



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, DURING
THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON AFRICA AT THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON MAY 08, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, we associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair of G-77. The special needs of Africa have long been recognized by the international community and I am happy that Africa is among the cluster of issues identified for separate consideration at CSD-16.

Our focus must be on concrete measures that support the development efforts of African countries. We recognize the initiatives that African countries have been making towards achieving sustainable development. The thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought and desertification is critical to these efforts. The international community must effectively support these efforts through provision of greater financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building.

On its part, India has been honoured to be able to contribute, within the limits of its capacity and capability as a developing country, to the development efforts of African countries. Our interaction has been at bilateral, regional and pan-African levels in the true spirit of South – South cooperation. India's trade and investment with Africa has risen sharply over the last few years. Indian companies have made investments worth several billion dollars in diverse sectors. These include capital goods industries that add value to Africa's exports, particularly to the EU and the US. A pan-African e-connectivity project to connect 53 African countries is a flagship project. Current two-way trade between India and Africa stands at over US\$ 30 billion. Yet, the true potential for trade and investment is much greater.

I am particularly happy to share that the 1st India – Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi recently marked a new chapter in the long history of civilizational contact, friendship and cooperation between India and Africa. Our Prime Minister emphasized that “it is our intention to become a close partner in Africa’s resurgence”.

Allow me to highlight some of the new initiatives announced at the Summit:

- India has undertaken numerous projects in African countries, supported by concessional lines of credit offered by the EXIM Bank of India. Over the last 5 years, these credit lines have amounted to US\$ 2.15 billion. India has now pledged to more than double this amount by offering credit lines worth US\$ 5.4 billion dollars over the next five years. This will be used to promote projects prioritized by Africa for its development needs and objectives, particularly all dimensions of physical infrastructure. We would also encourage participation of small, medium and micro enterprises, as well as involve the private sector, particularly through public-private partnerships.
- India has been implementing grant-based projects in critical areas focussing on human resources development and capacity building in many African countries. We have pledged to enhance these efforts by providing grants in excess of US\$ 500 million during the next five years. These efforts will also focus on creating regional and pan-African institutions of higher education, particularly in science, IT and vocational education, as well as invest in R&D in renewable energy and agricultural development.
- India believes that cooperation to enhance capacity building and develop human resources must be a key focus of international assistance. India has provided a large number of long-term scholarships to African students to pursue undergraduate, post-graduate and higher courses in India. The number of such scholarships will now be doubled.
- Technical capacity development is a key component of developing human potential and enhancing governance capabilities. Towards this end, India’s ITEC programme annually supports the short-term training of over 1100 Africans in India in various technical fields. This will now be enhanced to 1600 trainees per year.
- India has always recognized the crucial importance of market access in ensuring the development dimension of international trade. Towards this end, India announced a Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme for LDCs, which would

also be applicable to the 34 African LDCs. The scheme will provide preferential market access on tariff lines that comprise 92.5% of global exports of LDCs and cover 94% of India's total tariff lines.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reaffirm India's long-standing commitment to close cooperation with Africa.

Thank you.

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