

## Other Diasporas: A Global Perspective



## Introduction

Migration has been an integral part of human history. In the modern times, political, economic and technological developments have facilitated emigration in response to demands for skills, services or labour or as a consequence of natural or man-made calamities. Revolutions in technology, especially information and communication technologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have eliminated geographical distances and enabled migrant communities to maintain easy contacts with their homeland and among themselves. The contemporary processes of global economic, social and cultural integration have received a stimulus from the presence of global trans-national communities. The role of Diasporas has also acquired an enhanced significance in view of their adaptable nature and their dynamism and initiative. Almost all Diasporas tend to play a significant role in the development of the host country. There has been a tremendous upward mobility among the subsequent generations of labour Diasporas of several countries. They have risen to prominent political and economic positions. Diasporas have made high contributions in politics, trade, commerce, professions, culture and sports. The most prominent among the Diasporas of the world, namely, Jewish, Greek, Indian and Polish have played an active, and crucial role in supporting independence movements in their homelands and in retaining deep attachment to the motherland and its causes. The Chinese Diaspora has been a major force in economic modernization and growth in China.

23.2. Historical circumstances of migration have varied among the main Diasporas of the world. Broadly, these Diasporas have been classified as follows:-

Type of Diaspora	Example
Victim/refugee	Jews, African, Armenians, others: Irish, Palestinians
Imperial/Colonial	Ancient Greek, British, Russian, others: Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French
Labour/service	Indentured Indians, Chinese and Japanese, Turks, Italians
Trade/business/professional	Venetians, Lebanese, Chinese others: Today's Indians, Japanese
Cultural/hybrid/post-modern	Caribbean peoples, others: Today's Chinese, Indians

(Global Diasporas by Robin Cohen, University of Warwick)

- 23.3. Notwithstanding different historical backgrounds and present day circumstances of the world's many Diasporas, according to social scientists, there are several features which are common to most of them. These include: dispersal from the homeland, often traumatic; emigration from homeland in search of work or trade; colonial ambitions; a collective memory of the homeland; an idealization of the ancestral home; a strong ethnic group consciousness over a long period of time; a desire to return to motherland; a troubled relationship in the host country; possibilities of a creative and enriching life in the host countries.
- 23.4. The Indian Diaspora shares many of the above mentioned characteristics with the prominent Diasporas of the world. Indian Diaspora is also unique in several ways. It is more widespread than any other Diaspora and more varied with about half-a-dozen religions and sub-ethnic identities; it reflects a wide variety of occupational and income patterns from the highest to the lowest in the world. It has suffered more harassment than any other Diaspora except the Jewish Diaspora. It was segregated for many decades until 1950s, with very little contact with India and the developments within India. Consequently, different segments of the Indian Diaspora evolved distinct paths of development and different identities. Historically, there is a notable tradition of discourse on the homeland among the Jewish and Indian Diaspora.
- 23.5. It goes without saying that India must find her own solutions and policies to suit her requirements and goals in the establishment of her bonds with the Diaspora. We should, however, benefit from the experiences of the other Diasporas, which have stood the test of time. Towards that purpose, we have briefly profiled the more prominent Diasporas of the world, namely, Israeli, Chinese, Filipino, Italian, Polish, and South Korean highlighting the relevance of their experiences to India.

## **THE CHINESE DIASPORA**

- 23.6. The Overseas Chinese are said to constitute one of the largest Diasporas in the world. The US, Canada and Australia now receive more emigrants of Chinese origin than from anywhere else in the world.
- 23.7. There are interesting similarities between the Indian and Chinese Diasporas. Indian Americans and Chinese Americans are one of the most successful ethnic groups in the Silicon Valley, leading to the acronym *IC* being used for Indian and Chinese engineers rather than Integrated Circuits! This is not accidental, as education and learning have been at a premium in their respective ancient heritages.
- 23.8. The Chinese also maintained a historical taboo against overseas travel, which combined with the lower status accorded to merchants, encouraged this class to emigrate to Southeast Asia since the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Patterns of emigration in both Indian and Chinese communities have been similar in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. While indentured labour formed the bulk of emigrants in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a sizable professional segment emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Both communities have aroused feelings of envy in the areas where they have achieved success relative to the local

populations. Both communities are also characterised by an attachment and feelings of nostalgia for the countries they have left behind. Many Overseas Chinese traditionally consider themselves to be temporary absentees. The term for Chinese abroad is, therefore, *huaqiao*, or sojourners, meaning travellers.

- 23.9. The differences are also important. The Chinese Diaspora has helped to change the face of China, which the Indian Diaspora has not yet had the chance to do. Due to a much longer and more varied history of emigration and the different class origins of the sojourners, the Overseas Chinese community had built up powerful business (or bamboo) networks that controlled significant sectors of the economies in Southeast and East Asia. Regions with an overwhelmingly Chinese population – Taiwan, Hong Kong (SAR) and Singapore, are now known as the Tiger economies, and have made a tremendous contribution to economic development in the People’s Republic of China in a virtuous cycle. Since 1995, Overseas Chinese based in these regions have accounted for over 70% of the average annual FDI inflows of US\$ 40 billion into China.
- 23.10. Indians on the other hand, while having done brilliantly in the United States, have only recently established themselves in the global corporate world, where some of them have catapulted overnight to the very top. Unlike the Chinese in Southeast and East Asia, these Indians have achieved success purely on individual merit in the highly competitive structures of modern multinationals, without the help of family networks, *guanxi* (connections) and historically accumulated private capital (some Chinese American entrepreneurs have also achieved similar success). The other section of the Indian Diaspora that has made a significant contribution to India is concentrated in the Gulf, from where they send the bulk of private remittances received by India. According to the RBI, US\$ 2.3 billion, or 25% of debt creating inflows (deposits) into India in 2000-01 were from NRIs.
- 23.11. Secondly, the sometimes troubled relations between the US and China impact on the Chinese community in North America due to perceived cultural, ideological *and* ethnic differences, although this may change post-September 11. Books like “*The China Threat*” by Bill Gertz and “*The Coming Conflict with China*” by Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro delved into the perceived irreconcilable differences in national interest between the two countries. In contrast, educated Indians coming from a democratic tradition and enjoying a head start in communicating in English, had an easier transition and at the most suffered some ethnic discrimination. Ironically, life for some of them has become more difficult post-September 11. Thirdly, besides the intellectual fields, American Chinese have excelled in sports, where the Indian community has just made a tentative beginning.

### **Chinese Emigration to Other Regions in Asia from the 12<sup>th</sup> Century**

- 23.12. The over 20 million Chinese in Southeast Asia today settled there over a period of a thousand years. Emigration started tentatively from 1127 onwards, at the same time as China’s trading fleet was built by the *Southern Song* dynasty. The Chinese began establishing trading posts in the 15th century, during a time of economic expansion and the explorations of the intrepid admiral,

*Zheng He*. The earliest Chinese to migrate to the Southeast and North Asian countries were Cantonese speaking traders and craftsmen from the southeast coastal provinces of Guangdong (Canton) and Fujian, the same provinces which later witnessed an unprecedented boom after *Deng Xiao Ping* launched his economic reforms in 1978. This trend of mainly southerners emigrating from China was to be modified only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 23.13. The first significant emigration to Southeast Asia began after the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. China's coastal provinces have excellent natural harbours and ports, which facilitated overseas migration. However, while China achieved admirable successes in maritime activities, the central dynasties extended support to overseas commerce only fitfully. In marked similarity to Hindu custom, Confucian ethics frowned upon leaving the motherland. Confucius had said, "Do not travel afar when your parents are alive". Moreover, merchants were not well regarded in Confucian culture, again similar to the situation in India, where they were superceded in the caste hierarchy. Chinese rulers did not trust them, particularly because some overseas merchants were suspected of supporting domestic rebellions. A series of imperial edicts were issued between 1656 and 1712 that actually made overseas travel and residence punishable by beheading. Persecution, therefore, prompted merchants to periodically seek refuge in Southeast Asia.
- 23.14. By the time of the European influx, China had lost its primacy on the seas, but not before a substantial number had emigrated. Their descendants, the Asian Chinese, though they had to struggle very hard, eventually emerged as the dominant community in their countries/regions of settlement and achieved considerable success in the property sector, professions, trade, commerce and industry. They produced the wealthy conglomerates, which, in the modern era, were to make such a profound contribution to both their host countries' economies and to China.

**Table 23.1: The Ethnic Chinese in Asia**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Population (millions)</b>	<b>As % of Population</b>	<b>GDP (\$ Billion)</b>	<b>As % of Business Output</b>
Taiwan	21	99	255	95
Hong Kong ( SAR )	6	98	120	80
Singapore	2	76	62	76
Thailand*	6	10	80	50
Malaysia	6	32	48	60
Indonesia	8	4	98	50
Vietnam	1	1	4	20
Philippines	1	1-2	30	40

\*Thailand's Chinese population is difficult to count because of the high rate of inter-marriage.

## Emigration of Chinese Contract Labour in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

23.15. In the 19th century, poverty, the Taiping rebellion, the depredations of the colonial powers, the opium trade and internal tribulations drove a flood of migrants to Southeast Asia, Hawaii, North America, the Caribbean, Australia and Africa, where side by side with Indians, Chinese labourers toiled on the railways and other construction projects. Steamships also facilitated the coolie trade. Between 1801 and 1925, 3-6 million (estimates vary) contract labourers were often forcibly shipped out of China. Guangdong emigrants tended to head for the US, while people from Fujian left for the regions of Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Many Overseas Chinese (hereafter referred to as OC/OCs) in this period left China as coolies to work for traders, plantation owners, and government and semi-government authorities. Destinations in the Caribbean were Cuba, the British West Indies, British Guinea, Trinidad, Jamaica, British Honduras, Suriname, Martinique and Guadeloupe, where the Chinese were employed on sugar plantations and other sectors.

## Emigration in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

23.16. The third wave of emigration comprising skilled and better educated Chinese to the US, Canada and Australia began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and accelerated following the repeal of the discriminatory laws. China also relaxed emigration controls to qualify for most-favoured-nation trade status following the establishment of diplomatic relations with the US. Chinese emigration to Australia was concentrated in two periods: the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - attracted by the gold-fields of New South Wales and Victoria – and post-1960. As in North America, they soon became the targets of attacks and discriminatory legislation. Northerners also began to leave China in large numbers for the first time. Mandarin, spoken by the northerners, is, therefore, displacing Cantonese in the OC communities.

## Illegal Migration

23.17. Recent years have also witnessed significant *illegal* emigration from mainland China to Europe, the US and even South Africa, spawning an underground smuggling network through clandestine and dangerous routes. These are mainly through Thailand, Europe, outlying U.S. territories of the Virgin Islands or Puerto Rico, where it is easier to circumvent immigration controls. The horrific memory of 26 Chinese illegals suffocating to death in a cold storage truck in the Netherlands is still fresh. In the Russian Far East, an uncounted number of Chinese live and work illegally as traders and labourers, causing Russian apprehension about Chinese demographic pressures on the under-populated Siberian stretches. Local Russians are convinced that the number of Chinese in Russia is 4-6 million. Australia, which is now an alternative to the United States for illegal Chinese migration, regularly reports the detention of “boat people”, mostly of Chinese origin.

## North America

23.18. The contribution of the *Asian* OCs is treated after this section although it eclipses that of any other OC group. Chinese immigrants flooded to North America in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup>

century to work in the gold mines and in the expanding economies of North America including the transcontinental railroads. In 1882, however, the US Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, repealed only in 1943, because “in the opinion of the Government of the United States, the coming of the Chinese labourers to this country endangers the good order. . .”

- 23.19. At the same time, Canada invited the Chinese to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. Once it was completed, however, Canada also suspended Chinese immigration in 1923. This was preceded by intensely racist acts and legislation aimed at keeping Asian immigration limited or non-existent. In 1902, the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration had declared all Asians, “unfit for full citizenship . . . obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state” and in 1903, the Chinese head tax was raised to \$500.
- 23.20. Following the removal of discriminatory laws in the 1960s, Chinese immigration increased. According to the 2000 census, Americans of Chinese descent, the largest Asian group - Indians being the fastest growing – numbered 2.43 million. There has also been substantial illicit migration which does not get reflected in the official count. 1990 Census figures show that the Chinese population had a high education level, with 40.7% having a bachelor or higher degree as compared with 20.3% among the total population. About a third of the Chinese work in low-paying service occupations such as laundries, restaurants, garment factories and grocery stores. Many of these expanded into supermarkets, shopping malls and hotels/motels in California and Hawaii. Chinese immigrants founded numerous electronic, computer, high-tech and engineering firms and now occupy managerial, professional and white-collar positions. One pioneering success in the computer and word processing industry in the 1970s was Wang Laboratories, founded in 1951. The largest today is Computer Associates International, a software company. Many corporations have established ties with their counterparts in the Far East – Taiwan’s Acer Computer and Formosa Plastics, for example, whose US partners are Chinese Americans.
- 23.21. Chinese Americans have also excelled in science. The following are Nobel Laureates of Chinese origin – Daniel C. Tsui (1998 – Physics), Steven Chu (1997 – Physics), Lee Yuan Tseh (1986 – Chemistry), Samuel C. C. Tng (1976 – Physics), Yang Cheng Ning and Lee Tsung-dao (1957 – Physics). Other famous Chinese are Jerry Yang and David Filo, who created Yahoo, the super-Net search engine. Amy Chow won the 1996 Olympics gold for gymnastics, Michelle Kwan won the Olympics silver in 1998 for ice-skating, and Michael Chang excelled in tennis. Chinese Americans have formed coalitions to campaign successfully for local electoral offices. In public life, the community boasts of Congressman David Wu, Gary Locke, Governor of Washington and Harry Wu, the human rights campaigner. In media, Connie Chung has been a familiar face while Amy Tan has achieved international recognition as a writer. Other Chinese have achieved positions of high distinction in the American scientific and technological field.

## **Overseas Chinese Business Networks in Southeast Asia**

- 23.22. Despite the presence of different economic strata in Chinese communities everywhere, OCs have been branded as an extremely wealthy community. As an expert put it – **“If it were not for the**

**myth of prosperity, many Chinatowns would be properly classed as ghettos.”** A feature of the Chinese Diaspora is that the success of a few has traditionally prompted distrust of them in the regions of settlement. Prejudices born out of envy flourished especially in Southeast Asia, where OCs founded the region’s most powerful business groups and were periodically targeted as scapegoats by local governments and populations alike. Incidents of massacres of Chinese in Southeast Asia abound. Following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, ordinary Chinese were attacked and some were killed in Indonesia (resentment of Chinese immigrants in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, has been exploited by local politicians since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, though now this is considered politically incorrect).

