

## General Studies-2; Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

### India-Switzerland Relations

#### 1) Introduction

- India and Switzerland relations are built on common values: strong traditions of democracy and pluralism.
- Switzerland recognised India after independence in 1947 and established diplomatic relations thereafter.
- From 1971 to 1976, during the dispute over Bangladesh, Switzerland represented the interests of India in Pakistan and those of Pakistan in India.
- Both countries concluded Treaty of Friendship in 1948.

#### 2) Political and diplomatic relations

- India is one of Switzerland's main partners in Asia.
- India and Switzerland have been regularly conducting a political dialogue since 2005.
- Bilateral agreements in various fields including trade, education and vocational training, visas, migrations, investments, taxation, and cooperation in science and technology.
- In order to facilitate easy accessibility and rendering services to Swiss citizens and companies in India, Switzerland maintains a wide network of representations across India.
- In 2018, Switzerland and India will celebrate the 70 years of the Indo-Swiss Bilateral Friendship Treaty of 1948.
- Switzerland launched a programme "70 Years of Swiss-Indian Friendship: Connecting Minds — Inspiring the Future".

#### 3) Economic cooperation

- India is a priority country for Swiss foreign economic policy.
- India is Switzerland's third largest trading partner in Asia, and its first in South Asia.
- Both countries signed a joint declaration on the automatic exchange of information (AEOI) in tax matters
- Switzerland is the 11th largest foreign investor in the country.
- Swiss companies made investments worth USD 7.93 billion in India during 2006-2015.
- The number of jobs created through Swiss direct investment in India stood at about 100000 at the end of 2015.

#### 4) Education, research and innovation

- Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme
- Swissnex India programme connects Switzerland and India in the fields of science, education, art and innovation.
- India is a priority country for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships.

#### 5) Development cooperation and humanitarian aid

- Development and Cooperation activities focus on climate change related issues which aim to contribute to India's climate-compatible development.
- Promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency in key sectors.

- One of those is CapaCITIES, where Switzerland is helping municipal authorities in India to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Cooperation activities on other global issues such as food security and water
- M.S. Swaminathan is working for the Swiss Development Cooperation on food security and climate change.

### 6) Cultural ties

- Numerous Swiss artists and researchers have been active in the Indian subcontinent, notably Le Corbusier (architecture) and Alice Boner (painter, sculptor, art historian).
- Popular Hindi movies are filmed in the Swiss Alps.
- Both countries promote cultural exchanges
- Tourism is also thriving with many Indians travelling to Switzerland to discover the country — and many Swiss enjoy travelling to India.

### 7) Way Forward

- Further deepen the cooperation and take a determined approach to addressing global challenges for the benefit of both countries.
- At a time when protectionism is gaining ground in many places, both countries must seize the opportunities and promote free trade and economic agreements.
- Cooperation in the fields of transport, energy, vocational education and training, digitalisation and climate change.
- Both countries should act together on climate policy. Melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and the glaciers receding in Switzerland too will impact on the lives of millions of people
- Gotthard base tunnel, the world's longest railway tunnel was recently opened in Switzerland. India can learn from this advancement to build railway tunnels in the Himalayan region.
- India must raise the issue of black money stashed by Indians in Swiss banks.
- Exchange of related information by Switzerland is necessary to support India's fight against black money
- M.S. Swaminathan said, Sustainable development goals can be a common binding factor between India and Switzerland.
- Switzerland is a global leader in innovation and technology, and the Swiss SME sector can contribute for growth of Indian SME.