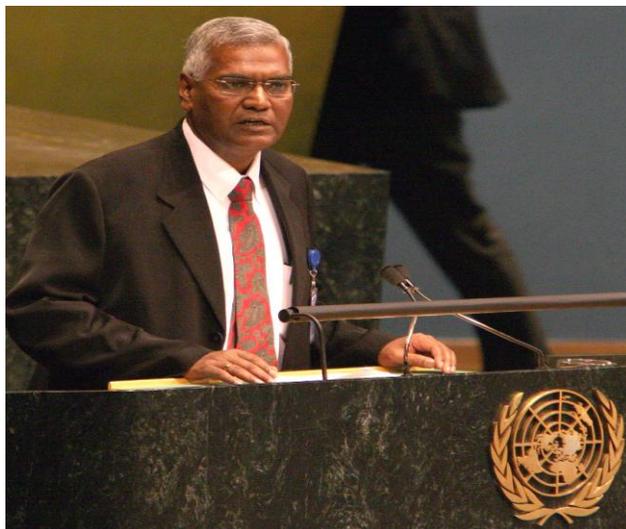




STATEMENT BY MR. D. RAJA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 57 [A] & [B]: NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND AGENDA ITEM 43: 2001-2010 : DECADE TO ROLL BACK MALARIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA, AT THE 63RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 15, 2008



Mr. President,

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955, described Asia and Africa as "sister continents". This vision of India and Africa, with our shared historical experience of fighting colonialism and multi-dimensional backwardness, and our common journey with a common destination, remains at the centre of India's links with Africa.

India, which hosted the first-ever India Africa Partnership Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008, is therefore extremely pleased to participate in today's discussion on the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Mr. President

We would like at the outset to take note of the High Level Meeting on the theme "Africa's Development Needs: State of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" that was held in New York on September 22, 2008. We would like to take particular note of para 39 of the Political Declaration adopted by the Meeting which stated *inter alia* that "All commitments to and by Africa should be effectively implemented and given appropriate follow-up by the international community and by Africa itself. We underscore the urgency of finding solutions to Africa's major challenges."

India would also like to echo the call of the President of the African Union made at that meeting that Africa deserves special attention. The strides being made by Africa in areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, human resources development, science and technology and information and communication technology are evident. They are also portents that indicate the awakening of a giant which will immutably transform the international political and economic order.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General in his report *New Partnership for Africa's Development : 6th Consolidated Progress Report Implementation and International Support (A/63/206)* provides details of the progress made in the various priority areas of NEPAD and analyses the response of the international community in support of NEPAD. We are particularly concerned in the light of this declaration that he has called for urgent implementation of international commitments, including a reversal in the decline of development assistance. We endorse the call of the President of the African Union of the moral obligation of the international community to assist Africa to pull itself out of the "poverty trap".

Mr. President,

India has always been committed to elevating its special engagement with Africa into an enduring partnership. We have a long-standing, close and multi-layered relationship with Africa based on our abiding commitment to work with the continent to fulfill its aspirations. Our partnership encompasses priority sectors integral to the developmental goals of Africa in the 21st century. A vibrant India and a resurgent Africa are witnessing an intensification of relations and growing convergence of interests in their common quest for sustainable economic growth and development.

The Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation adopted by India and Africa earlier this year highlight our shared vision and world view. The Delhi Declaration is based on equality and mutual respect. The Framework of Cooperation, adopted at the Summit, outlines the priority areas of our future

engagement. Taken together, these provide a sound foundation for the intensification of our engagement in the years to come.

India is committed to work together with Africa in accordance with the priorities of the continent. Areas of cooperation include capacity-building, agriculture, infrastructure development, health and food security and technology cooperation. India also announced the enhancement of the available concessional Lines of Credit for Africa to US\$ 5.4 billion. India sincerely aspires for a long-term partnership with Africa and is therefore investing in building economic infrastructure including railways, IT, telecom and power.

For India capacity building in Africa has been an area of priority. Since 1964, India has, through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, worked with Africa in placing thousands of students from Africa in professional institutions under India under scholarship schemes. Over 15000 African students are currently studying in Indian universities and colleges. India will over the next five to six years, undertake, on a grant basis, projects in critical areas focusing on education, science, IT, agriculture and renewable energy. India has offered a substantially higher number of training slots and has also doubled long-term scholarships. We have allocated half a billion dollars for this purpose.

The pan-African e-network project is a shining example of India-Africa partnership. India has gifted a dedicated satellite for e-connectivity in sub Saharan Africa to help bridge the digital divide. This project is fully financed by the Government of India and was launched from Addis Ababa with a satellite hub in Dakar. It is linking major universities in different regions of Africa with major Indian universities and centers of excellence in India and major hospitals in Africa with super-specialty hospitals in India. Thirty countries have already joined this Project to provide quality tele-education and tele-medicine.

Mr. President,

The Secretary General in his report on NEPAD has called for the long-overdue successful outcome of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations encompassing a development dimension. At the India Africa Partnership Forum Summit, India and Africa have decided to work together on pressing global issues of shared interests and concerns including the WTO such as the issue of cotton subsidies. India has made a unilateral announcement of duty free and quota free market access to goods from 34 Least Developed Countries in Africa. This will spur economic activity in manufacturing, particularly for African SMEs, by allowing them enhanced market access to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

India, like Africa, has been affected by the global economic slowdown, the international economic and financial system, and high food and oil prices. This is on our common agenda as are issues such as climate change, reform and

democratization of international institutions, the fight against terrorism, combating diseases, eradication of hunger and poverty and promotion of pluralism and democracy.

Mr. President

Africa's fight against Malaria that is dealt with in Secretary General's report transmitting the WHO's report on "2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa", remains an uphill task. Although there are signs that some progress might be taking place, it is a fact that resources remains inadequate, access to treatment is inadequate and that there is no evidence of a decline of malaria in Africa. The appearance of resistant *falciparum* strains is a matter of particular concern.

While a number of preventive measures, such as distribution of treated mosquito nets is being undertaken, it also remains a fact that the developing world's ability to combat such public health crises of this nature require fundamental changes in the intellectual property regime. The Doha Declaration enshrines the principle that trade rules on patents are not as important as public health. Access to medicines is a fundamental part of the right to health. It remains a matter of regret that this remains more in the realm of theory than practice.

Mr. President,

In concluding, I would like to state that it is our firm conviction that success in achieving the objectives of NEPAD depends on an African-led and Africa-developed agenda. With the rich human and natural resources available to Africa, and the commitment of Africa's leaders to achieving the objectives of NEPAD, success can be achieved if NEPAD receives the dedicated support of the international community in realizing the African dream.

Thank You

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