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Banquet speech by Prime Minister during his visit to Kenya (July 11, 2016)

July 11, 2016

Excellency, President Uhuru Kenyatta,
Deputy President William Ruto,
Members of the Cabinet
Distinguished Guests
Jambo, Namaskar,

Thank you for such a warm welcome.

I bring to you the greetings and good wishes of the 1.25 billion people of India. From over two millennia ago, the waters of the great Indian Ocean have facilitated the inter-mingling of our two peoples. We are maritime neighbours.

Communities from the western shores of India, especially from my home State Gujarat, and the eastern coast of Africa have settled in each other's lands. In end 19th century, Indians came to Kenya during the colonial era to build the iconic Mombasa Uganda railway. Many of them stayed and contributed to the economic development of Kenya. Several joined the freedom struggle, and stood shoulder to shoulder with Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the founding president of Kenya. I count Makhan Singh, Pio Gama Pinto, Chaman Lal, M.A Desai among others. Ancient links between societies have also enriched our cultures. The rich Swahili language includes many Hindi words.

Indian cuisine is now an intrinsic part of Kenyan cuisine. Excellency, Last evening, you and I saw first-hand the affection and bonds of the Indian diaspora with Kenya. They are a strong bridge between the two countries. And, we value this joint heritage. I am happy to return to your beautiful country which I first visited in 2008. This visit may have been short but the outcomes have been significant. I have been able to rekindle our personal friendship which began in New Delhi in October 2015. In the last few hours, we have been able to impart new vigour

and momentum to our long-standing relations:Our political understanding and commitment have deepened.

We are ready to join hands with Kenya in fulfilling your development priorities:

In sectors of your choosing; and

at a speed that you prefer;

And, be it:

agriculture or health care;

Needs of education, vocational education or training;

development of small businesses;

Renewable energy or power transmission; and

building of institutional strengths.

Like in the past, our experiences and expertise are available for Kenya's benefit.

Excellency, we have a thriving economic and commercial relationship. But, it is not a temporary or transactional relationship. It is a time-tested bond, built on the foundation of shared values and shared experiences.

Friends,

Both India and Kenya have young populations. Both cultures value education. Now is the time for skill development.As the Swahili proverb goes: "Elimubilaamali, kamantabilaasali" (Means: Knowledge without practice is like wax without honey).Kenya and India have always worked for world peace. We can also unite our efforts with other developing countries, not just for the well-being of the weak and the poor.But, also to help preserve our Mother Earth.

We can learn from each other in the crucial area of conservation of natural assets. As Mzee Jomo Kenyatta said, "Our children may learn about heroes of the past. Our task is to make ourselves architects of the future".

President Uhuru Kenyatta, Distinguished Guests,May I now raise a toast

To the health and well- being of the President of Kenya, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta;

To the progress and prosperity of the people of Kenya, our Indian Ocean neighbours,

To the everlasting friendship between the people of India and Kenya..



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