

# Study Material on Contemporary Issues for UPSC Exams “India & World Organizations”





## INDIA AND WORLD ORGANIZATIONS

### ANDEAN COMMUNITY (CAN)

The Andean Community is a trade bloc of four countries - Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are associate members while Panama, Mexico, and Spain are Observers. The Headquarters of CAN are located in Lima, Peru. Colombia assumed the Presidency Pro-Tempore of CAN for the period 2011-2012. The regional integration in the Andean countries began with the signing of the Cartagena Agreement (by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru) in 1969 creating the Andean Pact with the objective of creating a Customs Union and a Common Market. Venezuela joined the Pact in 1973 but withdrew in 2006 after Colombia and Peru signed Free Trade Agreements with USA. Chile withdrew in 1976 claiming economic incompatibilities. In 1979, the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers, the Andean Court of Justice, and the Andean Parliament were created. In 1985 the Andean Parliament agreed to the establishment of the Simon Bolivar Andean University located in Sucre, former capital of Bolivia. In 1990, the Andean Presidential Council was created. In 1991, they approved an open skies policy. In 1993, four members (except Peru which was temporarily suspended) established a free trade zone. In 1995, the members adopted a Common External Tariff.

In 1996, the Protocol of Trujillo renamed the Pact as the Andean Community. It also converted the Board of the Cartagena Agreement into a

General Secretariat based in Lima, Peru, with not only technical but also political functions giving a new political direction to the integration process. In 2001, the Andean Passport was created, enabling citizens of member states to travel between the countries without visa. In 2005, the integration of Latin American and Caribbean regions gained priority in the agenda of Andean Community. In 2006, the Andean Free Trade Area became fully operational after Peru was fully incorporated. CAN community deals with the following issues:

- Trade in Goods
- Trade in Services
- Customs Union
- Circulation of Persons
- Common Market
- Common Foreign Policy
- Border Development
- Social Agenda
- Sustainable Development
- Economic Policies

In July 2011 the CAN Presidents reaffirmed their commitment to deepen Andean integration and launched the reengineering of the Andean Integration System (SAI). The Andean Parliament met in Lima on 29th October to discuss and agree on joint measures to solve the problems faced by migrants abroad. The meeting, which includes the participation of 20 Parliamentarians from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, also assessed







regulations in the functioning of the Parliament of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)

## Important Institutional Bodies within the Andean Community

Besides the Andean Council of Presidents and the Council of Foreign Ministers, CAN has the following institutions:

- (i) **General Secretariat** - This is the executive body, with a full time Secretary General. At present Adalid Contreras Baspineiro (of Bolivia) is the Acting Secretary General. The Secretariat is in Lima, Peru.
- (ii) **Andean Parliament** - is the policy advisory body and is situated in Bogota, Colombia. It consists of 5 Members of Parliament from each member country, directly elected for a period of 5 years.
- (iii) **Andean Court of Justice** - This body in Quito, Ecuador resolves disputes among member countries.
- (iv) **Latin American Development Bank (CAF)** - Although CAF is much larger and has 18 Latin American and Caribbean nations as shareholder countries, it is the leading source of external financing for members, contributing more than 40% of their requirements. The annual total credit given by CAF is over US\$ 2 billion. The credit is given to regional integration projects and financing of international commerce of companies and banks and government projects. CAF has established its reputation as a successful regional fund with strong fundamentals and good credit rating. Exim Bank of India has extended a US\$ 10 million line of credit to CAF. CAF is situated in Caracas, Venezuela.
- (v) **Latin American Reserve Fund (FLAR)** - is a common reserve fund that seeks the stability of member countries by improving their ex-

ternal position and strengthening regional support. Initially called the Andean Reserve Fund, it began operations in 1978. In 1988, accession of other Latin American countries was permitted. Besides the 4 CAN members, FLAR presently also has Costa Rica, Uruguay and Venezuela as its members. It is headquartered in Bogota.

- (vi) **Simón Bolívar Andean University** - With its main campus in Sucre (Bolivia), it also has branches in Quito, La Paz, Caracas and Cali.

## Market

The Andean Community has a total population of 100 million with a combined GDP of US\$ 580 billion. Although formed in 1969, CAN became operational in the nineties with the establishment of a Free Trade Area in 1993 and Customs Union in February 1995. Internal problems in these countries in the last few years have slowed down the integration process.

Today 100% of the goods of Andean origin circulate dutyfree within the CAN. During the period January-November 2012, the exports of Andean community to the world were US \$ 116 billion - an increase of 2% as compared to the same period last year. During the period January-November 2012, the intra-community exports increased by 13% (from US \$ 8.4 billion to US \$ 9.5 billion) as compared to the same period last year.

## Free Flow of People

Since January 1, 2005, the citizens of the member countries can enter the other Andean Community member states without the requirement of visa. Passengers only need to present their national ID cards. The Andean passport was created in June 2001. Passports of all 4 member countries are issued based on a standard model which contains harmonized features of nomenclature and security.





## CAN and Mercosur

### Mercosur

The Andean Community and Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) comprise the two main trading blocs of South America. In April 1998, they signed a Framework Agreement for the creation of a Free Trade Area between each other and launched negotiations. The first stage of signing by CAN of economic complementarity or tariff preferences agreements with individual Mercosur members were concluded, followed by each CAN member signing a free trade agreement with Mercosur. Subsequently, CAN and Mercosur, along with nations like Chile, have been spearheading deeper integration of all South America through the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) patterned on the European Union.

### CAN and India

In June 2003, India and CAN established a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism for the purpose of strengthening and diversifying their friendship, understanding and cooperation and developing mutual trade and investment relations and cultural and scientific exchanges. During his official visit to Peru, MOS Dr. Shashi Tharoor met CAN Secretary General Freddy Ehlers, the then Chair Pro Tempore (Peru) of CAN and the Andean Ambassadors accredited to Lima on 21 January 2010. MOS Dr. Tharoor expressed India's interest in strengthening political and economic relations and cooperation with the Andean Community. The CAN Secretary General wished to cooperate in the fields of environment, energy and food security, rural development and science and technology. The CAN Chair Pro Tempore reiterated the interest of the member countries in holding the First Meeting of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism.

The objectives of the Political Dialogue and

Cooperation Mechanism are, among others, to:

- Deepen the Parties' knowledge of each other;
- Conduct the political dialogue and cooperation in areas of mutual interest;
- Expand and diversify trade and investment and study mechanisms to facilitate the Parties' access to each other's markets;
- Promote scientific, technical and technological cooperation; and
- Foster cultural and tourist exchanges.

The Andean Community, aware of the dynamic role India is called upon to play on the world scene, would like to reinforce the subregion's projection toward that country by starting up the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Mechanism, together with other instruments that could be developed within the framework of its Common Foreign Policy.

### History

- The groundwork for the Community was established in 1969 in the Cartagena Agreement
- In 1973 Venezuela joins Andean Pact
- In 1976, Augusto Pinochet withdrew Chile from the Andean Community claiming economic incompatibilities
- In 1979, the treaty creating the Court of Justice was signed and the Andean Parliament created and the Andean Council of Foreign Ministers were created
- In 1983, the treaty creating the Court of Justice entered into effect
- In 1991, the presidents approved the open skies policy and agree to intensify integration
- In 1992, Peru temporarily suspended its obli-





## gations under the Liberalization Program

- In 1993, the Free Trade Zone entered into full operation for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela
- In 1994, the Common External Tariff was approved
- In 1996, the Cartagena Agreement Commission approved the regulatory context for the establishment, operation, and exploitation of the Simón Bolívar Satellite System
- In 1997, an agreement was reached for Peru's gradual incorporation into the Andean Free Trade Zone
- In 1998, the Framework Agreement for the creation of a Free Trade Area between the Andean Community and the Mercosur was signed in Buenos Aires
- In 2000, a meeting of the South American Presidents, at which the Andean Community Heads of State and Mercosur decide to launch negotiations for establishing a free trade area between the two blocs as rapidly as possible and by January 2002 at the latest

In August 2003, the Andean Community and Mercosur Foreign Ministers, during a meeting in Montevideo at which the CAN delivered a working proposal containing guidelines for the negotiation, reaffirmed their governments' political determination to move ahead with the negotiation of a free trade agreement between the two blocs

In April 2006 President Hugo Chávez announced that Venezuela would withdraw from the Andean Community, claiming the FTA agreements signed by Colombia and Peru with the USA caused irreparable damage to the community

## Bimstec

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand brings together 1.5 billion people – 21% of the world population, and a combined GDP of over US\$ 2.5 trillion.

