

**STATEMENT BY MR. YASHWANT SINHA, MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
ON HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO
CONSIDER HOW TO SUPPORT THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S
DEVELOPMENT ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2002**

Mr. President,

I am happy to participate and represent India in this high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly at the beginning of the 57th session, devoted to exploring ways to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD]. Crafting partnerships among the African countries themselves and between Africa and the rest of the international community is at the core of NEPAD.

Mr. President,

2. By virtue of the abundance of its natural resources and the capacity of its peoples to be agents of change, Africa holds the key to its own development. The process of African development, however, like any other, requires venture capital. If NEPAD provides the prospectus for a new listing, having studied it carefully, our conclusion is that the venture holds promise to be mutually beneficial. We expect that Africa would benefit and that the return on investment will be manifold. In our view, the market has every reason to be bullish on NEPAD.

Mr. President,

3. Africa has, in NEPAD, accorded the highest priority to democracy. Like India, it sees democracy as a moral imperative. Democracy provides the basis for durable peace and stability. Conflict and instability are anathema to economic development. Democracy is, therefore, a necessary condition for progress and prosperity.

Mr. President,

4. Democracy, however, does not provide an instant recipe for economic salvation. Economic development requires, in addition, sound economic policies. And sound policies, in fact, the only workable policies – economic or political – are those which are chosen by the people themselves.

5. The independent evaluation of the UN New Agenda for Development of Africa finds that liberalisation, privatisation and market-based reforms pursued by many African countries in the 1990s did help to improve their macro-economic situation. The adjustment programmes, however, failed to restore economic growth and had adverse effects on social conditions. Over-riding reliance on liberalisation, privatisation and market-based reforms has, in many cases, proved counter-productive in accelerating development and alleviating poverty.

6. Africa has had, in the past, policies imposed from outside. National ownership is not a mere principle to be paid lip service to. The restriction of democratic space is not only morally unacceptable; it is also, we find, economically and socially counter-productive and could often prove to be disastrous. This is, in our view, a principal lesson which the international community needs to learn from the experiences of the past.

Mr. President,

7. We are gratified at the significant increase in the volume, quality and scope of South-South cooperation between Africa and the rest of the developing world. India has been particularly active in investment and various forms of technical cooperation arrangements with African countries. An important reason for the success is perhaps the relevance and appropriateness of the Indian development experience to Africa.

8. India's relationship with Africa is built on strong historical and political foundations. It has been our objective, for the last four decades, to also impart substantive economic content to this relationship. Over the past decades, we have provided more than US\$ 2 billion in technical assistance to countries of South. More than 1400 representatives of developing countries, the majority from Africa, are provided training every year under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme. Also, at any time, we are host to around 10,000 African students in our country. We are happy, through this programme, to be able to contribute to capacity-building in Africa.

9. Trade between India and sub-Sahara Africa has increased by almost 300% over the last nine years. We are determined to maintain and improve this rate of growth. India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry has, therefore, launched a "Focus Africa" programme this year. We attach particular importance to the promotion of private sector linkages and have initiated training programmes for private sector institutions.

10. In July this year, a conference on India and NEPAD was held in New Delhi that brought together representatives of Indian industry and financial institutions and their partners in Africa. The conference addressed, among other issues, the question of improving utilisation of the lines of credit extended by India to many countries in Africa. We have set for ourselves a target of US\$ 200 million in credit to be made available in the next one year.

Mr. President,

11. India is ready for NEPAD.

Thank you, Mr. President.