



Remarks

by

**Amb. (Dr.) Ruben Maye,
Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the
African Union, and Chairperson of AU Permanent
Representatives Committee**

**On the Occasion of
the Opening Session of the Senior Officials Meeting of
the 2nd Africa-India Forum Summit**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
20-21 May, 2011**

The Vice Minister of External Affairs of India and Co-Chair

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished participants;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I will to begin by welcoming you to Addis Ababa for this important meeting which marks the beginning of the 2nd Africa-India Forum Summit.

I thank the Chief of Staff for his Statement and the Commission of the African Union for hosting our meeting and for the excellent facilities it has put at our disposal.

I like also to express our appreciation to each and everyone for the contributions you have made which will facilitate the successful staging of the Summit.

Let me also specially welcome our guests and partners from India and express the hope that your stay in Addis Ababa will not only be successful but also enjoyable. India has made every effort to ensure that this Summit holds in very good conditions and has been very cooperative and supportive. I will request the Vice Minister to kindly convey our appreciation to the Indian government and the People of the brotherly country, India.

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The first Summit took place in New Delhi some three years ago. That Summit was an expression of the freewill of the People of Africa and India to take the long standing relationship between them to a higher height. This has broadened interaction between Africa and India at the continental level and has reinforced the bilateral and regional relations that Africa and India have built over the years.

The holding of the 2nd Forum Summit is, no doubt, an expression of confidence in the continental ties that we have built since the first Summit was held. An evaluation of what has happened in terms of the implementation of the New Delhi Declaration, the Framework for Cooperation and the Plan of Action we agreed last year, shows that we have achieved many of the objectives we set ourselves. Obviously, we have had some challenges, but we have worked together to deal with those challenges, and successfully too.

For this Summit, we have worked hard to produce the Addis Ababa Declaration and the Framework for Enhanced Cooperation between us. I am of the opinion that the two documents fully reflect the desire of both Africa and India to take the relationship between them to a greater height.

They also reflect the communality of interests that Africa and India share and give a promise of a better future for this mutually beneficial partnership.

I congratulate our Colleagues from both Africa and India on the excellent work that they have done in producing, what I consider, excellent proposals. I am aware that a lot of work has been done over several weeks, particularly in the last couple of weeks. That work has involved our Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the countries that will represent Africa in the Forum Summit on the one hand, and Indian Officials on the other.

I am glad that through the frank exchanges that have taken place, more than 90% of the two documents have already been agreed. Indeed, the Framework for Enhanced Cooperation is more or less a done deal and only four paragraphs of the Addis Ababa Declaration remain to be mutually agreed. And even then, considerable discussions have already taken place on them when the two sides met on 18 May 2011.

Consequently, my expectation is that we will focus on those areas that have not been concluded. My co-Chair and I have agreed that we will not be opening up agreed text. I urge therefore that you please focus on those four paragraphs that we need to conclude.

Let me end my remarks by expressing once again my sincere appreciation to those on the two sides who worked very hard and so well that our assignment is almost done.

I thank you all for your kind attention and I wish the Forum Summit great success.

**African Union Commission
Bureau of the Chairperson
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