- 23.23. The reasons for their success stem largely from the circumstances of ‘exile’. The historically induced insecurity driven by fears of expropriation, confiscation and forced flight has given rise to the following characteristics of OC businesses: keeping assets in liquid form, physically dispersing investments in different countries and a high degree of horizontal/ vertical diversification, as part of the community’s instinctive risk management strategy. Core competence is still a western concept. Thus while reinforcing networks among family businesses across countries, risks have simultaneously been diversified.
- 23.24. Most OC ‘companies’ are owned by a single individual or a family and accordingly have authoritarian structures, which on the one hand enable enormous flexibility in business decisions, an important reason for their tremendous success, and on the other are increasingly out of step with modern management practices. Concessions to modernisation have been made by hiring western trained managers and floating parts of their companies on stock exchanges, but control of the holding company or core assets has never been ceded.
- 23.25. People of Chinese origin have been prominent in the political arena also. Some of the prominent luminaries of Chinese origin include Lee Kuan Yew – Former Prime Minister of Singapore, and Chavalit Yongchaiyudh and Chuan Leekpai – Prime Ministers of Thailand. Mr Liem, the founder of the Salim Group in Indonesia (who has very strong links with Malaysia’s Robert Kuok), enjoyed a special relationship with President Suharto, which may have cost his community dear in the post-1997 riots. It is joked that Charoen Pokphand, Thailand’s most successful company and an aggressive investor in China (it received the first foreign investment certificate No. 0001 in China in 1979 immediately after the opening up) employs so many former Thai politicians that it could hold a cabinet meeting.

## **The Overseas Chinese Contribution to the PRC’s Economic Development**

- 23.26. The Overseas Chinese contribution to China’s economic development is undisputed and heavily documented. As the next table shows, FDI inflows into China have boomed since the early 90s. Over 70% of FDI is from overseas Chinese, mostly in labour-intensive export processing sectors (shoes, toys, electronic sub-assemblies, food processing, textiles, Christmas decorations and other

**Table 23.2: Some Prominent OCs Companies\***

<b>Group</b>	<b>Company</b>	<b>Sectors</b>	<b>HQs</b>
Cheng Yu-Tung (SAR)	New World Development	Telecoms, Infrastructure Property	Hong Kong
Kwok Brothers (SAR)	Sun Hung Kai Properties	Property	Hong Kong
Lee Shau Kee (SAR)	Henderson Land Property	Convention Centres	Hong Kong
Li Ka-Shing** (SAR)	Cheung Kong Property	Telecoms, Ports, Energy	Hong Kong
Liem Sioe Liong	Salim Group	Food, Cement, Property, Consumer Goods	Indonesia
Luci Tan	Fortune	Tobacco Brewing, Tobacco, Airlines, Hotels, Banking	Philippines
Tsai Family	Cathay Life Insurance	Insurance , Property	Taiwan
Wang Yue-Che	Formosa Plastics	Petrochemicals, PVC Semiconductors	Taiwan
Chang Yung-Fa	Evergreen	Shipping, Airlines	Taiwan
Acer Group	Stan Shih	Computers and peripherals	Taiwan
Sophonpanich	Bangkok Bank	Banking, Family Insurance, Stockbroking	Thailand
Chearavanont	Charoen Pokphand	Agriculture, Food, Telecoms, Aquaculture, Property, Beer	Thailand
Lamsam Family	Thai Farmers Bank	Banking, Trading, Agribusiness, Insurance	Thailand
Robert Kuok	Kerry Sugar	Property, Media, Hotels, Drinks, Food	Malaysia
Quek/Kwek Family	Hong Leong	Property, Hotels, Banking	Singapore, Malaysia
W. H. Sim	Creative Labs	Sound Blaster adapters and multimedia kits	Singapore
Eka Tjipta	Sinar Mas	Paper, Timber	Indonesia

Sources: Forbes; Asiaweek; 'OC Business Networks In Asia' © 1996 The Economist Newspaper Limited. Notes: \*Nearly all have some investments in the Asian property market. \*\* Richard Li, one of Li Ka-shing's sons, set up Star Television but sold it to Rupert Murdoch.

items in demand in export markets), and real estate. Entrepreneurs in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea and Southeast Asia shifted significant *but initially low-technology* manufacturing/assembly/export processing operations to the mainland. For example, by 1996, over 80% of all Hong Kong's labour-intensive industry had migrated to Southern China. This was followed by larger investments in infrastructure and real estate by the bigger conglomerates. Hong Kong (SAR) continues to be the main financial conduit for the PRC. Taiwanese investment was also labour-intensive and small-scale, reflecting the nature of Taiwan's own industrial structure, in electronics and electrical appliances, plastic and rubber products, food and beverages, footwear, toys, textiles, garments and small service industries. Recently, however, Taiwan has made some very high-profile and large-scale investments in IC technology in China.

- 23.27. By exploiting China's comparative advantages in abundant, skilled and cheap labour and light industry, FDI led to enormous increases in productivity. The compound annual growth of FDI between 1990-97 was 44%. FDI has built up a huge export sector in China. In 1999 Foreign Invested Enterprises (FIEs)' contribution to industrial output had risen to 15.9%. FIEs eclipsed any other sector in their profitability, in their relative contribution to the nation's exports, and rapidly gained market shares in the light, electronics and chemical industries.

**Table 23.3: FDI into China (in US\$ billions)**

YEAR	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
China	3.49	4.37	11.29	27.77	33.95	37.38	42.35	43	45.5	40.3	40.8*

- 23.28. The OC community's preferences for investment reflected each group's historical roots and physical proximity to neighbouring provinces on the mainland. The coastal areas accounted for 75% of total FDI, with Guangdong alone accounting for 30% of total FDI. Hong Kong FDI went to the adjacent province of Guangdong, which has the same language, Cantonese. Taiwanese investors preferred neighbouring Fujian. Investment flowed to the coastal areas because of the export-oriented character of FDI enterprises and because it minimised costs of transportation for exporters. Later investors also preferred coastal locations, which by then had well developed infrastructure facilities.
- 23.29. Later investments by multinationals were targeted at the domestic market, while the first wave of investment by the OCs was in line with China's export strategy. Though this earlier investment did not necessarily bring in high technology, it benefited the Chinese economy immeasurably as it strengthened its export capabilities and led to tremendous diversification of its manufacturing base, especially in the sectors of China's comparative advantage.

## **Chinese State Structures Dealing with Overseas Chinese Affairs**

23.30. The Chinese make a distinction between Chinese *citizens* residing abroad and Chinese who have given up their citizenship, which roughly corresponds with the NRI and PIO terminology used in India. Overseas Chinese who have invested or contributed in some way to China are also called returned overseas Chinese. Currently, the major arms of the State, Legislature and Party have high-level offices dealing with the Overseas Chinese through which preferential treatment is accorded to the latter.

## **The Constitution**

23.31. The Chinese *Constitution* (Articles 50, 70 and 89) protects the legitimate rights of Chinese nationals residing abroad and the rights and interests of returned overseas Chinese. It also mandates the Cabinet of the Chinese Government to exercise the above powers and functions as well as the setting up of the Overseas Chinese Committee of the Chinese Parliament.

## **The Party**

23.32. The Chinese Communist Party has an office called the ‘United Front Work Department’ of the Central Committee dealing with Taiwanese compatriots. One of the main national Chinese NGOs, the ‘All China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese’ is under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, while the other national NGO ‘China Overseas Exchange Association’ also maintains close links with the government. There is also a ‘Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Overseas Chinese Affairs Sub-Committee’ of the Chinese People’s Consultative Conference (which has many non-Party members).

## **The Legislature-National People’s Congress**

23.33. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the Chinese Parliament - the National People’s Congress (NPC) functions under the NPC’s Standing Committee when the NPC is not in session. The NPC has passed the following Laws:

- The 1990 “Law of Protecting Rights and Interests of Overseas Chinese and their Relatives”, which safeguards their legal rights with a focus on political and civil rights, right to participation in politics, property, person, education and the right of visiting, settling and studying in China. Of interest are its following provisions - for example, Article 3 of this Law specifically mandates the State to accord appropriate preferential treatment to returned overseas Chinese and the family members of overseas Chinese. Article 5 entitles returned overseas Chinese to appropriate representation on the National People’s Congress and local people’s congresses in places where there are relatively large numbers of returned overseas Chinese. Article 6 gives them the right to establish public organisations to safeguard their lawful rights and interests. Article 8 enjoins on local people’s governments at all levels to support returned overseas Chinese and the family members of overseas Chinese who invest,

inter-alia, in the establishment of industrial and commercial enterprises. Article 9 allows preferential treatment of duty reduction or exemption to returned overseas Chinese and the family members of overseas Chinese who receive donations made by their relatives and friends outside the country for use in public welfare undertakings.

- The 1993 “Measures for the Implementation of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Returned Overseas Chinese and Family Members of Overseas Chinese” (laying out the preferential treatment to be given by governments at all levels to Overseas Chinese when they return/invest in China).
- A 1990 provision for “Encouragement of Investments by Overseas Chinese and Compatriots from Hong Kong (SAR) and Macao” to create a stable investment climate. Of interest are Article 11, which states that “machines and equipment, vehicles used in production and office equipment that the enterprises with overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao investment need to import and within the total investment, and appropriate volumes of daily necessities and vehicles of overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao compatriots for private use while working in the enterprises shall be exempted from import duty and the consolidated industrial and commercial tax, and from the requirement for import licences. Raw materials, fuel, bulk parts, spare parts, machine component parts and fittings that enterprises with overseas Chinese, Hong Kong and Macao investment need to import for export-oriented production shall be exempt from import duty and the consolidated industrial and commercial tax, and from the requirement for import licences.”

## The Executive

### State Structures Dealing with Overseas Chinese Affairs

23.34. At the Central Government level, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, also called SCOCAO, under the State Council of the PRC (the Chinese Cabinet) is the highest executive body. The Office is headed by a Minister and 4 Vice-Ministers, equivalent to Secretaries in the Indian set up, with a staff of 120. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (SCOCAO) and its local branches assist overseas Chinese (OCs) in the following ways:

- Establishing comprehensive databases in each city, county and province to encourage OCs to find their ancestral roots, homes and properties. This assists the OC to build schools, hospitals and other local infrastructure in their ancestral hometowns and also network with influential members of the local community, which helps in future business dealings.
- Providing advisory services to OCs on investment and facilitating preferential treatment. This includes tax benefits and exemptions, location and *preferential* allotment of land, reduction or waiver of land tax, land-usage charges, and provision of consultancy and liaison services for overseas investors. In particular, the certification and clearances provided by the SCOCAO and its branch offices greatly speed up the approval process. However, it

must be remembered that the procedures and preferential treatment for OC foreign investment approvals are the same as those for any non-overseas Chinese foreign investment, both being very liberal.

- Organising large-scale fairs where matchmaking between OC and local business partners is arranged.
- Implementing policies and laws of overseas Chinese affairs to safeguard their legal rights and interests.
- Solving the problems of overseas Chinese having interests/ investments in China.
- Providing advisory services to OCs on tourism for settling down in China. SCOCAO even commissions firms to perform this task.
- Operating two Universities – Jinan University and Fujian Overseas Chinese University with provincial government collaboration to cater to children of OCs, as well as other institutes and schools that provide short-term courses.
- Implementing policies relating to preferential treatment for children of OCs.
- Maintaining regular contact with OC organisations by organising all China conferences to which China's leaders and prominent members of the OC community are invited. Similar functions are organised in other cities and by Embassies abroad.

23.35. Governments at every level – provincial, city, township and country have similar offices handling overseas Chinese affairs. They get their overall policy direction from the central government office. However, they are relatively independent in their functioning and are able to adopt innovative methods to attract investment. The central government holds annual conferences of the local offices to co-ordinate implementation of policies. Chinese Embassies abroad act as a principal conduit for contacts between OCs and the homeland.

## **Differences with the Indian Diaspora**

23.36. It is important to understand why China has benefited so greatly from investment from its Diaspora, unlike India. Some reasons are obvious, and are due to supply factors. Firstly, the entrepreneurial base of the OCs in Asia ensured a source of liquid funds. Secondly, as already seen, OC entrepreneurs were perpetually in search of opportunities for spreading their risks and geographically dispersing their investments.

23.37. Thirdly, much is made of so-called ethnic ties and emotional attachment to the “motherland”. It is true that OCs naturally have felt more at ease with negotiating business deals in the PRC than investors of other ethnic origin including Westerners. The latter cite the embryonic legal and institutional structures as well as a lack of familiarity with western business concepts as obstacles to investment, which accounts for the continuing preponderance of OC FDI inflows in the total.

But apart from sentimental and cultural ties, purely economic factors, i.e. - the lure of a low-wage manufacturing base in the neighbourhood - is the irresistible factor behind the surge in OC investment in the PRC. It must be recalled that while the State facilitated investment by overseas Chinese, the procedures and incentives for foreign investment were *the same* as that for any non-Chinese foreign investment. Hence economic compulsions are paramount for investment in the PRC, and not ethnic reasons.

- 23.38. Investments which had initially flowed from capital surplus countries like Japan - to Taiwan and South Korea - first contributed to economic growth in the region. Taiwanese and Korean investors in turn, invested in Southeast Asia and when costs there rose, in the PRC. In fact, the 2000 World Investment Report documents a reversal of investment trends, with China leading the entire region in FDI receipts, while Southeast Asia has fallen way behind, mainly due to loss of competitiveness vis-à-vis China. Due to historical reasons, it so happened that the dominant business groups in Taiwan, Hong Kong (SAR) and Southeast Asia were of Chinese ethnic origin. But later Korea and Japan also joined the bandwagon, along with western multinationals, once the OCs had cleared the undergrowth and blazed the trail.
- 23.39. However, physical proximity, cultural and economic factors did not fully explain the huge FDI inflows, which actually began in the 1990s – more than a decade after the reforms were launched. The PRC must be given credit for devising the right State policy mix and its prescience, particularly in anticipating and then building in the 80s the sort of infrastructure the foreign investor would feel comfortable with. This is not the place to discourse on Chinese economic reforms, since it was the whole package and not specific elements that attracted investment from the Chinese Diaspora and elsewhere. But certain features can be isolated, which together with the success of the overall reforms, have ensured continued investor confidence and 2 decades of 8% annual growth.
- In 1978 Deng Xiao Ping initiated a revolutionary programme of economic reforms, reversing a decades old anti-foreign investment and anti-export orientation, 13 years before India tentatively embarked on the same path. In 1979, FDI was permitted for the first time with the passage of the Law on Joint Ventures. Investor-friendly policies were adopted under the Open Door Policy.
  - The Government embarked on a policy of massive investment in infrastructure to create favourable conditions for foreign investment. China established 5 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in the coastal areas, in which it *developed world-class infrastructure* - Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, Xiamen (in 1980) and Hainan Island (in 1988), and the Pudong New Development Area in 1991 to be followed by similar zones in other areas. SEZs now account for a disproportionate share of manufacturing, foreign investment and foreign trade in China, infrastructure is the most developed, and average per capita incomes are the highest in China. By 1993, investment in infrastructure was 6.5% of GDP. The pace picked up from the mid-80s onwards. Today, this means China has 3 times the installed generating capacity

that India has, which means lower prices for industry. China's roads and other infrastructure are also of very high standards. Moreover, big conglomerates particularly from Hong Kong (SAR) invested heavily in property and real estate development in the coastal areas of China, adding to the construction boom and rapidly changing urban landscapes.

