

India – Barbados Relations

OVERVIEW

1. Barbados and India enjoy close and cordial relations and interact actively in the UN, Commonwealth and NAM. However, direct political and economic contacts have remained limited. The small population of Barbados, huge distances between the two countries and considerable dependence of Barbados on the US, Canada, and UK/EC, are some of the factors which have resulted in limited bilateral interaction between the two countries. However, the Barbadians have, by and large, extended support to our candidates in UN & other international fora. Barbados supported India's candidature for Non-Permanent seat at UNSC and has also committed support for India's bid for Permanent Membership of UNSC.

2. Barbados is an active Commonwealth member and is also a member state of regional groups such as CARICOM and the Association of Caribbean states.

VISITS

3. There have not been many high-level visits from the Barbadian side. Former Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ms. Billie A. Miller, Senior visited India a few times to attend international conferences.

4. Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Digvijay Singh paid a bilateral visit to Barbados from 15-17 June 2003. During the visit, he called upon Ms. Mia Mottley, Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General and also had bilateral discussions with Ms. Billie Miller, then Senior Minister and Foreign Minister.

5. Finance Minister of India, Shri P. Chidambaram, visited Barbados to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in September, 2005.

6. A delegation led by Secretary [East] visited Barbados to attend the CARICOM Summit in July 1996.

BILATERAL COOPERATION

7. Barbadian government has expressed interest in pursuing cooperation with India in the field of information technology, cotton cultivation and textile industry, film industry, academic exchanges, cultural cooperation etc. Given the size of this country, it enjoys relatively high prosperity owing to its flourishing tourism industry.

8. Barbadian Government has sent a proposal for signing an Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation with India. The proposal was not accepted initially by Ministry of Finance, Government of India, on the plea that bilateral economic activity does not justify the signing of DTAA. However, the proposal has been revived during the elections of CWSG and a team from Barbados visited India between 17th and 21st December, 2007 for discussions with the Ministry of Finance, GOI, for clarifications on some of the articles in the Indian draft. Second round of discussions to finalise DTAA will be held in near future on mutually agreeable dates.

9. The Government of Barbados is trying to develop Barbados as a major off-shore business, banking and insurance centre. Barbados has already signed DTAA with most of the major economies of the world and India, as an emerging market, has been found attractive by them. Larsen and Toubro has built a \$30-million stadium in Barbados.

AGREEMENTS

10. During the visit of Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Digvijay Singh in June 2003, an MoU for holding periodic Foreign Office Consultations was signed. However, so far, no Foreign Office Consultations have taken place. As per the understanding of Barbadian Foreign Office, Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, is supposed to visit Barbados for the first round of Foreign Office Consultations. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation with Barbados is under consideration.

ITEC PROGRAMME

11. In order to promote technical cooperation between the two countries, India is providing 11(Eleven) scholarships under ITEC to Barbados. There is a request from Barbados for some scholarships for its students to study in higher educational institutes in India.

TRADE

12. Bilateral trade between India and Barbados has not been very significant. According to available figures, trade from 2007-08 to 2010-11 was as follows:

	(Value in US\$ Millions)			
	Year 2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
TOTAL TRADE	2.55	3.96	4.51	5.63
%Growth	-8.72	55.26	13.71	24.95
Exports to India	0.03	0.08	0.21	5.48
Imports from India	2.52	3.88	4.30	0.15

INDIAN COMMUNITY

13. About 3,000 people of Indian origin have settled in Barbados. Most of them have since acquired local nationality. Over 2,000 of them are from Surat district of Gujarat known as "Suratis." Most of the Suratis are involved in trading. The rest are mainly Sindhis. There are also about 50 professionals engaged in the field of education and medicine, financial services and IT. Because of their hard work, the NRI / PIO community enjoys a good reputation and commands respect within the local Barbadian population.

January 2012

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