

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE INDIRA GANDHI PRIZE FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO H.E. MR. LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi: 22-11-2012

Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India

Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Former President of Brazil

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. The presentation of the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for Peace Disarmament and Development for the year 2010 is a key event in the calendar of global peace, development and disarmament. Today, we recognize and honour a contemporary world leader for his substantial contribution towards the achievement of these universal aspirations.
2. This prestigious award celebrates the legacy of the Late Shrimati Indira Gandhi as an untiring crusader for global peace, universal disarmament and a new international economic order. She won the mandate of the Indian people at a time in our recent history when our country was faced with serious domestic and external challenges. In her characteristic style, she approached these with due urgency, armed with the principles that Mahatma Gandhi taught and lived by - and the policies of her visionary father, Jawaharlal Nehru.
3. For me personally, this day is a reminder of my own association with one of the most dynamic Prime Ministers of modern India, a

tall leader acclaimed internationally, whose dedication and commitment to the people that she represented was unparalleled.

4. Shrimati Gandhi was very clear that India had to be self reliant and that her first concern always was national interest. In the socio-economic development of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi reached out to the poorest and the most deprived. Her call for “Growth with Social Justice” became a motto for her Government. It drove home the point that growth in India had to go hand in hand with equitable distribution of its benefits. It made prudent management of resources and revenues a priority - as also the creation of institutions and programmes for social change such as empowerment of Panchayati Raj institution, strengthening of public distribution system, initiating of mid-day meal schemes for school children, empowerment of scheduled castes and tribes among others.

5. It was Shrimati Indira Gandhi who steered India’s State and business sectors into a co-operative alliance for economic growth. Improving production was her top priority. She put out a new industrial policy to encourage expansion and also provided finance and tax relief to encourage investment. Special legislations were passed to discourage strikes and labour unrest. The nationalization of banks not only helped to increase household savings but it also provided considerable investments in the informal sector, in small and medium enterprises and agriculture. Thanks to her bold initiatives, the Indian economy today, is more resilient and confident. Two decades of steady

economic reforms have contributed to an improvement in average income and consumption levels in both rural and urban areas. There is a new-found dynamism in some of the most backward areas – bringing them into the national economic mainstream.

6. Environment and energy were high priority issues on Mrs. Gandhi's agenda. I recall that once she had written to Chief Ministers of all the States suggesting a drive to plant a tree for every child. She stressed the value of traditional energy-saving technologies - and welcomed the development of new technologies and their adaptation to India's needs.

7. At the global level, Smt. Indira Gandhi, while meticulous in her attention to detail, had a very clear perspective. She was a firm believer that only with coexistence could there be any existence at all. I would like to recall her words that are so relevant today. She said, and I quote, *“We regard non-interference and non-intervention as basic laws of international behaviour. Yet different types of interventions, open or covert, do take place in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America. They are all intolerable and unacceptable. Interference leads to intervention and one intervention often attracts another. Each situation of conflict has its own origins. Whatever they be, solutions must be political and peaceful. All States must abide by the principle that force or the threat of force will not be used against the territorial integrity or political independence of another state. Our plans for a better life for each of our peoples depend on world peace and the reversal of the arms race”*.

8. Her theme remained constant – the interrelation of security, development and the environment. She believed that nationalism should not detach peoples from common humanity. She was convinced of the need to create *“a new international order of humanity where power is tempered with compassion, where knowledge and capability are at the service of all humanity.”* As Chairperson of the Non Aligned Movement, she had remarked, while addressing the United Nations in 1983, that *“the safety of the weak is the strength of the strong”*.

9. Shrimati Indira Gandhi firmly believed that smaller nations had a key role in determining the future of the world. She referred to developing countries as “the step-children of the Industrial revolution” and said that they needed to be given due justice. In pursuing India’s aims, she never acted against the aspirations of other developing nations or compromised their priorities. She held that the myriad problems related to the environment, optimal utilization of global resources and the reorganization of political and economic systems needed the co-operative endeavours of the whole world community. Shrimati Indira Gandhi shall be remembered for her untiring efforts at maintaining cohesion, unity and enhanced economic co-operation among developing nations, their autonomous development, collective self reliance and equitable and democratic dialogue between the North and South. In her interventions at international fora, she was admired as a moderator and conciliator.

