

Statement by High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Zambia Ashok Kumar on presentation of his credentials to H.E. Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Republic of Zambia (22 October 2021)

Good Morning and Namaskar Mr. President!

At the outset, please accept my heartiest congratulations for winning the recently held Presidential Elections in August 2021 with a decisive mandate. The International Community has witnessed the peaceful conduct of elections and transfer of power, which is the victory of people's mandate and democracy. The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, has congratulated you for your victory in the Presidential elections.

Mr. President, I take this opportunity to extend my heartiest congratulations on the 57th Independence Day Anniversary of Zambia on 24th October 2021. The Government and the people of India continue to greatly value our longstanding relationship with the Republic of Zambia even before the Independence of Zambia in 1964. The relationship has been built on the shared values of democratic traditions and common history of fight against colonialism by peaceful means. The First President of Zambia, late Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, who worked with the Indian leaders, laid the strong foundation of India-Zambia bilateral relations, which have been nurtured well by subsequent leaders & people of both countries. Today, our bilateral relations are warm, cordial and multifaceted. The relationship continues to be driven by mutual respect, trust and the spirit of partnership. In recent years, the bilateral relations have progressed tremendously.

India cherishes and is grateful to Zambia for extending the consistent support, over the years, on many issues of India's interest at United Nations and various multilateral fora.

Mr. President, India being the largest democracy in the world, it accords great value to the democratic principles, ethos and choices to govern the countries. Hence, India looks forward to the opening of a new chapter to strengthen the bilateral relations with the 'New Dawn' government. India has always been and is ever willing to share its developmental experiences with the government and people of Zambia. It is now time to further diversify our bilateral relationship into new emerging areas of 21st century for mutual benefit.

Mr. President, India's strong relationship with Zambia is evidenced by people to people linkages, commercial ties and development cooperation. I am happy to note that a large number of People of Indian Origin, who are now Zambian citizens and the Indian nationals living in Zambia are contributing to Zambia's national development. The economic engagement between our two countries is much below its true potential, and hence there is a huge scope for investment in diverse fields. India's scholarships, capacity building programmes have also contributed in Zambia's development.

I look forward to pursuit of the common objective to develop bilateral relations through close cooperation and mutual respect. I assure you of my fullest cooperation to realize the stated objectives.

Mr. President, now, it gives me great honor to present to you, the Letter of Recall of the former High Commissioner, Mr. N. J. Gangte and my Letter of Credence from Mr. Ramnath Kovind, Hon'ble President of the Republic of India, appointing me as High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Zambia.