### Evolution of Bimstec

BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand - Economic Cooperation) was formed at a meeting in Jun 1997 in Bangkok. Myanmar was admitted in Dec 1997 and the organization was renamed as BIMST-EC. The grouping expanded when Nepal and Bhutan were admitted in Feb 2004. The grouping's name was changed to BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) at 1<sup>st</sup> Summit Meeting held in Bangkok in Jul 2004.

### Functioning of Bimstec

BIMSTEC organizes inter-governmental interactions through Summits, Ministerial Meetings, Senior Officials Meetings and Expert Group Meetings and through BIMSTEC Working Group (BWG) based in Bangkok. There have been two BIMSTEC Summit meetings (Bangkok Jul 2004, New Delhi Nov 2008), and 13 Foreign Ministerial meetings (13<sup>th</sup> MM held in Nay Pyi Taw in Jan 2011) and 15 SOMs so far. Myanmar is hosting the 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting, 16<sup>th</sup> SOM and 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory meetings from 1-4 March, 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw. BIMSTEC Chairmanship rotates among member countries (*alphabetically*). Myanmar is Chair of the Group since Dec 2009 and took over from previous chair India (Aug 2006-Dec 2009). Nepal has agreed to Chair after 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit.

### Bimstec Permanent Secretariat

The BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat is to be established in Dhaka with first SG to be nominated by Sri Lanka. India would be contributing 32% of







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the cost of Secretariat reflecting its strong commitment to BIMSTEC process.

### Areas of Cooperation

BIMSTEC has identified 14 priority areas where a member country takes lead. India is lead country for Transport & Communication, Tourism, Environment & Disaster Management and Counter Terrorism & Transnational Crime.

### Transport and Communications (India)

***BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS)*** conducted by ADB in 2007 was endorsed in 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting (Dec 2009). The Report was finalised in Dec 2013. ADB organised Inception Workshop on BTILS updating and 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of Expert Group on Road Development in Yangon in Jun 2013.

### Tourism (India)

A BIMSTEC Information Centre has been established in Jul 2007 in New Delhi. Ministry of Tourism organized a meeting on BIMSTEC Information Centre and contribution to Tourism Fund (1<sup>st</sup> JWG on Tourism) in Sep 2013 in New Delhi. 1<sup>st</sup> Round Table and Workshop of Tourism Ministers was held in Kolkata in Feb 2005; Nepal held 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting in Kathmandu in Aug 2006; Bangladesh will host next meeting.

### Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC)

BIMSTEC cooperation under CTTC has been divided into 4 sub-groups with lead shepherds - Intelligence Sharing (Sri Lanka); Combating Financing of Terrorism (Thailand), Legal and Law Enforcement Issues (India) and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors (Myanmar).

L&T Division of MEA hosted 5<sup>th</sup> Sub-group on Legal & Law enforcement issues in Jan 2013 in New

Delhi where draft Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was finalised. Members signed 'BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking' in Dec 2009; India has ratified it.

### Environment and Disaster Management

10. Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with MEA conducted a Workshop on "Seasonal Prediction and Application to Society" in June 2011. India is establishing BIMSTEC Weather and Climate Centre at National Weather Forecasting Centre at NOIDA. The MOA for establishment of the Centre was finalized at 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting in New Delhi in Aug 2008 and is expected to be signed during 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit.

### Trade & Investment (Bangladesh)

A Framework Agreement for BIMSTEC Free Trade Area was signed in Phuket, Thailand in Feb 2004. The Framework Agreement commits the parties to negotiate FTAs in goods, services and investments. An agreement on Trade in Goods and other provisions relating to Rules of Origin, Operational Certification Procedures and agreement on Customs Cooperation was finalised in Jun 2009 at 18<sup>th</sup> Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting in Phuket. 19<sup>th</sup> TNC was held in Bangkok in Feb 2011. India has exchanged its tariff preference schedules with member countries.

The 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of BIMSTEC Business and Economic Forum were held in Feb 2011 in Bangkok. India hosted a Business Summit meeting in Nov 2008 in association with CII, FICCI, and ASSOCHAM. India hosts an annual Integrating BIMSTEC Seminar held in the North East (Shillong 2013, Imphal 2014). To facilitate business travel among BIMSTEC member countries, three meetings of the Expert Group have been held on BIMSTEC Visa Scheme.





## Cultural Cooperation (Bhutan)

Members are expected to sign MoU on establishment of BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO), Bhutan during 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit. India hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> Expert Group Meeting BCIC&O in 2006 in New Delhi. The first BIMSTEC Ministerial meeting on Culture was held in Paro, Bhutan in May 2006.

## Energy (Myanmar)

Thailand hosted BIMSTEC Regional Workshop and Study Visit on Bio-Fuels Production and Utilization in Jun 2012 in Bangkok. Ministry of Power hosted 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Task Force on Power Exchange in Jan 2013 in New Delhi which discussed the draft text of MOU on Grid Inter-connection. Meeting of Energy Ministers took place in Oct 2005 in New Delhi and in March 4-5, 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand.

India also hosted Task Force Meeting in Feb 2011 in Bengaluru and SOM in Feb 2011 in New Delhi on operationalisation of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (MOA signed during 13<sup>th</sup> MM). A land for the Centre has been allocated in premises of Central Power Research Institute, Bengaluru.

## Agriculture (Myanmar)

Sri Lanka hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on Agriculture in Kandy in Nov 2010. Earlier, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Expert Group Meeting held in New Delhi in Apr 2008, nine priority areas (*along with lead countries*), were finalised; India will lead in Prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases (India); Affiliation of Universities/Research Institutions (India); Development of agricultural biotechnology including bio-safety (India); Development of Seeds (India).

## Poverty Alleviation (Nepal)

Nepal hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Meeting in Jan 2012 in Kathmandu where Plan of Poverty Alleviation was adopted.

## Technology (Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on May 9-10, 2011 in Colombo on establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Exchange Facility. The meeting discussed the draft Concept Paper.

## Fisheries (Thailand)

Thailand organized a training programme on Advance Aquatic Plants Tissue Culture in Aug 2013 in Bangkok.

## Public Health (Thailand)

Deptt. Of AYUSH in association with MEA hosted two Workshops on IPR issues and Regulatory issues in Traditional Medicines in October 2011 in New Delhi. Since 2005, India has granted 30 slots of AYUSH scholarships to study in India in the fields of traditional medicine in undergraduate, post-graduate and doctorate programs.

Thailand hosted 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Network of National centres of Coordination in Traditional Medicine in Aug 2010 in Nonthaburi; Institute of PG Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (IPGTRA), Jamnagar is the Indian nominee.

## People-to-People Contact (Thailand)

At India offers 1440 (Civilian), 274 (Defence) and 18 slots in NDC & DSSC under ITEC programme to BIMSTEC countries and the utilisation is almost 1200. India has set up BIMSTEC Network of Think Tanks with RIS as nodal agency. RIS hosted a two-day meeting of think tanks on 12-13 Feb, 2010.

## Climate Change (Bangladesh)

Bangladesh will be circulating a concept paper on cooperation in this area soon.

India signed three agreements with the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) members on culture exchanges, weather warning and establishment of permanent secretariat.





