

Statement by Ms. Preeti Kaur, Minister of State for External Affairs at the Joint Debate on Agenda Item 63[a] and [b], and 13: New Partnership for Africa's Development: Progress in Implementation and International Support; Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa: report of the Secretary-General [A/66/202 and A/66/214]; and 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries at the Sixty Sixth Session of the General Assembly, on October 11, 2011

Mr. President,

It gives me great pleasure to address today's Joint Debate on the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the promotion of peace and development in Africa, including in its efforts to fight malaria.



In the immortal words of India's first Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Africa is our "sister continent". India's links with Africa are civilizational. They are anchored in centuries of trade across the Indian Ocean; in the shared struggle against the yoke of colonialism; in our endeavour of post-colonial nation-building, and in our common quest to unshackle our people from the bondage of poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, and apartheid.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to this great continent for being the political birthplace of the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who first tested his central precepts of non-violence and peaceful resistance in South Africa.

Mr. President,

Ten years after the adoption of NEPAD, it is befitting to recognize the noteworthy progress made so far in pursuing sectoral priorities in agriculture, infrastructure,

health, education, science, information technology, and environment. Nevertheless, this decadal milestone also offers an opportunity for sober reflection on the unfinished tasks ahead in fulfilling the vision of socio-economic growth and sustainable development that was envisaged when this framework was first conceived.

Particularly relevant to this discussion is the pivotal contribution of international cooperation in Africa's development, especially in its efforts to make progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and in surmounting the difficult challenges confronting post-conflict and transitional societies in Africa.

As rightly emphasized by the Secretary-General in his Report, the international community needs to step up its efforts and bridge the gap between promise and delivery. The shortfall of 18 billion US dollars in meeting ODA commitments to Africa is a cause of concern. In these times of political uncertainty and fragile transitions in many African countries, it is more incumbent than ever for the continent's development partners to stay the course and help African countries achieve their developmental goals.

Mr. President,

On India's part, we have together with our African partners transformed our age old and special engagement into an enduring and multi-dimensional relationship. After careful nurturing over successive years, today our partnership with Africa is aligned with the priorities integral to the developmental goals of Africa and is built on the foundations of mutual equality and common benefit.

Sectoral areas of cooperation that have been accorded high priority include infrastructure development, capacity-building, agriculture, health, food security and technology cooperation.

Earlier this year, we reaffirmed our abiding commitment to working with our African partners at the second India-Africa Forum Summit in Addis Ababa in May 2011. At the Summit, India announced fresh lines of credit worth five billion US dollars over the next three years for Africa and an additional 700 million US dollars grant assistance for human resource development, transfer of technology, and building new institutions and training programmes, in consultation with the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and our African partners.

In keeping with NEPAD's emphasis on infrastructure development, we have also decided to support the development of a new Ethio-Djibouti Railway line at 300 million US dollars. We are also discussing with the African Union the augmentation of capacities for the development of regional structure in railways.

Building on the success of the Pan African E-network project that shares with all African countries our expertise in the fields of healthcare and education through

satellite, fiber optics and wireless links, we are looking at setting up an India-Africa Virtual University. The proposed University will set aside 10,000 new scholarships for African students.

We are further going to significantly raise the number of African beneficiaries of our scholarships and training slots, including under our flagship technical and economic assistance initiative- the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). We have committed ourselves to offering more than 22,000 scholarships to African students over the next three years.

With a view to encouraging trade and investment flows, there is also a proposal to establish an India-Africa Business Council. India is already unilaterally making available duty free and quota free market access for goods from 34 Least Developed Countries in Africa. This covers 94% of India's total tariff lines and provides preferential market access on tariff lines that comprise 92.5% of global exports of all LDCs.

India's private sector has played an increasingly important part in recent years in supporting trade and investment flows. Indian companies have made large investments in Africa in industry, agriculture, services, human resource development and infrastructure. The Indian conglomerate Tata has emerged as the second largest investor in Sub-Saharan Africa. New initiatives to establish an India-Africa Food Processing Cluster, an India-Africa Integrated Textiles Cluster, an India-Africa Civil Aviation Academy, an India-Africa Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, and an India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development are on the anvil.

Mr. President,

India has also contributed actively in efforts to maintain peace and security on the African continent through our six decade long involvement in UN peacekeeping efforts. Our most substantial presence remains in Africa, including in the latest peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

Further, India will contribute 2 million US dollars for the African Union Mission in Somalia in line with our consistent support to the development of African capacities in the maintenance of peace and security. We have consistently held the position that the international community must further encourage regional and sub-regional organizations in Africa to play a more important role both in peacekeeping and peacebuilding issues within Africa.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I would like to speak to the global anti-malaria campaign, particularly in Africa, dealt with in the WHO Report transmitted by the Secretary-General. The Report emphasizes the need to intensify efforts to reach the recently revised and more ambitious targets by 2015.

The analysis presented in the Report draws on empirical evidence to suggest a strong link between injection of significant funding and rise in the number of lives saved as a result of anti-malarial efforts. The fact that funding has stagnated in the past two years is therefore particularly worrisome. We would urge all donors to step up efforts at this critical juncture.

India's own cooperation agenda with Africa includes capacity building programmes for medical and health specialists to tackle pandemics like malaria, filarial polio, HIV and TB. India's private sector has been investing in establishing pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities in African countries. We are willing to do more.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, India's vision of the 21st century sees a great and dynamic role for Africa as an emerging growth pole of the world. We will offer our fullest cooperation to translate this vision into reality. We will take our partnership from pillar to pillar founded on mutual solidarity and kinship to harness the great potential of the more than 2.1 billion Indians and Africans.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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