

Speech by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the Inaugural Ceremony
of the Third India-Africa Forum Summit 29 October 2015, New Delhi

Excellencies,

Your Majesties,

Chairperson of the African Union, His Excellency Robert Mugabe

Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Madam Dlamini-Zuma,

Excellencies,

The fabric of this world is richer because of the 54 sovereign flags of Africa. Today, their brilliant colours have made Delhi the most special place in the world.

To the 41 Heads of State and Government and the other eminent leaders; to the hundreds of senior officials, business leaders and journalists from Africa, I say this: we are deeply, deeply honoured by your presence today.

To our visitors from the land where history began, humanity grew and new hope rises;
From the deserts of the north, where the glory of human civilization shines through the shifting sands of time;

From the south, where the conscience of our age has been forged – from Mahatma Gandhi to Albert Luthuli to Nelson Mandela;

From the shores of Atlantic that has been at history's tragic crossroads and now at the frontiers of many successes;

From our neighbours on the resurgent east coast;

From Africa's heart, where Nature is generous and culture is rich;

And, from the sparkling gems of island states;

A very warm embrace of welcome and friendship from India.

Today, it is not just a meeting of India and Africa.

Today, the dreams of one-third of humanity have come together under one roof.

Today, the heart beat of 1.25 billion Indians and 1.25 billion Africans are in rhythm.

We are among the world's oldest civilisations. We are each a vibrant mosaic of languages, religions and cultures.

Our histories have intersected since ages. Once united by geography, we are now linked by the Indian Ocean. The currents of the mighty ocean have nurtured the ties of kinship, commerce, and culture through centuries.

Generations of Indians and Africans have travelled to each other's land in search of their destiny or by the force of circumstances. Either way, we have enriched each other and strengthened our ties.

We have lived in the long shadow of colonialism. And, we have fought for our liberty and our dignity. We have struggled for opportunity, and also for justice, which, the African wisdom describes, is the prime condition of humanity.

We have spoken in one voice in the world; and, we have formed a partnership for prosperity among ourselves.

We have stood together under blue helmets to keep peace. And, we have fought together against hunger and disease.

And, as we look to the future, there is something precious that unites us: it is our youth.

Two-thirds of India and two-thirds of Africa is under the age of 35 years. And, if the future belongs to the youth, then this century is ours to shape and build.

Excellencies, Africa is already on that path.

We are all familiar with Africa's ancient achievements. Now, its modern strides are catching the attention of the world.

The continent is more settled and stable. African nations are coming together to take responsibility for their development, peace and security.

African struggles and sacrifices are upholding democracy, combating extremism and empowering women. Women now constitute around 20% of the elected Members of Parliament in Africa.

To one who has played a role in that, President Sirleaf, I extend our best wishes on your birthday today.

Africa's economic growth has gathered momentum and has a more diversified base. African initiatives are replacing old fault lines with new bridges of regional economic integration.

We see many successful examples of economic reforms, infrastructure development and sustainable use of resources. They are turning adrift economies into dynamic ones.

Four hundred thousand new businesses were registered in Africa in 2013; and, mobile telephone now reaches 95% of the population in many places.

Africa is now joining the global mainstream of innovation. The mobile banking of M-Pesa, the healthcare innovation of MedAfrica, or the agriculture innovation of AgriManagr and Kilimo Salama, are using mobile and digital technology to transform lives in Africa.

We see strong measures that are radically improving healthcare, education and agriculture. Primary school enrolment in Africa now exceeds 90%.

And, across its magnificent landscape, Africa is setting standards in wildlife conservation and eco-tourism.

Africa's sports, art and music delight the entire world.

Yes, Africa, like the rest of the developing world, has its development challenges. And, like others in the world, it has its own concerns of security and stability, especially from terrorism and extremism.

But, I have confidence in African leadership and the African people to rise to those challenges.

Excellencies,

for the past six decades, so much of our independent journeys have been together.

Now, so much of India's development priorities and Africa's lofty vision for its future are aligned.

Today, Africa and India are two bright spots of hope and opportunities in the global economy.

