

**BRIEF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY THE PRESIDENT OF
REPUBLIC OF BENIN**

July 29, 2019, Cotonou

1. It is a great honour for me to be welcomed by Your Excellency on this historic, first-ever State Visit from India to Benin. I am touched by the exceptional warmth and gracious hospitality with which we have been received.
2. As the world's largest democracy, India has been impressed by the emergence of the Republic of Benin as a shining example of a stable democracy in West Africa.
3. We attach high importance to India-Benin relations. We look forward to further expansion of our bilateral engagement. To this end, we have signed several agreements today.
4. I am confident that with my visit and with your dynamic support Mr. President, India and Benin will open a new chapter in their cooperation for the betterment of our two countries and peoples.
5. May I now request you, Excellencies and Distinguished Guests, to join me in raising a toast:
 - To the good health and happiness of President Talon;
 - To the continued growth in friendship and cooperation between India and Benin; and
 - To the peace and prosperity of the friendly people of Benin!Long live India-Benin ties!

Thank you!