



Speech by The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the banquet hosted in honour his excellency Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, The President of the Republic of Kenya

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Excellency, President Uhuru Kenyatta,
Honourable Ministers from Kenya,
Distinguished Guests,
Namaskar!
Habari Ya Jioni!
Mr. President,

We are delighted to welcome you today.

Not so long ago, in October last year, I had the pleasure of welcoming you to the Rashtrapati Bhavan when you participated in the Third India-Africa Forum Summit hosted in New Delhi.

Your State Visit to India this year, the first State Visit from Kenya since February 1981, reflects a new momentum in our bilateral co-operation.

The initiatives announced during Honourable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's State Visit to Kenya last July and your current visit will go a long way in strengthening our long standing affinities and enhancing our ties in the diverse areas of our common interest.

Excellency,

You have experienced the famed hospitality of the vibrant State of Gujarat. Of course, the enterprising people of this 'Jewel of Western India' are no strangers to you. Over the centuries, the *Muhindi* in Kenya have been a bridge between our two countries - and today, they are as much a part of your society as your own tribes: they are even referred to as the 43rd tribe of Kenya! Their active involvement in almost every sector of Kenya's economy bears testimony to their dedication to your great country.

Excellency,

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the founding President of Kenya, was an esteemed friend of the leaders of India's Freedom movement. During his famous Kapenguria trial in Kenya, independent India's first Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, had despatched Diwan Chaman Lal, an eminent lawyer, to represent and defend him in court. Over the years, this mutual regard and understanding have deepened and evolved into a close relationship. We have made substantial progress in every sphere of our cooperation. Today, India is one of Kenya's leading trade partners and second largest foreign investor. The presence of more than forty premier Indian companies in Kenya bears testimony to the complementarities of our two economies. India welcomes Kenyan business houses to explore the opportunities that our flagship schemes offer for partnerships and investments in our country.

Excellency,

Under your visionary leadership, Kenya has become one of the fastest growing economies of Eastern Africa. It has established itself as a hub for financial, commercial, tourist and transportation services. India remains committed to her developmental partnership with Kenya. India's Technical and Economic Co-operation programme and our training and scholarship initiatives under the India-Africa Forum Summit have benefited many young Kenyans. India stands ready to assist Kenya further in her human resource development and capacity building efforts.

In our discussions this evening, we shared a sense of satisfaction at our flourishing people-to-people contacts. This year, Indians represented the third largest tourist inflow into Kenya. Your beautiful country's pristine beaches on the Indian Ocean and famed wild-life parks have always been major attractions. In turn, Kenyans favour India for business, education, medical treatment and also tourism. India has recently held the first-ever

Festival of India in Kenya- Urafiki Utsav - which was very well received. We look forward to hosting a Festival of Kenya in India; and we anticipate that before long, Kenyan food like '*Ugaali*' and '*Sukuma*' Wiki will be popular in India as well!

It is for these reasons, Excellency, that India believes that as two old friends, and as developing nations with a 'young' population, there is much that we can do to build on our synergies.

In the 21st century, India looks forward to working with Kenya to fulfill the many shared aspirations of our respective peoples and contribute to global peace and stability. I have learned of a Swahili proverb saying - *Shikamana kama pete na kidole* , meaning, we must hold together like the finger and the ring. Let this ancient adage inspire our joint efforts.

With these words, Mr. President, I wish you and your distinguished delegation a very fruitful visit to India.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I request you to join me in raising a toast:-

- to the health and success of the President of Kenya, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta;
- to the progress and prosperity of the people of Kenya, our neighbours across the Indian Ocean; and
- to the everlasting friendship between India and Kenya.

Thank you !

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