10. In awarding the prize for 2010 to President Lula, we are honouring today an outstanding champion of the developing world. President Lula has been a transformative figure in Brazil. With his own unique life story of rising from humble origins to the highest level in the country and to international recognition as a world Statesman, he has inspired millions of his countrymen. Their faith in participatory democracy and in effective governmental intervention for development were strengthened by his actions. As a man of vision, he dreamed of comprehensive development for Brazil and made eradication of hunger and alleviation of poverty his imperatives. With energy and perseverance, he challenged the structural causes of food shortages and achieved food security for his people. He has been a champion of 'inclusive growth' in Brazil, a policy that is akin to our own approach. Through social programs like [Bolsa Família](#) and [Fome Zero](#) , hallmarks of his Presidency, President Lula has conceived and popularized models for effective delivery of financial benefits to poor families but expected them to fulfill some essential social requirements. Today Brazil is one of the front ranking economies and more than 20 million Brazilians have been lifted out of acute poverty due to these innovative and well administered programs. With the continuation of these policies by President Dilma Rouseff, a close colleague and friend of former President Lula, Brazil is on its way to becoming a 'middle class' country, the stated aspiration of its leaders.

11. President Lula is also credited as having changed significantly Brazil's international profile. His energetic and dynamic international engagement has been anchored on empathy and solidarity with the developing world. Starting with all of South America and with efforts at greater unity in the countries of that continent, President Lula forged stronger links with Africa recognising the historical and economic bonds of Brazil with many African countries. He has been a force in the evolution of new fora that bring together major emerging economies including India and Brazil. President Lula has thus greatly contributed to the cause of the developing countries and to the self-realisation of the commonalities and convergent interests of the major emerging economies. Brazil will come under even greater world attention in the coming years as the host of the FIFA world cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016.

12. Your Excellency, President Lula, allow me to state that it is a moment of great satisfaction for me to present the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2010 to you. I understand that the international jury had been unanimous in their choice. You are a true visionary of the 20th century. You are regarded as the most popular politician in the history of Brazil and one of the most popular world figures. Through your inclusive policies and your perseverance through the “Lula Institute” to promote democracy, social inclusion combined with economic development, you have been an example and an inspiration to many leaders the world over.

13. The formation of IBSA and south-south co-operation are manifestations of your contribution to the strengthening of co-operation between developing countries of Africa, Asia and South America. It was your foresight that infused a momentum to the integration of Latin America and the Caribbean. The formation of the Community of the Latin American and Caribbean States fulfills the desire of the people and the will of the nations in your region to carve out their own destiny.

14. The people of India hold you in high esteem. You have been a sincere friend of India. It was during your Presidency that relations between India and Brazil steadily progressed and the seeds were sown of a close partnership in the IBSA, BRIC, G-20 and BASIC. Our bilateral cooperation has strengthened significantly in recent years - and we are today in a strategic partnership of a privileged nature, engaged in realizing its full potential for our mutual benefit. Our two way trade flow today is over 9 billion USD. We look at Brazil as an important partner in achieving energy security, food security, as a source of raw material for our industry and enhanced co-operation in science and technology as well as higher education to accelerate the development processes in both our countries .

15. The commonalities between our countries is truly striking: we are the largest democracies in our continents i.e. Asia and Latin America; we both have enormous diversity - ethnic, cultural and religious; cultural vibrancy and family ties are important in both

our societies, and above all we face the challenges of development. In recent years, our economies have been growing and today we are major economies in terms of GDP, but we both face regional and income disparities. It is therefore inevitable that often our perspective on global issues are similar be it with regard to democratisation of the world order, issues relating to international trade at the WTO or climate change. We share a strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and the global elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. We are united in our belief in dialogue and consultation as the best path to the resolution of disputes. Our relationship has therefore been termed as 'natural and necessary'.

16. Your Excellency, President Lula, at this critical juncture in world affairs, as we confront economic uncertainty, food scarcity, increasing competition for the world's resources, political instability and terrorism, it is men of vision, integrity and clarity of purpose who can instill faith among their fellow men, find solutions and show the way. Your policies have always been inclusive and your perseverance inspiring. Our Government and people applaud your selfless labour for your people and for mankind. May you long continue to play an active role in global affairs. I once again congratulate you and wish you good health and success in all your future endeavours .

Thank you.