

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, MR. RAM NATH KOVIND AT THE COMMUNITY RECEPTION

Livingstone, April 12, 2018

1. It is a privilege for me to meet members of the Indian community in Livingstone. Thank you for welcoming me with such affection. I am delighted to meet a vibrant Indian community in this old and historic city and this very important tourist centre – so close to the Victoria Falls, which I will soon be visiting.
2. This is my third journey abroad after becoming President of India. I have made it a point to schedule all my visits so far to Africa. This is a reflection of how closely we in India view the continent. Africa is home to some of our closest friends as well as to very well-integrated Indian communities. And the Indian community in Zambia stands out. With your contributions you are a model for the Indian diaspora. You are true cultural ambassadors of India.
3. The Indian community in Zambia can be traced back to even before this country's independence in 1964. Trade and commerce, mining and hospitality, healthcare and academics – you are doing your bit for Zambia in so many fields. You come from various parts of our country. But here in Zambia, despite the diversity, you are all united as representatives of Indian society and of our civilisation.
4. Your contributions have helped generate goodwill for your community as well as for India as a nation. You are our champions in a faraway land, even in Livingstone, which I understand is as much as 7,500 km away from Delhi. We in India have long believed in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Today, I am truly happy to meet our Livingstone kutumb! You have made great efforts to embellish India's reputation as well as keep alive our cultural traditions so far from home. This is heart-warming. I congratulate all of you.

5. The greatest Indian to have lived in Africa was, of course, Mahatma Gandhi. For both India and Zambia, he is an inspiration. On this visit, I have been received very warmly by President Lungu and the government and people of Zambia. Yesterday I was fortunate to meet Dr Kenneth Kaunda, a statesman who has the same stature in Zambia that Mahatma Gandhi has in India. He is an old friend of our country and of your community.
6. It is because of such mature leaders in Zambia and because of the efforts of every section of society – including all of you – that Zambia is an example for the rest of Africa as a democratic developing country. Our people share the values of liberty and freedom, of human dignity and socio-economic development. As members of the Indian community here, you are custodians of that value system. You are a living bridge between India and Zambia. Please help make this partnership even more meaningful.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7. Our government seeks sustained and proactive engagement with our overseas community. The dialogue with the diaspora is aimed at providing possibilities and platforms through which you can learn about as well as participate in India's transformation. And link this transformation with the developmental priorities of Zambia. I urge you to partner us in this process.
8. Today India is on the road of fast economic growth. There is confidence and optimism among our youth. India's rise is creating newer opportunities for collaboration with the external world. Our government is keen to strengthen ties with our people abroad. You must take advantage of available schemes, particularly of the OCI programme. It will connect you with India forever.
9. Last but not the least, time and online booking slots permitting, I invite you to visit Rashtrapati Bhavan the next time you are in Delhi. It is not just where I live and work. It is every Indian's address – including every Indian in Livingstone!

Thank you

Jai Hind!