



First India-GCC Senior Officers Meeting (SOM)

The first round of India-GCC SOM was held on 20 March 2023 in Riyadh. The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, Secretary (CPV&OIA) while the GCC delegation was led by Dr. Abdul Aziz Bin Hamad Al-Owaishaq, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Negotiations, GCC. The meeting had participation from all the 6 member countries of GCC. The India-GCC SOM meeting was held pursuant to MOU signed on India-GCC Mechanism of Consultation during EAM's visit to Riyadh in September 2022.

2. Both sides conveyed happiness over the progress in trade and investment between India-GCC countries. Both sides agreed for an early finalisation of India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

3. Secretary (CPV&OIA) invited for more collaboration between India and GCC countries in renewable energy, food security, health, IT sector and counter terrorism. Both sides proposed formation of Joint Working Groups to cater to particular areas of cooperation between India and GCC countries. These joint working groups would be headed by experts and would ensure regular and continuous progress across priority sectors.

4. Both sides appreciated the progress in relations between India-GCC countries built on historical ties, coupled with growing trade and investment, and presence of approximately 8.5 million Indian diaspora in the region. GCC as a trade bloc is the largest trade partner to India with a total trade of USD 154 Billion in FY 2021-22 They agreed that people to people ties need to be further enhanced. The discussion also focused upon regional issues of importance.

5. Both sides looked forward for early convention of India-GCC TROIKA meeting at Foreign Minister level.

New Delhi

March 20, 2023