

Pranam! Namaste!

Your Excellency (Mrs.) Barr. Bimbola Salu-Hundeyin, Secretary to the Lagos State Government, representing the Governor of Lagos State, H.E. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, representative of Deputy Governor, HE Mrs. Mobolaji Daba, Permanent Secretary, Permanent Secretary of Health of Lagos State, HE Olusegun Ogboye, Hon'ble Aluwole, Commissioner for Education of Osun State representing the Governor of Osun State. DG of Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, HE Eghosa Emaaniel Osaghae, DG of Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry, HE Dr. Chinyere Almona; representative of DG, NAFDAC, Executive Secretary H.E. Jermaine Sanwo-Olu, representatives of state governments under the Consular jurisdiction of this Consulate, fellow diplomatic colleagues, business leaders, distinguished guests and cherished citizens of our two great nations,

Welcome to the Republic Day Reception of the Consulate General of India.

Today, we celebrate the adoption of the Indian Constitution on January 26, 1950—a guiding light for democratic ideals in our diverse nation. As our Constitution completes 75 glorious years, we honor the visionaries who skillfully blended India's ancient democratic principles, dating back to the Vajji Confederacy of Vaishali, with modern governance.

This past year has been a landmark in the bilateral relations between India and Nigeria. The historic state visit of India's Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, to Abuja in November 2024 set the tone for renewed collaboration. Wide-ranging discussions between the leaderships reaffirmed the strategic partnership between our nations, with India sharing its expertise in poverty alleviation, technology, agriculture, fintech, defense, space, and more. Several vital MoUs were signed during this visit. India is thankful of the great gesture of Nigerian Government for presenting the highest civilian honour to the Prime Minister of India. The Prime Minister's address to the Indian diaspora in Nigeria was both encouraging and inspiring.

Nigeria's recent formal entry as a partner country of BRICS marks another milestone in our relationship. I extend my heartfelt congratulations as we work more closely toward shared global visions. In 2024, the India-Nigeria Joint Trade Commission and Consular Dialogue laid a strong foundation for stable and prosperous bilateral relations.

India continues to amplify the voice of the Global South, as articulated by our Prime Minister: *"Today's India not only firmly asserts its own point but also*

strongly amplifies the voice of the Global South.” India has been instrumental in initiatives such as making the African Union a permanent member of the G-20, the International Solar Alliance, and pioneering the Indian stack of public digital infrastructure. These efforts, along with our proactive G-20 presidency, underline India’s commitment to global unity, sustainability, and development.

India remains steadfast in supporting capacity building in Nigeria. Through the India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, we offer numerous fully funded training opportunities in premier Indian institutions, reflecting our commitment to shared growth.

Our business ties are vibrant and dynamic. Indian investments in Nigeria exceed \$27 billion, with over 150 Indian companies operating across key sectors. The synergy between Nigeria’s Renewed Hope Agenda under President Tinubu and India’s vision for a *Viksit Bharat* (Developed India) by 2047 provides a roadmap for accelerated development.

Sustainability is at the heart of India’s progress. As the world’s third-largest renewable energy producer, India has installed over 46% of its energy capacity from renewables as of October 2024, with ambitious goals of achieving 500 GW by 2030.

Let me also draw your attention to one of India’s most remarkable cultural events—the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj. This once-in-12-years gathering, expected to attract over 400 million devotees, highlights India’s ability to integrate heritage with technology. Advanced logistics, drones, robotic lifeguards, and green sanitation facilities are ensuring a seamless experience for visitors, showcasing how tradition and innovation coexist in India.

India’s advancements in futuristic technologies, including AI, robotics, semiconductor manufacturing, and space exploration, have positioned us as a global innovation hub. India stands sixth in terms of Intellectual Property filings in the world. We have consistently improved our ranking in the global innovation index moving from 48th position to 39th in 2024. The Indian pharmaceutical industry, with a trusted presence in Nigeria, continues to strengthen localized drug manufacturing—a testament to our enduring partnership. I was honored to inaugurate two such facilities last year alongside Nigerian dignitaries, with more projects in the pipeline.

Our achievements in space exploration are equally commendable. With the successful SPADEX satellite docking experiment, India has joined an exclusive group of only four nations (USA, Russia, China) with such advanced capabilities. The transformation of India’s space sector into a

collaborative ecosystem driven by private innovation is further evidence of our progress.

Here in Lagos, the State, under the visionary leadership of H.E. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, exemplifies excellence with its reformist THEMES Plus agenda. I am pleased to note the enriching visits of the Lateef Jakande Leadership Academy interns and Lagos health professionals to India, where they gained first hand exposure to advanced infrastructure, malaria research, and public health management systems. Health professionals would have got insight into the usage of Public Digital Infrastructure in the management of disease. These exchanges strengthen our shared commitment to development.

The Indian community in Nigeria continues to play a pivotal role in fostering goodwill and progress. Renowned for their expertise, discipline, and peace-loving nature, Indians here are contributing significantly to Nigeria's growth. Indian companies are among the largest employers in Nigeria, and I am confident that our people-to-people ties will continue to flourish with the support of both governments.

As we celebrate our Republic Day, we reaffirm India's identity as *Vishwa Bandhu*—a friend of the world. Our diaspora embodies this spirit, adding value to their host countries through their hard work and innovation.

I express my deep gratitude to Her Excellency Barr. Bimbola Salu-Hundeyin and other dignitaries for gracing India's National Day Reception.

Dhanyavad. Thank you.

Jai Hind!

Governor of Abia State, HE Mr. Alex Otti, OFR came later in the function but has asked us to start the program. At the time of his arrival,

I acknowledge the presence of E Mr. Alex Otti, OFR, Governor of Abia State amongst our midst. Thank you excellency for honouring our invitation.

Abia State is famous for their strong cultural identity and entrepreneurship. The state is known for Akwere cloth and Masquerade festival. Today Abia is very popular for its vibrant markets especially the Araria international market where you can find literally "everything". We are privileged to have the Governor to our National Day celebration and India wishes the Abia State great strides. We shall be happy to cooperate in their development and capacity building efforts.