The documents were signed by External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid, Bangladesh Foreign Affairs Minister Md. Shahriar Alam, Bhutan Foreign Affairs Minister Lyonpo Rinzin Dorje, Myanmar Foreign Affairs Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin, Nepal Foreign Affairs Minister Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, Sri Lanka External Affairs Ministry Secretary Kshenuka Senewiratne and Thailand Foreign Affairs Ministry Permanent Secretary Sihasak Phuangketkeow.

Member countries signed a Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat. The objective of MoA is to establish Secretariat at Dhaka, Bangladesh, which will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the BIMSTEC activities and projects and to service meetings of BIMSTEC. The Secretariat is expected to function from May 2014 with Sumith Nakandala of Sri Lanka as the first Secretary General of BIMSTEC.

The members also signed another MoA on the establishment of a BIMSTEC centre for weather and climate. The document aims to establish the weather and climate centre in India which will promote cooperation in identified areas of fundamental and applied scientific research in weather prediction and climate modeling and capacity building in weather and climate research. Ministry of Earth Sciences is establishing the centre in premises of National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, NOIDA.

The nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO).

The objective of this MoU is to set up Observatory in Bhutan, which will serve as a repository for information on cultural industries, disseminate such information and facilitate its access by the member countries. The Cultural Industries Commission is a high level oversight

mechanism for the observatory, which will develop plans and programmes in this area.

## BRICS [BRAZIL, RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA AND SOUTH AFRICA]

The BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India and China] idea was first conceived by economists of Goldman Sachs as part of an economic modeling exercise to forecast global economic trends over the next half century; the acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper No. 66, "The World Needs Better Economic BRICs".

### Expansion of BRIC into BRICS

BRIC Foreign Ministers at their meeting in New York on 21st September 2010 agreed that South Africa may be invited to join BRIC. Accordingly, China, as the host of 3rd BRICS Summit [and the 1st BRICS Summit as South Africa joined BRIC at this Summit], invited South African President to attend the Summit in Sanya on 14 April 2011, with the concurrence of other BRIC leaders.

First Summit,  
Yekaterinburg, Russia, June 2009

Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, attended the first BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg on 16 June 2009. The Summit adopted Joint Statement of BRIC Leaders and a Joint Statement on Global Food Security.

### Second BRIC Summit, Brasilia, April 2010

Brazil hosted the second BRIC Summit in Brasilia on 15 April 2010; Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, led the Indian delegation which included Minister of Commerce and Industry. A Joint Statement was issued after the Summit. A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed among BRIC Development Banks (EXIM Bank from the Indian side). The First edition of the BRIC Statistical publication was also released.







Third BRIC (and first BRICS) Summit,  
Sanya, China, April 2011

The third BRICS Summit was held on 14 April 2011 at Sanya. Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, led the Indian delegation to the Summit. The theme of the Summit was "Broad Vision and Shared Prosperity". Sanya Declaration was issued at the Summit.

Fourth BRICS Summit,  
Delhi, 29 March 2012

The 4th BRICS Summit was held in New Delhi on 29 March 2012 under the broad rubric of "BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity". The Delhi Declaration at the conclusion of the Summit was issued outlining shared positions of BRICS countries on global issues and giving a roadmap for further cooperation among BRICS countries.

Fifth Summit:  
Durban, South Africa, 27 March 2013

The Fifth BRICS Summit, the last in the first cycle of Summits, was hosted by South Africa on 27 March 2013 under the overarching theme "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Development, Integration and Industrialisation". South Africa assumed the Chair of BRICS from India at the Durban Summit. The Summit was preceded by a number of pre-Summit events: meeting of BRICS Academic Forum in Durban on 10–13 March 2013; BRICS Financial Forum on 25 March 2013; meeting of BRICS Trade Ministers and BRICS Business Forum both on 26 March 2013. A meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers, though not a regular pre-Summit meeting, was also hosted by South Africa on 26 March 2013.

A 'BRICS – Africa Dialogue Forum' was held in the afternoon of 27 March under the theme 'Unlocking Africa's potential: BRICS and Africa Cooperation on Infrastructure' which was attended by BRICS Leaders and 14 African Leaders including

Chairpersons of African Union and NEPAD, another 3 African States represented at high level, Chairperson of AU Commission as well as Executive Heads of 8 African Regional Economic Communities.

Major outcome of Durban Summit was proclamation of establishment of BRICS-led New Development Bank. Other notable outcomes include, creation of a financial safety net through creation of a Contingent Reserve Arrangement

(CRA) amongst BRICS countries with an initial size of US\$ 100 billion, setting up of BRICS Business Council with five representatives from each country and establishment of BRICS Think Tanks Council. An eThekweni Declaration including eThekweni Action Plan was issued at the Summit. BRICS Trade Ministers also issued a Joint Communiqué. BRICS Development Banks signed two agreements at the Summit.

Consultations of BRICS  
Leaders on the Margins of G-20 Summits

Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, Chaired a meeting of BRICS Leaders in Los Cabos, Mexico, on 18 June 2012, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit for an exchange of views on the Summit agenda. BRICS Leaders also discussed swap arrangements among the national currencies as well as reserve pooling. A similar consultation meeting was held in Cannes, France on 3 November 2011, on the margins of the G20 Summit.

Foreign Ministers' Meetings

Foreign Ministers of BRICS have been meeting regularly in New York on the sidelines of UNGA since September 2006. India hosted the meeting of Foreign Ministers in New York on 23 September 2011. The last meeting was hosted by South Africa on 26 September 2012. The first standalone meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia on 16 May 2009. A Joint Communiqué was issued at the Meeting.





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## Finance/Economic Ministers' Meetings

The first meeting of BRICS Economic/Finance Ministers was held in November 2008 in Sao Paulo, Brazil for consultations in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis. BRICS Economic/Finance Ministers meet regularly on the sidelines of G20 meetings and IMF/WB annual meetings; the last meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors was held in Tokyo on 11 October 2012.

## High Representatives on National Security

Russia hosted the First meeting of BRICS High Representatives on National Security (National Security Advisors) in March 2009. The Second meeting was held prior to the Second Summit in Brasilia in April 2010. The Third meeting was hosted by Russia in Sochi, in October 2010 on the margins of a high-level international security conference. A meeting of BRICS NSAs was also held on the margins of the third International Meeting of High-level Representatives on Security Issues in St Petersburg, Russia on 10-11 June 2012. The third standalone Meeting of BRICS High Representatives on Security was held in New Delhi on 10-11 January 2013.

## Agriculture Ministers' Meetings

Two meetings of BRICS Agriculture Ministers have taken place; the first in Moscow on 26 March 2010 and the second in Chengdu, China on 28 October – 1 November 2011. A Joint Declaration was issued at the meeting and Action Plan for 2012-2016 for Agricultural Cooperation among BRICS countries outlining priority areas was adopted. A Working Group on Agriculture has also been set up to deepen cooperation in Agriculture. India hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Working Group on 27-28 August 2012 in New Delhi.

## Trade Ministers' Meetings

BRICS Trade Ministers met in Sanya, China on 13 April 2011 on the sidelines of the third Summit as well as in Rio in April 2010 in the run-up to the second BRIC Summit. Trade Ministers also met on the sidelines of the 8th WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva in December 2011. A standalone meeting of Trade Ministers was held on 28 March 2012 in New Delhi before the 4<sup>th</sup> Summit. BRICS Trade Ministers also met in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, on 19

April 2012 on the sidelines of the G20 Trade Ministers' Meeting. The last meeting of BRICS Trade Ministers was held in Durban on 26 March 2013 before the 5th Summit; a Joint Communiqué was issued by the Trade Ministers.

## Health Ministers' Meetings

Beijing to explore areas of cooperation in the health sector. BRICS Health Ministers also met in Geneva on 22 May 2012. India hosted the third meeting of Health Ministers on 10-11 January 2013 in New Delhi.

## Science & Technology Senior Officials

The first meeting of Science & Technology Senior Officials was held on 14-16 September 2011 in Dalian, China. Indian delegation was led by MoS for S&T. The second meeting was hosted by South Africa in November 2012. The third meeting is proposed to be hosted by India in 2013.

