

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE  
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT  
PARTICIPATING IN 2<sup>ND</sup> SUMMIT OF FORUM FOR INDIA-PACIFIC  
ISLAND COUNTRIES (FIPIIC)**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi: 20<sup>th</sup> August 2015,

Excellencies,

I warmly welcome you all to India. It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege to receive you in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Even though India is separated from the Pacific Island Countries by oceans and continents, we are proud to have a long tradition of close friendship with you. Our peoples are bound by our centuries-old trade and cultural linkages that have contributed to the trust and warmth in our relations. We particularly appreciate the way that your nations have made the Indian diaspora feel comfortable and secure in distant lands. Our Government attaches great importance to its relations with our friends in the Pacific Island Countries. We believe our economic linkages and co-operation with your countries are a key factor in India's extended "Act East" Policy.

Excellencies,

India is delighted to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Co-operation. The establishment of this Forum reflects the desire of all its member countries to build an enduring partnership between our nations and our peoples. I would like to thank you for the contribution of each of your governments to its success. Your reunion in New Delhi and Jaipur, less than a year after the first Summit in Fiji last November, is testimony to your commitment to the common objectives of the Forum.

I am happy to note that the programs announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the First FIPIC Summit in Fiji only a few months ago are already bearing fruit. We propose to enhance our engagement in the sectors where our interests converge – such as human resource development, capacity building, healthcare, affordable, clean and renewable energy, adaptation measures for disaster management and infrastructure development. India is committed to partner with you in your efforts to achieve the developmental goals of your respective nations. Towards this end, India's annual grant-in-aid to each Pacific Island Country has been enhanced from US\$125,000 to US\$ 200,000 last year. We hope this will support specific projects prioritised by you. We are glad that the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme, the ICCR scholarships, the special training modules organized by Foreign Service Institute and other such schemes are being availed by your citizens. We believe that such exchanges between our peoples will go a long way in increasing their contacts and mutual understanding. I am

convinced that our bilateral cooperation has much greater potential waiting to be realised. India has made considerable progress in the field of IT, health, solar energy, disaster mitigation and management, agriculture – particularly coconut and coir and oil and natural gas exploration. We are focused on skills development and innovation - with special emphasis on locally relevant technology. It is our earnest desire to share our knowledge and expertise with friendly countries like yours - especially where these can be adopted to promote sustainable development.

Excellencies, India, like the Pacific Island Countries, has chains of islands and is also experiencing the negative impact of climate change. Like you, we are confronted with serious challenges in preserving our fragile ecosystems while stimulating growth. We believe that the sharing of best practices and eco-friendly technologies among our countries will greatly help us all to collaborate in obtaining finances and technology transfers required to combat the impact of climate change. India has launched a number of domestic measures including carbon pricing, incentivizing afforestation, expanding the use of low carbon and renewable technologies and improving energy efficiency in all sectors. We would be happy to work with you in these areas - to help preserve your environment and conserve your precious resources.

The Pacific Island Countries are generously endowed with natural resources. We would be happy to work with you in harnessing your mineral, marine and hydrocarbon resources. Our Government and private sector are keen to strengthen and diversify our bilateral trade and encourage investments in fisheries, agriculture, oil and natural gas, mining and water desalination. It would be in the interest of all FIPIC members to identify our complementarities so that we can focus our efforts on those.

Excellencies, we greatly appreciate the support we have received from you for our candidature for permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council. This year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations. UNSC reform and expansion will be discussed and concrete proposals are expected to be considered in the forthcoming UNGA session next month. An intergovernmental negotiating text is already on the table, for which we need your support. Our nations share a common commitment to the reform of institutions of global governance – so that they better reflect the aspirations of developing countries. We believe that it is vital for us to work together to push for these long awaited reforms in the forthcoming session of the UNGA.

I am confident that your deliberations tomorrow and the work of the Forum will result in concrete proposals for our enhanced cooperation in the years ahead. I look forward to increased exchanges between our Governments and our peoples on regional and global issues of our common concern.

On a personal note, I am delighted that some of you are accompanied by your gracious spouses. I hope you all enjoy your visit and that the programmes of the Forum bring you to India regularly. With these few words, Excellencies, I once again welcome you and extend to you my best wishes for the success of the 2<sup>nd</sup> FIPIC Summit.

Thank you.