



REMARKS OF THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES, MR PRAVIN GORDHAN TO THE JUBILANT TAMIL NADU GLOBAL EXPO AND KNOWLEDGE SUMMIT, HELD AT CODISSIA COIMBATORE, INDIA.

DELIVERED VIRTUALLY FROM PRETORIA, 3 FEBRUARY 2024

Vanakkam,

Namaskar,

Sanibonani,

My fraternal greetings to Mr Santosh Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Jubilant Tamil Nadu Foundation,

Mr Satheesh Kumar, Director – Jubilant Tamil Nadu, CEO – the talk,

Business Leaders present,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Thank you for this great honour to participate in the Jubilant Tamil Nadu Global Expo and Knowledge Summit 2024.
2. Of course, we must thank the technology of today for enabling me to seat in Pretoria, South Africa, and yet communicate with you where you are, in a distant land, but not too distant, both in physical terms but also in the spirit from each other.

3. I am grateful once again that you have given me this opportunity, and this happens in the context of where we have very successfully in South Africa, done a few important things, both for the Global South but also for the globe more generally and for the continent of Africa in the recent past.
4. This past year we hosted the 15th BRICS Summit in August in Johannesburg, and it brought together leaders from all the BRICS countries, including those who later became new members of BRICS as well.
5. It was a conference that was a landmark event which laid the basis for a greater deal of solidarity between our countries, both in respect of our political economic outlook but also in terms of economic and scientific cooperation.
6. The engagements have laid the foundation for further cooperation amongst our countries, and it is a cooperation which enables each of us as nations to pursue our national self-interest but increasingly, at the same time, ensure that we have a unity of purpose as we enhance cohesion within the Global South in a very complex geopolitical context that we find ourselves in.
7. So we have an increasingly developing shared vision amongst the BRICS countries, but certainly amongst India and South Africa, and the various constituencies that we represent.
8. Of course, all of us know that the relationship between India and South Africa goes back more than a century. Its roots lie in the colonial policies of oppression and suppression of peoples both in India and South Africa by the British empire.
9. Its roots also lie in the kinds of techniques and weapons of struggle developed by **Mahatma Gandhi** in South Africa, which later influenced the freedom of India, and have today become a worldwide set of ideas but also tools for people to continue to struggle for freedom and justice in all parts of the world where these matters have yet to be resolved.

10. Mahatma Gandhi's injunction that: *"Be the change you want to see in the world"* still reverberates across generations as we work for a just and equitable World Order, but also a just and an equitable society in each of our cases, tackling an important set of new problems that we are confronted with.
11. This is in terms of employment for our young people, poverty at different levels, inequality, and the growing inequality between the rich, and the middle class and the poor amongst our countries, but also inequality of opportunity for all sections of our society as well.
12. In particular, the underlying factor of greed within our societies worldwide is becoming increasingly a problem that is giving rise to unfortunate developments and habits amongst various sections of our population, however at the same time South Africa's unique ties with India are also borne out of the fact that South Africa is home to one of the world's largest Indian diasporas outside of India.
13. In terms of trade, South Africa is the 23rd largest destination for Indian exports, which of course must increase with the efforts of the kind of conference that you are having now, and through the dynamic way in which you say you will visit countries in all five continents.
14. And we look forward to the new administration in South Africa, and its new cabinet ministers interacting with you as you make your presence felt both in South Africa and on the African continent.
15. Total trade between our two countries reached nearly \$20 billion in 2022-23.
16. **Top imports from South Africa** include gold, steam coal, copper ores & concentrates, phosphoric acid, manganese ore, aluminium ingots & other minerals, along with chemicals, wood, pulp, and paper products.