## Competition Authorities

The first meeting of BRIC Competition Authorities was held in Kazan, Russia on 1 September 2009. The second meeting was hosted by China in Beijing on 20-22 September 2011. India will host the next meeting in New Delhi on 20-22 November 2013.

## Inter-Bank Cooperation

The first meeting of Development Banks was





hosted by Brazil in April 2010; EXIM Bank participated from India in this BRICS process. An MoU laying the foundation of BRICS Inter-Bank Cooperation Mechanism was signed at the

Meeting. Following up on the MoU, BRICS Development Banks signed a Framework Agreement on Financial Cooperation within the BRICS Inter-bank Cooperation Mechanism. The Framework Agreement envisaged grant of credits in local currencies and cooperation in capital markets and other financial services including access to capital and financial markets and treasury transactions in member countries and issuing local currency bonds in BRICS markets. Master Agreement on Extending Credit Facility in Local Currencies, and BRICS Multilateral Letter of Credit Confirmation Facility Agreement, were signed by the Development Banks at the Delhi Summit.

The last meeting of BRICS Development Banks was held on 25th March 2013 in Durban. Two Agreements, viz. BRICS Multilateral Infrastructure Cofinancing Agreement for Africa and BRICS Multilateral Cooperation and Cofinancing Agreement for Sustainable Development were signed.

## BRICS led New Development Bank

India mooted the idea of setting up of a BRICS-led South-South Development Bank, mainly funded and managed by BRICS countries to recycle surpluses into investment in developing countries for infrastructure and sustainable development project. The idea was discussed at the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting held on 25 February 2012 on the sidelines of G20 Finance Deputies, Central Bank Governors and Finance Ministers' meeting in Mexico City. The first meeting of experts to examine the feasibility and viability of this idea was held in New Delhi on 19 March 2012. The matter has been under discussion at technical level through a number of meetings; the last such meeting was held in Moscow

on 15 February 2013 on the sidelines of G-20 meetings.

South Africa hosted a meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers in Durban on 26 March 2013 to further discuss this issue. After several technical meetings and discussions at Finance Ministers' level, the Leaders proclaimed establishment of New Development Bank at the Durban Summit.

## Statistical Organizations

BRICS National Statistical authorities have held four meetings; the last meeting in New Delhi on 6-8 February 2012. BRICS National Statistical Authorities bring out BRICS Statistical Publication; the first was issued at the second Summit in Brasilia in April 2010 and its revised edition after South Africa's joining of BRICS, was issued at the third Summit in Sanya. Further revised editions have been released at the Delhi BRICS Summit on 29 March 2012 and at the Durban Summit on 27 March 2013.

## Academic Forum (Track-II)

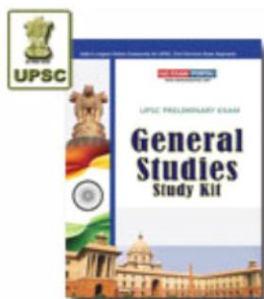
India hosted the first BRIC Academic Forum in May 2009 as preparatory event to feed into the first BRICS Summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia in June 2009. Brazil hosted the second Academic Forum before the second Summit on 14-15 April 2010. China hosted the third meeting in Beijing in March 2011. The fourth meeting of Academic Forum was held in New Delhi on 5-6 March 2012. Observer Research Foundation coordinates India's engagement with BRICS Track-II process. South Africa hosted the Fifth Meeting in Durban on 10-12 March 2013. A 9-member Indian delegation, coordinated by ORF, attended the Forum.

## BRICS Think Tanks Council

South Africa had taken the initiative to launch a Consortium of BRICS Think Tanks in the run-up to the 5th Summit in Durban. A meeting to discuss organizational details and other issues was held in







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- General issues on Environmental Ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change - that do not require subject specialisation
- General Science.
- Current Affairs.

2. Home assignment: where Multiple Choice Questions of the learned chapters will be given for selfevaluation.

3. Important current affairs materials for civil services preliminary examination will be provided

4. Online Tests will be conducted after the end of each subject.

5. At the end of your course, five comprehensive test will be conducted to evaluate your performance.

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Durban on 8-9 March 2013. The Consortium, named as BRICS Think Tanks Council, was launched on 11 March 2013.

## Business Forum & Business Council

Four BRICS Business Forum meetings have taken place; the last in Durban, South Africa on 26 March 2013 on the sidelines of the 5th Summit. At the Delhi Summit, the Russian President had proposed to set up a BRICS Business Council. The Business Council was launched at the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban on 27 March 2013. It will have 25 members with 5 members from each country.

## BRICS Economic Research Group

This new initiative was taken by India to bring together economic thinktanks and chief editors of business and economic magazines/publications from BRICS, to evolve BRICS thinking on economic linkages and developmental challenges within and outside BRICS. National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) from India hosted the first meeting on 27 February 2012 in New Delhi.

## Other Areas of Engagement

Other areas of engagement include meeting of Mayors of BRICS cities (the last meeting was held in Qingdao, China in May 2011. Mumbai Municipal Commissioner has attended these meetings) and BRICS Friendship Cities meeting (the first meeting held in Sanya, China on 1-3 December 2011). Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation hosted the 5th meeting of BRICS Mayors and the 2nd meeting of the BRICS Friendship Cities on 15-17 January 2013. The First Meeting of BRICS Urbanization Forum was held in New Delhi, under India's chairmanship, on 1 February 2013.

## BRICS Study

At Prime Minister's suggestion at the first BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia in June 2009, DEA, Ministry of Finance, coordinated a BRICS

Study focusing on synergies and complementarities between the BRICS economies and highlighting their role as growth drivers of the world economy. The Report was released by the Leaders at the Delhi Summit in March 2012. At the BRICS leaders meeting in St. Petersburg in September 2013, China committed \$41 billion towards the pool; Brazil, India and Russia \$18 billion each; and South Africa \$5 billion. China, holder of the world's largest foreign exchange reserves and who is to contribute the bulk of the currency pool, wants a greater managing role, said one BRICS official. China also wants to be the location of the reserve. "Brazil and India want the initial capital to be shared equally. We know that China wants more," said a Brazilian official. "However, we are still negotiating, there are no tensions arising yet." On 11th October 2013, Russia's Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said that a decision on creating a \$100 billion fund designated to steady currency markets would be taken in early 2014. The Brazilian finance minister, Guido Mantega stated that the fund would be created by March 2014. However, by April 2014, the currency reserve pool and development bank had yet to be set up, and the date was rescheduled to 2015. One driver for the BRICS development bank is that the existing institutions primarily benefit extra-BRICS corporations, and the political significance is notable because it allows BRICS member states "to promote their interests abroad... and can highlight the strengthening positions of countries whose opinion is frequently ignored by their developed American and European colleagues."

In March 2014, at a meeting on the margins of the Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague, the BRICS Foreign Ministers issued a communique that "noted with concern, the recent media statement on the forthcoming G20 Summit to be held in Brisbane in November 2014. The custodianship of the G20 belongs to all Member States equally and







no one Member State can unilaterally determine its nature and character.” In light of the tensions surrounding the 2014 Crimean crisis, the Ministers remarked that “The escalation of hostile language, sanctions and counter-sanctions, and force does not contribute to a sustainable and peaceful solution, according to international law, including the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.” This was in response to the statement of Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who had said earlier that Putin might be barred from attending the G20 Summit in Brisbane. In April 2014, Russian Ambassador at Large Vadim Lukov remarked that the dollar may be replaced by the ruble and other national currencies of the BRICS counties, and that “A large part of the fund goes toward saving the Euro and the national currencies of developed countries.

In July 2014, the Governor of the Russian Central Bank, Elvira Nabiullina, said that the “BRICS partners the establishment of a system of multilateral swaps that will allow to transfer resources to one or another country, if needed” in an article which concluded that “If the current trend continues, soon the dollar will be abandoned by most of the significant global economies and it will be kicked out of the global trade finance. Washington’s bullying will make even former American allies choose the anti-dollar alliance instead of the existing dollar-based monetary system.”