India is honoured to be a development partner for Africa. It is a partnership beyond strategic concerns and economic benefits. It is formed from the emotional bonds we share and the solidarity we feel for each other.

In less than a decade, our trade has more than doubled to over 70 billion dollars. India is now a major source of business investments in Africa. Today, 34 African countries enjoy duty free access to the Indian market.

African energy helps run the engine of the Indian economy; its resources are powering our industries; and, African prosperity offers growing market for Indian products.

India has committed 7.4 billion dollars in concessional credit and 1.2 billion dollars in grant since the first India-Africa Summit in 2008. It is creating 100 capacity building institutions, and developing infrastructure, public transport, clean energy, irrigation, agriculture and manufacturing capacity across Africa.

In the last three years alone, nearly 25,000 young Africans have been trained and educated in India. They are the 25,000 new links between us.

Excellencies,

There are times when we have not done as well as you have wanted us to. There have been occasions when we have not been as attentive as we should be. There are commitments we have not fulfilled as quickly as we should have.

But, you have always embraced India with warmth, and without judgement. You have rejoiced in our success, and taken pride in our achievements. And, you have stood for us in the world.

This is the strength of our partnership and our friendship.

And, as we travel on the road ahead, we will do so with the wisdom of our experience and the benefit of your guidance.

We will raise the level of our support for your vision of a prosperous, integrated, and united Africa that is a major partner for the world.

We will help connect Africa from Cairo to Cape Town, from Marakesh to Mombassa; help develop your infrastructure, power and irrigation; help add value to your resources in Africa; and, set up industrial and information technology parks.

Excellencies,

As the great Nigerian Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka insisted, human entity remains the primary asset in overall development.

Our approach is based on the same belief: that the best partnership is one that develops human capital and institutions; that equips and empowers a nation to have the freedom to make its own

choices and shoulder the responsibility for its own progress. It also opens doors to opportunities for the youth.

So, development of human capital in every walk of life will be at the heart of our partnership. We will open our doors more; we will expand tele-education; and we will continue to build institutions in Africa.

The Egyptian Noble Prize winning writer Naguib Mahfouz said, "Science brings people together with the light of its ideas...and prods us towards a better future."

There can be no better expression of the ability of science to unify people and advance progress.

So, technology will be a strong foundation of our partnership.

It will help develop Africa's agriculture sector. Africa has 60% of the world's arable land reserves, and just 10% of the global output. Agriculture in Africa can drive the continent's march to prosperity, and also support global food security.

India's expertise in healthcare and affordable medicines can offer new hope in the fight against many diseases; and give a newborn a better chance to survive. We will also collaborate to develop Indian and African treasures of traditional knowledge and medicines.

We will make available our space assets and technology. We will use the possibilities of digital technology to transform development, public services, governance, disaster response, resource management and quality of life.

We will expand and extend the Pan Africa E-Network, conceived by late President APJ Abdul Kalam, which links 48 African countries to India and to each other. This will also help set up your Pan Africa Virtual University.

We will work to reduce digital divide within Africa and between Africa and rest of the world.

We will cooperate for sustainable development of Blue Economy that will become important future drivers of our prosperity.

For me, Blue Economy is part of a larger Blue Revolution to reclaim our blue skies and blue waters, as we move on the path of clean development.

Excellencies,

when the sun sets, tens of millions of homes in India and Africa become dark. We want to light up lives of our people and power their future.

But, we want to do it in a way that the snow on Kilimanjaro does not disappear, the glacier that feeds the River Ganga does not retreat and our islands are not doomed.

No one has done less to contribute to global warming than India and Africa. No one can be more conscious of climate change than Indians and Africans.

This is because we are the inheritors of Nature's most precious gifts, and of traditions that respect them the most; and, our lives remain most connected to Mother Earth.

We are each making enormous efforts with our modest resources to combat climate change. For India, 175 Gigawatts of additional renewable energy capacity by 2022 and reduction in emission intensity by 33-35% by 2030 are just two aspects of our efforts.

We will also deepen India-Africa partnership on clean energy, sustainable habitats, public transport and climate resilient agriculture.

