

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF
HIS EXCELLENCY MR EDGAR CHAGWA LUNGU
THE PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, August 21, 2019

- 1 It is an honour Mr. President to host you on your first State Visit to India. Last year, I had a memorable visit to your beautiful country. Your exceptional warmth and hospitality made it even more special. We wish to lace your stay in India with as much warmth and affection.

Mr. President,

- 2 Zambia-India ties are deep and historical. We have walked together, hand-in-hand, in our onward march as democratic nations. Our leaders have inspired each other in our struggle for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi won independence for us, but he was equally concerned about the freedom of the Zambian people. We feel truly privileged that his teachings continue to resonate among your people and your leaders. Your first President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, a living legend, is a true Gandhian. I had the privilege to call on him during my State Visit to Zambia. As we celebrate Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary this year, we pay our deepest gratitude to the Zambian people for the love and respect they have shown to the Father of our Nation.

Mr. President,

- 3 Our ties are described as "all weather and time-tested friendship". Nations do enjoy such warm sentiments, but rarely. And when that happens, relationship grows in abundance and partnership gallops with pace. Today, Zambia and India share a multifaceted relationship. Our economic ties are on the upswing. We find a perfect match between India's growth and

Zambia's capacity. Our trade and investment ties have brought prosperity to our two peoples. For decades, Indian companies have had a home in Zambia. Many more wish to partner you in your progress. I am confident that you will continue to support them as they work to contribute to Zambia's growth and development.

Mr. President,

- 4 Our people and our youth have similar aspirations. They wish to lead the world on innovation, smart solutions, next-generation technologies, green growth and more. We must exchange knowledge and skills to fulfil their aspirations. Smart Zambia and Digital India could not be better partners for each other. Today, we have made a new beginning in our digital collaboration. I hope our tele-education and tele-medicine expertise would create new opportunities for the youth in Zambia.

Mr. President,

- 5 Our political relations are deep. Our economic ties are growing. Our defence and security ties must also keep pace. I am happy that today we have expanded our defence cooperation. And along with it, we have yet again renewed our mutual commitment to securing ourselves, and the world, from the scourge of terrorism.
- 6 Mr. President, no word on Zambia-India friendship is complete without our people. They have been the real champions of our relationship. Be it the Indian community in Chipata or the Zambian students in Chennai, the cultural understanding that they have developed with people around them is truly remarkable. They savour pap with spinach and relish biryani with masala with equal delight! We surely could not have asked for more.

- 7 As two ancient societies, our people show deep reverence for nature. On my visit to Zambia, I was most delighted to visit the world famous Victoria Falls. May the energy of Victoria Falls, what you affectionately call Mosi-Oa-Tunya, and the embrace of the Himalayas continue to inspire us as we forge new bonds of friendship!
- 8 With these words, Mr President, I wish you and your people peace, progress and prosperity. And I wish our two countries everlasting friendship.

Thank you.