



English rendering of the Prime Minister's press statement during the visit of President of Swiss Confederation (August 31, 2017)

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Your Excellency, Madam President and distinguished guests,

Members of the media,

I'm delighted to welcome Madame President and her delegation in India.

Excellency,

India is not new to you; you have already visited the country several times in the past. However, your India visit as a President is taking place at a time when we are celebrating the festival of completion of 70 years of India's independence. This is also the time of completion of seven decades of Indo-Swiss Treaty of Friendship & Establishment. We hope that during this visit you would feel the same warmth and hospitality that we have felt during our visit to Switzerland in 2016.

I am delighted to see that both sides are keen to maintain deep relations at all levels.

Friends,

Today, we had a comprehensive and meaningful discussion on bilateral, regional and global issues. Our strong bilateral relations have progressed further through this visit.

The issues like disarmament and geographical expansion are extremely important for both Switzerland and India. In this context, we are extremely grateful to Switzerland for supporting India's entry into the MTCR.

We also discussed Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement between Indian and European Free Trade Association. The discussion on the provisions of this agreement has already started. It's a very welcome step. Both the sides have expressed their commitment to complete this agreement. Today, the issue of transparency in financial transactions is a cause of serious concern for the world. Be it black money or dirty money, or be it money laundering or be it the funds linked to arms and drugs. Our cooperation with Switzerland is ongoing to deal with this global curse.

Last year, we had signed a joint statement for automatic exchange of tax related information. Under this agreement, the information will be automatically shared with us upon completion of the internal processes of Switzerland. Foreign Direct Investment is a crucial basis for our economic relations and India particularly welcomes the Swiss investors. In this context, we have agreed to continue to discuss about the requirement of a new bilateral investment treaty. There are several opportunities for the Swiss companies to become a partner in India's growth and development.

Today, during our discussion with the business leaders of both the countries, we felt that they have a strong desire to constantly increase the business to business collaboration for mutual benefit.

India's traditional medicines, particularly Ayurveda, can play an important role in sustaining the health and wellness. I'm happy that Switzerland has recognized Ayurveda and it is keen to have more cooperation in this important sector.

In order to avail benefits from Switzerland in the fields of vocational education and skill, both countries took a joint initiative in the form of SkillSonics; more than five thousand Indians have taken advantage of this initiative. We are willing to extend our cooperation to expand this model.

Friends,

Climate Change is a big challenge faced by every country. We have agreed on the need to implement the Paris agreement on the basis of principal of common but differentiated responsibilities and also to work collectively for developing the ways to implement it. India will be helped in meeting its growing requirement of clean energy by becoming a member of the nuclear supplier group. In this context, we thank you for the constant support of Switzerland to us in getting the membership of NSG.

Initiatives like International Solar Alliance and our efforts to achieve the target of generating 175 Giga Watt of renewable energy by 2022 reflect India's commitment to clean energy and green future.

Excellency,

I'm confident that this visit of yours will be helpful in taking our relations to a new height. I thank Madame President for an extremely meaningful discussion and I'm keen to jointly work with you in the coming months.

Once again I heartily welcome you and wish you to have a meaningful visit to India.

Thank you very much!

AKT/SH/KT/RSB/AK

