



[www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org](http://www.IndianDiasporaCouncil.org)

7<sup>th</sup> August 2018 (EST-USA)

*Dear Colleague,*

You are invited to attend and participate in a Forum on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018 in Paris organized by the Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC). It will be hosted by IDC France and its affiliates. The theme is: “**Descendants of Indian Indentured Labourers - Issues & Opportunities**”.

This forum precedes the wreath-laying ceremony on 11<sup>th</sup> November in Paris honouring the over 10,000 Indian soldiers who were killed in World War I fighting to preserve freedom. Refer to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuve-Chapelle\\_Indian\\_Memorial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuve-Chapelle_Indian_Memorial)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/forgotten-role-of-indian-soldiers-who-served-in-first-world-war-marked-at-last-a6725851.html>

<http://www.indiandiasporacouncil.org/news.php>

(Honouring Indian Soldiers who served in World War 1)

Details as follows:

**Subject:** **Descendants of Indian Indentured Labourers - Issues & Opportunities**

**Special Invitees:** India’s Min of State for External Affairs, Hon. Gen (Ret’d) V. K. Singh; India’s Amb to France, HE Vinay Mohan Kwatra; Member of National Assembly of France, Hon. Serge Letchimy.

**Date:** **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

**Time:** **2:30pm – 3:30pm**

**Tea/Coffee:** **2:30pm – 3:30pm**

**Forum:** **3:30pm – 6:00pm**

**Venue:** **Paris, France** (exact location to be determined)

**Attendees:** Representatives from France, UK, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, USA, South Africa, Reunion Island, Mauritius, Guadeloupe/Martinique, Guyana, French Guiana and others

**Cost:** No charge to attendees for lunch and forum

**Program (Forum):**

- Welcome & Introductions
- Forum objectives and program agenda
- Keynote Remarks: Prof Clem Seecharan (UK); Mon Krishna Ponaman (France)
- Other Speakers (Netherlands, Belgium, Guadeloupe, South Africa, Reunion Island, USA, etc)
- Remarks by Special Guests
- Interactive Round Table Discussions
- Resolutions & Action Items
- Thanks and Appreciation

The agenda for the Forum will be further developed and announced well in advance. We encourage you to provide your input, suggestions, and recommendations which can be added to the agenda to be more comprehensive.

**RSVP:** RSVP requested by 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018 for planning & lunch

**Hotel Accommodation:** Hotel accommodation and tourist visit in Paris can be arranged per request

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We place high value in your position in the Indian Diaspora community, your interest and your commitment towards addressing the issues of interest and concerns of the descendants of Indian Indentureship.

Ashook Ramsaran

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## Perspective

“The **Indian indenture system** was an ongoing system of indenture, a form of debt bondage, by which 3.5 million Indians were transported to various colonies of European powers to provide labour for the (mainly sugar) plantations. It started from 1828 (Reunion Island) and in earnest starting in 1833 (Slavery Abolition Act) and continued until 1920. This resulted in the development of large Indian diaspora, which spread from the Indian Ocean (i.e. South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zanzibar, Uganda, Malawi, Seychelles, Réunion and Mauritius) to Pacific Ocean (i.e. Fiji), to the Atlantic Ocean (i.e. the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Belize, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Jamaica) as well as the growth of Indo-Caribbean, Indo-Fijian, Indo-Mauritian, and Indo-African population.” *Wikipedia*

Indian Indentureship was an intense and harrowing period for Indian labourers from several Indian states to faraway lands of then British, Dutch and French colonies to replenish desperately needed labour after the British emancipation of slavery in 1834. The majority of those labourers were taken from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry.

March 20, 2017 marked the centennial of official abolition of Indian Indentureship, an era spanning the years 1834-1917. The history and consequences of Indian Indentureship are deeply embedded with tremendous significance, importance, meaningful history and reflections to millions of descendants living in many countries which were the recipients of Indian Indentured labourers seeking better livelihoods. These countries included: Mauritius, Fiji, Malaysia, South Africa, East Africa, Guyana, Trinidad, Suriname, Jamaica, Belize, St. Vincent, Grenada and other countries of the Caribbean, as well as former French colonies of Reunion Island, Seychelles, Guadeloupe, Martinique and French Guiana.

### INDIAN INDENTURED MIGRATION ARRIVAL HISTORY

Country	Date of First Arrival & Ship Names	Number of Indenture Arrivals
Mauritius	November 2, 1834 - <i>Atlas</i>	451,796
Guyana (formerly British Guiana)	May 5, 1838 - <i>Hesperus</i>	238,909
Trinidad & Tobago	May 31, 1845 - <i>Fatal Razak</i>	143,939
Guadeloupe	December 24, 1854	42,326
Jamaica	May 7, 1845 - <i>Maidstone</i>	36,412
Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana)	June 5, 1873 - <i>Lalla Rookh</i>	34,000
Martinique	May 6, 1853 - <i>Aurelie</i>	25,509
French Guiana(South America)	1854	19,276
St. Lucia	May 6, 1859 - <i>Palmyra</i>	4,354
Grenada	January 27, 1857 - <i>Maidstone</i>	3,200
St. Vincent	June 1, 1861 - <i>Travancore</i>	2,472
Belize (formerly British Honduras) located in Central America	1858 – Sepoy Indians 1882	1,000 from 1857 revolt 3,000 from Jamaica
St. Kitts	June 3, 1861 - <i>Dartmouth</i>	361
Nevis	1874	315
St. Croix	1863	321
Reunion Island	April 13, 1828 - <i>Yangon</i>	120 000
Seychelles	1898	6,315
South Africa	November 16, 1860 - <i>Truro</i>	150,000
Fiji	May 15, 1879 - <i>Leonidas</i>	60,965
East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zanzibar, Uganda, Malawi	On-going research – indenture & contract labour for railroads and sugar plantations	On-going research

Note: The information above is compiled from various sources and its accuracy is based on information reviewed.

Credit to the many historians, researchers and authors whose information have been used to compile the listing above.

Compiled from various sources by Ashook Ramsaran (President, Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC))

Also of significance is the continuing migratory second journeys and/or duality of Girmitiyas from their respective countries of birth to Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, South Asia and South East Asia, as well as other dialogue among Girmitiya countries. This trend has certainly added to the dynamics of Girmitiya journeys to be added to the continuing dialogue among Girmitiyas and others impacted by this 20<sup>th</sup> century migratory trend.