Over the weekend of 13 July 2014 when the final game of the World Cup was held, and in advance of the BRICS Fortaleza summit, Putin met his homologue Dilma Rouseff to discuss the BRICS development bank, and sign some other bilateral accords on air defense, gas and education. Rouseff said that the BRICS countries “are among the largest in the world and cannot content themselves in the middle of the 21st century with any kind of dependency.” The Fortaleza summit was followed

by a BRICS meeting with the UNASUR presidents in Brasilia, where the development bank and the monetary fund were introduced. The development bank will have capital of US\$50 billion with each country contributing US\$10 billion, while the monetary fund will have US\$100 billion at its disposal. On 15 July, the first day of the BRICS 6th summit in Fortaleza, Brazil, the group of emerging economies signed the long-anticipated document to create the US\$100 billion BRICS Development Bank and a reserve currency pool worth over another US\$100 billion. Documents on cooperation between BRICS export credit agencies and an agreement of cooperation on innovation were also inked.

The 7<sup>th</sup> summit coincided with the entry into force of constituting agreements of New Development Bank and BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement and during summit inaugural meetings of the NDB were held, and it was announced it would be lending in local currency; and open up membership to non-BRICS countries in the coming months.

## MEKONG-GANGA COOPERATION (MGC)

The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam launched in 2000 at Vientiane, Lao PDR, for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers, and the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins. The MGC is also indicative of the civilizational, cultural and commercial linkages among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries.

The 1st MGC Ministerial meeting took place in Vientiane from November 9-13, 2000. The meeting issued the Vientiane Declaration on MGC that covers cooperation in tourism, culture,





education and transport and communications. The 2nd MGC Ministerial Meeting held in Hanoi on July 28, 2001, adopted the Hanoi Programme of Action, a detailed Work Programme for six years (July 2001 to July 2007), providing specific actions for cooperation, in culture, tourism, human resource development/education, and transport and communications.

The 3rd MGC Ministerial Meeting was held in Phnom Penh on June 20, 2003. It provided additional political impetus to the MGC initiative. It adopted the Phnom Penh Roadmap for MGC. In the meeting the Ministers reviewed the progress of the implementation of the Hanoi Programme of Action for MGC. The Ministers reaffirmed their determination to seek ways and means to further promote cooperation among member countries with a view to enhancing socio-economic development. The Ministers agreed that MGC should continue to focus on the four priority areas of tourism, culture, education, and transport and communications in keeping with the Hanoi Programme of Action.

On the margins of the ASEAN Summit in Cebu, the Philippines in January 2007, Thailand, the then chairman of the MGC, handed over chairmanship to India on January 12, 2007. As part of the cooperative activities that year, India hosted a delegation of about one hundred Buddhist pilgrims from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam from September 5-12, 2007.

The 5th MGC Ministerial Meeting chaired by India, held at Manila, Philippines on August 1, 2007, reviewed and discussed the cooperation in each of the four core areas. The meeting agreed to expedite the setting up of the Museum of Traditional Asian Textiles at Siem Reap, Cambodia. India's continued support to 50 MGC scholarships was appreciated. In addition to these scholarships India offered 50 scholarships to enable scholars from the MGC countries to study in India. These scholarships were meant for diverse areas of study such as

Culture, Buddhist, IT, Vocational training etc. India also offered to organize Education fairs in MGC countries to create greater awareness about the education facilities available in India. The Hanoi Programme of Action (HPA) was extended by six years from August 2007 to July 2013.

India hosted the 6th MGC Ministerial Meeting on September 4, 2012, in New Delhi. In addition to the existing 4 areas of collaboration under MGC, certain new areas were identified at this meeting for forging cooperation. These include health research relevant to the region and sharing of expertise on pandemic management, bringing together the complementarities that exist in the SME sector in India and the Mekong States, aspects related to food security and preserving the rich biodiversity of our region. India's initiative in Setting up of the Traditional Asian Textiles Museum at Siem Reap, Cambodia was highly appreciated. India announced a commitment of USD 1 million annually for the India-CLMV Quick Impact Projects Revolving Fund. This fund would be for short gestation projects that could directly benefit local communities, with results that are immediate and visible. These additional elements were seen as a clear reiteration of members' commitment towards the MGC. The 7th MGC Ministerial Meeting would be held in the later part of 2013 under the Chairmanship of Lao PDR.

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## CENTRAL AMERICAN INTEGRATION SYSTEM (SICA)

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### Background

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The Central American Integration System (SICA) was set up in 1991 as the revived institutional framework for Regional Integration in Central America. SICA evolved from the original Organisation of Central American States (ODECA) initially begun in 1951 and Central American Common Market set up in 1960. SICA consists of seven full members: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador,





Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; and Dominican Republic as the Associate Member (Total 8). The 14 observers in SICA include: US, Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Peru (as regional Observers) and Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia (as non-regional Observers). US joined SICA as Observer in 2012 and France and South Korea's Observer status has been approved by SICA's apex decision-making Body and formal agreements are soon to be signed. SICA Secretariat is based in San Salvador.

## Objectives of SICA

The objectives of Central American Integration System (SICA) are to realise the integration of Central America in order for the Isthmus to become a Region of Peace, Freedom, Democracy and Development. It aims, inter-alia:

- to consolidate democracy and strengthen its institutions;
- to set up a new model of regional security;
- to achieve a regional system of welfare and economic and social justice;
- to attain economic union and strengthen the Central American financial system and
- to strengthen the region as an economic bloc in order to insert it successfully into the international economy.

## Principles of SICA

SICA has laid down fundamental principles which, inter-alia, expects member states to do "fulfilment of their obligations by refraining from establishing, agreeing or taking any action that is contrary to the provisions of SICA instrument" and to "respect the principles and norms of the charters of the United Nations and the Organisation of American States (OAS), and the statements issued in the Central American Presidential meetings since May 1986".

**1<sup>st</sup> India-SICA FM Level Meeting:** India started establishing linkages in 2004 with the regional block SICA in Central America thus commencing an intensification of relationships with Latin American region. India hosted the visit of an 18 member SICA delegation to India in February 2004 led by the then Foreign Minister of El Salvador and including Secretary General of SICA Oscar Santamaria. A declaration for the Establishment of a Mechanism for Political Cooperation and Dialogue between SICA and India was signed by the then EAM Yashwant Sinha on behalf of India. The visit was a landmark in that all these countries for the first time had sent Ministerial and high level representations to India - an indication of their interest in promoting linkages with India which to date had been hampered by the geographical distance and linguistic barriers. In addition to a substantive and fruitful meeting with the EAM, priority areas of mutual interest to the two sides including, inter alia, Information Technology, Science and Technology, Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, HRD, SMEs, infrastructure and tourism were identified. It was also agreed to promote people to people contacts through holding of Festival of India in Central America and Festival of Central America in India. The visiting delegations were deeply appreciative of the assistance and training received through India's ITEC Programme under which the Indian side pledged to increase the training slots and more if need arises. The El Salvadorians who were next to hold the revolving Presidency of SICA invited EAM to visit El Salvador in the second half of 2004. During his visit to Latin America, in September 2004, MOS (RIS) had a meeting with the-then Secretary General of SICA Mr. Oscar Santamaria in San Salvador. Conveying our desire to build institutional ties with SICA, based on the framework agreement signed, MOS told our willingness to participate in the infrastructure and other integration projects of SICA.







**2<sup>nd</sup> India-SICA FM Level Meeting:** Under India's initiative, 2<sup>nd</sup> Foreign Minister Level Meeting was hosted by India on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2008 in New Delhi. Of the eight SICA Members, four countries, viz. Panama (at First Vice President-cum-Foreign Minister), Nicaragua (FM), Guatemala (FM), Costa Rica (FM) and three members at Vice Foreign Minister level from El Salvador, Honduras and Dominican Republic attended the meeting. Belize was not represented and one Director from SICA Secretariat also took part.