- A key factor in the success of China's FDI policy was that the authority for granting approvals and for implementation of the policy were decentralised to the provinces and localities. These vied with each other to court foreign investors, with ready assurances of preferential tax policies, priority supply of land, water and electricity, and expeditious clearances.
- Foreign firms were promised and delivered some of the world's most favourable tax rates by the central government. Tax breaks and holidays, concessional tax rates, duty free imports of capital and office equipment, duty free import of all inputs for the processing trade (these are available for all enterprises and not just Foreign Invested Enterprises, or FIEs), were the main perquisites enjoyed by foreign investors in China (some of these were later scaled down as China became more assertive in attracting FDI).
- A crucial factor was the fervour driving the Party and State bureaucracy to speed up economic growth. The Economist commented that "no matter where you go in China today, the most emphatic sensation you get is the intensity of the desire to modernise and grow. Governors, party secretaries, party representatives on boards of directors: their only interest seems to be foreign investment, trade and economic reform." This attitude greatly facilitated increased FDI inflows.
- The main contours of China's opening up and infrastructure development were thus already in place when FDI inflows started picking up in the 1990s. At the same time entrepreneurs in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea were looking for investment destinations for their capital surpluses and to relocate sunset industries. As Taiwan's economy matured, it relocated huge manufacturing facilities to the mainland. Hong Kong (SAR) acts both as a source of original investment as well as a conduit for "round-tripping". Though FDI is exaggerated by the phenomenon of round tripping, that is, Chinese capital going abroad and returning to take advantage of tax breaks given to foreign firms in China, the plus side is that the funds return to the originating country and create *real assets*. They did not remain parked abroad.
- Although the PRC reversed the pre-1949 provisions permitting dual nationality for Overseas Chinese, following the economic reforms their importance was recognised and special legislation, executive provisions and mechanisms enacted for the benefit of the OCs. The Chinese Constitution protects the legitimate rights of Chinese nationals residing abroad and the lawful rights and interests of returned Chinese and family members and the Chinese Parliament – the National People's Congress has passed legislation the subject. Currently, the major arms of the State and Party, including the National People's Congress, the State

Council and the People's Political Consultative Conference have high-level offices dealing with the Overseas Chinese. At the Central Government level, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (SCOCAO) under the State Council is headed by a Minister. In addition to this, governments at every level – provincial, city, township and country have similar offices handling overseas Chinese affairs.

## Conclusion

23.40. OC capital was thus driven by hardheaded business reasons, and not sentimental ties. They came in when they were ready. Thus, the Kuok tycoons of Malaysia and Singapore and Li Ka-shing, the Hong Kong billionaire began making large-scale investments only in the 1990s. Only a few OCs, like the Thailand based Charoen Pokphand started in 1979. Gordon Wu, the Hong Kong billionaire's Hopewell Holdings also invested large sums in power plants and highways in the late 80s.

## Lessons from China's Experience with its Diaspora

23.41. The differences between the Chinese and the Indian Diaspora thus stem from historical factors. Among China's several advantages, which India does not have as yet, is a large and extremely wealthy component of the Diaspora, which is familiar with the ways of doing business, and ready to invest its capital surpluses in the country of origin. According to *The Economist*, the liquid assets of the OCs are estimated at around US \$ 2 trillion. The Indian Diaspora's origins are also more recent, and its more successful elements are in professional fields. Relative to their own economic weight, the Indian Diaspora has displayed as much concern and attachment to helping the country of origin as any other. This trend could be facilitated by enabling policies in India. However, India will not be able to attract similar FDI inflows from the Indian Diaspora, inter-alia, because the era of massive relocation of labour intensive industries seems to have ended for the time being, unless China decides to vacate these industries to India! India could, however, apply the following lessons from the Chinese example:

- The necessity of deep and meaningful economic reforms to generate rapid growth: The most important lesson from China is that it is the overall economic environment and incentives for investment - an expanding economy, good infrastructure and sensible labour policies – which ultimately ensure sustained investment, domestic, Diaspora based, or foreign. The interest of the OCs in investing significantly in the PRC picked up after the PRC had created the necessary conditions for attracting investment. Moreover, the PRC has the same incentives for attracting FDI regardless of source.
- The necessity of creating a problem-free environment for foreign investors, which includes, inter-alia, assured power supplies, water connections, special housing, easy land acquisition policies: China has adopted legislation and created high-powered State organs to this end. Simultaneously, it has decentralised authority to the lowest possible administrative unit to offer incentives to the foreign investor. As a result, an Overseas Chinese investor finds that all his concerns are expeditiously addressed. A similar twin approach of raising the level at

which policy is decided at the Centre, while delegating and decentralising the actual implementation to local administrative units could be attempted in India.

- 23.42. If these policies are followed, an environment in which all investment, whether of Overseas Indian origin, domestic and foreign will be attracted to India – will be created. With India's relative advantages - an established institutional and judicial framework and greater familiarity with western business practices – FDI inflows from all sources, and not just the Indian Diaspora, could then be expected to increase.

## **THE GREEK DIASPORA**

- 23.43. The Greek Diaspora is estimated to be about 6.7 million inhabiting nearly 86 countries from the United States to the countries of the former Soviet Union, from Canada to Australia, from Latin America to Central Europe, from South Africa to Germany and England while the population of Greece is approximately 10.6 million. The countries in which the Greeks have the largest population and presence are the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, the countries of the former Soviet Union and South Africa.
- 23.44. The main waves of Greek emigration began in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century owing to development of international trade between the West and East in which Greece had a central location. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the centre of gravity of financial activity shifted to the centres of industrial revolution. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Greece with its maritime traditions and banking services, continued to witness the largest expansion of its diaspora and of Hellenism and that of professional and entrepreneurial activity. Greeks occupy high political position in many countries as mayors, members of parliament and senators. Greek miners and railroad workers had gone to Utah in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They went to the Federal Republic of Germany from 1960s to 1980s. In the aftermath of civil war in Greece, communist refugees fled to Eastern Europe and Soviet Union. Many of them have returned to Greece.
- 23.45. The wealthy Greek merchants and intellectuals of the Diaspora actively participated in laying the foundation of the Greek national movement. The Diaspora has, throughout its history, maintained excellent relations with the motherland and comes to its aid in times of need as in the recent years in the case of issues concerning Cyprus. Parliamentarians of Greek origin in different countries advise the Standing Committee of Parliament on Foreign Affairs. The Greek Diaspora also maintains a grassroots level interest in interacting with and helping their compatriots in the motherland. The more influential among them have worked actively to promote closer relations between home and host countries. Greece pays special attention to the host countries of the Diaspora.
- 23.46. The Greeks are a homogeneous society based on Baptism in the Orthodox Church. Religious ethnicity and citizenship are linked. For Greek citizens residing abroad, voting is obligatory. They vote at their embassies/consulates.

## Organisational Structure

23.47. The General Secretariat for Greeks Abroad (GSGA) was established in 1983. It is a part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and functions as an autonomous government entity with its own budget, headed by a Secretary General. It is responsible for the planning, implementation, and coordination of policies addressed to the Greek Diaspora. Its principal aims are :

- To keep the relationship of Diaspora with Greece alive and active by helping them maintain their ethnic and cultural identity.
- To reinforce and multiply the ties between Greeks abroad and Greece.
- To aid in the prosperity and advancement of Hellenes through harmonious coexistence with all people of the world. To foster the continuous strengthening of the ties among them through the World Council of Hellenes Abroad, Greek Cultural Months the world over, Internet Websites, scientific and professional symposia and numerous other far-reaching institutions and activities.
- To maintain the contact of young Greeks with their ancestral language and civilization, with Greece and with overseas communities so that they may be active leaders of Hellenism and of multicultural cooperation.
- To help improve working conditions and standards of living for Greeks all over the world.
- To ensure their smooth reintegration into the Greek society.
- To reinforce philhellenism throughout the world.

## Activities of the GSGA

23.48. The GSGA develops a wide range of activities and programs, and acts as a liaison between the Diaspora and Greek government Ministries and other institutions that deal with specific issues affecting the Diaspora (e.g., education, military service, investments, insurance, taxation, etc.), while coordinating government policy in those areas.

23.49. Apart from planning and implementing policy initiatives for the Diaspora, the GSGA also :

- Provides economic assistance to organisations of overseas Greeks for their cultural and other activities.
- Organises conferences of Greeks abroad both in Greece and overseas and supports such conferences organised by Diaspora organisations.
- Publishes and distributes informational brochures.
- Sends books and audio-visual materials to organisations, academic institutions, etc.
- Sponsors and publishes scientific research on Diaspora and emigration issues.

- Monitors the educational programs of Diaspora organisations and schools and co-operates with the Ministry of Education for the enhancement of these programs.
- Provides scholarships and in other ways promotes the teaching of the Greek language and literature abroad.
- Organises cultural events overseas in co-operation with local organisations, usually in the form of cultural months or cultural weeks.
- Organises symposia and events in Greece for the promotion of overseas artists, academics , scientists, etc.
- Provides information to repatriated Greeks on issues that concern their return to Greece (e.g., pensions, insurance, legal status, tax issues, training, work related issues, etc.) and otherwise implements programs for the successful integration of returning Hellenes into larger social fabric.
- Follows and contributes in the shaping of international developments on Diaspora issues through its monitoring of, and participation in, international organisations/agencies, including the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the OECD, and the World Trade Organisation.

### **Divisions and Departments**

23.50. The GSGA has the following Divisions and Departments:

- Office of the Secretary General.
- Division of Communication with Greeks Abroad
  - Greeks Abroad Organisations Department
  - Communication and Information Department
  - International Co-operation Department
  - Department for Religious Matters
- Division of Educational and Cultural Matters
  - Educational Department
  - Cultural Department
  - Hospitality (Philoxenia) Department
- Division of Economic and Social Policy
  - Economic Co-operation Department
  - Social Policy Department

- Social Security and Welfare Department
- Bureau for EU Matters
- Division of Planning, Research and Development
  - Research Department
  - Organisation and Planning Department
- Division of Finance and Administration
  - Administration Department
  - Secretariat Department
  - Finance Department
  - Publications and Procurement Department
  - Electronic Data Processing Department
  - Legal Co-ordination Department
  - Technical Infrastructure Office
  - Press and Public Relations Office

- 23.51. The Greek Diaspora have organised themselves in over 3,500 organisations in their host countries. These organisations operate at three levels; namely, (i) the community residing in a certain foreign city or a Regional Association of Greeks from a specific geographic region in Greece (ii) second level being the Federation, which is an umbrella organisation of first level organisations in certain foreign countries and (iii) third level being the Confederation which consists of all the federations functioning on an international level. In addition to the above, there also exist several other organisations that fulfil specific educational, professional or other needs of the Diaspora such as Chambers of Commerce, academic associations, medical associations, banking associations.
- 23.52. In 1995, an organisation called the World Council of Hellenes Abroad (better known by its Greek acronym SAE) was founded which is the institutional umbrella representation of all Greek organisations abroad. SAE is a non-partisan, independent consultative body on matters of interest to Greeks abroad, comprised entirely of representatives from Diaspora organisations.
- 23.53. SAE is regularly convened once every two years in the city of Thessaloniki, where its world headquarters are located. It is governed by an elected nine-member executive board (world president, alternate world president, four vice presidents and three secretaries to the world president). The four vice presidents also act as regional SAE presidents in their geographic regions.
- 23.54. The GSGA supports SAE in every possible way and serves as the institutional link between the Greek government and SAE.

## **Relevance of the Greek Experience in the Indian Context**

23.55. Greece is a developed country, although among the less prosperous ones in the EU. It is dependent on the EU for economic assistance and for its economic growth and advancement. Its requirements from its Diaspora are, therefore, different from those of India and the Indian Diaspora. The religious and cultural homogeneity of the Greek Diaspora is another important difference between the Greek and Indian Diaspora. India can, however, benefit from the Greek experience in several ways. A predominant feature of the Diaspora is sentimental and patriotic attachment to the motherland. India like Greece is inheritor of a rich ancient civilisation and culture and can learn from the Greek experience. Greece has a history of very positive interaction and 'brotherly' relations between Diaspora and the motherland. Key importance is given by Greece to providing educational and cultural assistance to the Diaspora. The large GSGA Secretariat in the Foreign Ministry of Greece reflects the high regard for the sentiments and sensitivities of the Diaspora, on which there is an overwhelming national consensus. The Diaspora reciprocates this attitude towards the motherland and comes forward to help the motherland, when needed. The GSGA offers a valuable institutional model for India's efforts to forge links with the Diaspora in the context of her foreign policy goals, initiatives and frameworks.

## **THE ITALIAN DIASPORA**

### **Introduction**

23.56. According to the Italian Foreign Ministry sources, there are roughly 60 million persons of Italian origin abroad, while the population of Italy is approximately 57 million. The number of Italians abroad in 1861, according to published sources was 220,000. By 1876, about 100,000 peoples were leaving Italy each year and by 1914, there were 5-6 million Italians living abroad as compared to 35 million inside Italy. Most emigrants from Italy left in search of employment and better economic prospects as Italy at the time of its independence was a poor agricultural country with large unemployment. Many labourers with poor education from Southern and North - Eastern Italy went to South and North Americas as well as to other European countries in the period 1880-1914. Emigration continued after the establishment of the fascist regime and in the period preceding the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, though in relatively smaller numbers. After the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Italy was again faced with large unemployment, economic shortages and widespread poverty which resulted in another wave of emigration, particularly from its Southern region. The emigration from Italy was directed towards three major geographical areas: Western Europe, South America (mostly Brazil and Argentina) and North America. In addition to the 60 million persons of Italian origin world wide, there are about 3.9 million Italian nationals with larger communities in Argentina, Brazil, USA, Germany, Switzerland, France, Belgium, UK, Canada, Australia and South Africa.

23.57. Two main heroes of Italy's independence had lived abroad i.e., Mazzini in the UK and Garibaldi in the USA. The flow of remittances from the Italians settled in the USA after 1880s began to create a favourable opinion domestically in regard to emigration. The Italian elite saw in this

phenomenon, a ready solution to the country's problem of large unemployment in the South and migration began to be regarded as a useful safety valve against class conflicts. According to published sources, the Italian Government started taking serious interest in the welfare of emigrants with the passage of the 1901 Emigrant Act which created the General Commission on Migration, based in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With a view to promoting the linkages of the emigrants with the mother country, some Italian politicians began voicing support for recognising dual nationality but countries like the USA and Argentina did not react favourably to this suggestion at that time.

