

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF SAINT VINCENT & THE
GRENADINES ON THE TOPIC “INDIA AND SVG – TOWARDS AN
INCLUSIVE WORLD ORDER”**

Kingstown, May 19, 2022

I am grateful to you all for the welcome and hospitality extended to me and my delegation. This is not only my first visit to your beautiful country but also the first ever visit by a President of India to Saint Vincent & the Grenadines.

I am happy to be here among the Honourable Members of Parliament. Being a legislator entails a deep sense of commitment and dedication in order to realise the dreams and aspirations of the people.

India and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines have historical relations established by our forefathers, years ago, even before our countries had become independent. We are both multi-racial societies with a common history of British colonial rule. Our friendship is rooted in our common historical and cultural heritage as well as our shared values of democracy, inclusion, freedom and the rule of law.

Our bilateral engagement has blossomed in the last few years. The visit of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves to India in September 2019 infused new energy into our relations. I am happy that India's development partnership involves various communities in this country. I am glad to note that projects such as the Bequia Market Repairs and Restoration, the Community Development Project for Glenside Village Marriaqua and the Rehabilitation and Transformation of the Chateau-Belair Agriculture Depot into a processing and training facility have either been completed or are at an advanced stage of completion. India has stood by St. Vincent & the Grenadines during this COVID pandemic as well. As a symbol of our solidarity with the people of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, a shipment of life saving drugs and protective gear were dispatched at the start of the pandemic. India had also sent Made in India Covishield vaccines last year.

India engages with SVG at the regional level in the CARICOM which has more than one million-strong Indian diaspora. We appreciate SVG's active participation in the various activities on our Agenda with the CARICOM. We deeply value our ties with the CARICOM which is one of the oldest integration groupings in the region. India will continue to partner with this regional mechanism in addressing the challenges on the front of development and other issues.

We live in a world characterized by multiple linkages among nation-States and people across the world. Today, more than ever before in human history, the international community is linked together at multiple levels: modern supply chains make economic inter-linkages deep; technology has no borders; our families and friends live across the globe; and we all are consumers of global products and services.

The trans-continental migration of people, going back many centuries now, adds a special dimension to this global connect. The presence of Indo-Vincentians is a fine example of this connect. People from India who came here in the 19th Century as indentured labour, subsequently became an integral part of your society.

Today's closely connected world has brought immense benefits to people around the globe through opening up of new markets, new educational and employment opportunities, greater access to information and new vistas for countries to engage with the outside world.

This globalized world order has also brought its own set of challenges. Climate Change, political conflicts threatening international peace and security, cross-border terrorism, supply-chain disruptions – are some of the major global challenges that impact us all. Nation states would have to look beyond their narrow self-interests in tackling these challenges for the well-being of our future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Multilateralism is more relevant in today's inter-connected and inter-dependent world than it was at any time in our shared history. Multilateralism ought to be used as an instrument to promote strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth in all nation-states.

However, for multilateralism to remain relevant and effective, institutions need to be reformed. Structures and institutions that emerged after the two world wars focused on one major issue – that of preventing another world war. To tackle the complex issues of today, the new world order that we seek to build, is to be an inclusive world order, where every country can express its legitimate interests. This can only happen by way of an expanded and better-designed representation system in key global institutions.

It is important, therefore, to ponder upon and examine whether the current world order, with the United Nations and its institutions, is adequately serving the global community in addressing these complex challenges.

Our objective in advocating for an inclusive world order is to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, non-discriminatory, and equitable multilateral system. The need of the hour is, therefore, reform of global institutions, with the UN Security Council at its core, to reflect the contemporary global reality.

On this issue, India and St. Vincent & the Grenadines share common interest, approach and understanding. Both our countries are part of the 42 member developing countries' platform of the L 69 group. This group is actively pushing for reforms of the UN Security Council through an expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership.

I congratulate St. Vincent & the Grenadines for the stellar role it played in advocating for a meaningful and time-bound progress in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations process on Security Council reforms, during its membership of the Security Council for the years 2020-21.

As India celebrates 75 years of its independence, we are taking forward our engagement with the world in line with our philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or the 'World is one Family'. In India, my Government's motto is "*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas,*" i.e., together with all, development for all, with everyone's trust and with everyone's efforts. This also demonstrates India's approach in the global arena which means India believes in an inclusive world order that is sensitive to legitimate interests and concerns of every country and region, irrespective of its size or wealth.

We think and act for the future of entire humanity. India has remained steadfast in its commitment to share its experience, knowledge and skills acquired in its journey of development, with fellow developing countries. I am confident that India and St. Vincent & the Grenadines will continue to work closely together in advancing these shared objectives for an inclusive world order.

With these words, let me thank Madam Speaker for giving me an opportunity to address this August Assembly. It is an honour for me to be here today, on behalf of the world's largest democracy. It was a pleasure sharing my thoughts with you. I wish the people of India and St. Vincent & the Grenadines a very bright future.

Thank you!