

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE WELCOME BANQUET HOSTED BY
PRESIDENT OF NAMIBIA**

Windhoek, June 16, 2016

1. It is indeed a proud privilege for me and my colleagues to be hosted in such a warm and hospitable way. The speech of the President of Namibia at this banquet will be considered an important milestone in the bilateral relations between India and Namibia. I consider myself privileged by the presence of founders of SWAPO and leaders of Namibia who not only led the liberation struggle but also made important contributions so that the people and Government of Namibia can occupy their rightful place in the comity of nations.

Your Excellency,

2. The long-standing friendship and co-operation between India and Namibia is based on the firm foundation of mutual trust and understanding. Our two nations, though separated by the Indian Ocean, are united by our common experience of colonial exploitation and struggle for freedom. India believed that her own independence in 1947 would remain incomplete so long as her brethren in Africa continued to be oppressed by colonial

rulers. India stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of this country and other African countries in their freedom movement. We were proud to be the first nation to host a diplomatic mission of SWAPO. Millions in India rejoiced when your heroic struggle bore the sweet fruit of freedom and independence. India was the first country which on the eve of its liberation in 1946 decided to snap ties with South Africa on grounds of apartheid prevalent there despite the fact that South Africa was an important trade partner of India at that time. The ties were renewed only after Nelson Mandela took the reins of Africa in his hands.

3. India has, at every stage, admired the foresight and wisdom of Namibia's leaders in guiding your nation towards progress and development. Dr. Sam Nujoma, the Founding President of Namibia, was admired as a leader and great friend of India. His stewardship of the people of Namibia into a new era of peace, security and democracy is his greatest gift to them. His cherished legacy has been further consolidated by his visionary successor, your predecessor, former President Pohamba. Under your able leadership, Your Excellency, Namibia is surging ahead on the path of development. The "Harambee Prosperity Plan" conceived by you has set a new and ambitious agenda for realizing inclusive development, social cohesion and enduring stability in Namibia. We, in India, welcome its

principles and wish it great success.

Your Excellency,

4. India attaches high importance to enhancing her bilateral relations with Namibia. Our two countries have been cooperating closely while making sustained efforts to realize the developmental goals of our two nations. We have focussed on human resource development, capacity building, cultural exchanges and closer cooperation in the education and defence sectors. We do believe that India's flagship programmes like Skill India, Make in India, Digital India and 100 Smart Cities could be workable models in Namibia as well. 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 this sector of your economy. India has always been - and will continue to be - a reliable partner in your endeavours in this direction. Our flourishing bilateral trade and economic relations remind us of the still greater potential that is waiting to be realized. India is fully committed to the implementation of the projects and initiatives that we have jointly identified.

Your Excellency,

5. Africa and India, are centres of gravity in today's globalised world. They have a responsibility to work

together for peace, security, and sustainable development in our two continents. We share the view that reform of the United Nations and its principle organs - created in the wake of the Second World War - is an imperative. We agree that they need to be made more reflective of today's changed world - so that they can respond more effectively to the complex challenges confronting the world today. It is truly ironic that the most effective organisation of the United Nations, the Security Council does not represent India, a country where every sixth citizen of the world resides. The entire continent of Africa is also not represented in the Security Council. It is high time that the ground reality of the world today gets representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council.

6. India looks forward to working closely with Namibia in our common effort to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change and in addressing other important global issues that require collective action by the international community.
7. India, as a steadfast friend and reliable partner, will always consider it a matter of pride to stand shoulder to shoulder with Namibia in realising her people's aspirations, progress in its region and peace in the world.

8. With these words, Excellency, I once again thank you for the gracious hospitality extended to me and to the members of my delegation. I take this opportunity to convey through you and Mme Geingos, my best wishes to the people of Namibia.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. May I request to please join me in raising a toast
- to the continued good health of His Excellency President Hage Geingob and Madam Geingos,
 - to the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Namibia and
 - to the enduring friendship between India and Namibia.