### **Involvement of the Italian Diaspora in the Furtherance of Italy's National Objectives**

- 23.58. In recent years, the Italian government has established an organised framework for regular interaction with its Diaspora. In 1985, the Italian government encouraged the establishment of the Committees of Italians Abroad (also called COMITE) in areas with a minimum of 3000 Italian nationals. The COMITE has an executive comprising of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and its members are elected for 5 years. They are expected to collaborate with the Italian diplomatic and consular missions, Italian associations and other COMITEs for the protection of citizen's rights and interests, and promote cultural and social activities, school services, and cultural, social and economic ties with Italy. In 1989, the Italian government set up a General Council of Italians abroad (CGIE) consisting of 95 members, 65 of whom are elected by the Italian communities abroad and 29 are appointed by the government-ten representing immigration associations, 7 from political parties in the Parliament, 9 from trade unions and charitable institutions represented in the National Council of Economy and Labour, one from National Press Federation, one from the Federation of Italian Press Abroad and one from border workers' organisations. Thus there is wider interaction among the representatives of Italian communities in various countries on the one side and government representatives and important segments of the domestic on the other pertaining to the promotion of each others' needs and interests. This Council is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and advises the government on the problems of Italian communities abroad, the need for educational and professional training, how to enhance their national identity, and prepares an Annual Report which is presented to Parliament.
- 23.59. Last year, the Italian government took the initiative of convening a series of Conferences of Parliamentarians of Italian origin, Persons of Italian origin and Italian Consuls world wide. It is understood that there are 346 MPs and Senators of Italian origin in 27 countries in Europe, North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. The Conference of Parliamentarians of Italian Origin was attended by 166 parliamentarians including the speaker of the French National Assembly and the Deputy Speaker of Peru's Congress. The Parliamentarians of Italian origin agreed to set up an Association of MPs and former MPs of Italian Origin in the world. It was felt that Italy ought to utilise the expertise and good offices of these Parliamentarians to establish closer ties with their country of origin and to constitute special lobbies to promote Italian political

and economic interests. The Italian community in the US, for instance, is being geared to canvas US support for Italy's admission as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council.

- 23.60. The Conference of Italians Abroad was organised in Rome from December 11-15, 2000 and was attended by 676 representatives of Italian communities abroad, 169 delegates from Italy, 380 journalists and a large number of observers. It was inaugurated by the President of Italy. This Conference had been preceded by 5 Regional Conferences in Canada, USA, Australia, Europe and South Africa to seek inputs from the Italian communities in these regions about their problems and suggestions for more interactive networking arrangements. The Conference focused on the contributions of the Italian communities in science and technology, economy and culture. It adopted a resolution asking parliament to give voting rights to Italians abroad. The Italian government was also asked to improve the provision of consular services as well as to finance research activities on the problems of the Italian communities in various countries.
- 23.61. The First Conference of Italian Consuls Abroad was held in Rome on December 18-19, 2000 with the participation of 210 Consuls General and Consuls, officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Industry, and members of the business, media, academic and cultural communities. The Conference while discussing means to improve the effectiveness of the Italian Consular Offices abroad, strengthening the external image of Italy, collaboration with the private sector to promote Italian products abroad and to attract more foreign investments in Italy, gave a separate focus to the activities and issues concerning the Italians abroad.

### **Special schemes or incentives offered to Diaspora for fostering closer links with Italy and special legal and constitutional provisions in this regard**

- 23.62. **Dual Citizenship and Reservation of Seats in Parliament:** With a view to foster closer links with Italians abroad, the Italian Parliament passed a Citizenship law in 1992 which explicitly allows (Art.11) Italian citizens who possess, acquire or gain foreign citizenship to retain their Italian citizenship. Italian citizens can renounce their citizenship, if they so desire, but the acquisition of a foreign citizenship does not imply the automatic loss of Italian citizenship. This legislation has benefited Italians living in those countries where acquisition of the local citizenship does not require the incumbent to renounce or lose his previous citizenship. The Italian Parliament passed a resolution in October 2000 to reserve 6 seats in the Senate and 12 in the Chamber of Deputies for the Italian communities abroad. Efforts are now being made to pass the enabling legislation for electing these representatives. The Italian government is also providing financial assistance to the Italian communities abroad for the teaching of the Italian language. Italian TV and radio stations are being encouraged to extend the coverage of their broadcasts to countries with large Italian communities.

### **Special Measures in the Economic and Taxation Fields**

- 23.63. The Italian government has signed Agreements for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with several

countries. Italians abroad face no restrictions in purchasing land or other assets in Italy. They are able to get pension payments for services rendered in Italy, through the Italian Missions abroad.

### **Annual Conference of the Diaspora**

- 23.64. In the past, the Italian government had held a number of conferences of Italians overseas at different intervals. More recently, they have made intensive efforts to reach out to the Italian communities abroad, review their needs and work out new approaches to utilise their experiences and contacts. The Italian government intends to continue these initiatives, though no decision on the periodicity of these conferences has been made so far. The meeting of the General Council of Italians Abroad is, of course, held annually. The centre-right government of PM Berlusconi which came to power in June, 2001 has appointed a separate Cabinet Minister for Italians Abroad. He is spearheading moves to give early representation to the Italians abroad in the national parliament.
- 23.65. **Special Award for the Diaspora:** Italy provides awards for the Diaspora and other foreigners for outstanding achievement and contribution to the motherland.
- 23.66. **Organisational Structure:** The Italian Foreign Ministry has a Directorate General for Italians Abroad and Immigration Policies, headed by a Minister of State. The Directorate General has five Sub-Divisions. There are total of 149 officials in their Directorate for Italians Abroad; of these 16 are diplomatic officers. Annual budget of this Directorate for 2001 is of \$ 66 million.
- 23.67. **Establishment of a Crisis Unit in the Foreign Ministry:** A Crisis Management Unit has been established to analyse and respond to specific emergency situations in which Italians nationals are involved, to take necessary measures to guarantee the safety of Italian nationals abroad, and to collect and appraise any information needed to implement emergency plans. The Unit has 15 staff members, four Departments and is headed by a Secretary General.
- 23.68. The emphasis on the part of the Italian Government is to ensure that the Italian communities abroad continue to speak Italian and remain in touch with the Italian culture.

### **Relevance of Italian Experience in the Indian Context**

- 23.69. Italy is an important industrialised country in the European Union and the Italian Diaspora is by and large an affluent Diaspora. As such, the nature of expectations of Italy and its Diaspora differ from those of India and her Diaspora. The following experiences of Italy, however, are relevant for India:-
- (i) PIOs holding public offices in their adopted countries could be encouraged to form global associations, so that as nationals of these countries they could contribute to strengthening of bilateral relations with India.
  - (ii) A dedicated structure, at a high-level, could be established in India, exclusively for Diaspora Affairs.

- (iii) A Crisis Management Unit could be established in the proposed structure, for effectively dealing with emergency situations involving NRI/PIOs.
- (iv) Favourable consideration could be given to representation for the overseas Indian Communities in the Indian Parliament in order to draw the attention of the Parliament to the problems of overseas Indians; add a new perspective to Parliamentary debates and give PIOs a stronger sense of identification with the motherland.
- (v) Sympathetic consideration could be given to Dual citizenship for overseas Indians. The pros and cons of dual citizenship could be studied in the Indian context.
- (vi) The institutional structure of the CGIE and its network of COMITEs is highly relevant to India as it could ensure wide-ranging and regular interaction between the Indian Diaspora and the Indian government and important national groups in India such as political parties, trade unions, National Councils on Economy, Labour, Press, overseas press etc.
- (vii) Diaspora issues could form an important agenda in the regional level meetings of Indian HOMs and Consular Officials.

## **THE JAPANESE DIASPORA**

- 23.70. Japan with a population of 125 million has a Diaspora of 3 million primarily settled in North and South Americas. The largest number - 1.3 million – is in Brazil followed by 1 million in the USA. Other countries with significant Japanese population are Mexico, Argentina, Bolivia and Peru.
- 23.71. Initially, the economic profile of the overseas Japanese community was mainly agricultural. Over the years, it has changed to trade and commerce and fine human resources. The rise of Fujimori as the Head of State in Peru made the world aware of the conspicuous Japanese Diaspora presence in South America. The Japanese Diaspora in their adopted countries are called “Nikkei” people. In their adopted countries, “Nikkei” people have (a) actively participated in the fields of politics, economics, administration, academia and culture; (b) made active and positive contributions to economic and social development for which they have received individual recognition; (c) and they have played an important role in promoting mutual understanding and progress in the friendly relationships between Japan and their adopted countries.
- 23.72. In July 1955, the Government of Japan set up Overseas Emigration Council, which was an advisory body to advice the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Japan on matters relating to overseas emigration policy of Japan. The Council was subsequently transferred to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 1984. It had 18 members nominated by the Prime Minister from academic and intellectual circles for a term of 2 years. Vice Ministers dealing with administrative matters in various Ministries and Agencies were ex-officio Advisers to the Council. The Council submitted advisory reports on subjects such as measures to cope with various problems concerning the Japanese people living abroad including measures for ensuring their safety, measures towards

reform of visa system, their protection at times of crisis etc. The Council has since been disbanded in January, 2001. With some administrative restructuring, a new body called “Council on the Movement of People Across Borders” is being established by the Japanese government. This organisation will also be an advisory body to advise the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. There is a special cell in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan under the Consular and Migration Policy Division to handle issues relating to the Japanese Diaspora.

### **Special Schemes and Incentives to the Japanese Diaspora**

- 23.73. The main pillars of Japan’s approach to its Diaspora are special schemes or incentives for fostering close links with the motherland, notably through (a) promotion of Japanese language and culture among the people of Japanese origin living abroad ; (b) Imparting technical education to facilitate those who wish to return to Japan and reintegrate ; (c) welfare of the Diaspora, though such activities as ; (i) invitations to Japanese citizens overseas aged above 50 years to visit Japan ; (ii) study tours for students (50-60 numbers); (iii) invitations to leaders of the overseas Japanese (Nikkei) in Latin America to visit Japan; (iv) scholarships to overseas Japanese students to provide vocational skills etc.
- 23.74. There are no special taxation arrangements for the Japanese Diaspora. As regards economic measures to support people of Japanese origin, Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), a government agency provides interest free loans, technical training and scholarships to the Diaspora. The Government of Japan also sends senior and young volunteers to countries which have Japanese Diaspora concentration.
- 23.75. Government of Japan holds conventions and conferences of Japanese people living abroad every year in Tokyo. So far, 42 such conventions have been held between 1957 and 2001. This is being arranged through Association of Nikkeis with active help and assistance of government. The Government of Japan also organises a Pan-American convention every two years in which the representatives of Japanese Diaspora from the Americas participate.
- 23.76. Japan is among the largest providers of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries. It gives special emphasis to liberal ODA flows to those countries, which have substantial Japanese Diaspora concentration.

### **Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad**

- 23.77. The Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad is a well organised body with the objective of providing a deeper understanding of Japan among the host countries and contributing to the advancement of mutual friendship and prosperity between Japan and host countries. To this end, the Association endeavours to enhance the contact and co-operation with the “Nikkei” and the Japanese abroad and participate in projects for international co-operation and interchange between Japan and host countries. Its functions and activities include: an Annual Convention which is attended by the Imperial family for promoting mutual understanding between the Diaspora and

Japan; invitations to eminent Diaspora to visit Japan; annual meetings of the Overseas Japanese Press Association; Public Relations Training for Overseas Japanese Information Media; training to Diaspora journalists; employment-oriented technical training to the children of Diaspora in Japan; technical training to the Diaspora workers who want to repatriate to Japan; training in Japanese language and life for about 40 Diaspora students in Japan for one month; training in Japan of Japanese language teachers staying overseas etc. Most of the technical training programmes are organised by the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in co-operation with the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA).

### **Relevance of the Japanese Experience in the Indian Context**

- 23.78. Japan is a highly advanced economy and the second richest economic power in the world. The bulk of the Japanese Diaspora is in Latin America and comprises of a professional/business oriented people. The large Diaspora in the US is affluent and well placed.
- 23.79. The Japanese Diaspora is active in promoting bilateral relations between Japan and their host countries. The Japanese Government is reputed to have a very caring attitude towards its Diaspora with the objectives of making them feel comfortable in their adopted countries through assistance in the development of Japanese culture and symbols there as well as liberal aid to the host countries. India could learn from Japan's policy of caring for her Diaspora in fostering close bonds between Diaspora and the home country. The dissemination of Japanese culture and language, the provision of technical and educational assistance to the Diaspora, successful organisational models and functions of the Nikkei And Japanese Abroad Societies are particularly relevant in the Indian context. The experience of the new Advisory Body to the Prime Minister to be known as "Council on the Movement of People Across Borders" would be of relevance for India.

## **THE SOUTH KOREAN DIASPORA**

### **Introduction**

- 23.80. The Republic of Korea with its population of about 46 million has about 5.6 million Koreans residing abroad. More than 90% of them are in China, US, Japan and the countries of the CIS. South Korean Diaspora has made important economic and technological contribution to its motherland.

### **Organisational Structure**

- 23.81. There is a "Committee of Korean Residents Abroad", composed of 15 members including the Prime Minister and other Ministers. The Committee functions as a consultative organisation for Korean residents abroad. An autonomous organisation called 'Overseas Koreans Foundation' (OKF) was also launched in October 1997. OKF holds 'Overseas Young Koreans Leaders' conferences to

which it invites professionals of the Diaspora from different countries to identify their problems and to help them build meaningful linkages with their mother countries. Besides other activities, it also has websites: [www.hanminjok.net](http://www.hanminjok.net) and [www.virtualkorea.net](http://www.virtualkorea.net) for the Diaspora.

- 23.82. Prominent Koreans from different countries are invited to visit the Republic of Korea. Economic and cultural exchange programmes, annual meetings of Korean businessmen for encouraging contributions to Korean economy, encouragement of the Korean communities in the countries with large Korean Diaspora to conduct projects through their own efforts and financial means, training programmes for the Korean businessmen in the less developed countries, special programmes for youth groups, support to educational programmes to preserve Korean identity and culture, establishment of overseas Korean schools, providing scholarships for university students to study in Korea especially for those living in China and the countries of CIS, and vocational training to acquire cutting edge industrial technologies are other notable features. The OKF sends cultural envoys and troupes of artists and holds annual arts and music festivals. It hosts the Seoul Arts and Music Festival every year in search of talented Korean artists and musicians among the Diaspora and helps them to develop into internationally renowned artists. It also honours promising overseas Korean authors with literary awards.
- 23.83. According to the Overseas Koreans Foundation Act, the Foundation has nine or less directors inclusive of the chairman and one auditor. Officers other than the chairman and full-time directors work part time. The Chairman is appointed by the President through the Prime Minister upon the recommendations of the Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister. There is a Board of Directors. The Directors, except for those who are ex-officio are appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The auditor is appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade. He can attend the meetings of the Board. The terms of office of the chairman and directors are three years. Officers and employees of the Foundation cannot engage in any business with the object of profit - making and should not hold any additional posts.
- 23.84. An Overseas Korea Fund has been established in the Foundation and for its projects. Financial resources of the Fund are raised by donations, contributions, borrowings etc. Government makes contribution to the Fund for establishment and operation of the Foundation.
- 23.85. In December, 1999, a “Law on Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans” came into force giving them legal, economic and other incentives so that they could contribute more for the development of the motherland.

### **Relevance of the South Korean Experience in the Indian Context**

- 23.86. The Republic of Korea is an upper middle income developing country and one of the world’s fastest growing industrial economies. Its Diaspora has made important economic and technological contributions to the mother country. The Committee of Korean Residents Abroad and the model

of Overseas Koreans Foundation as an autonomous organisation are of relevance in the Indian context. Equally relevant to us are the programmes involving the Korean Diaspora in the economic development of mother country and for their cultural exchange.

