

**Opening Statement by Vice Minister for External Affairs, H.E. Mr. Vivek Katju at the Inaugural Session of the Senior Officials' Meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa India Forum Summit, 20 May 2011**

**Distinguished Colleague from Equatorial Guinea,**

**Excellency, Amb. John Shinkaiye,**

**Distinguished Heads of the Regional Economic Communities and NEPAD,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to participate in this Senior Officials' Meeting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa India Forum Summit. We assemble here today in order to share our views on the current state of India-Africa relationship and put our efforts together to carve out new pathways towards enriching our partnership in the coming years.

Excellencies, India's partnership with African countries rests on a firm historical foundation of shared struggles against colonialism and apartheid and an equally important struggle for the comprehensive development of our societies, economies and polities. Ours is an association marked by consultation, responsiveness and mutual appreciation of each other's concerns. India and the African countries, through a deliberative mechanism spanning across several fora, have arrived at a model of cooperation where the selection of priority areas are being made in full consultation.

India's vision for a partnership with Africa for the 21st Century goes beyond the already strong bilateral relationships and envisages closer cooperation with the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as the African Union. This new paradigm of cooperation is premised on Africa's own model for the

development of Pan-African institutions and development programmes. The wide ranging cooperation and development partnerships between India and Africa encompasses, amongst others, the fields of human resources and institutional capacity building; science & technology; agricultural productivity & food security; industrial growth; development in the health sector; infrastructure development; and Information and Communication Technology.

The First India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008 turned out to be a milestone event insofar that its outcomes became the guiding parameters of India's deepening engagement with Africa. Excellencies, I am happy to share with you that the implementation of the announcements made during the First India Africa Forum Summit is going on in a satisfactory manner

In March 2010, a Joint Action Plan, based on the India-Africa Framework for Cooperation, was announced. One of the highlights of the Joint Action Plan is the establishment of 19 capacity building institutions. The African Union has conveyed to us the locations of these institutions in December 2010. The concerned implementing agencies have already begun the preliminary process in consultation with our African partner countries and the preparation of Detailed Project Reports is underway. Several new training programmes for about 450 trainees have been completed during the last year. Further, both Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training positions and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships have been substantially enhanced. It is heartening to note the encouraging response that India's offer of Special Agriculture Scholarships and C.V. Raman Scientific Fellowship has received and currently more than 150 scholars are benefitting from these schemes.

Out of US\$5.4 billion of concessional lines of credit announced at the time of the First India Africa Forum Summit, nearly US\$2 billion for projects in Africa have been committed. 19 Least Developed Countries in Africa are already availing the benefits of Duty Free Tariff Scheme (DFTS), which India announced during the last Summit.

Excellencies, as per the decision of our African partners, the Second Africa India Forum Summit is being organized in this beautiful city of Addis Ababa, the seat of the African Union. This meeting of the Senior Officials will be followed by Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 23 May 2011 leading up to the Summit on 24-25 May 2011.

There have also been a series of events planned before or concurrently with the Summit. A meeting of the Trade Ministers of the India Africa Forum is being organized tomorrow. Earlier in the month, the First India Africa Academic Conference was held on 11-12 May 2011 which provided a platform to our respective intellectual communities to share views on several crucial issues. Some of the other events being organized over the next few days include a trade exhibition; a business conclave; interaction amongst Indian and African craftsmen; a multimedia exhibition; cultural performances showcasing fusion of Indian and African cultures; a festival of commercial Indian films; and India-Africa media partnership symposium. I hope you will have an opportunity to attend some of these events. At the conclusion of the Summit, we also intend to release a commemorative stamp and a coffee table book on India-Africa relations.

Excellencies, I would like to invite your attention to the two outcome documents-the **Addis Ababa Declaration** and the **India Africa Framework for Enhanced Cooperation**-that are to be issued at the end of the Summit. I am

confident that through our consultations we would arrive at an agreement with regard to these documents so that they can be presented before our leaders for their consideration during the Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the Summit.

Excellencies, with our rising global politico-economic profile, both India and Africa are justifiably expected to highlight the concerns of the developing world at various international fora. This shared responsibility calls for a synchronization of our views and response to a variety of global issues that may have a direct bearing on the development prospects of our peoples. It is in this context, Excellencies, that our interactions at the highest level acquire immense significance.

Excellencies, I thank you and look forward to participating in our discussions over the next two days.

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