But, it is also true that the excess of few cannot become the burden of many. So, when the world meets in Paris in December, we look to see a comprehensive and concrete outcome that is based on the well established principles in the UN Convention on Climate Change. We will all do our part for it.

But, we also want to see a genuine global public partnership that makes clean energy affordable; provides finance and technology to developing countries to access it; and the means to adapt to the impact of climate change.

I also invite you to join an alliance of solar-rich countries that I have proposed to launch in Paris on November 30 at the time of COP-21 meeting. Our goal is to make solar energy an integral part of our life and reach it to the most unconnected villages and communities.

India and Africa seek also seek a global trading regime that serves our development goals and improves our trade prospects.

When we meet at Nairobi Ministerial of the WTO in December, we must ensure that the Doha Development Agenda of 2001 is not closed without achieving these fundamental objectives.

We should also achieve a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security and special safeguard mechanism in agriculture for the developing countries.

Excellencies,

this is a milestone year when we are setting the agenda for our future and celebrating the 70th anniversary of the United Nations.

The world is undergoing political, economic, technological and security transition on a scale and speed rarely seen in recent history. Yet our global institutions reflect the circumstances of the century that we left behind, not the one we are in today.

These institutions have served us well, but unless they adjust to the changing world, they risk becoming irrelevant. We cannot say what will replace them in an uncertain future.

But, we might have a more fragmented world that is less capable of dealing with the challenges of our era. That is why India advocates reforms in global institutions.

This is a world of free nations and awakened aspirations. Our institutions cannot be representative of our world, if they do not give voice to Africa, with more than a quarter of UN members, or the world's largest democracy with one-sixth of humanity.

That is why India and Africa must speak in one voice for reforms of the United Nations, including its Security Council.

Excellencies,

today, in many parts of the world, the light of a bright future flickers in the storm of violence and instability.

When terror snuffs out life on the streets and beaches, and in malls and schools of Africa, we feel your pain as our own. And, we see the links that unite us against this threat.

We also see that when our oceans are no longer safe for trade, we all suffer together.

And, when nations are caught in conflict within, no one around remains untouched.

And, we know that our cyber networks bring opportunities, but also carry huge risks.

So, when it comes to security, distance no longer insulates us from each other.

That is why we wish to deepen our cooperation in maritime security and hydrography, and countering terrorism and extremism; and, why we must have a UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

We will also provide support for Africa Union's peacekeeping efforts. And, we will train African peacekeepers here and in Africa. We must also have a stronger voice in decisions on UN Peacekeeping Missions.

Excellencies,

from connecting lives to collaborating for our prosperity, from keeping our people safe to advancing our global interests, the agenda of our partnership stretches across the vast territory of our linked aspirations.

To add strength to our partnership, India will offer concessional credit of 10 billion U.S. dollars over the next five years. This will be in addition to our ongoing credit programme.

We will also offer a grant assistance of 600 million U.S. dollars. This will include an India-Africa Development Fund of 100 million U.S. dollars and an India-Africa Health Fund of 10 million U.S. dollars.

It will also include 50,000 scholarships in India over the next five years. And, it will support the expansion of the Pan Africa E-Network and institutions of skilling, training and learning across Africa.

Excellencies,

if this century is going to be one in which all humans have a life of opportunity, equality and dignity; stand in peace with each other; and live in balance with nature, then India and Africa must rise together.

We will work together:

from the memory of our common struggles; and, the tide of our collective hopes;

From the richness of our heritage; and, the commitment to our planet;

From the pledge to our people; and, the faith in our future;

from the generosity of the African saying that a small home can hold hundred friends;

from the spirit of India's ancient belief: सन्तः स्वयं परहिते निहिताभियोगाः that great souls are always taking the initiatives to do good to others;

from the inspiration of Mandela's call to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Today, we pledge to walk together, with our steps in rhythm and our voices in harmony.

This is not a new journey, nor a new beginning. But, this is a new promise of a great future for an ancient relationship.

Your presence here today, Your Majesties and Excellencies, is the strongest proof of our resolve and our commitment.

Thank you! Thank you very much!!