## **THE JEWISH DIASPORA**

### **Introduction**

- 23.87. The strength of the Israeli State and the influence of the Jewish Diaspora are complementary in promoting the national objectives of the Jewish State and the interests of Jews world wide. The largest and the most influential Jewish Diaspora is in the United States. It has networked with the Israeli state and the Jewish community world wide with a view to promoting their common interests. The influence of the Jewish Diaspora in the USA and in countries of Europe follows its enormous wealth, its conspicuous professional presence and its numerical strength. Israel's relations with the former USSR and the countries of Eastern Europe under the Communist regimes were strained owing to political reasons. In the US and West Europe, there was wide - spread concern and anxiety regarding the security and well-being of the Jewish Diaspora in these countries. There has been substantial emigration to Israel after the break up of the Soviet Union. Israeli relations have also improved gradually with the former States of the USSR and with Russia, where a fairly large number of Jews continue to live. Israel had close relations with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Today, the influence of the Diaspora in South Africa has helped promote Israeli interests therein.
- 23.88. Out of the 14 million Jews in the world, 5.2 million are in Israel. Major groups abroad are in the US (6m.), France (600,000), Russia (550,000), Ukraine (400,000), Canada (360,000), UK (300,000), Argentina (250,000), Brazil (130,000), South Africa (106,000), Australia (100,000), and the remainder in a total of 91 countries world wide – the smallest communities being in Iraq and Tahiti (100 each). Anti-Semitism has been widely prevalent in most parts of the world and is the main concern of the Diaspora and of Israel. The Jewish community throughout the world is aware that there has never been any trace of anti-Semitism in India.
- 23.89. As is well known, the Jewish community in the US is well integrated in the country's economy, politics and government and has an important influence on US foreign policy towards Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. The community is also well integrated in the European liberal democracies, where there are major concentrations as in the case of the UK and France. Questions of holocaust claims and responsibilities have strained relations with countries like Switzerland, whose banks in 1998-99 were accused of withholding the claims, amounting to billions of dollars, of thousands of Jews who died in the holocaust. Similar claims for damages (for forced Jewish labour) have been made against companies like Mercedes Daimler. As regards the rest of the Diaspora, they are integrated in varying degrees in the host countries. The Jewish community in Islamic nations, however, faces different degrees of discrimination. The Israeli State and the Jewish Agency offer

incentives to the Diaspora especially in East Europe to emigrate to Israel. They also permit people of Jewish origin anywhere in the world to make their homes in Israel.

- 23.90. Scholars point out that the Jewish presence world wide, their knowledge of several international languages, expertise in money lending, international trade, commerce, and diplomacy as well as their cohesiveness and solidarity as a community has made them an integral part of the world economy while helping them preserve their identity.

### **Historical Background**

- 23.91. The history of Jewish people is inextricably linked with that of religion. The Jews have lived throughout history with a powerful sense of a unique destiny. Early Biblical writers expressed this through the concept of the 'chosen people'. They were repeatedly conquered, suppressed and enslaved, from ancient times. The Jewish tribes in Palestine were plundered and enslaved by Babylon in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. and the wealthy among them taken to Babylon. They were enslaved by Alexander the Great and taken to Egypt. In the next 700 years, they dispersed all over the world as minority communities in various Empires where they were humiliated, massacred and treated as undesirable strangers.
- 23.92. With the consolidation of Christianity, they became targets of persecution and discrimination by state authorities in their host countries especially, in Europe and in the Christian world. In the era marked by the Crusades, anti-Semitism became a strong force and culminated in massacres of Jews in Western Europe. The savage attitude of Christians towards the Jews was influenced by the perception that one of the objectives of the crusades was to 'avenge the death of the Saviour on the Jews'. Jews were banished from the Kingdoms of Britain and France. Following the Crusades, the Jews began to save their money in order to protect themselves in times of crisis. Gradually, many of them in the West became moneylenders. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, many Jewish communities moved to Central Europe and Russia where they faced discrimination and persecution. In Poland and Lithuania, they enjoyed a favourable status till the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. The Jewish communities under Muslim rule in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire received better treatment. They had enjoyed relative autonomy in Babylon and under the Persians and Parthians. Babylon emerged as a centre of Judaism, where many Jewish/religious academies were founded till the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Jews enjoyed peace and prosperity under Muslim rule from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries AD especially in Spain. The Jews under the Ottoman Empire in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were extremely prosperous and held important positions in economic life and were represented in leading diplomatic and financial positions in the service of the Sultan. Notwithstanding the fact that they had a status lower than the Muslims, they had religious autonomy and could occupy high posts. The decline of the Ottoman Empire led to the decline of the Jewish community as well. There was greater accommodation of the Jews in many parts of West Europe, after the French Revolution. Under the Nazis, however, there were mass massacres of Jews in West Europe. Six million Jews were killed in the holocaust. The Jews were also subjected

to violence and harassment in East Europe and in Tsarist Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There were organised massacres and Pogroms, following which there was large-scale migration to the New World i.e. USA, Canada and South America. The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw an improvement in the position of the Jews in Western Europe and there was considerable migration to countries, which had experienced the Industrial Revolution. It was in 1917 that the Balfour Declaration laid the foundation for a Jewish national Home in Palestine. The year 1948 saw the creation of State of Israel in Palestine. The Muslim countries of the world and Israel's Arab neighbourhood were generally hostile to the creation of the State of Israel. Demands were made on behalf of the Muslim world for establishing and recognising the State of Palestine. Large numbers of Jews from the Arab countries migrated to Israel. Migration of Jews from the Soviet Union had also commenced. They went to Israel, as well as to North and South America and other West European countries. The State of Israel was truly a creation of its Diaspora.

- 23.93. In the USA, the Jewish immigrants, who had formed an industrial proletariat, improved their economic standing by moving into professions through the education of their children. After the Second World War, Jews became one of the most prosperous Diasporas in the world. The Jewish community in the USA today commands considerable economical and political power. The Jewish communities in Britain, Canada and France also occupy a very important position in those countries. They are well-integrated and prosperous communities. The rise of intolerance in the Muslim world led to continuing outflows of Jews since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Between 1948 to 2000, 2.8 million Jews migrated to Israel of which 1 million were from the former USSR.
- 23.94. The Jewish community had established its presence in India in the ancient times. The Iraqi/Baghdadi and Armenian Jewish communities migrated to India in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Jewish community in India numbered approximately 25,000 in 1948. The emigration (or 'Aliya') of Jews from India began since the establishment of the State of Israel with big outflow in 50s and 60s. The figures of aliya for Indian Jews up to now are about 27,000. Approximately 6000 Jews reside in India, as per Jewish Agency figures (1998). The Indian Jews went to Israel for religious and economic reasons. They are proud of their Indian heritage and the fact that they did not face any sort of social or religious discrimination in India.
- 23.95. The Jews who had migrated in large numbers to South America in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had encountered strong anti-Semitism during the 1930s and 40s. In modern times too they have encountered anti-Semitism during the military dictatorship in Argentina from 1976-82.

### **Concerns of the Jewish Diaspora**

- 23.96. The main issues of concern of the Jewish Diaspora are discrimination and anti - semitism; their security and the security of the state of Israel; their religious connection with Israel; welfare activities of the Jewish communities and promotion of bilateral relations between Israel and their host countries.

- 23.97. The attitude of host countries of the Diaspora varies from full support to Israel (US and South American countries broadly) to measured support from UK and France in the Middle East peace process, and on the Palestinian Issue. The Islamic world (with the exception of Turkey & Morocco) is largely hostile to Israel. As regard the peoples' attitude in the host countries, anti-Semitism continues to exist in varying degrees in the European and Muslims nations.
- 23.98. The Jewish Diaspora's relations with their host countries are based on their peaceful and law abiding way of life. Wherever they are allowed to follow their religious and social traditions, even in isolation from the social mainstream, they make every effort to maintain their traditions. There is professional, economic and political integration, wherever this is permitted in the host countries.
- 23.99. The Diaspora is very keen to ensure that their children get Jewish education. Numerous programmes by the Diaspora organisations and by the Government of Israel have been established in this regard and are very popular.

### **Involvement of the Diaspora in the National Objectives of the Mother Country**

- 23.100. The contribution of the American Jews to Israel has been most prominent, followed by that of the European Jews. The South African Jews during the apartheid era, played a major role in establishing close (mostly secret) relations between South Africa and Israel. To date, Israeli influence in the African continent is based on the contacts and ties of the South African Jews. In the case of CIS countries, there has been an improvement in recent years owing to large Israeli and Jewish investments in the region. The Isenberg family made large investments in China, which helped in promoting close economic ties between Israel and China. The Jewish media, big business, philanthropists and Foundations have made a large contribution to promoting the interests of Israel and the Diaspora.
- 23.101. Israel and the Jewish Agency have an extensive network with all Jewish communities in the world. Their programmes have centred around strengthening of linkages between Israel and the Diaspora; intra-Diaspora linkages and emigration to Israel. There are many Jewish organisations of this nature, some of which are mentioned in this chapter.
- 23.102. The organisation of the Jewish Agency and AIPAC(The American Israel Public Affairs Committee) indicate the objectives of the American Jews with regard to Israel and the Diaspora world wide. These organisations are networked with Jewish communities world wide and with the Israeli Government and embassies abroad. The political objectives of Israel are an important concern of the Diaspora. Religion is also of significance. The underlying idea and the endeavour is to enable the world's Jews to be allowed to perform their religious obligations, and strengthen their linkages with Israel. Details of their activities are given below.

### **Special Schemes/incentives offered by Israel to Diaspora for fostering close links with the motherland**

- 23.103. The main programme of the Government of Israel with regard to its Diaspora is to provide incentives for the Jewish people to migrate to Israel and promote the Israeli objectives of making the State viable, populous, and capable of defending itself against hostile forces. The 'Law of Return' offers wide-ranging benefits to the Diaspora to migrate to Israel. Schemes for the Diaspora include services of the Rabbinate – for catering to the religious and social needs of the Diaspora including – kosher food. On specific religious and social occasions when Rabbis are not available for the Diaspora, services of Israeli-based Rabbis are provided for them – as in case of divorces.
- 23.104. Other important programmes for fostering close links of the Diaspora with Israel are the 'Birthright Programmes' under which the Government and the Jewish communities around the world bring Diaspora youth to Israel to impart broad educational training, including the Jewish religious and cultural traditions (those programmes include – the Hebrew language which is invariably part of all such courses) and the political and security objectives of the country; holding of Diaspora conferences every 4-5 years; and the Maccabiah games (the Jewish Olympics held in Israel every four years). These schemes aim at inculcating a feeling for the 'motherland' among the Diaspora especially the youth, and promoting their close links with Israel. The Jewish Agency which is closely connected with the government helps considerably in funding such programmes.
- 23.105. **Legal, constitutional provisions for Diaspora.** All the Jews are encouraged to visit and live in Israel. The Law of Return deals elaborately with the identification of Jews and grant of permission for Aliya. The Ministry of Immigration offers incentives, financial and other incentives facilitating the smooth settling down of new immigrants in Israel. Israel allows dual nationality, in respect of countries with which it has diplomatic relations. Jewish persons can obtain an Israeli National ID (which indicates Israeli nationality) even if they hold foreign passports. Thus, a Jew holding an Indian passport may obtain an Israeli National ID, but not an Israeli passport.
- 23.106. **Special Measures in the economic/taxation spheres.** Israel currently has a liberalised economic system. There are special incentives for foreign investments in Israel, including investments by the Diaspora. Special incentives are provided by the Israeli State mainly for new immigrants. The main trading partners of Israel- US and Europe are also the largest centres of the Diaspora. Israel has special and privileged economic arrangements with them. The Diaspora has taken a lead in promoting trade between these countries and Israel and also in developing the economic infrastructure of Israel. A scheme of Israeli Bonds had been established by the Government of Israel to attract the savings of the Diaspora for investments in the development of infrastructure in Israel and for the overall development of the economy.

### **Organisational Structures in the Israeli Government**

- 23.107. The following organisations and structures exist in Israel and the Diaspora with regard to Diaspora affairs.

- 23.108. **Israeli Ministry of Immigration:** This Ministry deals with the ‘aliya’ of the Jews to Israel. It administers the Law of Return, conducts programmes and provides funds for the complete integration of new immigrants during their first three years in Israel. Its annual budget is to the tune of \$400-500 million. Its operations are based in Israel. The nodal agency for identifying Jews and their emigration to Israel is the Jewish Agency, whose Immigration & Absorption Department co-ordinates with the Israeli Immigration Ministry and missions abroad. The Ministry and the Jewish Agency jointly run the Information and Publications Unit, which deals comprehensively with the absorption process abroad. The immigration Ministry also keeps track of the Israeli citizens residing abroad, who number about half a million.
- 23.109. In the Knesset, there is the Permanent Committee on Immigration, Absorption & Diaspora, which is the nodal legislative committee dealing with Diaspora affairs and mainly with immigration and absorption. A Ministerial Committee headed by Natan Sharansky was formed, as a forum to raise consciousness about its Diaspora. It has no legislative and executive powers and has only advisory functions.
- 23.110. The Foreign Ministry has a World Jewish Affairs Division, headed by an Adviser to the Foreign Minister on World Jewish Affairs. The Division is responsible for maintaining contact with the Diaspora through Israeli diplomatic missions abroad and in co-operation with other Ministries.
- 23.111. The specific areas of responsibility of the Division include:
- (i) Explaining the political positions of the Israeli government in general, and the Palestinian issue in particular, to the Diaspora and seeking its assistance in achieving these goals.
  - (ii) The Division is currently engaged in the formulation of a new agenda for the Diaspora.
  - (iii) Co-ordinating the issue of the restoration of Jewish property throughout the world, including claims and compensation for holocaust victims.
  - (iv) Gathering material on manifestations of anti-Semitism, and follow-up thereon.
  - (v) Issuing directives to the Israeli missions abroad on the above matters and assisting in the co-ordination of visits of Jewish personalities from abroad.
  - (vi) During 1997, the Division was also involved in issues relating to Judaism.
  - (vii) The head of the Division represents the Foreign Ministry on the Ministerial Committee for the Diaspora. The Division plays an active role in co-ordinating meetings of the Committee with representatives of the American Jews. In the recent past, it has been involved in initiating and preparing meetings of the Israel-Diaspora Forum and the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of expulsion of the Jews from Portugal.
  - (viii) Among the important programmes handled by the Division is the ‘Young Jewish Leadership Diplomatic’ seminars, held annually to explain the position of the Israeli government on

foreign policy matters with the aim of making Diaspora youth ambassadors of Israel and involve them in promoting Israel's national objectives. Such a programme is part of the 'Birth Right' projects, under which, the Israeli government has budgeted \$10 million over five years (starting 1999) and 250,000 Jews will be brought to Israel.

- (ix) A Ministry of Diaspora Affairs was established in the former government of PM Barak (1999-2001) headed by Michael Melchior. The Ministry broadly dealt with issues currently looked after by the World Jewish Affairs Division in the Foreign Ministry. The Ministry for Diaspora Affairs was wound up recently.