A Press Statement was released at the end of the Dialogue and several issues of bilateral, regional and international concern were discussed. The attending Heads of Delegations paid a courtesy call on Vice President and Prime Minister. This meeting decided to extend and expand India's assistance and cooperation with SICA members. Having set up IT Training Centres in five SICA member countries, it was decided to set up IT Training Centre in other three SICA countries, viz., Belize, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. India offered to increase ITEC scholarship for all eight SICA member countries from 68 to 100 slots and share India's expertise in priority areas such as Agriculture, Pharmaceuticals, SMEs, Tourism, Renewable Energy, Disaster Management, Distance Education and supply of Satellite Imagery for development purposes. Line of credit arrangements for US \$80 million, already approved by India in the first SICA Meeting in 2004, was to be pursued for such projects. An India-SICA Joint Technical Committee to prepare for implementation was also to be constituted. SICA members accepted India's suggestion to double the volume of India-SICA bilateral trade from \$537 million in 2008 in next three years. Besides, governmental credit line assistance, EXIM Bank was to extend a US \$10 million commercial line of credit to Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI). It was also decided that Foreign Ministers should meet every two years either in India or in a SICA

country and that they should continue to meet every year on the margins of UNGA. India agreed to share its experience to meet challenges of food security and energy security with SICA member countries. The meeting also decided to set up an India-SICA business forum. Five agreements were signed of which three pertained to abolition of visa for Diplomatic and Official passport-holders between India and Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Two MOUs for Foreign Office Consultations with Costa Rica and Honduras were also signed. The meeting also proposed on an appropriate date a Summit-level meeting between SICA and India. Under the auspices of the announcement of assistance, IT training centres have been established by MEA in the Central American countries. These countries have benefited owing to this India's assistance. SICA countries welcome and utilise well India's ITEC scholarships and training programmes.

**Proposal for 3<sup>rd</sup> India-SICA FM level Meeting:** MEA had proposed to host 3<sup>rd</sup> India-SICA Dialogue in New Delhi in mid-May 2012. Honduras, as pro tem President of SICA for first half of 2012, proposed to host this meeting in Roatan Island, Honduras. The dates were not convenient for Indian side. In early June, Nicaragua as pro tem SICA President-designate for second half of 2012, proposed that India hosted this Meeting in Delhi in July or in September 2012. However, meeting could not take place.

**Secretary General, SICA:** Salvadoran Foreign Minister Hugo Martinez is a serious candidate for the post of SG, SICA. The present SG's term was expiring on Jan 31, 2013, however, it has been extended for six more months from Feb 1, 2013. During the SICA Summit held in Managua on Dec 13, 2012, Panamanian President presented Panama's candidature for the SICA SG. Panama candidate is the former Trade and Commerce Minister. The negotiations are still underway and the tussle continues.





**Resident Missions of SICA countries in India:** Three SICA member countries have diplomatic Missions in Delhi: (a) El Salvador; (b) Costa Rica and (c) Panama. First Lady of El Salvador had requested former MOS (ST) to help open an Indian Mission in San Salvador.

**SICA and Honduras:** During SICA Summit held in Panama in June 2010, as the Honduras' incorporation into SICA could not be finalised in Panama, an extraordinary special summit meeting was called in July 2010 in San Salvador under the Chairmanship of President Funes, basically to consider reintegration of Honduras into SICA. All Central American Head of States agreed for incorporation of Honduras except Nicaragua which felt that all cases against the former President Zelaya need be withdrawn and his return to Honduras made without any glitch. Honduras was subsequently admitted in SICA formally in mid-2010 and ex-President Zelaya returned to Honduras where he lives now under the reconciliation arrangement.

**Scope:** The countries in Central America individually are small populations ranging from 3.5 million (Panama) to 14 million (Guatemala). Collectively the population is about 52 million. But there is potential for economic and trade relations, revealed by the fact that this region collectively has two way bilateral trade amounting to US \$ 25 billion with USA alone larger than with India, Russia and Indonesia. In terms of language and distance, SICA is far from India but given the technology age, a lot of areas for mutual cooperation can be expanded with India. Although SICA has failed to attract a significant level of foreign direct investment to Central America, SICA's intra-regional free trade programme has proved beneficial to the region.

Nicaragua is keen for Indian participation in the Nicaragua Canal project, which is expected to rival the Panama Canal, an official said. Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Samuel Santos Lopez, in India on an official visit Aug 19-23, wants Indian

businessmen involved in the proposed \$40 billion canal, foreign ministry spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin said. Lopez told Indian officials that his government was expected to ready a detailed project report by 2014. Lopez also reiterated his country's support for India's candidature to a UN Security Council permanent seat.

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## INDIA AND THE COMMONWEALTH

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### Background

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Since the London Declaration of 1949, which established the modern Commonwealth, India has held a pivotal position in this voluntary association of 54 independent sovereign states. It was India's decision in 1948, as a newly independent Republic, to remain in the Commonwealth which influenced other Asian and African countries to join the organisation and which opened the era of the modern Commonwealth. Since then, it was firmly established that joining the Commonwealth no longer necessarily involved continued allegiance to the British Crown. At the same time the word 'British' was dropped from the association's title to reflect the Commonwealth's changing character.

In 1965, the leaders of the Commonwealth established the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, which became the association's independent civil service, headed by a Secretary-General. India was instrumental, as a part of group of half a dozen nations, led by Ghana, in the creation of the Secretariat arguing strongly for a neutral and impartial body to replace the mechanism hitherto provided by the British government. A year later, the Commonwealth Foundation was launched to assist the growing number of Commonwealth professional associations and, subsequently, NGOs. In 1971, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) was created, which advanced the idea of technical co-operation among developing countries.

India is the largest member state of the Commonwealth, with nearly 60% of the total





population of the association. It is the fourth largest contributor to the Commonwealth budgets and programmes. It provides the largest number of technical experts engaged by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation extending assistance to developing Commonwealth countries after the UK.

India is a member of key Commonwealth bodies, including the Steering Committee on Commonwealth Connects, the Standing Committee on Terrorism, Commonwealth Advisory Board on Sports, Grants Committee of Commonwealth Foundation as well as the Executive and Accreditation Committees of the Commonwealth Secretariat's Board of Governors.

India/eminent Indians have been members of important special committees set up by the Commonwealth from time to time, for instance, the Intergovernmental Group on Criteria for Commonwealth Membership set up following the 1995 CHOGM; the Mandates Committee set up in 2003 to review the mandates of Commonwealth organisations; the Commonwealth High Level Review Group constituted at 1999 CHOGM to review the role of the Commonwealth and advise on how best it could respond to challenges of the new century; and Commonwealth Expert Group on Democracy and Development set up following the Coozum CHOGM in 2002.

More recently, Shri Yashwant Sinha, former EAM was a member of the Committee on Commonwealth Membership and Prof. Amartya Sen was the Chair of the Commission on Respect and Understanding. India hosted CHOGM in 1983 in New Delhi and the annual Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in 1957, 1975, 1991 and 2007. India successfully hosted the 2008 Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune and the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. India also hosted the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers in January 2010 in New Delhi.

Significance of the Commonwealth for India

For its part, the Commonwealth is a natural constituency for India. It is a community of English speaking countries. It has a preponderance of developing countries, most of which avidly seek assistance on a South-South basis. It is an association which puts a premium on democracy and good governance, where India has so much to share with others. It provides a platform to interact and build consensus with a very diverse group of countries, including G-8 countries like the UK and Canada, key developing countries like South Africa, Nigeria and Malaysia, and a plethora of Small States.

The Commonwealth is a unique international organisation with the bulk of its membership coming from 32 Small States. There is a great degree of genuine appreciation among these States for India as the largest and a vibrant democracy and for the high-tech advancement and economic progress India has achieved in the past decade and a half. At the same time, India's contacts with this large member of Small States are few and far-between. India does not have resident Missions in 23 Commonwealth states. Unlike the UN where these States find more options in terms of rich donor countries like Japan and Germany, the Commonwealth provides a useful and unique platform for India to capitalise on this sense of goodwill.

