

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA**

Lusaka, 11 April 2018

1. Your Excellency, Mr. President allow me start by mentioning how happy we are, to be in this beautiful, warm and friendly country. My wife and I, and indeed my entire delegation, greatly appreciate the gracious hospitality you have extended to us. I am honored to be visiting Zambia.
2. Excellency, India and Zambia share a very special relationship. Ours has been a partnership built on the legacy of our founding fathers: Mahatma Gandhi and President Kenneth Kaunda. Years gone by are witness to our commitment and steadfast support for justice, freedom and solidarity for those who needed them most.
3. Excellency, the soil and sinews of this country and this continent have always espoused the larger cause: you have been the font of liberation movements in Africa; and it was on your sacred African soil that Mahatma Gandhi first shook the shackles of injustice. We could not have shared a more glorious past !!
4. Excellency, I am delighted that we have continued with our friendship with same vigor and passion in the present. I must say that to be called "*an all weather and time-tested friend*" is both an honour and privilege for us.
5. There is much in common in between our two countries, and not just in being home to the wonders of the world - the awesome Victoria Falls in Zambia and the magnificent Taj Mahal in India. We have a shared commitment to democratic governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and inclusive development. Our economic cooperation is

doing well but we both desire to do more. Indian companies have been much encouraged by your leadership and economic policies. They are keen to create new ventures and projects, in partnership with your people and your communities. The Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement that we have signed will give a boost to our economic engagement. There is a lot that “Smart Zambia” and “Digital India” can share with each other. Similarly, Indian growth story and Zambian economic strengths should support and build each other.

6. We are proud of our development partnership with Zambia. This is in keeping with our age-old guiding principle of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbam”- that is - “the world is our family”. Our assistance in health and energy sectors is adding value to people’s lives in this country. We are keen to step up our capacity building and training support. To this end, we have offered to establish an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Zambia. I hope that it would foster new ideas, enterprises and start-ups in the country.
7. Excellency, we thank you for joining the International Solar Alliance. Solar energy can do wonders for the land of safaris, and we are ready to assist you, both with technology and finance.
8. Excellency, our two countries are strong partners on defence and security. As with our political relations, we share the comfort of history in our defence ties; our men have fought together in various theatres of war. Let us build on this strong foundation. We should also come together to defeat and destroy terrorism in all its manifestations.
9. Excellency, as two countries with multitude of languages and peoples, we both understand the value of diversity. Our Diaspora, many of whom are proud Zambians today, have added their beauty and colour to your social fabric. They have not only contributed to your economic progress but also helped build bridges of friendship between the two countries.

10. Excellency, we have great admiration for your political legacy. It fills us with joy and pride that Zambia continues to play a leading role in the region. The peace and stability you have maintained and enjoyed is a shining example for many to follow.

11. With these words, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, May I request you to join me in raising a toast:

- To the health and happiness of the President of Zambia and First Lady;

- To the continued well-being and prosperity of the friendly people of Zambia; and

- To the enduring friendship between Zambia and India.

May the fragrance of Bougainvillea and Lotus together radiate in all directions. Thank you.