## **Non-Governmental Organizations**

### **(a) Jewish Organisations**

- 23.112. The Jewish Diaspora is organised in a spread of associations and groups which look after a wide range of interests.
- 23.113. In the US/Canada, there are two kinds of Jewish organisations – communal (synagogues) of which there are 180 listed, most of them are currently defunct. They deal with the media and local councils, and also maintain close links with Israeli missions.
- 23.114. Among the other important organisations (there are 54 in all) are the AIPAC, The Conference of the President (which works with the White House, Dept.of State, etc.), Anti-Defamation League, Hillel (covers Jewish life on campuses), B'nei B'rith.
- 23.115. Even in a country like India, at least thirty Jewish associations are listed, such as Bene Israeli Women's Organisation, Bombay Zionist Association, Council of Indian Jewry, Bene Israeli Homeless Fund.

### **The Jewish Agency for Israel**

- 23.116. The JA (1929) pre-dates the state of Israel and was a vehicle for relations between Israel and the Diaspora. Before 1948, it acted as the official representative of the Jewish people to the British administration and to world powers. It was also responsible for building of a Jewish homeland, for aliya, and for settlement and provision of basic social services. It was the 'government-in-making' of the pre-state Israel. While most of the pre-state functions were taken over by the Israeli state, the JA retained responsibility for aliya. The JA's general assembly comprises about 500 members, 50% from the World Zionist Organisation, 30% from United Jewish Appeal (UJA) and 20% from Keren Hayesod. The UJA raises funds in the US for the JA's programmes and KH raises funds in about 50 countries outside the US. It is headquartered in Israel.

### **The American Israel Public Affair Committee (AIPAC)**

- 23.117. It is the legislative arm of the US Jewish community charged with the responsibility of dealing with the US Congress and US-Israel relations. It is ranked among America's most powerful interest

groups. It helps pass more than 100 pro Israeli legislative initiatives a year, including security and aid issues concerning the state of Israel. It is a lobby in the US Congress, provides information on the Middle East and brings Congressional groups from the US to understand Israel's concerns. It has a \$ 15 million annual budget and a staff of 65 in Washington. Its recent focus has been on enhancing US-Israeli strategic co-operation, Iran's nuclear weapons programme, countering terrorism etc.

### **The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee**

23.118. The AJJDC is the main organisation which deals with the welfare issues of the Diaspora outside the US and Canada. Its four missions are aid for the Jews in distress; relief of Jews in need; restoring and strengthening Jewish community life; and helping Israel to address the social service needs of its vulnerable population. Among its rescue operations are the assistance programmes to the holocaust survivors, and in recent times to rescue the Jews in the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict. Relief activities include assistance to weaker sections of the Diaspora, especially in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and also in India and Africa. The AJJDC is also involved in strengthening Diaspora communities through educational and cultural programmes, and financial/economic help. For example, the AJJDC provided Rabbis and Jewish Service Corps volunteers to the Bene Israeli community in India to enrich Jewish life. It also has elaborate programmes for the upliftment of weaker sections of the community in Israel.

### **The World Jewish Congress**

23.119. A political umbrella Association of 80 Jewish communities in the world, it is designed to protect the human rights of the Jewish people by taking up their interests or concerns with their host governments. It does not deal with social and educational issues, but only political concerns. It is a sort of an international NGO which lobbies in different countries. It is a voluntary organisation where all communities are represented in a general assembly and representatives are elected on the basis of proportional representation. Each country has one vote, though decisions are made on the basis of the consensus principle. It does not have an enforcement mechanism. The general assembly of the WJC elects its president and regional officers every five years. It has an annual budget of \$ 5 million. In the early 1990s, it approached the GOI to influence India's vote in the UNGA resolution which attempted to equate Zionism with racism. The WJC is headquartered at New York. All its publications are from Israel. It hosts Presidents of local Jewish communities in different countries for briefing sessions on issues concerning Israel, such as the recent violence in Israel.

### **The American Jewish Committee**

23.120. The American Jewish Committee in the US protects human rights of Jews and works for the security of Israel and the development of bilateral relations with the US.

## **The Project Interchange**

23.121. The Project Interchange, another Jewish organisation in the US, educates American political, ethnic and religious leaders about Israel, including through visits to Israel. Many other organisations focus on issues of reparations to the victims of the holocaust and trials for Nazi war crimes.

## **Relevance of Israeli Experience in the Indian Context**

23.122. Israel is a prosperous country. Its outlook and policies are conditioned by its historical background relating to the struggle for a homeland for Jews and the continuing problems of security in the context of Palestinian issues, Gaza Strip and the West Bank. There is considerable dissimilarity between the experiences and requirements of India and Israel. The religious homogeneity of the Jewish Diaspora also distinguishes the Jewish Diaspora from the Indian Diaspora. Moreover, India does not share Israel's imperatives of focusing on encouraging the return of the Diaspora to the homeland as a prime concern. Nor does it share Israel's religion-based concept of a 'homeland'. The High Level Committee feels that despite these differences, the Israeli experience is highly instructive for India and its Diaspora. It also notes in particular the Israeli Diaspora's contribution to its motherland and the great solicitude of the motherland for its Diaspora.

23.123. Specific mention may be made of the following policies/projects and programmes which are relevant in the Indian context -

- (a) Based on its economic strength and political influence, the Jewish Diaspora had a positive impact, in promoting the concerns of Israel and of Jewish communities world wide in fostering close and friendly bilateral relations between the host countries and Israel. Indian Diaspora can take its cue from the Jewish example.
- (b) Powerful Jewish lobbies in the US Congress look after the concerns of Israel and the Jewish communities all over the world and in the White House. The Indian Diaspora would find the activities of the lobbies of the Jewish Diaspora, their extensive funds raising ability, their global networks which link Jewish associations and organisations world wide as well as with the State of Israel, a role model. The Indian Diaspora would also find the work of the World Jewish Congress including its human rights concerns for the Diaspora as a useful guide.
- (c) The Jewish Diaspora's special role in the economic development of Israel is worthy of adaptation and emulation in the Indian context. Keeping in view the key role of Science & Technology in India's economic development and advancement, India can benefit from the Israeli experience of large-scale funding by the Israeli Diaspora to several research institutions and training programmes and projects in Science & Technology, in Israel. Special efforts are needed to encourage the Indian Diaspora to contribute similarly to India through funds and technical expertise. Programme such as the National Technology Incubator scheme encourages the talented among the Diaspora, especially scientists and engineers to work in Israel in programmes or projects for which the Government provides physical premises,

financial resources etc. in high technology fields in particular. Similar concepts could be applied in other important areas as well to attract PIO talent from technologically advanced countries for India's development.

- (d) A scheme of Israel Bonds, issued by the Government of Israel, to build and strengthen the national economy and infrastructure, could be adopted in the Indian context. This could be an important instrument of channelising the savings and investment of the Diaspora for the development of India's infrastructure and economy. It would also strengthen the emotional bonds of the Diaspora with the motherland. The Israel Bond Organisation and other organisational structures and committees both in Israel and in the countries with significant Diaspora concentrations, could similarly be established in India and abroad as per our requirements.
- (e) The Jewish Birthright Project for educating the Diaspora youth about the culture and needs of the motherland is of special relevance for India. India could devise imaginative programmes and summer camps for Diaspora youth, which combine tourism and education in a manner which attracts the youth to participate in such programmes. In view of India's resource constraints, the Government of India need not bear the costs of international travel of the participants to attend such camps in India. That expenditure could be borne by the Indian Diaspora youth and in the case of those who cannot afford it, by organisations/associations of the Diaspora.
- (f) The substantial philanthropic contributions by the Jewish Diaspora to Israel, especially to various institutions of public or private character which bear the names of the donors, has special relevance for India. Suitable steps may be taken to encourage and promote philanthropic contributions by the Indian Diaspora to India in order to improve the quality of the life of the people and to develop their full potential.
- (g) The Indian Diaspora could be encouraged to carry out an in-depth study of the major Jewish organisations and their multi-faceted contributions to their motherland as well as to the causes of the Diaspora worldwide. It could make concrete recommendations on steps that the Diaspora could take to significantly enhance friendly ties between home and host countries; contributing substantially to the motherland, especially for its socio-economic development needs; promote cultural and emotional bonds with the Diaspora, especially for its youth and build strong political lobbies, wherever appropriate, in support of causes of the motherland and the Diaspora.

## **THE LEBANESE DIASPORA**

### **Introduction**

23.124. According to the World Lebanese Cultural Union, the global forum of the Lebanese Diaspora, there are some 13 million Lebanese abroad.. The population of Lebanon is about 3.5 million.

Ninety two per cent of the Lebanese Diaspora is settled in North and South America. Most of the Lebanese are in Brazil (6.8 million), United States of America (3.5 million), Argentina (1.2 million), Canada (2, 70,000), Columbia (1,25,000), Australia (3,90,000), France (64,929), New Zealand (45,000), Saudi Arabia (1,20,570). Most Lebanese migration took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when Lebanon was not an independent country. The reasons were mainly the Lebanese Civil War of 1860; the growth of population; economic opportunities in other countries and religious and political persecution in Lebanon. During the period 1975-1990 the Lebanese Civil War was the main cause of further emigration. The majority of the Diaspora is from the Christian community. The number of Muslims migrants is comparatively small.

- 23.125. The Lebanese Diaspora is politically active particularly in North America and Australia. The Lebanese Government permits dual nationality. The overwhelming majority of the Diaspora, enjoys the same rights and privileges as the Lebanese nationals residing in the country. The overseas Lebanese are treated as Lebanese citizens. There are no special provisions and financial incentives for them as they can avail of all the facilities given to home based Lebanese nationals.
- 23.126. Lebanon has maintained cultural and commercial links with its Diaspora. The home based Lebanese businessmen and companies have constant interaction with the Diaspora. The remittances sent home by the overseas Lebanese have played an important role in Lebanon's economy especially in meeting a major part of its large trade deficit of-US \$ 6.2 billion in the year 2000. It is evident that the remittances sent home by successful emigrants have had an important effect on the country's economy and social life. They have enabled families to buy land and build family homes and villages, and educate children. Some emigrants have also built schools and clinics; while others have offered to buy Zero percent rate of interest Treasury Bills for a period of 5 years. Over 90 per cent of the Diaspora in North and South America have formed lobbies to counter the Jewish lobby and champion the cause of Lebanon.
- 23.127. The Lebanese Government has established a World Lebanese Cultural Union (WLCU). Its main effort is to strengthen links between the motherland and the Diaspora. The Union holds annual conferences and is financed by subscription of members, and donations. The Lebanese Government also provides grants to the WLCU for its activities, which aim at promoting cultural linkages with the Diaspora especially the youth. The WLCU has an elaborate network. In countries where there is a substantial Lebanese population, there are Councils of the WLCU at the country-level and at the level of the continent to which country councils are affiliated. Finally, there is an apex WLCU body at the global level. The WLCU Council maintains contacts with the Lebanese Diaspora and organises cultural events. They celebrate Lebanon's National Day with great enthusiasm. The Council has specialised Committees dealing with economic and cultural issues which include contributions for the reconstruction of Lebanon and consolidation of economic relations between Lebanon and the host countries; media exchange programmes between Lebanon and the host countries; support to the underprivileged in Lebanon and in host countries; employment needs of

the youth; spread of the Lebanese culture in the host countries; and establishment of schools for teaching the Arabic language.

- 23.128. The WLCU has organised camps in Lebanon for young members of the Diaspora. They are required to pay their international travel and are offered a week's stay in Lebanon at the expense of the Lebanese authorities. During these youth camps, they are exposed to the Lebanese culture, music and tourists sites. They are considering organisation of Beauty contests and sports Olympiads for the Lebanese Diaspora; and invitations to Diaspora artists to visit and perform in Lebanon. Outstanding athlete/sportsmen are encouraged to play for the Lebanese national team.
- 23.129. The Lebanese Organisations in various countries focus mainly on welfare activities relating to the needs of the Diaspora. Their grievances are resolved through the Lebanese embassies. Lebanon's liberal attitude of allowing dual nationality has been a very important factor in nurturing in the Diaspora the essence of belonging to its roots. The Lebanese leadership has also exhorted the Diaspora to create an international lobby aimed at supporting crucial national issues and the drive for reconstruction of Southern Lebanon which was vacated by Israel after 22 years of occupation. It is encouraging the Diaspora to take an active part in the build-operate-transfer (BOT)public projects and launch an expatriate fund to finance economic and political lobbies aimed at providing Lebanon much needed international support.
- 23.130. Lebanon provides its Diaspora with national decorations for their outstanding services. The Lebanese have also utilised services of well-placed members of the Diaspora as in the case of Phillip Habib (who was a key negotiator in the US Foreign Service) to arrange a cease-fire across the Lebanese-Israeli border.
- 23.131. It is particularly noteworthy that the Lebanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been renamed Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigrants.
- 23.132. Lebanon is now in the process of reconstructing its economy severely damaged by the civil war. Trade and financial services which had been Lebanon's main source of income and the manufacturing sector were badly damaged as well. Unsettled conditions in Lebanon today have discouraged foreign investment The present Prime Minister has however, attempted to introduce schemes to encourage the Diaspora to invest in Lebanon.

### **Relevance of Lebanese Experience in the Indian Context**

- 23.133. The WLCU, even though it has been relatively inactive following the civil war in Lebanon, offers a model for a global forum for promoting cultural links among the Indian Diaspora as well as with the motherland. The Indian Diaspora could be encouraged to study this model for its possible adaptation to the Diaspora's requirements of strengthening its unity amidst diversities of sub-cultural and ethnic communities; strengthening intra-Diasporic bonds; projecting India's unique ancient civilisation and heritage to the host countries; and enhancing mutual interaction and

understanding with the mainstream cultures in the host societies. Dual Nationality has facilitated strong links between Lebanon and its Diaspora. This aspect has relevance for India.

## **THE FILIPINO DIASPORA**

### **Historical Background**

23.134. Mass migration of Filipinos overseas was mainly based on economic inducements, and their permanent migrations can be traced to the early 1900s when Hawaii experienced a severe shortage in plantation workforce the Philippines was then an American colony, and became a source of cheap labour. The US became the primary market for the overseas Filipino workers. By the late 1930s, Filipinos comprised about 70% of Hawaii's plantation labour and a significant percentage of California's grape, apple and orange-picking population.

23.135. The next wave of contract migration came after the Second World War, when Filipino contractors and labourers participated in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of American strongholds in Guam and Okinawa. The Korean and Vietnam wars institutionalised Filipino participation in many US defense and war-related civilian projects. At the same time, workforce markets started opening up in Borneo, Thailand, Malaysia, and in Indonesia. These opportunities were utilised by Filipino labour in search of employment. Canada also provided an alternative destination for professionals – mainly medical personnel who sought permanent migration to the North American continent.

23.136. In the 1970s, contract migration began to the Middle East. This was fuelled by the development boom following the steep increase in oil prices and the vast demand in oil-producing Arab countries for foreign skilled workers. Their requirements were in excess of what their indigenous population could supply and there was also some reluctance on the part of many locals to engage in blue-collar jobs. The newly-industrialising countries from Asia emerged in the 1980s as a destination for Filipino labour. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and other NICs offered trainership programmes to fill up shortages in their labour markets. Such contract migrations of Filipinos eased the domestic unemployment situation temporarily.

### **Government Regulation and Supervision**

23.137. In the post-independent Philippines, until 1974, overseas recruitment of Filipinos had been characterised, by minimal Government supervision and there was exclusive private sector participation. Between 1974 and 1978, laws were passed which provided for Government control on migration and for the eventual phase-out of private sector participation.