A large number of Commonwealth countries also have a sizeable Indian population. We have a strong interest in promoting, maintaining and strengthening healthy democratic institutions and the rule of law as well as the prevention of conflict in these countries, as well as in the Commonwealth countries of South Asia. There are, of course, politically-inconvenient, lingering stereotypes about the Commonwealth being Anglo-centric, reinforced by the Queen being the Head of the Commonwealth. However, the reality is that the







UK is now only one player, now play just as large a role. The Commonwealth now has a Chairperson-in-Office (the Head of Government of the last host of CHOGM), which serves to further 'dilute' the figurehead role of the Queen.

The Commonwealth has a very healthy tradition of not permitting bilateral disputes between member states to be brought up in its councils. However, the continuation of this code of procedure cannot simply be taken for granted as there is sustained pressure from certain quarters to alter this. The Commonwealth straddles the North-South divide in the world with an immense diversity of races, religions, cultures, geographical spread and stages of development. It is thus a useful forum for dialogue and promoting understanding on global issues and forging consensus on a smaller scale than the UN.

Though the UN remains the principal forum for multilateral action, certainly the main custodian of international peace and security, the Commonwealth is suitably placed to address many concerns, especially of its smaller members, through its unique style of functioning based on consensus, informality and goodwill. The informal ways in which dialogue is conducted and decisions arrived at in Commonwealth bodies provide an excellent chance of winning wider support. The overall impact of this sense of family is that the Commonwealth is perceived by its members as discreet and non-threatening. The CHOGM summits, through the Retreat Sessions, provide an opportunity for the leaders to interact informally in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Given India's broader global engagement, the Commonwealth will continue to be a useful vehicle for projecting our global aspirations. India's activism within the Commonwealth and supportiveness of its initiatives represents an important opportunity to dispel any notion of a distance arising between a rising India and its erstwhile constituency.

## India's Present Contributions

India is the fourth largest contributor to overall Commonwealth budgets after the UK, Canada and Australia. It is the fifth largest contributor to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), with an annual contribution of GBP 1 million.

## INDIA-UNITED NATIONS RELATIONS

The year 2012 was busy with important milestones such as India's second UPR in May 2012, the election of a new Director-General of ILO, the convening of the first ever Extraordinary Session of the WMO on the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCs), continued State consultations on the ICRC-led review of humanitarian law, the creation of the Nansen Initiative by UNHCR, the Transformative Agenda of OCHA, the adoption of the Migration Crisis Operational Framework by the IOM Council and the sudden convening of a Diplomatic Conference on Industrial Designs and Geographic Indications by the developed States in WIPO.

## Human Rights

India continued to play an active role in the Human Rights Council (HRC) with the resumption of its membership in July 2011 with 181 votes out of 193. Besides its three regular sessions (February – March; June-July; and September 2012), a Special Session on Syria was held in June, 2012. India's second UPR was held on 24 May 2012. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Goolam E. Vahanvati, Attorney-General of India.

India served as a member of the *troika* for the UPR of Poland and Sri Lanka. Eminent Indians continued to serve with distinction as members of important Treaty- Monitoring Bodies and Human Rights mechanisms including Shri Dilip Lahiri (Member, Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination); Smt. Indira Jaisingh (Member, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination





against Women); Shri Chandrashekhar Dasgupta (Member, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). Shri Anand Grover continued his mandate as the Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health; and Shri Kishore Singh as well, as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

## International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The highest decision-making body of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the IOM Council, held its 101st Session from 27-30 November 2012. The Session was notable for the adoption of a Resolution on the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework (IMCOF).

## Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)

The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) has remained as the largest and most comprehensive global platform for dialogue and cooperation on international migration and development. The Sixth Annual GFMD 2012 Summit Meeting was held on 21-22 November 2012 in Pailles, Mauritius. Shri Dilip Sinha, PR of India to the UN, Geneva led the Indian delegation. India had provided US\$ 50,000 as a onetime and first time grant to GFMD on the request of the current Chair, Mauritius to all States.

## United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

From 1-5 October 2012, the institutional meetings leading up to the 63rd Session centered on strengthening UNHCR's efficiency in discharge of its core duties on international protection and collaboration efforts with other UN organizations in humanitarian exigencies.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees visited India on 19-20 December 2012 for the Fourth

Annual Open-Ended Bilateral Consultations between India and UNHCR.

## Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

During the year under review, the Permanent Mission of India participated in all the briefing sessions that Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) organized in Geneva (as per established norms, OCHA policy is negotiated in New York and implemented through the Geneva office). The Mission also drew attention of OCHA to the need for an exit strategy for its new field-based humanitarian intervention mechanism called Transformative Agenda whereby the mechanism is led by an UN humanitarian coordinator

## World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

India actively participated in the Diplomatic Conference on the Protection of Audiovisual Performances held in Beijing, from 20-26 June 2012, which adopted the 'Treaty for the Protection of Audiovisual Performances'. The Indian delegation led by Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) attended the 50<sup>th</sup> Series of Meetings of Assemblies of Member States of WIPO in Geneva from 1-9 October 2012. As a member of the Development Agenda Group, India actively worked towards promoting the incorporation of the development agenda recommendations in the works of all the relevant committees of WIPO.

## United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

India continued its active engagement in all UNCTAD meetings of the Trade and Development Board (TDB), Multi-Year and Single-Year expert meetings. The Indian delegation led by Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry participated in the UNCTAD XIII Ministerial





Conference held in Doha, from 21-26 April 2012. Mr. Ashok Chawla, Chairperson, Competition Commission of India led the Indian delegation at the Twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Competition Law and Policy from 9-11 July 2012, and Ad-Hoc Expert Meeting on "Consumer Protection: The Interface between Competition and Consumer Policies" from 12-13 July 2012. Mr. T.C.A. Ranganathan, Chairman and Managing Director of Export-Import Bank of India participated in the Fourth Session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on International Cooperation: South-South Cooperation and Regional Integration as a panelist on 'Trade finance: challenges and Opportunities', held in Geneva from 24-25 October 2012.

#### United Nations Commission on Science, Technology and Development

India actively participated in the one-day open meeting, convened by the Chair of CSTD on 18 May 2012, involving all Member States and other stakeholders, to identify a shared understanding about enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet, as per the UNGA Resolution A/Res/66/184. The Indian delegation actively coordinated its position with IBSA countries proposing setting up of a Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation.

#### Group of Fifteen (G-15)

India participated in the 35th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of Fifteen (G-15) held on 27 September 2012 in New York, on the margins of the 67th UN General Assembly. India reiterated its offer to replicate within the framework of G-15 cooperation, its projects on solar energy in Senegal and the establishment of a Centre for Entrepreneurship Development in Zimbabwe. India made an annual contribution of US\$ 25,000 for 2012.

#### International Trade Centre (ITC)

India participated in all the inter-governmental meetings of the ITC, a subsidiary body of UNCTAD and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The 46th session of the ITC Joint Advisory Group (JAG) was held from 21-22 May 2012, which examined the activities of ITC and also considered the ITC's Strategic Plan for 2012-2015.

#### World Health Organization (WHO)

India participated in the 65th World Health Assembly (WHA) held in Geneva from 21-26 May 2012. India's success in polio eradication was widely acknowledged in the WHA. India also participated in the First Informal Consultation with Member States and UN agencies on the development of a Global Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2020) on 2 November 2012 where it was, *inter alia*, brought out that Yoga, meditation and counseling should be a part of overall strategy for mental health promotion and prevention of mental disorders and suicides.

#### International Labour Organization (ILO)

India participated in the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) of ILO held in Geneva from 29 May-12 June 2012. Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Minister of Labour & Employment led the Indian delegation to the ILC. The Labour Ministers of Bihar, Haryana and Kerala also participated in the Conference. At the ILC, India's progressive schemes as important social protection measures, for the socioeconomic upliftment of the poor and the marginalized, were acknowledged. India also participated in the 316th Session of the Governing Body (GB) of ILO from 5-15 November 2012 in Geneva. The Indian delegation led by Dr. Mrutyunjay Sarangi, Secretary (Labour & Employment) participated in the Working Party, as one of the 16 members, for Improvement of Functioning of GB and ILC (There are 8 Workers and 8 Employer-Members in the







India and World Organizations

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Working Party).