17. **Major Indian exports to South Africa** include vehicles and components, transport equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, machinery, footwear, dyes and intermediates, chemicals, textiles, rice, and gems and jewellery.
18. On the pharmaceuticals, I must mention the singularly important role that India and its capabilities played during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the responsiveness of your government to ensuring that African countries, and South Africa in particular, had access to COVID vaccines at the time when Western countries were stockpiling the vaccines and not willing to share the surplus stocks that they had with developing countries more generally, and the African continent in particular.
19. It is in this context that the Jubilant Tamil Nadu Global Expo and Knowledge Summit presents us with the opportunity to deepen our trade relations and commercial ties, but also create a deeper and better understanding of what are the dynamics that are emerging in the world today and how is geopolitics globally, beginning to influence different relationships and underlining the importance of developing cohesion amongst the Global South in particular.
20. It is a context like this that will provide what might appear to be a paradox for us to deal with. On the one hand we should cooperate, cohere as the Global South, and ensure that we become a force as the Global South to be reckoned with in multilateral institutions.
21. And at the same time, let us be frank, we will compete with one another as well in relation to export markets, innovation, and our ability to play whatever kind of role we can for the benefit of our respective peoples.
22. Tamil Nadu is indeed a jubilant place for doing business. You have a powerful history, both culturally and otherwise. And like South Africa, you also seeks to provide investors as we do, with a vibrant environment for investment.

23. We continue to learn from yourselves and others about what a good investment climate looks like, how do we increase foreign direct investment (FDI) into our respective countries but also importantly, how do we exchange technology advancements in a way in which we are not left behind, particularly as the African continent.
24. For example, among the sectors we want to grow, is the tourism sector so that we can see more visitors from India in South Africa. To enable this, we need to persuade our new management at **South African Airways (SAA)** to reintroduce the route between South Africa and India – to its certain cities as the airline begins to expand from domestic to continental and inter-continental services as well.
25. As you know, South Africa has a very sophisticated infrastructure, financial system, a strong legal and constitutional framework, and has acted for many years as a gateway to the African continent itself. This is reinforced by the other major development over the last few days which showed the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which encompasses over 30 countries on the African continent.
26. The first exports under this initiative from South Africa to Ghana, Kenya and Tanzania took place a few days ago from the Durban port. This is what President Ramaphosa officiated at in the last few days to launch and give the official stamp of approval and support to this preferential trade agreement.
27. South Africa, as we all know, is open for investment across all sectors of our economy, and Indian investors are most welcome as I am sure South African investors will be welcome in Tamil Nadu and India more generally, and especially in areas where India has shown immense capabilities: business process outsourcing (BPO), pharmaceuticals, automotive and manufacturing sectors.

28. As you know, we also have a very dynamic automotive manufacturing sector as well, and we can certainly compare notes and learn from each other in this regard.
29. To build a just and inclusive economy, our government has prioritized skills development and training to reduce unemployment, especially amongst our young people.
30. As government, we are determined to leverage technologies that will help us transform our energy landscape, which is troubled at the moment by a shortage of generated power, and it's an area in which India has done tremendously well over the past decade or so, and again lessons can be learned from yourselves in that particular regard.
31. Similarly, the logistics sector is a key area both for yourselves and us as well. It is another key area where an exchange of skills, know-how and equipment would be extremely useful for our country at this point in time.
32. And manufacturing is an important objective that we have set for ourselves as a country and as a continent, as dynamic changes begin to take place in terms of what was once considered to be the workshop of the world – and that workshop is being disaggregated both across Asia but also in certain African countries, and we would certainly like to see a further promotion of that.
33. Our goal is to build an inclusive economy that helps us realise the ideals that we envisioned by Nelson Mandela, as the first President of a democratic South Africa.
34. In his first State of the Nation Address on 24 May 1994, he committed us:

To work for "... the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear."

35. With those inspiring words of our founding President, I wish to thank you once again for the invitation to participate in your conference. And let us jointly develop a new vision for what the Global South could mean, both in political terms and importantly, in economic and social terms.

36. Let us promote the concept of the Global South so that our peoples all over the world, and certainly in the Global South, understand the kind of solidarity that they need to develop, and the cooperation that will enable them to play a pivotal role in determining the future of the globe as a whole.

37. Of course, at the same time, as I said earlier on, we would have to take cognisance of a very fluid geopolitical and geoeconomic environment. But these provide us with the opportunity to forge cooperation and synergies between ourselves and yourselves in the various economic sectors and in our societies as well.

38. A key element as we go forward will be how technology is shared amongst all the peoples of the world but certainly in the Global South; how we develop the skills of our younger generation – an area in which you have done remarkably well as India, an area in which we are also investing a fair amount of resources and energy amongst our young people as well. This of course must be enabled by a new sense of entrepreneurship amongst all of us.

39. To conclude, there's history, there's politics, there's culture and there's economic opportunities that will act as a binding force, potentially, for all of us.

40. Vanakkam.

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