

SPEECH BY CLR MPHO PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF  
JOHANNESBURG, INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATION, HOUGHTON,  
JOHANNESBURG, 26 JANUARY, 2014

Your Excellency, Honourable High Commissioner of India, Ms. Ruchi Ghanashyam

Consul General Mr. Randhir Jaiswal

High Commissioners, Ambassadors, and other Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Officials from the City of Johannesburg

Ladies and gentlemen

***Good Evening***

As the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg I would like to thank the Indian government, through you, your Excellency the High Commissioner of India, Ms. Ruchi Ghanashyam, for inviting us to this important function, commemorating the day in which the Constitution of India came into force on 26 January 1950.

This is an important day in India's political calendar. On this day, the people of India finally freed themselves from the clutches of colonialism, following independence in 1947. As South Africans we identify with your struggle for freedom and draw our own parallels with the course of events in India. For us, your 26 January is the symbolic equivalent of our April 27, the day on which we liberated ourselves from neo-colonialism, following almost 300 years of racial oppression. The day is also equivalent to May 28, 1996 when as South Africa we adopted what



came to be known as the most liberal constitution in the world. Indian independence was undoubtedly one of the most crucial events in the past several generations: world-wide, there were many struggles against imperialism thereafter, but with India a free nation, the writing was on the wall for empire in the post-war world.

We hold our unshakable decades-long relationship with you, our counterparts, in high esteem. As South Africans we recall, with pride, the heroic role played by South Africans of Indian descent in the struggle against colonialism and apartheid. We recall, particularly, the heroic role played by Mahatma Gandhi, India's father of the nation, in the fight against racial oppression in South Africa between 1893 and 1914. His form of resistance against segregation based on the principles of non-violence, *Satyagraha*, was an inspiration to us, the African National Congress, the ruling party in South Africa today.

As the ANC, we adopted Gandhi's passive resistance strategy during our campaign of civil disobedience - the Defiance Campaign of 1952. In our struggles we worked hand in glove with the Transvaal Indian Congress under the leadership of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo and Dr. G.M Naicker, the President of the Natal Indian Congress.

We remember that during exile times (1960-1990), the people of India received us with warmth and gratitude, allowing the African National Congress, the government in waiting at the time, to establish and run an office in India, manned at one time by our Chief Representative and stalwart, Agnes Msimang. Some of our leaders received tertiary education in India during exile times. For that we are grateful as you played an important role in the liberation of this country.



These are ties that bind, as we continue to engage in a common cause, the effort to bring a better life to our respective peoples.

Through you, your Excellency, Ms. Ruchi Ghanashyam, we would like to thank the Indian government for keeping faith with us, the democratic government of South Africa. The fact that you were one of the first countries to open an embassy in South Africa after the democratic dispensation of 1994, symbolises your faith in our country.

Again, that Indian business continues to invest directly in this country, supporting South African industry and bringing much needed revenue, demonstrates that the Indian government and India's business community have confidence in the country's economy. As the City of Johannesburg we are quite aware that:

- There are more than 150 Indian companies in South Africa, most of them based in Gauteng province, and particularly here in Johannesburg.
- That India has invested over US\$ 7-8 billion in South Africa, creating new jobs and opportunities for our society.
- That India remains deeply committed to socially sustainable business through skill development, technology transfer and maximum job creation for the local youth.
- That bilateral trade between South Africa and India is an annual US\$ 11-12 billion. This amounts to a massive jump of over 350%



in the last 10 years.

May the people of India enjoy this Republic Day celebration and may bilateral relations between India and South Africa grow from strength to strength.

Thank you