

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**BANQUET STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. HAGE G.
GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE
VISIT BY H.E. PRANAB MUKHERJEE,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

STATE HOUSE

WINDHOEK

JUNE 16, 2016

Check against delivery

Your Excellency, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, President of the Republic of India;

The Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly;

Honourable Chairperson of the National Council;

**Your Honour, Chief Justice of the
Republic of Namibia;**

**Honourable Ministers from India and
Namibia;**

Honourable Members of Parliament;

**The First Lady of the Republic of
Namibia;**

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honoured and proud to welcome you Excellency, President of the Republic of India and your delegation to Namibia and to Windhoek in particular. Welcome to the Land of the Brave from the land where Truth Alone Triumphs. Your presence here today symbolizes the long-standing bonds of friendship and solidarity between our two countries and peoples. Welcome to Namibia Your Excellency.

Your Excellency,

India is Namibia's friend, past, present and future. We may be separated by geography and one country may dwarf the other in population size, but we share a common identity through our history of struggle for self-determination, as well as through our ideals and aspirations. Together, we are united in the pursuit of justice, liberty and equality. These principles form the foundation of our friendship.

India is not only the world's largest democracy in size but also in terms of virtues and principles.

From the days of the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the independence movement and father of the nation of India, India as a country has always champion the cause of fighting against colonialism and oppression. Whether at the United Nations or as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, India has always been the voice of those who were suppressed.

As Namibians, we owe much of our hard fought for freedom to India, which stood shoulder to shoulder with us in our quest for independence. India was the first among those countries, which accorded SWAPO full diplomatic status during our liberation struggle.

Today we stand together in the spirit of South - South Cooperation for a shared vision for prosperity.

Your Excellency,

Your visit affords us with yet another unique opportunity to consolidate our partnership and forge stronger ties for the mutual benefit of our people. The spectrum of cooperation between our two countries has been vast. We have made significant progress in various sectors, including science and technology, culture, defense, health and agriculture. One of the most dynamic facets of our bilateral cooperation is the human resource development.

Your Excellency

Last year, Namibia declared all-out war on poverty and subsequently outlined concrete plans and activities in our Harambee Prosperity Plan to drive the Nation towards shared prosperity. I have often said that democracy, buttressed by good constitutions, peace and stability are all laudable achievements, but the people do not eat these things.

Whether in India or Namibia, New Delhi or Windhoek, what people are looking for is access to basic amenities, food, clothing and shelter, education and employment.

Social grants and other forms of Government support to the most vulnerable will be important elements in the fight against poverty.

However, a more sustainable solution to poverty eradication is the pursuit of economic policies that will translate into a higher, shared and sustained growth of our economies. In this regard, it has been proven that fair trade; south-south investment and exchange of technology are some of the most effective ways of stimulating sustained growth.

It is, therefore, pertinent that our two nations [and indeed the African continent, and the Indian sub-continent] place a special focus on increasing cooperation in trade and investment.

In Namibia, we see ourselves as a gateway into Africa.

Not only that we are also in close proximity to South-America, which is an important partner in south-south collaboration, but we are ready to be the gateway for Indian companies into Africa and into South-America.

I note that the agreements signed today symbolize our common desire and commitment to tap into the vast potential of our countries, most specifically our human capital.

I believe that such cooperation will not only strengthen our ties and boost South-South Cooperation, but it will also go a long way towards exploiting the developmental potential that lies within the foundations of our relationship.

Your Excellency,

Namibia recalls with fond memories the successful hosting of the India-Africa Forum in the beautiful and historic city of New Delhi.

What we took away from that summit is India's commitment to continue to advocate and work for a just trading system as well as your unflinching solidarity with African countries under the leadership of the African Union.

The India-Africa Forum is a formidable platform to complement the efforts of the African Union in realizing the objectives of AU Agenda 2063.

Your Excellency,

On the international front, India has been instrumental in promoting reforms in global political and economic order.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to speak out with a unified and resolute voice for urgent reforms of the United Nations, Security Council, the International Financial Institutions, especially the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and other multilateral institutions to

become more democratic and thus representative of all the regions of the world. Only then can the international community effectively maintain international peace and security in accordance with the UN Charter.

Your Excellency,

During the 70th Session of the General Assembly of the UN, we collectively adopted Development Agenda 2030. Our collective achievements of the realization of the Millennium

Development Goals should serve as inspiration as we commence implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Just recently we converged at the United Nations Headquarters in New York for the High-Level Signature Ceremony of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This was to pledge our commitment to curb emissions, strengthen resilience and act internationally and domestically to address climate change.

Namibia bears witness to the adverse effects of climate change through the recurrence of severe droughts and floods within our country.

We, therefore, remain fully committed to addressing this global challenge. I would like to take this opportunity to on behalf of all the Namibian people express our profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of India and the People of India for your generous donation towards our drought relief.

Namibia recognizes India's leadership in climate change, through the launch of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). This Alliance, we believe, will play an important role in advancing access to renewable energy.

In the same vein we commend India's commitment towards the peaceful usage of nuclear energy. And we will look into legal ways of selling our Uranium to India.

Your Excellency

In closing, I wish to reiterate our desire to working with you towards the deepening of our relations and forging ahead in achieving our shared destiny.

I thank you for your attention.

Distinguished Guests, may I now invite you all to rise and join me in proposing a toast [wait for a second]. Now I propose a toast:

- **To continued good health and well-being of His Excellency President Shiri Pranab Mukherjee**
- **To the ever growing friendship and fraternal relations between our countries and peoples.**
- **To friendship between India and Namibia.**