

Opening Statement

by

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at the

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at

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Permit me to commence my opening remarks on a very personal note. I had the privilege of serving in Dar es Salaam as India's Deputy High Commissioner from early in 1983 to end 1985. It was a very different Dar es Salaam then from what I see today. Today's Dar es Salaam is almost unrecognizable. This is true also of most of the other countries in Africa. It is this economic, social and political transformation of which India has been a part from the early 1960s and of which India shall remain a part till we have achieved our common objective of ensuring peace, stability, prosperity and security for our peoples and nations.

A very warm welcome and thank you all for accepting the invitation of the Indian Council of World Affairs to attend this second conference that the Council is organizing on the continent to follow up on the Third India-Africa Forum Summit that was held in New Delhi from 26-29 October 2015. Our first conference was held in Accra from 19-20 January 2017 and the participants were from Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal, Togo, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali and Mauritania. This second conference brings together representatives from the East Africa Community and the Southern Africa Development Cooperation countries.

We are delighted that we have representatives from Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Mauritius, Swaziland, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and of course from our host country Tanzania. We are missing our colleagues from Rwanda, Botswana and Seychelles.

The objective of holding this follow up conference is to take stock of what has happened since the third India-Africa Forum Summit; to understand from our partners how they perceive the progress in implementation of the decisions taken at the Summit; what have been the shortfalls and their suggestions for how best we can build on what has been done so far, so that by the time of the fourth Summit in 2020 the basket of fulfilled opportunities is hopefully overflowing. It is also to seek new ideas on how we can cooperate to mutual benefit in new avenues that have opened up since the last Summit.

For this particular conference, we have chosen the topics of security, stability and development. These are closely related issues that acquire particularly great significance in the context of today's very complicated and even dangerous world. A world, where diverse centrifugal forces are at work, security risks are on the rise including from terrorism which refuses to go away, religious extremism, the tendency of some major countries to begin to look inwards; and to the continuing inability to reform the international political, economic, security and financial architectures. India and Africa in particular have an important role to play in the process of the building of a new international architecture that places development, peace and stability in developing countries at its heart with the objective of eliminating poverty, ensuring sustainability of growth and a clean planet.

It is for this reason that our leaders adopted at Delhi in October 2015 a framework for strategic cooperation and clearly defined the contents of that framework. It bears recalling in this

context that for India, the eastern sea board of Africa is a particular significance from a variety of perspectives.

Our agenda over the next two days contains five major themes and we have attempted to suggest the focus in each of these. As I said at the outset, we wish to hear from our partners from the participating countries at this conference on their perspectives on these five themes each of which holds enormous promise for developing not only our partnership at the bilateral level but also at the level of India-EAC and India-SADC.

Before I conclude, let me reiterate what Prime Minister Modi said at the conclusion of the third India-Africa Forum Summit in October 2015. He stressed that the friendship and faith in India shown by our partners in Africa is a source of great pride and strength for us. Our destinies, he said, are closely interlinked and our aspirations and challenges very similar. He had promised that Africa would remain at the centre of India's attention and that has indeed been the case. India's interaction with Africa in recent years has been intense and regular. Over and above the visits by India's President, Vice President and Prime Minister, under the extended political outreach of India's Ministry of External Affairs, Ministerial visits have taken place to all the countries of the African continent. This focus will further strengthen in the years ahead. While informing the Indian Parliament on 26 July last year, India's External Affairs Minister reiterated that India's approach to the development partnership with Africa is driven by the aim of South-South Cooperation, empowerment, capacity building, human resource development, access to the Indian market and support for Indian investments in Africa.
