

**Joint Communique on the Visit of the Vice President of
India to the Republic of Rwanda
Kigali 21st February 2017**

The Vice President of India, H.E Mohammad Hamid Ansari paid an official three day visit to the Republic of Rwanda from 19th to 21st February 2017. The Vice President was accompanied by a high level delegation including Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Mr Vijay Sampla, four Members of Parliament and high ranking officials of the Government of India as well as a business delegation.

The visit followed the first official visit of His Excellency President Paul Kagame to India in January 2017, during which he participated in the 8th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit and held bilateral talks with Mr Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India. During the visit, Rwanda and India agreed to elevate their relations to Strategic Partnership and issued a declaration to that effect.

On arrival, the Vice President was received by the Hon. Bernard Makuza, President of the Senate. Both leaders expressed appreciation for the excellent bilateral relations between Rwanda and India.

The Vice President visited the Gisozi Genocide Memorial and laid a wreath on the grave of victims of the genocide in 1994.

During the visit, the Vice President met with President Paul Kagame and both leaders discussed bilateral cooperation between the two countries. They committed to further promote bilateral trade and investment; and increase people to people interactions. The Vice President expressed admiration for remarkable growth and transformation of Rwanda under the able leadership of President Kagame and expressed an interest in exploring the untapped enormous methane reserves in Lake Kivu for energy production. Rwanda expressed a desire to replicate some of India's schemes for Digital Inclusion. India agreed to share its experience and expertise in this regard.

The Vice president reiterated India's decision to open a resident Indian Mission in Rwanda highlighting that this will further cement the strategic partnership between Rwanda and India; while serving the growing Indian community in Rwanda and further boost trade, investment, tourism and people to people connection between

the two countries.

Emphasizing India's commitment to partner in Rwanda's development, the Vice President further reiterated India's support for priority development projects including Roads, Hydro power and technical and vocational training centres through lines of credit, as offered during H.E. President Paul Kagame's official Visit to India in January 2017. The two leaders agreed to enhance cooperation in health sector. Rwanda welcomed this support and solidarity with India.

Both Leaders unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism, irrespective of motivations, wherever and by whosoever committed. In this context, both sides underlined their shared concerns on the menace of cross-border terrorism and stressed the importance of international efforts to prevent and fight terrorism. The two leaders agreed that resolute and credible steps must be taken to eliminate safe havens and sanctuaries that provide shelter to terrorists and their activities.

The Vice President also met and held a meeting with Hon. Bernard Makuza, the President of the Senate. The two leaders discussed possible areas of collaboration including enhanced parliamentary diplomacy, Training and capacity building, cultural exchange programmes, institutional support and development including collaboration in regional and international matters of mutual interest.

The Vice President also addressed the students and faculty at the University of Rwanda where he highlighted current global issues facing the world and the role of India as a growing global economic actor and its commitment to greater engagement on global matters. He also discussed the growing relationship between India and the African continent in general and the cooperation with Rwanda.

The Vice president also met with the Indian community living in Rwanda most of whom are investors and active in the business sector, as well as Indian experts working with different institutions in Rwanda and in the region.

The Vice President and the Prime Minister of Rwanda presided over the India – Rwanda Business forum and inaugurated the India-Rwanda Innovation Growth exhibition which is expected to lead to eventual establishment of a Center for Technology Innovations in Rwanda.

The Vice President and the Prime Minister of Rwanda witnessed the signing of three important agreements between India and Rwanda: the Bilateral Air Service Agreement, the Exemption of Visas for Free Entry agreement for holders of Diplomatic and Official passports traveling to either country; and a Memorandum of Understanding on establishment of an Entrepreneurship Development Centre in Rwanda.

Vice President Ansari thanked the Government and people of Rwanda for their warm hospitality.

Done in Kigali 21st February 2017

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