

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, MR RAM NATH KOVIND AT THE COMMUNITY RECEPTION

Lusaka, April 10, 2018

1. It is a privilege for me to meet members of the Indian community in Lusaka. Thank you for welcoming me with such affection. This is my third journey abroad after becoming President of India. It is not by coincidence that all three visits have been to Africa, which is a continent so dear to us.
2. I have met the Indian community in every country I have visited – but the Indian community here, in Zambia, is special. You are cultural ambassadors of India in one of our closest friends in this continent. This is a tribute to your contributions. And this is a tribute to how integrated the Indian community is with the national life of Zambia.
3. You came here and made yourself at home even before Zambia became independent in 1964. Trade and commerce, mining and hospitality, healthcare and academics – the Indian community does its bit for Zambia in so many fields. You come from various parts of our country – from Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, from Kerala and Bengal, and many other states and regions. But here in Zambia, despite the diversity, you are all united as representatives of Indian society and culture.
4. Your contributions have helped generate goodwill for your community as well as for India as a nation. You are our champions in a faraway land. You have made great efforts to embellish India's reputation as well as keep alive our cultural traditions so far from home. This is commendable. I congratulate all of you.
5. The greatest Indian to have lived in Africa was, of course, Mahatma Gandhi. For India and Zambia, he is a common inspiration. On this visit, I have been received very warmly by President Lungu and the government and people of Zambia.

Tomorrow I will have the honour of meeting Dr Kenneth Kaunda, a statesman who has the same stature in Zambia that Mahatma Gandhi has in India. And who is an old friend of our country and of your community.

6. It is because of such mature leaders in Zambia and because of the efforts of every section of society – including all of you – that Zambia is an example for the rest of Africa as a democratic developing country. Our people share the values of liberty and freedom, of human dignity and socio-economic development. These values give our relationship strength. And you, as members of the Indian community here, are custodians of that value system.
7. If I look at India-Zambia bilateral relations over the past few years, I see an economic partnership that is progressing impressively. Indian business is a significant investor in Zambia. Our investments have created value and jobs for the local community and they have won friends. When I was reviewing the programme for my visit, I was pleasantly surprised that my delegation and I would be staying in a hotel run by an Indian company. This is not a very common experience for me when I travel abroad. And I can only attribute this to how closely the Indian community and Indian investments are knitted into the fabric of Zambia's society.
8. As a living bridge between India and Zambia it is for you in the community to make this partnership even more meaningful.
9. India is marching ahead rapidly. It is the fastest-growing major economy in the world. Please connect its diverse economic opportunities with the development priorities of Zambia. Let that be your key responsibility.
10. As a community, please remain connected with each other and make yourselves even more relevant to your host country. This can be done by joining hands to project our image, our soft power and our strengths – what we as a country bring to the table and offer our international partners. Yoga to IT, cinema to

healthcare, food to festivals – there is so much of India that you can introduce your Zambian friends to.

Ladies and Gentlemen

11. Our government seeks sustained and proactive engagement with our overseas community. The purpose of this engagement is to provide an opportunity to familiarise you with the transformational changes taking place in India. The dialogue with the diaspora is also aimed at providing possibilities and platforms through which you can participate in India's growth and development.
12. Today India is on a path of high economic growth. There is confidence and hope among our youth. A new India is taking shape. The rise of India is creating unprecedented opportunities for collaboration with the external world. In this context, our government is keen to strengthen ties with our people abroad. New schemes have been launched and old ones made simpler. You must take advantage of the OCI programme. It connects you with India forever.
13. Last but not the least, time and online booking slots permitting, I invite you to visit Rashtrapati Bhavan the next time you are in Delhi. It is not just where I live and work. It is every Indian's address – every Indian; anywhere in the world.

Thank you
Jai Hind!