23.138. In 1978, private sector participation in overseas employment was reinstated since the demand of the booming overseas market was more than the Government machinery could handle. From the decade of 1970s, the employment migration of Filipinos evolved into a managed phenomenon,

rather than simply a spontaneous exodus driven by economic factors. In 1980, laws were amended to recruit and place workers for overseas employment under Government-to-Government arrangements.

### **The Case of Flor Contemplacion (1995)**

23.139. The case of Flor Contemplacion, who was charged in Singapore for murdering a Filipino maid and a Singaporean child raised the plight of OFWs to the very top of national agenda. There were demands that enough jobs be created at home for its citizens. The Philippines offered an emergency airlift of all OFWs wanting to leave Singapore; effectively froze bilateral exchanges [including planned joint naval exercises], threatened to break diplomatic relations with Singapore and forced the Foreign Minister and Labour Minister of the Philippines to resign. It also resulted in the passage of the following Act.

### **Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act [MIWOFA] of 1995**

23.140. The major provisions of this legislation stated that the Government would ensure that the prospective host countries, apply existing labour and social laws to protect the rights of migrant workers; observance of multilateral conventions to which the host countries are signatories and of declarations or resolutions for the protection of these workers; implementation of bilateral agreements or arrangements with the Philippines Government regarding protection of the rights of the overseas workers, through positive, and concrete measures. The law also seeks to deter “illegal” Filipinos from working in other countries. Illegal recruitment has been categorised as ‘economic sabotage’ and life imprisonment has been prescribed for those who recruit workers below the age of 18 years.

### **Omnibus Rules on Overseas Filipinos [OROF]**

23.141. These rules were approved in 1996, in follow up to the MIWOFA legislation. Under the Rules, all fees for services charged by any Government office on migrant workers as of June 1995 would not be increased. All other services rendered by the Department of Labour and other Government agencies in connection with the recruitment, introduction and placement of labour and other assistance to migrant workers would be rendered free of cost. The administrative costs would not be borne by the worker.

23.142. Filipino migrant workers are exempt from the payment of travel tax and airport fee on showing their Overseas Employment Certificate issued by the POEA.

### **Office of the Legal Assistant for Migrant Workers Affairs [OLAMWA]**

23.143. This office was created by the MIWOFA. The Head of the Office has the rank of Secretary to the Government and is primarily responsible for the provision and overall co-ordination of all legal assistance services to (i) Filipino migrant workers, and (ii) All overseas Filipinos in distress.

### **Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Centres [MWOFRFC]**

23.144. The MWOFRFC are established in countries where there are at least 20,000 migrant workers; where feasible, these are established within the premises of the Embassy. The FRC provides services including counselling, welfare assistance, information programmes, registration, HRD, gender sensitive programme etc.

23.145. FRCs are staffed by a minimum of four personnel composed of the following:

- (a) Labour attache [Ministry of Labour & Employment],
- (b) Foreign Service personnel [Foreign Ministry],
- (c) Welfare Officer [OWWA],
- (d) Center Co-ordinator [OWWA],
- (e) Interpreter, when necessary [local hire].

23.146. Where there is a significant concentration of Filipino migrant workers, a lawyer and a social worker is also deployed, if required, upon the recommendation of the HOM.

### **Philippine Overseas Employment Administration [POEA]**

23.147. The POEA was set up in 1982, with the Minister for Labour & Employment as the Chairman of the Governing Board. It supervises and regulates private sector participation in the Overseas Employment Programme. It rationalises and regulates the industry through its licensing system, established rules and regulations and an improved system of private agency performance appraisal.

23.148. POEA has approved over 1,300 private manning agencies to which 2-year licenses are granted. It receives over 200 complaints a month from workers and employers regarding violation of disciplinary regulations/recruitment procedures etc. The judgement of the administrator is only subject to appeal in the Office of the Minister.

#### **POEA provides the following services:**

- (a) Pre-employment: includes accreditation of employers, improving job orders, conducting market research etc.
- (b) Licensing and regulation: issuance of license to private employment agencies, regulates the number of participants in the overseas programme, conducts surveillance of suspected illegal recruiters, provides assistance to victims of illegal recruitment etc.
- (c) Welfare & employment: Conducts seminars, maintains a registry of workers for placement purposes etc.
- (d) Adjudication: handles complaints against agencies, employers and contract workers etc.

- (e) General Administration: Policy research, information, statistical monitoring of overseas employment data etc.

Last year, the POEA, processed over 800,000 cases and issued individual OECs [Overseas Employment Certificates]

### **Illegal OFWs**

23.149. Illegal OFWs are now estimated at 3 million approximately, a substantial increase from 1.8 million in 1995. Travelling within the ASEAN region requires no visas. Hence, many OFWs use that as the initial staging ground.

23.150. Cases regarding illegal recruitment are dealt with in a regular court; POEA only has a small cell, which provides assistance to the local police and other concerned authorities. To prevent illegal recruitment and fraud and exploitation of migrant workers, Embassies and consular offices, through the POEA disseminate information on labour and employment conditions, migration realities and adherence of particular countries to international standards.

### **Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA)**

23.151. Created in 1977, it is a Government agency under the Department of Labour & Employment with the responsibility of promoting the welfare of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) and their dependants.

### **Objectives**

- (a) Protect and promote the welfare of the overseas Filipino workers and their dependants,
- (b) Facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the Labour Code concerning the responsibility of the government to uplift the lives of OFWs,
- (c) Provide social work, legal, cultural and entertainment programmes,
- (d) Provide skill development services for OFWs and their dependants,
- (e) Undertake studies and researches for the enhancement of the Filipino overseas workers' social, economic and cultural well-being, and
- (f) Develop, support and finance projects for the welfare of migrant workers.

### **Administration**

23.152. The Board of Trustees is composed of the Minister of Labour & Employment as Chairman and the Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Budget & Management and Administrator of POEA among others as members.

23.153. It undertakes the repatriation of workers in cases of war, epidemic, disaster or calamities [natural or man-made] etc.

### **Technical Education & Skills Development Authority [TESDA]**

23.154. TESDA functions under the Department of Labour & Employment. It accredits private agencies which impart training to OFWs. It also approves the curricula in these institutes.

### **Re-Placement and Monitoring Centre [RPMC]**

23.155. This was created in the Department of Labour & Employment for returning OFWs to:

- (a) Provide a mechanism for their reintegration into the Philippines society,
- (b) Serve as a promotion house for their local employment; and
- (c) Tap their skills and potentials for national development.

23.156. Migrant Workers' Day is commemorated on June 7<sup>th</sup> under the sponsorship of the Department of Labour & Employment. The objective is to highlight the important role of Filipino migrant workers and overseas Filipinos to the motherland.

### **Voting Rights**

23.157. Currently, OFWs are not entitled to vote. However, a bill to enable them to participate in the electoral process is being debated in the Senate. If passed, OFWs will be able to cast their ballot in the next national elections.

### **Involvement of OFWs in the National Objectives of the Philippines**

23.158. The Philippines gives considerable importance to the OFWs in their foreign policy. In a recent interview from Beijing, President Arroyo stated that after geo-political realities and issues, the OFWs are the next major subject in the Philippine's foreign policy. This was in view of seven million OFWs being scattered around the world who remit over US Dollars six billion a year to the Philippines.

23.159. Practically, four fifths of the estimated seven million Filipinos overseas at present are contract workers and the remaining one fifth have opted for permanent immigrant status in their country of destination. Most of them return to the motherland and to their families which they temporarily leave behind.

23.160. OFWs and their windfall earnings from overseas employment have propped up the Philippine economy from one crisis to the next, and have provided for more than two decades now, much-needed foreign exchange for important development projects.

### **Relevance of Filipino experience in the Indian Context**

23.161. With over 2000 Filipinos leaving daily for employment abroad on a legal basis and contributing substantially to the national exchequer, the Philippines have put in place after 1995, supporting institutions, boosted the strength of their Missions and tightened their laws aimed at providing

the OFWs with a sense of security. In spite of all the regulations and strengthening of the legal framework, the Philippines, do not seem to have completely tackled the problem of illegal workers. The experiences and problems of the Filipino labour in the Gulf and South East Asia have many similarities with those of Indian labour in these regions. Philippines appears to have effectively addressed many of the problems and issues concerning its overseas workforce. The following organisational structures/legislations of the Philippines would, therefore, be highly relevant in the Indian context :-

- (i) The Philippines appears to be far more successful than India in providing fair and sound contracts to its overseas labour. There have been major complaints from Indian labour in regard to employment contracts. The Philippines arrangements of the POEA (Philippines Overseas Employment Administration) can be suitably adopted in India or existing arrangements improved on that basis.
- (ii) The Philippines has given high importance to legal assistance for its overseas labour, both in the Philippines as well as in countries where there are large concentrations of labour. Details of these have been outlined earlier in this chapter. India does not have arrangements for legal assistance for its overseas labour. This is a major drawback in our efforts to protect the rights of workers and provide for their welfare. India can benefit considerably from the Filipino experience and adopt similar arrangements for adequate legal aid and protection to overseas workers. The scheme for Legal Attaches in missions abroad; the office of the Legal Assistant for migrant workers in Philippine, headed by a Secretary; legal presence in concerned missions for providing legal aid to workers etc. have special relevance to Indian requirements.
- (iii) The Philippines has done exceptionally well in providing and up-gradating skills of the overseas workers so as to ensure high salaries, professional training and good treatment abroad. These arrangements could be studied in-depth and recommendations made for similar arrangements in India for imparting skills and vocational counselling for Indian labour overseas.
- (iv) The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act, 1995 appears to provide a highly effective framework for addressing all concerns of the overseas labour and other Filipino migrants. This could be studied in depth with a view to making suitable recommendation on appropriate legislations that could be adopted by India.
- (v) The Board of Trustees of OWWA comprising of Labour and Employment Minister as its Chairman, and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Budget and Management and Administrator of POEA etc. as Members could be suitably replicated in India as a nodal body to oversee welfare arrangements for the overseas labour.

- (vi) The insurance programme of the OWWA which provides for effective medical reimbursements, and covers disability, dismemberment or death could also be studied and suitably adapted in the Indian context.

23.162. Since the problems faced by the Indian labour are very similar to those faced by the Filipino workers in the Gulf, the Filipino experience, arrangements and legislations are highly relevant to India and can be suitably adapted to India's requirements as follows:-

- (i) Enactment/strengthening of legislations along the lines of the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipino Act, 1995.
- (ii) Establishment/strengthening of appropriate organisational structures in India and in the Indian Missions overseas on the model of
  - (a) Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Resource Centres (MWOFRFC)
  - (b) Philippines Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)
  - (c) Office of the Legal Assistant for Migrant Workers Affairs (OLMWA)
  - (d) Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA)
  - (e) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.
  - (f) Re-placement and Monitoring Centre (RPMC)
- (iii) Provision of exemptions for travel tax, airport fees and other concessions under the OROF.

The above legislations and mechanisms would ensure protection of the rights of the overseas workers; provisions of skills; measures for the welfare of the overseas workers; measures for the resettlement and reintegration of the returnee migrants; orientation programmes to make workers fully aware of the conditions of work overseas etc. Due recognition should also be given to contributions of the overseas workers to the national economy and to their importance in India's foreign policy as a major source of remittance. The annual celebrations of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and national awards proposed in this report, could also give due recognition to the achievements of the overseas workers and their contribution to India.

## **THE POLISH DIASPORA**

### **Introduction**

23.163. Emigration from Poland to other countries has been under way for more than a century. The bulk of Polish emigration to the United States occurred when Poland was partitioned by Germany, Russia and Austria. Economic and political reasons have been the causes of emigration. People emigrated during the communist rule in search of new pastures. Throughout Polish history, emigres have generously supported the nation's struggle for a free Poland both morally and materially. During the socialist period, the State tried to woo emigres by setting up officially sponsored

Emigré Societies abroad and sought to lure investment into Poland by establishing support to “Polonian companies.” The Diaspora, played an active role in the overthrow of Communism in Poland. It is only after the overthrow of communism in Europe that efforts were made in an organised manner by the Government of Poland to reach out to these communities which go under the collective name of Polonia (Polish Diaspora).

### **Constitutional and Legal Provisions**

- 23.164. The obligation on the part of Government of Poland towards its people staying abroad has been incorporated in the Constitution of the country. According to Article 6.2 of the Constitution, the Republic of Poland shall help Poles living abroad to maintain their links with the national and cultural heritage. The Polish constitution allows dual citizenship.
- 23.165. The Upper House of Polish Parliament has taken legislative initiatives of importance to the Polish Diaspora. The draft Polish Citizenship Act introduced by the Senate aims to make it easier for people of Polish descent to acquire Polish citizenship. This draft seeks to address unlawful stripping of Polish citizenship during the Second World War. The second initiative is a draft law on ‘the Poles Charter’ and the procedure of establishing the national status of persons of Polish nationality or Polish origin. It appears that there may be problems in its adoption. The third legislation, namely, the Repatriation Act seeks to fulfil a constitutional obligation that persons of Polish descent have the right to settle on the territory of the Republic of Poland. Out of the three drafts, only the Repatriation Law was passed in November 2000. The other two drafts are still being considered by the Polish Parliament. The law of repatriation mainly aims to facilitate the return of people of Polish origin from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Tazikistan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries of former Soviet Union. The repatriation is done through local authorities, institutions and private parties who can undertake to guarantee shelter and work to the repatriates. Several NGOs also take part in the repatriation process. About 20 million Zloty (about US \$ 6 million) was earmarked to finance repatriation from the budget of 2000. The law on repatriation has 45 articles describing the nature, modus operandi, and scope of repatriation. Most of those repatriated so far under this law have come from Kazakhstan where they were forcibly resettled during 1935-36.
- 23.166. Polish families who are interested in getting repatriated to Poland can register with Polish Embassies and Consulates by providing details of the size of the family, area of preference, nature of skills etc. The local administrations of Poland forward their requirements and capability to absorb repatriates to the Government. The Government examines the data with the help of the Polish diplomatic Missions and Posts and decides on the number of families to be repatriated..

