

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Windhoek, Namibia : 17.06.2016

1. It is indeed a great privilege for me to be amidst you this morning in the Namibia University of Science and Technology. I am particularly happy to be amidst the academic community, the new generation and future leaders of Namibia.

2. My delegation consists of Minister of State in the Indian Prime Minister's Office, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Shri Surendrajeet Singh Ahluwalia, Member of the Lok Sabha, the House of the People and Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Member of the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament. We bring with us warm greetings and goodwill for all of you. Young India pays its compliments to the emerging Namibia particularly the youth who are marching ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. When India gained her independence in 1947, our people felt that their achievement would remain incomplete as long as their brothers and sisters in Namibia continued to bear the yoke of foreign rule. India stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of this country in their freedom movement. We were proud to be the first nation to host a diplomatic mission of SWAPO. Millions in India rejoiced when the heroic struggle of your people finally succeeded – and the free and independent state of Namibia was born. Dr. Sam Nujoma, the Founding President of Namibia, is, to this day, admired as a world leader and a great friend of India. I look forward to meeting him later this afternoon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. My State Visit – the first by an Indian head of State since 1995, underscores the importance that India attaches to reinvigorating her relations with Namibia and the region.

5. India remains committed to partnering with Namibia as your people pursue their developmental goals and national aspirations embodied in Government of Namibia's "Vision 2030" and "Harambee Prosperity Plan",

6. Namibia is blessed with rich natural resources and an abundance of mineral wealth. Their efficient extraction and value addition using environment-friendly methods will contribute to the sustainable development of Namibia's mining sector. Our public and private sector enterprises stand ready to join you in this direction. In the sphere of bilateral trade and investment, the fruitful economic exchanges between India and Namibia underscore the much larger potential that is waiting to be realized.

7. In our bilateral discourse, the areas that we have prioritised for our collaboration include human resource development, capacity building and educational and cultural exchanges. In this

context, I would like to mention India's flagship programmes like *Skill India, Make in India, Digital India* and *100 Smart Cities* as they could be successful models in Namibia as well.

8. So far, over a thousand Namibian citizens have been trained in India under our ITEC program. Indian experts – government and private – have been deployed to assist the Government of Namibia in various policy formulations. I am pleased to inform you that yesterday, after my official discussions with President Geingob, an MOU has been signed on setting up a centre of excellence in IT in Namibia. This MOU will significantly contribute to enhancing the capacity and skill levels of Namibian ICT students and professionals. We intend to commence the setting up of this centre as soon as possible, in consultation with the Government of Namibia.

9. At the end of the third India-Africa Forum Summit meeting in Delhi in October 2015, India announced a total number of 50,000 scholarships/fellowships to be made available to African participants over a period of 5 years – from 2015 to 2020. Lines of credit worth US \$ 10 billion for Africa were announced - to be used over the same five year period for implementation of projects agreed with the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and individual countries. My Government has also approved projects valued at approximately US \$ 600 million under grants-in-aid for human resource development, infrastructure and institution building in Africa. Since the commencement of her structured engagement with the African Union through the IAFS-I in 2008, India has extended 40,000 scholarships to Africa that offered about 300 training programmes at 60 institutions of higher education in India.

10. Also upto eight C. V. Raman Fellowship slots are available annually for Namibian researchers to pursue cutting edge research work of their own interest in India for a period of upto six months. I invite Namibian students and researchers to make use of this opportunity to develop co-operation in research and innovation with India.

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. India places high value on quality education and research for a nation's development. As President of the Republic, I happen to be Visitor of more than 116 central institutions of higher learning in India, I have always emphasised the importance of inculcating, in our students, an unfettered spirit of enquiry and an enhanced commitment to research and innovation. I have been equally keen to develop a corps of highly motivated, inspired teachers who will help to achieve these objectives. These, I believe, are the key ingredients for infusing energy into vital sectors of a nation's economy as they are unquestionable drivers of growth and progress. Although it is the manufacturing sector that creates employment, it is education that enables a nation to overcome its weaknesses, address issues rationally and breach the frontiers of science and technology to swiftly progress on the path of technological advancement and overall development.

12. Both our nations are fortunate that our youth are brimming with ideas and enterprise. India, with an estimated 4300 start-ups is emerging as the third largest start-up ecosystem in the world today. Not surprisingly, 72% of the founders of these start-ups are below the age of 35. Their ventures represent impressive - and often simple - business models - from delivering essential commodities and affordable healthcare to creating improved and cost effective agricultural technology and on-line marketing, to name a few. Their innovations have brought positive

impulses to each and every sector of our economy - from handicrafts to tourism, education and transportation. The employment generated by these start-ups fosters inclusive growth and has the potential of improving the quality of life of millions of our citizens. I mention this as I am confident that by mobilising their youth, other developing economies, too, can channelise their untapped potential for achieving socio-economic transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. There is in India, today, tremendous emphasis on fundamental research to manage the impact of climate change, address food and drinking water scarcity and efficiently exploit sustainable, clean and renewable energy sources. Our country is on the path of a technological revolution that, we hope, will empower our people. India is the fourth country in the world to achieve space mission to Mars, "Mangalyaan" – and the first to do so in the first attempt – that, too, at a very modest expenditure.

14. At the time of India's independence, India, due to her weak agriculture sector, had to import food grains. However, soon enough, due to proper planning and synergy between science and public policy, the excellence of our scientists and the selfless toil of our farmers, our country saw a revolution in agricultural productivity. A country which was a net importer of food grains, today produces enough to feed its huge population. Through this 'Green Revolution', we were able to make ourselves self-reliant - and even a major exporter of food grain.

15. In medicine, bio-technology and information technology, too, a dramatic revolution has taken place in India - which has transformed our lives. Our mobile phone density is about 74.55 and we rank third after US and China in internet use. Nano-science and technology, solar energy, vaccines and drug discovery are other areas on which India is presently focussed. A major initiative of my Government is the "*Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research*" or INSPIRE. Under this scheme, more than 13 lakh awards have been sanctioned and hundreds of innovations selected for exhibition and patenting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. Scientific enquiry is one of the most creative impulses of the human mind. It seeks answers to fundamental questions and plays a vital role in the advancement of mankind. Modern societies and nations are built on the fruits of research and technology development. The science and technology policies we adopted were thanks to the initiative of the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru observed "*the future belongs to science and to those who make friendship with science.*" I bring his words to you as I am confident that they will kindle a light within you.

Dear Students,

17. I have no doubt that you are looking forward to the day when you, too, will make your proud contribution to a vibrant new landscape of innovation and technological development in Namibia.

18.I am very happy to learn that students of this University, in a multi-disciplinary partnership with other Namibian Universities, have recently rolled out the first prototype of a solar taxi. This is an example of the creativity and innovative capacity of the Namibian scientific community.

19.I wish you every success in your academics and a very bright future.

20.With these words, I thank you once again for giving me this opportunity of interacting with you.

God bless you all!