

Indo-Dominican Republic Relations

Bilateral relations between India and the Dominican Republic (DR) have been friendly and cordial and continue to widen and 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 level consultations between the two countries.

MOS (RS), 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 them.

DR Foreign Minister Carlos Morales Troncoso visited India 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 also visited Delhi , Agra , Bangalore , Hyderabad and Mumbai. Immediately after the visit, DR opened its Embassy in India on 1st May 2006. An agreement in Bilateral Cooperation was also signed by DR Foreign Minister and Minister of State Shri Anand Sharma in Delhi on 17 February 2006.

MOS (AS), MEA visited the DR in February 2007. MOS offered 30 slots under ITEC to the Dominican side for IT training.

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 co-operation.

Minister of State for External Affairs, MoS(ST), Dr. Shashi Tharoor visited Dominican Republic at the invitation of its 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. President Dr. Fernandez reiterated his request to open Indian diplomatic Mission in DR. MoS(ST), also held discussions with DR Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Eddy Martinez Manzueta.

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

Air Services Agreement

An MoU with the Dominican Republic was signed on 19th October 2011. The Indian delegation was led by JS(P). Both delegations finalized and initialed the text of the ASA including the Annex specifying the Route Schedules. The capacity entitlements available for the designated airlines of each shall be 14 services per week subject to maximum of 7 services per week to each of the two points of call as specified in the Route Schedule.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

India's exports to the Dominican Republic are small but growing at an impressive rate. Bilateral trade for the year 2010 was reported as US \$ 100 million.

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.

Indo-DR business highlights –

- Our exports to the Dominican Republic are steadily rising. We expect our exports to reach USD 80 mn. in 2010-11.
- The visit of DR foreign Minister to India accompanied by a business delegation and the opening of DR embassy in New Delhi led to an increase in business interaction.
- A 14-member Pharma delegation under the aegis of Pharmexcil visited the Dominican Republic in April 2006. The companies made several headways in the DR market.
- A TCS delegation visited DR to look for opportunities in the IT Sector
- NIIT signed an MoU with Cyber Park of Santo Domingo to establish IT training centre.
- A delegation from Jaguar, Paharpur Group visited DR.
- TCS and NIIT were represented at the IBERO – American Chambers of Commerce Meet in Santo Domingo in March, 2006.
- Several IT companies including MAT visited DR to establish business tie-ups.
- Indian Pharma companies like Claris, Matrix and Caplin Point are doing good business in the country.
- Several trade delegations from DR Visit India Trade Fairs.

- TATA International and TATA Motors are exploring the market. Peravia Motors of Santo Domingo visited Mumbai to kick-start its tie-up with Tata Motors.
- Bajaj two wheelers are doing well in the Dominican market.
- Mahindra and Mahindra's Scorpio SUV was displayed at the Transport Fair in Santo Domingo.
- The largest rum maker in DR – BRUGAL bought distillery units from Praj Industries , Pune

Prospects in the Dominican Market:

- **Pharmaceuticals:** The Dominican is a good market for our Pharma products. Indian companies doing business in the country could combine their business operations with Haiti (the two countries form the island of Hispaniola)
- **Information Technology** : The Dominican Republic intends to become the IT hub of the Caribbean. It is looking for Indian partners who could provide service to the US and to the Latin America . IT friendly policies of the government along with english and spanish speaking trained manpower could be leveraged to start ITES /BPO units
- **Tourism:** The DR has more than 4 million tourists. Indian hotels could look into the opportunities for investing in hotel resorts and real estates.
- **Mining:** DR has substantial reserves of Nickel and Gold. It may be of interest to our mining companies.
- **Renewable Energy:** Companies like Suzlon, NEPC could sell their products to the DR which is looking to diversify its energy needs.
- **Film Industry:** Indian film makers looking for exotic locations could explore the DR. Support and technical services would be much cheaper than locales in Europe.
- **DR-CAFTA free trade agreement** - The implementation of DR- CAFTA pact has opened up opportunities for Indian companies which could setup operations in the DR for the US market.

Indian companies in DR:

- **Pharma:**
 - Claris Life Sciences Ltd. has a representative office in Santo Domingo.
The company is doing business worth 1 million USD per annum. It deals in IV solutions.
 - Micro-labs has a representative office .
 - Caplin Point: Sources bulk formulations from India and sells value added products in the Dominican Market.
- **Scrap:** There are several small Indian Scrap Companies based in the DR.
- **IT:** MANN India has set up a BPO at the Cyberpark, Santo Domingo

ITEC and Bilateral Assistance

Under the ITEC programme, the Government of India has been offering slots to the Dominican Republic for training in various institutions in India since 1999. With the strengthening of relations, both slot allocation and slot utilization have increased. DR is also being offered slots under PCFD programme run by the Foreign Service Institute. Life saving drugs worth USD 50,000 were 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 to Tropical Storm Noel in Oct-Nov 2007. On the official request of the Government of Dominican Republic India donated medicines worth USD 50,000 (Fifty Thousand only) as humanitarian assistance.

Indian Community

At present there are about 200 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 substantial following in the Dominican Republic. Several Sai Baba centers are active in the country. A substantial number of the visitors from Dominican Republic to India happen to be Sai Baba devotees.

Cultural

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 visit is historically important as this was the first cultural visit at Government level and has laid a strong foundation to further build our cultural relations.

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. A bilateral cultural agreement is under discussions.

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