

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH  
KOVIND AT THE RECEPTION HOSTED FOR INDIAN  
DIASPORA IN MAURITIUS BY THE HIGH COMMISSIONER  
OF INDIA IN MAURITIUS**

**March 13, 2018**

1. I am happy to be amongst this august gathering of Indian Diaspora and friends of India. I am accompanied by a delegation comprising Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Shri Ashwini Choubey and four Members of Parliament. I must say, you have made us feel really special in your beautiful country. I and my delegation have been received with tremendous warmth and affection. Right from the time I landed in Mauritius, to every event that I have been to, I have felt the warmth and goodwill of our ancestral links, of our familial ties. I am truly grateful for this gesture.

2. Yesterday I had the honour to attend the celebration of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence of Mauritius. I wholeheartedly enjoyed the spectacular celebrations. I was impressed by the high sense of pride and humility that marked the festivities. I once again extend to you greetings and felicitations on this historic occasion.

**Friends,**

3. In the last 50 years, the people of Mauritius have created a democratic, plural and multiethnic society laced with high

optimism and progress. The economic achievements of this small but vibrant country are laudable. You have created, what many call, a heaven on earth. Under the wise guidance of generations of farsighted leaders, the people of Mauritius have transformed this island nation, into a beacon of peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean.

### **Friends,**

4. We are two countries, but one people. We have common civilisational roots. We share with you much more than any other country or society. Our traditions, colours and festivals are the same. Our inspiration, encouragement and inner strength also come from the same source. For both of us, Mahatma Gandhi is an everlasting source of pride. His message and struggle did not stop on the sands of Dandi, it reached in full strength to shores of Mauritius as well.

5. I had the privilege of visiting the symbol of our umbilical relations, the Aapravasi Ghat, and climbed its historic 16 steps. It is a tribute to the sacrifice, courage and hope that Mauritians have displayed over the last nearly 200 years. A ghat has a special meaning in India. It connects us to our ethos and spirituality. I must say when I was at the Aapravasi Ghat, I felt I was on a spiritual pilgrimage. It was truly a humbling experience for me.

6. In India, we rejoice at the remarkable success of our brothers and sisters who left Indian shores many generations ago, and have achieved great material and spiritual progress. In our country, since time immemorial, we have believed in living together, in harmony, peace and unity. Indian life and society has been defined by “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum*”, meaning the whole world is our family. This is even more so for Mauritius, with whom we are linked by blood and sweat.

### **Friends,**

7. Today, more than ever, we want to connect with our Diaspora abroad. We want to engage and embrace them and in the process hold each other’s hand for mutual progress and prosperity. To this end, we have made special provision for Mauritius in our OCI scheme. I was filled with joy to handover OCI cards to several distinguished members of the Indian Diaspora today. We hope to further strengthen these ancestral bonds.

8. I also invite each one of you to visit and participate in the programmes of the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in Delhi. It is a home, an address in India for every member of our Diaspora. I am happy that young Mauritians have already started to connect with the Kendra. In January, earlier this year, we hosted several of your parliamentarians there for a Global PIO Parliamentarians Conference. We must utilise our Diaspora

networks and platforms, more and more, for connecting with India and for engaging others in different parts of the world.

### **Friends,**

9. Today, India and Mauritius are both robust democracies and vibrant, multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies, which stand for the values of tolerance and social harmony. In India's onward march, diversity has been our strength. And democracy has allowed it to flower and prosper. Democratic values, with inclusive economic development and progress, have the power to bridge gaps of ethnicity, religion or any other difference that may be there. As democracies, we must nourish diversity and our roots.

### **Friends,**

10. The motto of my Government in India is "Sabka saath Sabka vikas" i.e. "Together with everyone, development for everyone". This motto has been the cardinal principle of our developmental partnership with Mauritius. We want to support our brothers and sisters here, in building a stronger Mauritius, with infrastructural projects that add value to the well-being of common people. I had the honour to inaugurate few such projects yesterday. I hope they will bring happiness and joy to each and every section of the Mauritian society. I would also urge you to connect with India, its economic growth and new energy. You have made stellar economic progress and we are

on a path of rapid economic growth. We must complement each other in our respective pathways.

**Excellencies and Friends,**

11. The Indian Ocean has connected us in many ways. It has been a uniting force for us. A stable and peaceful Indian Ocean is in the interest of both India and Mauritius. We must strive and work together to ensure and achieve this shared objective.

12. India and Mauritius have always stood by each other. India was proud to help Mauritius in its efforts to gain due recognition from UNESCO for the Aapravasi Ghat and Bhojpuri Geet Gawai. As members of our proud Diaspora, we seek your continued assistance to bring to bear Indian thought and practice at the world stage, not just for our own benefit, but for the larger good. After all yoga today is cherished by one and all.

**Excellencies, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

13. I once extend my heartiest felicitations to the Indian Diaspora and Indians living in Mauritius. You are a true reflection of India with its rich diversity, cultural heritage and traditions. We are proud of you and your achievements.

14. With these words, I wish you all and your families the very best for all your endeavours, and even greater success and prosperity in the years ahead.

Thank you.