

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT THE WELCOME BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA, DR  
MULATU TESHOME**

**Addis Ababa, 5 October, 2017**

It is indeed a privilege for me to visit your beautiful country, particularly since it is my first visit abroad after being elected President. That I chose to visit Ethiopia on my maiden trip is reflective of the importance we attach to our relations with your country. I have come to pay tribute to our enduring friendship and to further deepen our age-old ties.

I am conscious that when one visits Ethiopia one visits the cradle of humankind, the land of LUCY, and home to the most ancient kingdom in Africa.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you, Excellency, for your warm welcome and gracious hospitality. I am truly touched by your special gesture of personally receiving me at the airport.

My visit marks a milestone in our bilateral relations. While India is celebrating the 70th anniversary of Independence, our two countries are marking the beginning of the 70th year of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.

**Excellencies,**

Our two countries are ancient lands. We have interacted and engaged with each other since ages. Indian traders flocked to the ancient port of Adulis, trading silk and spices for gold and ivory. A sizeable Indian community came and settled here in the latter part of the 19th century. Then came Indian teachers and with them Indian thought and knowledge, some of which we had learnt from you and made our own.

There was movement in the other direction too. Thousands of people of Ethiopian origin became an integral part of Indian society along the West Coast of India. Many rose to become Kings, Queens and Military

Commanders. The principality of Sachin in the present day Indian State of Gujarat is just one such shining example of our intermingling.

Our exchanges have produced many more similarities. Your linguistic fabric is as diverse as our mix of regional languages; your music as rhythmic as the beat of our tabla; and the crease of your Shamma as beautiful as the folds of our Sari. And while I am yet to taste your Injera, I am doubly sure that it will be as delectable as our Dosa.

**Excellencies,**

On the bedrock of our age-old ties, we have together crafted a contemporary and modern partnership.

I had fruitful meetings with the Ethiopian leadership today. Our two sides committed to further deepen our bilateral and global engagement.

At the Joint Business Dialogue, we took stock of our thriving economic and commercial relationship and agreed to enhance it further.

**Excellencies,**

India-Ethiopia relations are doing exceedingly well. We are testing the frontiers of science together. Our youths are incubating and innovating together. Our education connect continues to be on an upward trajectory.

India remains committed to sharing its development experience with you and to financing projects as per Ethiopia's development priorities. Today, we have agreed to consider a fresh line of credit for supporting Ethiopian growth and development.

We are happy that our technical cooperation and capacity building programs are creating values and skills that our long-lasting, impactful and sustainable.

We value your support for the International Solar Alliance. It is reflective of our common commitment to create a more sustainable world, crafted on the idea of climate justice.

**Excellencies,**

We see Ethiopia as a natural partner in our growing engagement with the world. Together, we must fight the scourge of terrorism. And together, we must shape and change new and old institutions of global governance.

Today, the voice of Ethiopia is heard with respect. Your place as a non-permanent member of the United National Security Council and the election of Dr. Tedros Adhanom as the new Director-General of WHO are matters of pride for all of us. I heartily congratulate the people of Ethiopia on these splendid achievements.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

In conclusion, let me say once again how fortunate I feel to have visited your beautiful country. I wish Ethiopia greater peace, prosperity and growth in the years ahead.

I thank you all.

May I now invite Your Excellency and Ladies and Gentlemen, to join me in raising a toast:

- to the health and happiness of His Excellency the President of Ethiopia;
- to the progress and prosperity of the people of Ethiopia; and,
- to the everlasting friendship between India and Ethiopia.

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