

**Speech of H.E.Mr. N. Ram Prasad, High Commissioner of India
for the Credentials Ceremony
Thursday, 24 Aug 2023**

Your Majesty,

On behalf of the Hon'ble President, Government and the People of the Republic of India I convey warm regards to Your Majesty, Her Majesty Queen Mother, the Kingdom and people of Eswatini. Since arrival on 01 Aug 2023, in the last more than three weeks stay in the beautiful Kingdom of Eswatini, I have already fallen in love with the warmth and hospitality of Emaswati and the cool and serene climes of the Kingdom.

2. India's relationship with the Kingdom of Eswatini is close, friendly and cordial. Your Majesty's participation at the Second and Third India-Africa Forum Summits in Addis Ababa in May 2011 and in New Delhi in October 2015 and participation in the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave in March 2017 paved the way for the historic visit of the Hon'ble President of India in April 2018. Exchange of visits at the highest levels facilitated the establishment of our resident High Commission in the Kingdom in August 2019.

3. The conferment of the highest honour of Eswatini, 'the Order of the Lion' by Your Majesty on Hon'ble President of India during the historic April 2018 visit to the Kingdom and the address of the Hon'ble President of India to the Joint Session of the Eswatini Parliament were a recognition of the importance attached by the Kingdom of Eswatini to our bilateral relationship.

Your Majesty,

4. During the State visit of Hon'ble President of India in April 2018, India gave a cash grant of US\$ 1 million to the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA); in-kind donation of 700 tons of rice and 300 tons of beans for the NDMA and medicines

and medical equipment worth US\$ 3 million. The Maphalaleni/Lubuyane irrigation infrastructure project in the Hhohho Region, announced during the visit was implemented with the grant assistance of US\$400,000/-. This has resulted in transforming lives of local farmers from subsistence to commercial farming. The First Lady Mrs. Savita Kovind made a donation of 500 blankets to the Philani Maswati Foundation and the Khulisa Umntfwana Project, two charitable initiatives patronized by Her Majesty the Queen Mother. During the Covid-19 pandemic, India donated medicines worth Rs. 10 million. India was the first country to have donated 20,000 Covishield vaccines to Eswatini in March 2021 when most of the developed world was hoarding the vaccines. Announced in December 2020 the US\$1 million WASH initiative for Covid19 and Climate Change response under the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Trust Fund is being implemented in all the four Regions of Eswatini.

5. We wholeheartedly thank Your Majesty for the kind gift of a plot of land for constructing the High Commission. We have already initiated the process of registration and taking possession of the plot of land so graciously gifted by Your Majesty and we hope to begin construction of our new Chancery and Residences soon. This gift of Your Majesty to the Government and the People of India will be remembered and cherished forever.

6. Completion of an Agriculture Development and Mechanization Project under a Line of Credit of US\$37.9 million resulted in maize productivity in Eswatini by six times. Completion of the Royal Science & Technology Park (RSTP) with the Line of Credit of US\$20 million opened vistas for Emaswati into the ICT. I am sure, with the successful implementation of the US\$10.4 million Line of Credit, in the next couple of years, for establishment of the Disaster Recovery Site for the National Data Center of Eswatini by RSTP, would help achieve self-sufficiency for the Kingdom of Eswatini to various payment gateways of the international financial and banking sectors. The upcoming new Parliament Building project of the Kingdom of Eswatini under the

US\$108.24 million Line of Credit is going to be the major landmark not only for the Kingdom but for the entire Southern African region.

Your Majesty,

7. I have the honour to state that in the last four years of existence of the High Commission of India in the Kingdom of Eswatini, we have sent four major cultural delegations of Eswatini to India. We have just announced offer of another handicraft/cultural delegation for the upcoming Surajkund Mela in February 2024. The historic performance of the Manipuri Dance Group of India in the Lozitha Palace for Your Majesty was a memorable event. We look forward to more and more cultural interactions between our culturally vibrant countries.

8. The High Commission of India has facilitated about 100 fully paid scholarships to Emaswati under the Africa Scholarship Scheme of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in the last four years. This number is going to grow and more and more Emaswati are going to obtain higher education in various prestigious universities and colleges of India.

9. As a key development partner, India continues to contribute to the capacity building of Eswatini. More than 300 Emaswati government officials have benefitted from the ITEC programme of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India. Our defence cooperation is also growing with the high-level visits of His Royal Highness Prince Sicalo and the Eswatini Army Commander to India in 2022. Several UEDF officers have taken advantage of our defence training opportunities and more and more are going to visit India in the coming months.

10. Establishment of two India Corners at the National Libraries in Mbabane and Manzini is witness to the commitment of India towards the people of Eswatini. This has been followed up by establishment of mini-India Corners in all parts of the

Kingdom at various educational institutions like the University of Eswatini, Waterford Kamhlaba High School, and various High Schools in Matsanjeni, Siteki and Mbabane.

11. These achievements are only the initial phase of our budding bilateral relationship. Eswatini is a key development partner for India and it is my mandate to carry forward the momentum and take the relationship to new heights.

Your Majesty,

12. Since my arrival in your beautiful Kingdom, I have taken up the offer of Jaipur Foot Camp under which my Government is ready to provide limbs to more than 500 differently abled Emaswati. As I speak, we are working with the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Eswatini to expeditiously organize this Camp, which would change lives of differently abled Emaswati for better. As a key development partner, we have offered generic drugs with WHO-prescribed standards at nominal prices under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). I am very sure, implementation of this offer in Eswatini would alleviate the scarcity of basic medicines in the Kingdom of Eswatini and provide affordable health care to all in the Kingdom.

13. On behalf of the Government of India, I convey our gratefulness to Your Majesty and Government for the great support extended to various India's candidatures at various multilateral fora. To build up on this and to further boost our bilateral relationship, I have reached out to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation for organizing the next Foreign Office Consultations between India and Eswatini at a mutually convenient date and venue.

14. The more than 2,000 Indian diaspora community is a key pillar of the economy of the Kingdom of Eswatini and I am sure this interaction at the people-to-people

level of two countries is going to grow leaps and bounds for the mutual benefit of our two countries.

Your Majesty,

15. As I assume my duties as High Commissioner of the Republic of India to the Kingdom of Eswatini, I wish to assure your Majesty that during my service I will do everything I can to develop the relations between our two countries even further. Please accept, Your Majesty, my best wishes for Your Majesty's continued well-being and the lasting prosperity of your great Kingdom.

16. I am honoured and privileged to present the Letter of Recall of my predecessor and the Letter of my Accreditation as the High Commissioner of India to the Kingdom of Eswatini.
