$ 200,000 for resettlement process of Ambae islands after eruption of volcano in June 2018. The amount was handed over to the Prime Minister of Vanuatu on 26 July 2018.

18. GOI has increased Grant-in-Aid to Vanuatu to US\$ 200,000 annually to be rolled over to provide a wider scope for our development cooperation.

19. India had given US\$ 669,093 to Vanuatu since 2006 for various community development projects 'like procurement of equipment for school/office equipment/LED bulbs & ICT equipment etc.

20. **Climate Change and Solar Energy Cooperation:** India is doing solar electrification of 200 houses in Vanuatu. Refresher training for 43 'Solar Mamas' from seven Pacific Island Countries was completed successfully in Fiji on 10 September 2016, as a part of US\$ 1.5 mn GOI project of 'solar electrification of 2800 houses in 14 PICs'. Four Vanuatu solar mamas had been trained in India at Barefoot College, Rajasthan since 2012.

21. **International Solar Alliance:** Vanuatu has signed and ratified the Framework Agreement of ISA and become the founding member of ISA.

22. **Participation in ISA Founding Conference and Solar Summit:** Hon. Charlot Salwai TABIMASMAS, Prime Minister of Vanuatu led the country's delegation to the ISA Founding Conference and Solar Summit which was held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018. Vanuatu PM also had a bilateral meeting with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Conference.

23. **Culture:** Ms. Meera Das, Indian Classical Dance Group (Odissi) performed in Vanuatu on 7 November 2017 as a part of Namaste Pacifika, a Festival of India being held in seven Pacific Island Countries. This was such first-ever Indian Cultural group's performance in Vanuatu, which mesmerized over 1000-strong audience.

24. **International Day of Yoga:** The 9th International Day of Yoga 2023 was celebrated in Port Vila, Vanuatu with enthusiastic young children, organized by the High Commission in collaboration with the Indian Community in the country. The event aimed to introduce yoga to the young generation and promote its numerous benefits for physical and mental well-being.

October 2023

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