

Statement by Seychelles at the Ministerial session preceding the 3rd India-Africa Summit, New Delhi, 27th October 2015

Excellency, Chairperson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of India,

Excellency, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe and Co-Chair,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the outset, please allow me to express my profound appreciation and that of my delegation for the warm reception and hospitality afforded to us since our arrival. I know that a lot of effort has been made to ensure our every comfort during our stay, for which we thank and congratulate the Government and People of India.

I also wish to present the apologies of your colleague Foreign Minister, Mr Joël Morgan, whose schedule has not allowed him to join you today. He will, however, be leading the Seychelles' delegation at the Summit as President James Michel himself is taken up by our national electoral agenda with Presidential elections due to take place on 5th December. President Michel has instructed us to convey to you his deepest regrets for not being present on this occasion.

OUR PARTNERSHIP & THE WAY FORWARD

Chairperson,

This Third India-Africa Summit is an opportunity for us to jointly assess achievements, scrutinize problematic areas and map out new avenues in which to build the India-Africa Partnership and the implementation of the newly-revised Africa-India Framework of Cooperation.

This new framework of cooperation is timely in that it has allowed us the opportunity to refocus our collaborative efforts on key areas of our African development aspirations, articulated through the Agenda 2063, to areas where India enjoys a unique position of expertise and comparative advantage.

We have come here today, yes as individual states, but also as part of a whole - the African Union. Our Union has a vision for the continent, one of growth and prosperity, and we are coming to a limited, but uniquely qualified number of partners who we recognise as friends and development partners of Africa as we continue on our journey.

India is one such partner, a partner who has a unique experience of transforming its economy for the benefit of its people, despite a global system that offers more impediment than support.

We have very convergent aspirations and visions towards poverty eradication, economic growth and prosperity as we enter the 21st century.

In short, we have a lot to offer one another.

Africa is a continent of immense opportunities with its abundant reserves of natural resources. On the other hand, India as a land of innovative technological know-how, advanced learning, and expertise, offers the African continent a unique opportunity for a mutually beneficial partnership.

The inseparable ties and bonds of friendship that bind our two continents is reflected in the determination of Africa to partner in India's economic resurgence and in the commitment of India to be a trusted partner in Africa's renaissance.

Chairperson,

We welcome the setting up of new and robust joint monitoring and coordinating mechanisms as the cornerstone of our renewed partnership. It will allow us to follow the progress and to ensure that the processes are not stalled and timelines for the completion of projects are established and respected.

This is one way that we can assure ourselves that we are on track, and also provide the mechanism to identify very early potential sign of derailment for which corrective actions can be promptly taken.

CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY

Chairperson,

A new dynamism in south-south cooperation approach is needed to support the trials of today so as to keep the momentum going and to face up to the global challenges that are threatening our collective futures.

Climate change is top of that list. It doesn't take much to connect the dots and see that the majority of the problems and environmental disasters we are facing today can be traced back to the continued abuse of our planet.

It certainly doesn't take much to see who is going to pay the price. We are. And our future generation if the matter is not addressed in a collective and very holistic manner.

We have just returned from celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations where we adopted a new ambitious agenda for global development - the Sustainable Development Goals.

Sustainability is not just the new 'it' word, it is the very foundation of any future we hope to have.

The ability to maintain sustainable development resilience is paramount for survival of all our economies. Environmental protection and the ability to exploit our resources in a carefully considered manner is part and parcel of that.

BLUE ECONOMY

Chairperson,

The Blue Economy features strongly in our partnership because we all recognize the opportunities and the abundant potential that exist in this sector, and the wealth of expertise that exists between both regions.

The Blue Economy offers a vast scope for our economic advancement but one key area, upon which all others depend, is adequate port facilities and marine transportation. Such infrastructure would not only boost trade and our maritime defences, but also allow judicious exploitation of ocean resources.

India has the technological know-how and maritime infrastructures that can really benefit the African continent in our quest to address these deficits.

TRADE

On trade, we express our deep appreciation to India for introducing and expanding its Duty Free Trade Preference Scheme for LDCs to allow for greater trade flows and strengthening the economies of these developing countries. We look forward to greater coverage that the preference scheme may provide. We also take the opportunity to underline the need to create a conducive environment for the extension of the scheme to ALL African countries.

Chairperson,

We owe it to our people and our country. Our young generation will hold us accountable tomorrow for valuable time wasted and opportunities denied to them and future generations to come if we fail to pave the way now.

Let us be remembered for leading and driving the process forward, and not forever procrastinating for a better tomorrow.

Chairperson,

I thank you.