

## **India-Dominican Republic Bilateral Relations**

Bilateral relations between India and the Dominican Republic (DR) have been friendly and continue to deepen in all spheres.

### **Political relations and institutional framework**

Diplomatic relations between India and Dominican Republic were established in May, 1999. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2001 in Santo Domingo to hold regular Foreign Office consultations. DR opened its Embassy in New Delhi in 2006. DR supported India for UNSC non-permanent seat 2010 as well as Indian candidatures for ICJ, MOI and UNESCO last year. DR was one of the first signatories of the Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance.

MOS (Shri Rao Inderjit Singh), MEA visited Dominican Republic in September 2004. During the visit, the DR government announced its intention to upgrade diplomatic relations and open an Embassy in New Delhi. It also invited Indian companies to develop business and invest in areas such as IT, Pharmaceuticals, and infrastructure projects. The DR leaders offered to work with India in the UN, WTO, and other multilateral forums. MOS offered ITEC training slots and technical assistance to DR.

DR Foreign Minister Carlos Morales Troncoso visited India in February 2006 heading a high level delegation which included Ministers of IT and Investment, Higher Education and Science and technology, Deputy Tourism Minister and 12 business delegates. The delegation visited Delhi, Agra, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Mumbai. Immediately after the visit, DR opened its Embassy in India on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006. An agreement on Bilateral Cooperation was signed by DR Foreign Minister and Minister of State Shri Anand Sharma in Delhi on 17 February 2006. MOS (Shri Anand Sharma), MEA visited the DR in February 2007.

In June 2008, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Clara Quinones de Longo from Dominican Republic attended the Second India -Central American System for Integration (SICA) Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi. Setting up of an IT Centre in Dominican Republic was announced at the meeting as a symbol of South- South cooperation.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr. Shashi Tharoor visited Dominican Republic at the invitation of President Dr. Leonel Fernandez Reyna from January 23-25, 2010. During the visit, wide ranging talks were held with the President and the Foreign Minister Mr. Carlos Morales. MoS (ST) signed an MoU to set up an IT

Centre for Excellence in DR with the assistance of GOI. The Centre was inaugurated by the President in August 2011. CDAC India ran the Centre with three Indian faculty members for two years. MoS (ST), also held discussions with DR Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Eddy Martinez Manzueta.

President of the Dominican Republic Dr. Leonel Fernandez visited India and attended the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit held from February 3-5, 2011. During his stay in India, besides meeting with Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister, he met with Indian business leaders and attended seminars at Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi by FICCI, CII etc. He also addressed the Indian Council of World Affairs. A high level business delegation accompanied him.

Secretary (West) M. Ganapati of Ministry of External Affairs with Joint Secretary (LAC) visited Dominican Republic during 22-23 August, 2012. The visit highlighted the keen interest of both sides to promote trade, increasing scholarships for Dominican students as well as cooperation in natural disaster management and economic areas. A Cultural Agreement was also signed between India and Dominican Republic.

General (Rtd.) Shri V.K. Singh, Minister of State (VKS) visited DR in February, 2015. He met Foreign Minister, Navarro, and delivered an address on India's policy towards LAC region and also interacted with business leaders. An Agreement for Cooperation in Renewable Energy was signed.

Chief Election Commissioner of India, Dr. Nasim Zaidi participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> A-WEB General Assembly and International Conference, which gathered panelists from about 100 electoral bodies from around the world, held from 18-21 August 2015 in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.

An Agreement on gainful occupation for family members of diplomatic mission was signed in Santa Domingo in June 2016, by Mr. Ashok Das, Joint Secretary (LAC) from Indian side and Mr. Andres Navarro Garcia, Minister of External Relations of Dominican Republic

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Institute of High Education in Diplomatic and Consular Training of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Dominican Republic was signed in Santo Domingo on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 by DR Foreign Minister Miguel Vargas and by Ambassador on behalf of FSI.

### **Trade and Economic Cooperation**

Bilateral trade between India and the Dominican Republic has increased significantly in last few years, with balance of trade in favour of DR. Two way trade increased to **US \$ 900.23 million** in 2016-17. Main items of India's exports are cotton textiles and readymade garments, drugs and pharmaceuticals, furniture, transport equipment, manufactures of metals, chemicals, plastic and linoleum products, tea, processed foods and marine products. Gold accounts for 70.20 % of DR exports to India in 2016.

*(The latest trade figures as available on 14.12.2018)*

Values in US \$ Millions

No.	Year	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
1.	EXPORT TO DR	125.70	140.91	175.01	224.98	196.92
2.	IMPORT FROM DR	12.50	290.66	478.62	674.86	645.81
3.	TOTAL TRADE OF INDIA WITH DR	138.20	431.57	653.63	899.83	842.73
4.	TRADE BALANCE (EXP-IMP)	113.21	-149.75	-303.61	-449.88	-448.89

*(Sources: Department of Commerce, Government of India)*

### **ITEC and Bilateral Assistance**

Under the ITEC programme, the Government of India has been offering 10 slots per year to the Dominican Republic for training in various institutions in India since 1999. The slots were reduced to 5 since 2016-17. DR is also being offered slots under PCFD programme run by the Foreign Service Institute. A large quantity of life saving drugs worth USD 50,000 was donated to the DR Foreign Minister in March 2006. The donation was very well appreciated by the DR government. There had been widespread damage to life and property in Dominican Republic due the Tropical Storm Noel in Oct-Nov 2007. Upon the official request of the Government of Dominican Republic, India donated the medicines as humanitarian assistance.

### **Cultural relations**

A classical dance exponent in the Dominican Republic received an ICCR scholarship in 2002 to attend a course in Mohiniyattam in Kalamandalam, Kerala. An exhibition on Gandhi was organized at the Global Foundation in May 2006 and in Colegio Mahatma Gandhi in September 2006. Fifteen DR professionals are working for IVY Comptech, a BPO company based in Hyderabad.

‘Living Arts’ an ICCR sponsored Rajasthani Dance Troupe visited Dominican Republic from 2 – 7 October 2008. This was the first cultural visit at Government level.

An 8-member martial arts group “Hindustan Kalari Sangam” from Kerala sponsored by ICCR, performed two shows in Santo Domingo on November 8-9, 2010 in collaboration with the DR Government and the Dominican Ministry of Culture. Bilateral CEA was signed in August 2012. Indian Food Festivals were held in Santo Domingo in October, 2013, March and October, 2014. Indian Film Festival was organized on DR Television during April 2014 and from 11-23 August 2016 by the Directorate General of Cinema of DR. A Rajasthani folk dance troupe performed in DR in February, 2015.

On the occasion of 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of India’s Independence, the Embassy of India in collaboration with the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), organised a Food Festival from 6-10 August 2017 at Embassy Suites, Hilton, Santo Domingo. Ministry of Culture, Government of India sponsored a 9-member Kathak dance group led by Ms. Shubhada Dubey and they performed on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Santo Domingo. In addition, Embassy has also organized a Photographic Exhibition on the ‘Heritage Architecture of India’ in Santo Domingo from 7-27 August 2017.

Earlier, a 10-member Kathak group led by Ms. Shovana Narayan performed at Bellas Artes Theater, Santo Domingo, on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The group was sponsored by ICCR.

### **Indian Community**

At present there are about 50 Indian nationals and people of Indian origin living in the country. Some of them are students in medical colleges and others are working as engineers, software experts or representing Indian companies. Several businessmen also form part of the community. Satya Sai Baba of Putthaparthi has a following in the Dominican Republic alongwith those of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar’s Art of Living Foundation. A number of the visitors from Dominican Republic to India happen to be Sai Baba devotees.

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