

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Gurjit Singh, Ambassador of India to Ethiopia and Djibouti and Representative of India to the African Union and the UNECA**

at the

**Meeting of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa  
Addis Ababa, 19-20<sup>th</sup> June, 2006**

**INDIA'S SUPPORT TO INFRASTRUCTURE IN AFRICA**

India and Africa have a heritage of harmonious cooperative relations which have moved from political support to a close economic partnership. India's economic partnership with Africa involves a strong public-private partnership under which Indian private companies as well as Indian public companies are participating in infrastructure development in Africa.

Under a grant programme of the Government of India, a Pan-African e-Network project is being established in cooperation with the African Union and with the members of the African Union bilaterally. Under this programme tele-medicine and tele-education facilities will be provided after establishing VSAT based e-network in all member states of the African Union.

India is willing to provide its own developmental experience and technological and technical expertise to develop infrastructure in Africa. At present nearly US\$1.2 billion in lines of credit are available through pan-African, regional and bilateral financial institutions. So far much of these lines have been used for small industry development as well as development of agricultural capacity. We would like to see more of these lines of credit being used for infrastructure development projects particularly with a regional approach. Areas in which this can be done are railways, irrigation and related water resources, power, telecommunications and roads.

Many Indian private companies as well as public sector companies have been participating in internationally funded projects in these sectors successfully. If Indian lines of credit available to institutions like the ECOWAS Development Bank, the PTA Bank, and under our TEAM-9 and NEPAD initiatives could be used for developing infrastructure then India would be happy to utilize its existing programmes of the Exim Bank and the ITEC Programme to provide feasibility studies for such initiatives. India's offers of providing feasibility studies through our programmes mentioned above can also be utilized for developing infrastructure projects in Africa which may have sources of funding other than the Indian lines of credit.

India has provided capacity-building institutions in some African countries e.g. India-Ghana IT Training Centre in Ghana; the Entrepreneurship Development Training Centre in Senegal and the Plastic Technology Training Centre in Namibia. Similar institutions can be utilized for infrastructure development training.

Where the power sector is concerned, India has recently given lines of credit worth US\$450 million to Sudan for the development of power plants. Indian lines of credit have

also been utilized for rural electrification projects (Ethiopia), power transmission projects and can be utilized for the development of sub-stations and downstream services related to distribution and consumer services.

The railways is an important area where India's large network and expertise can be utilized to revitalize the railway plans in Africa and create regional networks which could finally be merged into a pan-African railway. Indian railways are associated with feasibility studies in Senegal and Mali and in management in Tanzania and Mozambique.

Telecommunications is another strength of India particularly in ICT and rural telephony. These have been utilized under Indian grants and credit programmes as well as under directly funded programmes in several African countries and could be utilized to a larger extent. ICT solutions for several infrastructural sectors are also an area where Indian talent can be tapped.

India has successfully created a national stock exchange providing an alternative IT-based solution to physical trading in 28 different stock exchanges in India. A similar solution can be provided to the growing sector of stock exchanges in Africa by the creation of a multi floor trading African stock exchange. Similarly, Indian solutions to creating a pan-African Commodity Exchange can also be an area of consideration.

Indian private companies and banks are making a strong entry into Africa and are moving from trading to investment. This factor needs to be better recognized and Indian companies and banks could be encouraged to create local joint ventures and participate in the infrastructure development projects in Africa which are internationally or bilaterally funded since the cost effectiveness of using Indian companies has now been well established.

## **Framework**

- Capacity building for infrastructure creation, financing and maintenance through training courses under ITEC Programme.
- Feasibility studies can be conducted either as a grant or as part of project costs by utilizing Indian programmes and consultants.
- Indian lines of credit can be utilized for infrastructure projects particularly with a regional view.
- India can provide lines of credit for specific infrastructure projects through negotiations with the Government of India and the Exim Bank of India.
- Indian experts and private sector companies can participate in infrastructure developmental activity through international financing including the Indian Trust Fund with the African Development Bank.
- The enthusiasm of the Indian private sector can be tapped to encourage them to participate in infrastructure projects in Africa particularly on BOT basis with suitable guarantees on repatriation and investment protection.
- Indian public and private banks and infrastructure leasing companies can be associated with the focus of this conference.

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## **Bringing India IT prowess to Africa**

### ***Pan African e-Network Project for Tele-education and Tele-medicine***

India will use information technology to bring benefits of healthcare and higher education to all countries of Africa, including in remote areas. This will be achieved through the Pan African e-Network Project, which is an initiative of H.E. Mr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the President of India. He made this proposal and offer at the inaugural session of the Pan-African Parliament in Johannesburg on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004. The network will be connected by a satellite/fibre optical network to provide tele-medicine, tele-education and VVIP connectivity to all these countries.

The current total project cost is US\$ 105 million, which will be a hundred per cent grant from the Government of India. The Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi is responsible for the project, while the Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), a government of India enterprise, is the implementing agency.

After the Indian President's proposal, a detailed presentation was made by a high level Indian delegation of senior officers drawn from different Ministries/departments to the Chairperson of the AU Commission in May 2005. The proposal was examined by a Special Advisory Committee with representatives from over a dozen relevant Pan-African organizations. The AU Commission found the Indian proposal in line with the means and objectives of the AU, which provided tremendous potential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) through the use of innovative Information Communication Technology.

The Network will consist of 5 regional universities, 53 learning centers, 5 regional Super Speciality Hospitals (SSH) and 53 remote hospitals in all countries of Africa. There will be 6 universities and 5 Super Speciality Hospitals (SSH) from India linked into the Network. It will provide connectivity through Voice-Over-IP, video-conferencing and internet connectivity to the Heads of State of all the countries in Africa. The Indian government has already provided a list of courses offered by the 6 Indian universities to the AU Commission. The tele-medicine connectivity will enable the SSHs to provide expert services to the 53 remote hospitals which are equipped with the required medical equipments like ECG, ultrasound, pathology and X-ray at each location. A doctor from any of the remote locations can refer the patient's medical records to any of the SSH and have a tele-medicine video-session for live diagnosis and advise by the doctors at a scheduled time. India will also provide tele-medicine facility at the AU Medical Centre in Addis Ababa.

The AU Commission had invited bids to host the hub-station, for which Senegal, Mauritius and Ghana have submitted their proposals. Bids have also been invited by the AU Commission by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006 to host the five Regional Leading Universities and five Regional Super Speciality Hospitals of the Network in Africa.

Ethiopia will be the first beneficiary of the project in Africa. The pilot project for Ethiopia is already under advance stage of implementation. Addis Ababa University and Black Lion Hospital will be the nodal centers for tele-education and tele-medicine respectively, with remote centers at Alemaya University and Nekempt Hospital. The cost of the pilot project for Ethiopia is US\$ 2.13 million, which will be fully met as a grant from India.

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