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The Extraordinary Session of the WMO Congress [Cg.Ext.(2012)-the first-ever such session in the Congress's 62 year-old history] was held from 29-31 October 2012 to consider the Draft Implementation Plan (DIP) and the Draft Governance Structure based on the Intergovernmental Board (DGS) for establishing the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) as directed by the High-Level Declaration of the World Climate Conference-3 (HLD-WCC-3) in 2009. Both documents were approved in the Congress. Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, led the Indian delegation.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

The major activities with regard to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 2012 were (i) the World Telecommunication and Information Society (WSIS) Day 2012 celebrated on 16 May 2012 at Geneva. The theme was "Women and Girls in ICT". (ii) The ITU Council-12, meeting with the Plenary Session held on 4 July 2012 in Geneva. (iii) Briefing sessions of the World Conference on International Telecommunication (WCIT-12) and the World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly-12 (WTSA-12) held in Geneva on 8-9 October 2012. WCIT-12 was held in November 2012 and WTSA-12 will be held in December 2012 in Dubai.

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

The Annual 2012 session of the Inter-Parliamentary Conference (IPC) on the WTO, held in Geneva from 15-16 November 2012. A 3-member Indian Parliamentary delegation led by Shri P.C. Chacko, MP participated in the Annual session of IPC. The 127th IPU Assembly was held from 21-26

October 2012 at Quebec City, Canada. The delegation was led by Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Cross Societies (IFRC)

The First Informal Meeting on "Strengthening Compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) was held in Geneva on 13 July 2012. The informal meeting was an ICRC endeavour to accelerate the discussions on review of IHL proposed at the 31st International Conference of RC&RC (2011) through adoption of two resolutions on "Four-Year Action Plan for the implementation of IHL" and "Strengthening Legal Protection for Victims of Armed Conflicts".

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

The 25th Congress of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was held at Doha, Qatar from 24 September-15 October 2012. During the Congress, elections were held for the Director-General of UPU, Deputy Director-General of UPU, Council of Administration (CA) and Postal Operations Council (POC), India was successfully elected to the CA and POC.

The UN General Assembly on 11 December 2014 adopted without a vote a resolution commemorating 21 June as the International Day of Yoga, recognizing the holistic benefits of this timeless practice and its inherent compatibility with the principles and values of the United Nations.

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

Background and Objectives

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established by an agreement concluded on 25 May 1981 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia among Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in view of their special relations, geographic proximity, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs,





joint destiny and common objectives. Presently it encompasses a total area of 2,672,700 sq.km. The official language is Arabic.

The GCC Charter states that the basic objectives are to have coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields, strengthening ties between their peoples, formulating similar regulations in various fields such as economy, finance, trade, customs, tourism, legislation, administration, as well as fostering scientific and technical progress in industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources, establishing scientific research centres, setting up joint ventures, and encouraging cooperation of the private sector.

The GCC members and Yemen are also members of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA). This is unlikely to affect the framework of the GCC in a major way as the GCC has a more prioritized timeframe as compared to GAFTA and it seeks greater integration. Recently, Morocco and Jordan have applied for the GCC membership which is currently being studied by the GCC Expert Committee.

GCC comprises of some of the fastest growing economies in the world, mainly due to an increase in oil and natural gas revenues coupled with a building and investment boom backed by reserves, etc. Most of these economies which were affected during recent economic downturn have now recovered and are growing at a fast pace again.

**Organization Structure:** The structure of the GCC consists of the Supreme Council, the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General. The Secretariat is located in the city of Riyadh. The constitution of the GCC precisely reflected the importance of seeking ways to make the unity of Arab States a reality. The constitution required the organization to provide “the means for realizing coordination, integration and cooperation” in economic, social and cultural affairs.

- (a) The Supreme Council (the highest authority of the GCC) comprises the Heads of State of the six member countries. The Supreme Council meets once a year in ordinary session. Emergency sessions can be convened at any time by the heads of any two Member States. The chairmanship of the Supreme Council is held by each Member State in turn. Resolutions are carried by majority vote. The Supreme Council is responsible for determining the overall policy of the GCC and for ratifying recommendations presented to it by the Ministerial Council or the Secretariat General.
- (b) The Ministerial Council comprises the Foreign Ministers of the six member countries. The Ministerial Council meets once every three months in ordinary session. Emergency sessions can be convened at any time by the Foreign Ministers of any two Member States. The Ministerial Council draws up policies and makes recommendations on means of developing cooperation and coordination amongst Member States in the economic, social and cultural spheres.
- (c) The Secretariat General prepares reports, studies, accounts and budgets for the GCC. It drafts rules and regulations and is charged with the responsibility of assisting Member States in the implementation of decisions adopted by the Supreme and Ministerial Councils. The Secretary General is appointed for a three-year term (renewable) by the Supreme Council on the recommendation of the Ministerial Council. Current Secretary General is Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al- Zayani and was appointed in April 2011.

## GCC Summit Meeting

33<sup>rd</sup> GCC Summit was held in Bahrain from December 24-25, 2012, under the chairmanship of





the His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain and current President of the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council is still studying the proposal of transition of GCC member states from the phase of cooperation to union, initially mooted by Saudi King Abdullah in the 32nd GCC Summit in Riyadh in December 2011.

## GCC Monetary Union

GCC Monetary union is ratified by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. Oman had opted out of it in 2006 and UAE did so in May 2009. Although on March 15, 2010 UAE reiterated that it is committed to the concept of a single currency however the free trade in the region should precede single currency realization. Riyadh is selected as the location for the monetary council and the future central Bank. Nevertheless 30<sup>th</sup> GCC summit had established a Joint Monetary Council (JMC) who would take necessary steps to issue the GCC single currency. GCC Monetary Union thus remained a long term goal to be preceded by monetary and fiscal policies and creation of an effective regional central bank.

## India and GCC: Contours of Cooperation

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a collective entity has tremendous significance for India. The Gulf constitutes the “immediate” neighborhood of India separated only by the Arabian Sea. India, therefore, has a vital stake in the stability, security and economic well-being of the Gulf. As a group, the GCC has been increasingly determining the economic, political, and security policies of its member States. The GCC countries are moving ahead rapidly with their economic integration efforts.

The GCC has emerged as a major trading partner for India; it has vast potential as India's investment partner for the future. The GCC's substantial oil and gas reserves are of vital importance for India's energy needs. The GCC

countries are collectively host for cooperation in trade, investment, energy, manpower, etc.

## Economic and Commercial Relations

India enjoys traditionally cordial relations and cooperation with the GCC. India's old, historical ties with GCC states, coupled with increasing imports of oil and gas, growing trade and investment opportunities, and presence of approximately 6 million Indian workers in the region, are of vital interest to India. India's economic linkages with the GCC have increased steadily especially due to growth in oil imports. These continue to make steady progress to-date. During 2011-12, India's exports to GCC were USD 45.36 billion. The bilateral two-way trade during the period was USD 145.72 billion, marking a 24.13% increase over the previous year, and growing at a steady pace.

## Strategic Relations

From the strategic point of view, India and GCC share the desire for political stability and security in the region. The common political and security concerns of India and GCC translate into efforts for peace, security and stability in the Gulf region and South Asia. The emerging common security perceptions create further opportunities for GCC-India cooperation in the future. The GCC states are going through important changes and transformation; the process of understanding and integration is coming of age. Along with it the areas for cooperation are also widening beyond investments, trade & commerce and sharing & development of human resources to security.

## India-GCC Industrial Conference

The first GCC-India Industrial Conference was held in Mumbai in February 2004. The 4th GCC-India Industrial Conference is scheduled to be held shortly, the dates for which are being worked out by the GCC Secretariat.





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