### **Profiles of Polish Diaspora in Various Countries**

- 23.167. It is estimated that about 15 to 17 million people of Polish descent are living outside Poland while the population of Poland is approximately 38.6 million. The country-wise distribution of the Polish Diaspora and organisations representing these communities are as follows:-

- (a) **USA:** There are about 9.4 million people of Polish origin living in the United States of America. While hundreds of organisations are actively involved in representing the Polish communities, the Polish American Congress is an umbrella organisation which subsumes the majority of smaller groups as its members. The leaders of the Congress had accused Poland of inaction in respect of atrocities committed against Jews in the past. The repatriation of property taken over by the Communist Government is also another issue of concern to the Polish Diaspora. The local concerns of the Polish community in America, are taken up by the Government of Poland with the US Administration from time to time.
- (b) **Germany:** About two million people of Polish descent are estimated to be living in Germany. The Convent of Polish Organisations represents a considerable number of smaller organisations. There are two more organisations with a long tradition of representing the Polish community in Germany. There are some tensions concerning the status of the Polish minority in Germany and these matters are being taken up by the Polish organisations with the German Government.
- (c) **Brazil, France and Canada** have 1.2 m., 1 m. and 0.8 m. Poles respectively and one or more Associations of Polonia. Ukraine has an estimated 250,000 people of Polish descent and two organisations represent them.
- (d) **Lithuania:** The estimated Polish population is 250,000. The Alliance of Poles in Lithuania is an important organisation representing the community. Following a change in the country's electoral law, Poles in Lithuania have recently converted their social organisation into a political party. There are two members of this new party including the Deputy Minister for Education in the present coalition Government. This has enabled the Governments of Poland and Lithuania to have a very good interaction at various levels on matters of importance to both countries. There are special Parliamentary and Government bodies, which meet frequently to discuss and address problems of the minorities. There are also seven special committees at the official level, including a Committee on Minorities. The Polish Diaspora has played an important role in enhancing the level of interaction between the two nations.
- (e) **Belarus:** There are 400,000 Poles living in Belarus. There has not, however, been much interaction between the two countries on matters concerning the Polish Diaspora owing to the absence of high level political contacts between the two countries.
- (f) **Russia:** The Polish Congress in Russia represents about 100,000 Poles residing in Russia. There is a demand that the Russian Parliament should pass a law recognizing the Polish groups as victims of Stalinist repression. This is considered to be an important issue from the political point of view.
- (g) **Other Countries** About 150,000 people of Polish descent live in **Australia** and approximately 140,000 in **the UK**; 50,000 in the **Czech Republic**; 100,000 Poles in **Argentina**; 40,000 in **Austria**; and 40,000 in **Kazakhstan**.

## Organisational Structure

### Governmental:

23.168. Within the Polish Government, 3 Ministries are involved with Polonia viz. Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Education and Culture.

- (a) **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA):** A separate Department for Polonia was created in 1998 to look after issues concerning the Diaspora and to maintain contact with them. The Department disseminates information on the developments within Poland and encourages the Polish Diaspora through Consular offices to maintain cultural, social and economic links with the motherland. The Department of Polonia has 8 officials and is headed by a Director. The Department works under an Under Secretary of State or Deputy Minister. The Polish diplomatic Missions and Posts monitor policies of the countries of their accreditation towards Polish minorities. The Government of Poland approaches the Governments of the concerned countries on issues pertaining to the well-being and concerns of the Polish minorities.
- (b) **Ministry of Education:** This Ministry deals with the deployment of Polish teachers abroad; allocation of grants to educational programmes meant for the Polish Diaspora; programmes to send teachers from Poland to teach the Polish language in East European and CIS States; and a Centre for Upgrading Teacher's Qualifications. Teachers have to work in extremely harsh conditions especially in Kazakhstan and Siberia. There is no fixed number of teachers who are deployed there as this depends on the requirements which vary from year to year. The Catholic Church also contributes by offering teaching facilities for the Polish language during Sunday Schools and other special events. There has been an effort to open Departments of Polish Studies or Centres of Polish Language Teaching at Universities in the host countries. However, no significant progress is understood to have been made on this front, mainly because of financial constraints. The Government's efforts are supplemented by NGOs through a practice of patronage extended to the schools. According to this, direct contacts are established between schools in Poland, Eastern Europe, the CIS countries and in the West, for exchanges among the youth and mutual assistance.
  - (i) A programme of summer camps for children from the Diaspora is organised by the NGOs led by the Polish Community Association, partly subsidised by the Ministry of Education. This is becoming very popular. Around 6,000 children have been attending the summer camps every year in Poland. Children are exposed to a range of issues including language, culture, food etc. in Poland. While the entire expenditure for children from the East is met by the organisers, participants from the West are required to pay their expenses.
  - (ii) Students of Polish origin after completing their basic education in their country of adoption can also come and join any university in Poland and pursue their studies like any other Polish student.

- (c) **Ministry of Culture:** This Ministry deals with the propagation of culture among Poles abroad. The budget of the Ministry is very small and activities concerning culture are taken care of by the Polish Community Association. Propagation of culture among Poles abroad takes various forms. The Ministry of Culture through cultural institutes and diplomatic Missions promotes Polish culture by organising exhibitions, tours, music competitions, film festivals etc. The NGOs supplement these by supporting performance by Polish artists abroad. Polish folklore is particularly popular where knowledge of the Polish language is disappearing, since it is easy to understand and enjoy folklore. The Polish Community Association has been organising folk festivals regularly. Preservation of the Polish cultural heritage in the East Europe and CIS countries is a delicate issue. The Government of Poland is trying to preserve landmarks of Polish history and culture in these countries.
- (i) The Inter-Governmental Committee for Polonia and the Polish minorities supervises the above mentioned cultural activities.

### **Inter-Governmental Committee for Polonia and Polish Minorities Abroad:**

23.169. This Committee was formed in February, 2000 and is headed by an Under Secretary of State (Deputy Minister) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It has representatives from the Ministries of Education, Culture, Finance and Internal Affairs and Chancellery of the Prime Minister. Altogether, there are 8 members in the Committee. The Director of the Department of Polonia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is Secretary to the Inter-Governmental Committee and Department of Polonia. The MFA acts as the Secretariat of the Committee. This Committee supervises all matters concerning Poles abroad and submits its report to the Prime Minister every year. Its agenda includes identifying issues concerning the Polish Diaspora; formulating programmes of action; preparation of proposals and projects for submission to the Polish Parliament; supervision and co-ordination of activities of Governmental bodies, agencies and partly of NGOs as well. It meets once in 4 months. Affairs relating to Polonia are monitored by both Houses of Parliament.

**Sejm Committee:** The Polish Diaspora Commission in the lower house of Parliament, (Sejm) engages in legislation on policy matters pertaining to the Diaspora.

**Senate Committee:** The Senate Committee on Emigration and Poles Abroad deals with financial matters including allocation of budget for Diaspora matters and activities. It initiates and co-ordinates activities of co-operation with overseas Polish Communities; and focuses on protection of the Polish cultural heritage and history abroad. The Committee advises the Senate on promotion of links between the Polish emigre community and their homeland. The Speaker of the Senate visits countries with a substantial Polish Diaspora and meets with the leaders of these countries on problems and issues pertaining to the Polish communities.

### **(b) Non-Governmental:**

A network of non-Governmental Organisations exists in Poland to cultivate links with Polish

communities abroad. Largely financed by the State, the activities of these NGOs have proved to be an effective mechanism in the establishment of links between Poland and the Diaspora. The Polish Community Association is one of the main non-Governmental organisations involved in promoting links with Polish communities abroad. It is also responsible for implementing projects approved by the Polish Senate, such as construction of Polish schools, community centres etc. The Association is aimed at promoting Polish culture, and education and protecting the rights of Poles including expressing opposition to various forms of discrimination or enforced assimilation. It receives budgetary support from the Senate and some limited funds from the Ministries of Education and Culture as well. Another Government funded organisation the Tadeusz Goniewicz Foundation for Poles in East Europe has been supplying textbooks. A “Foundation for Support for Poles in East European Countries” was established as an independent body and is headed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Its budget is sanctioned by the Senate and its Council has representatives from various walks of life. The size of financial support by the State varies every year according to the projects proposed by the NGOs. NGOs are thus playing a very significant role in supplementing the Government’s efforts to promote Polish culture among its Diaspora. They also organise exhibitions, cultural events, film festivals and musical concerts; promote teaching of Polish language and history to the local communities. The Government of Poland supports these efforts.

**(c) Structures among the Diaspora:**

In each country with a significant population of people of Polish origin, there are a number of Associations. In some countries in addition to hundreds of small organisations, there is an umbrella organisation to provide a unified voice.

**Second Congress of Expatriate Poles:**

23.170. Over 320 delegates from all around the world participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of Polish Communities Abroad held in Poland from April 28 –May 3, 2001. The event organised by the Warsaw based Polish Community Association (Wspolnota Polska) was inaugurated in Warsaw and concluded in the former capital city Cracow. During the deliberations, several issues including education, citizenship law, promotion of Poland’s causes abroad etc. were discussed. The Congress decided to create a global organisation representing the entire expatriate community by setting up a World Council of Polonia (Radah Polonia Swiata) within six months time. It was agreed to have the headquarters of the Council located in Canada.

23.171. The participants in the Congress called on the Polish Parliament Sejm to change regulations concerning citizenship so that people with dual citizenship can enter Polish border based on the passport of the country in which they currently reside. They demanded expediting legislation on finalising the Polish Charter and granting citizenship to Poles living in the East. They called for a quick response from the Government and its affiliate organisations to anti-Polish sentiments expressed in the foreign media. The Congress resolved that activities promoting the country

should be intensified. They demanded increased attention to problems faced by Poles living in the East European countries. There was a unanimous view among the delegates that Polish organisations in the West should sponsor and assist organisations in East Europe.

23.172. It was decided to formally celebrate May 2 as the Day of Expatriate Poles every year. It was also agreed to hold the Congress once in five years. Earlier speaking at the opening ceremony, Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek commended the role played by the Polish Diaspora especially from the West in Poland joining NATO and requested them to make similar contributions to the country's efforts to enter the European Union.

### **Social and Cultural Activities**

23.173. The Government of Poland has been in constant touch with the Governments of the neighbouring countries, especially in East Europe and where a substantial number of Polish Diaspora reside to ensure that the rights of the minority community are respected. Poland has, on many instances, intervened with the Governments of the neighbouring countries and persuaded them to change policies which were not favourable to the Polish minority communities. The Polish Government signed some treaties with neighbouring countries to protect and promote the rights of the Polish minority. These treaties were signed soon after the fall of communism. They invoke human rights as a common foundation of European societies. However, the Government of Poland is cautious in its approach while dealing with these issues to avoid interference in the internal affairs of concerned countries. Civic bodies which are non-governmental social organisations, are very active in promoting the Polish culture and in bringing Polish Diaspora in close contact with the people of Poland. Government has been encouraging their activities by extending financial and other support. In 1989, there was an organisation, "Polonia Association" dealing with the affairs of Poles abroad. This was a social organisation. In 1990, "Wspolnota Polska Association" (Polish Community Association) was established in place of Polonia Association.

### **Special Awards for the Diaspora**

23.174. There are no awards or honours meant exclusively for the members of the Polish Diaspora and foreign nationals. Some Orders and Awards/Honours are conferred on Poles living abroad and foreign nationals in addition to Polish citizens living in Poland in recognition of their contributions to Poland.

### **Relevance of Polish Experience in the Indian Context**

23.175. In general, Polish communities in Western countries, Canada and USA do not have major problems calling for intervention of the Polish Government. These communities are fairly well off and are identified as an important source of support for promoting the national objectives of Poland through lobbies in favour of Poland in host countries. There are, however, a number of problems faced by the Polish communities living in countries in East European and CIS countries. Education,

welfare and protection of minority rights and culture are some of the problems. Poland is trying to address them through discussions with the Governments of host countries to find suitable solutions. India's historical context and present-day requirements are different. Poland's communist past, its membership of NATO and its impending membership of EU also distinguish the Polish experience from the Indian experience. Notwithstanding the widely differing historical circumstances, the following aspects of the Polish experience and organisational structures could be relevant to us:-

- (i) Legislative/advisory committees on the Diaspora in both the Houses of Parliament /sub-committees to Standing Committees of Parliament.
- (ii) An inter-Ministerial Committee to provide a forum for continuous and regular interaction and co-ordination in government at the highest level.
- (iv) A well developed network of NGOs to assist in liaising between the Central and State Governments and the Diaspora for fostering close emotional, cultural, philanthropic and other ties between India and its Diaspora.
- (v) A global forum to provide a unified voice for the Indian Diaspora.
- (vi) Bilateral inter-governmental consultations with countries which host substantial Indian Diaspora, in regard to major problems and concerns of the Diaspora for mutually satisfactory resolution of these problems.

## **THE IRISH DIASPORA**

23.176. About 70 million people across the world claim Irish descent. About 3 million Irish citizens are estimated to be living outside Ireland. Of these, 2 million are in the U.K. and half-a-million in the USA. The largest number of people claiming Irish ancestry are in the United States who number around 40 million. Most of them are emigrants since the Great Famine in Ireland during 1846-51. The next wave of emigration was in 1950s, the economic boom years in Britain which coincided with the depression in Ireland. Other countries where significant number of people are of Irish origin are – Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Latin America. Australia is said to be the 'most Irish' with 30% of its people tracing their origins to Ireland. As far as Latin America is concerned, the Irish emigration was mainly to serve in the armies and on the farm during the early years of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico have sizeable numbers of people of Irish descent.

23.177. The Irish Diaspora has contributed in various ways to the culture and development of the countries of their domicile. Famous American Presidents such as Woodrow Wilson, and in recent times John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton are of Irish descent. Similarly, several leading figures in Canadian political life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were of Irish origins –Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a distinguished statesman (died 1868) and Ex-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Relatives of former Prime Minister Paul Keating of Australia are said to hail from County Galway

in the west of Ireland. The powerful influence of the Irish Diaspora in the Australian politics can be understood by the fact that six of the seven Prime Ministers of Australia during the period 1929-49 were of Irish ancestry. Similarly, John Edward Fitzgerald, the first Premier of New Zealand was Irish born. An Irish man founded the Argentinian Navy; an Irish person was the first Head of the Government after independence in Chile.

23.178. The cultural influence of the Irish Diaspora is mainly due to the work of the Irish Missionaries, particularly in the fields of education and health. In India itself, we can see their contribution to the social life through the works of Irish missionary groups such as Loretto, the Christian Brothers, the Columbus etc. In addition to the missionaries, the Irish charity organisations have been undertaking humanitarian work in several developing countries including India. Concern, Trocaire, Goal are a few of such Irish development agencies who receive governmental support as well. A recent example of the work of these Irish aid agencies in India was in Gujarat which was hit by the massive earthquake.

23.179. Ireland of today has a population of less than four million. It has been an emigrant country through the history. There is no department or a cell within the Irish Government structure that exclusively deals with the issues relating to the Irish Diaspora. Because of the relatively small size of its market, its economy these days is driven mostly by external trade. Several multinational companies have been encouraged to set up base through lower corporate tax regime. Therefore, Ireland has not been in short supply of foreign investment. As such, no special effort is being made on the part of the Government to encourage the Irish Diaspora to contribute to the economic development of the home country. Only recently, owing to rapid growth of the economy at about 10% for the last 5-6 years, they have experienced skilled labour shortages. The State employment agency made efforts to invite Irish people abroad to come back and work in Ireland. Apart from this, there have been no specific schemes or efforts to target the Irish living abroad. Former President Mrs. Mary Robinson addressed the two Houses of the Parliament in 1995 commemorating 150 years of the Irish Famine and touched upon the lives of the Irish Diaspora in various countries and called for maintaining social and emotional contacts with them. A project by name 'The Irish Genealogical Project' was started to computerise the old hand written records of births, deaths and marriages, to help the Irish diaspora to trace their ancestry. There is a bilateral project 'Dion Project' to help the Irish people living in Britain to settle into a foreign environment. Apart from such bilateral initiatives, there is no co-ordinated or centralised effort to keep contact with the Irish Diaspora.

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