



# INDIA भारत

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## STATEMENT

BY

H.E. Mr. Anand Sharma  
Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India

at the

High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward.

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal,  
Excellency Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

India and Africa have a unique and special bond based on shared experiences and civilisational links. Over centuries, vibrant cultural and economic exchanges have marked the relations between India and Africa which were interrupted by colonization. Decolonization and emergence of free countries in Asia and Africa restored this engagement, bringing India and Africa together to address the challenges of social and economic development and poverty eradication.

We have a long-standing, close and multi-layered relationship with Africa based on our abiding commitment to work with the continent to fulfill its aspirations. Our partnership encompasses priority sectors integral to the developmental goals of Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A vibrant India and a resurgent Africa are witnessing an intensification of relations and growing convergence of interests in their common quest for sustainable economic growth and development.

India has always been committed to elevate its special engagement with Africa into an enduring partnership by developing an institutional mechanism for India-Africa dialogue. The first-ever India Africa Partnership Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008 was convened in partnership with the African Union. It is the African Union which worked with us in choosing the participants and in defining the roadmap of Africa-India cooperation in accordance with Africa's priorities. The Delhi Declaration and the Africa-India Framework for Cooperation adopted at the Summit highlight our shared political vision and world view and provide a solid foundation for a systematic and stepped-up engagement in the years to come.

The vision of the Delhi Declaration is based on equality and mutual respect. The Framework of Cooperation, adopted at the Summit, outlines the priority areas of our future engagement. These are in line with the priorities of the continent and include capacity-building, agriculture, infrastructure development, health and food security and technology cooperation. Our Prime Minister also announced the enhancement of the available concessional Lines of Credit for Africa to US\$ 5 billion. India sincerely aspires for a long-term partnership with Africa and is therefore investing in building economic infrastructure including railways, IT, telecom and power.

India has made a unilateral announcement of duty free and quota free market access to goods from 34 Least Developed Countries in Africa. This will spur economic activity in manufacturing, particularly for African SMEs, by allowing them enhanced market access to one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

I would like to conclude, Distinguished co-chairs, by reiterating India's commitment to continue to work closely with the countries in Africa to meet the diverse challenges that they face, to achieve the developmental targets and fulfill the aspirations of the people of Africa.

Thank You

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