

Welcome Address by the Consul General of India, Lagos, Nigeria

Interaction with Students and Faculty of International Relations

Anchor University, Lagos.

11 June 2025

Distinguished Faculty Members, Esteemed Students, dear colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ekaro, Good morning, Namaste,

It is my honour and pleasure to interact with such a vibrant and intellectual student and learned faculty members. I thank Anchor University for choosing the Consulate General of India, Lagos, for familiarization tour.

As students and scholars of International Relations, you are aware about the nuances of Diplomacy and in coming years you would be shaping the frameworks through which we understand diplomacy, cooperation, conflict, and global change. I do hope that today's discussion adds a meaningful dimension to your understanding of India — a country that is not only ancient in heritage, but modern in its aspirations. India places immense value on academic engagement and dialogue. Our foreign policy is deeply rooted in values of peace, cooperation, mutual respect, and inclusivity. It is through forums like this that we can build bridges of understanding and strengthen international partnerships. I am delighted to share with you India's vision for a peaceful, progressive, and interconnected world.

First our Bi-lateral relation

India and Nigeria

India and Nigeria have been friends and trusted allies. They are strategic partners. The current state of relationship between our countries is excellent. This has been strengthened by the visit of the President of Nigeria to India and the Prime Minister of India to Nigeria. The strength and potential of Nigeria is fully recognized by India. I would like to bring to your kind attention that our Prime Minister has declared Africa as top priority in our foreign and economic policy. **Articulating our Africa policy PM stated that our development partnership will be guided by African priorities. It will be on terms that will liberate African potential and not constrain African future. India's priority is not just Africa; India's priority is Africans – every man, woman and child in Africa.** This should be the gold standard of bilateral relationship.

Economically, India is one of the biggest trading partners of Nigeria. Indian companies have strong presence in Nigeria with a cumulative investment of USD 30 Billion. Approximately 150 major Indian companies are working in Nigeria. It is estimated that Indian companies or companies operated by Indians are one of the biggest employer of Nigerians.

I would also like to recall here our bilateral cooperation in the capacity building under Indian Technical and Economic cooperation scheme. This scheme is in operation for developing countries since 1964. Please underline 1964. The scheme provides for training in sophisticated courses to the government employees of global south completely free of charge including visa, ticket, tuition, lodging, boarding and even tourism.

During the recent visit of our PM, Narendra Modi in November 2024, both sides reviewed the gamut of bilateral relations and discussed areas of further cooperation including maritime security, energy security, defense, health, education, trade and investment, food security including agriculture mechanization, combating terrorism, piracy, and drug trafficking, cooperation in international forums. After the delegation level talks, State lunch was hosted in the honour of Prime Minister, where he was conferred with the Grand Commander of the Order of Niger Award. The Prime Minister also addressed and interacted with the Indian community. The following MoUs were signed during the visit of Prime Minister in Nigeria (i) Programme on Cultural Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of India and the Federal Republic of Nigeria (ii) MoU of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Survey Cooperation (iii) MoU of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters.

India: A Nation on the Move

India today stands at a significant crossroads — both as the world's most populous democracy and as one of the fastest-growing major economies. The past few years have been phenomenal and transforming India at a rapid pace. People are coming out of poverty at never seen rate. There is all round growth in Infrastructure, electricity and manufacturing Sector. Global giants like Apple, Samsung, Mercedes and several others are feeling the benefit of India.

Economic Growth and Innovation

India has emerged as a global hub for low cost digital innovation and entrepreneurship. The country has been very successful in deploying effective public digital infrastructure. With over 100 unicorns and a vibrant startup ecosystem, we are leveraging technology to drive inclusive development. Initiatives like *Digital India*, *Make in India*, and *Startup India* have created momentum for job creation, foreign investment, and skill development.

Despite global challenges, India has maintained a steady GDP growth rate, driven by structural reforms, strong domestic demand, and public investment. As the world's largest democracy and the fourth-largest economy, India is playing an increasingly pivotal role in global affairs. We are on track to become a \$5 trillion economy in the coming years, which has significant implications for global trade and multilateral cooperation.

India is making landmark strides in areas that will define the future. Our achievements in space — from **Chandrayaan-3's moon landing** to the **Aditya-L1 solar mission** — are not just scientific milestones, but diplomatic ones, showcasing the possibilities of South-South cooperation in science and technology.

We are also a founding member of the **International Solar Alliance** and a strong advocate for climate justice, emphasizing “Lifestyle for Environment” (LiFE), a movement toward sustainable living.

Global Diplomacy and Strategic Outreach

India's foreign policy today is guided by the principle of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” — the world is one family. We seek partnerships that are equitable, sustainable, and rooted in mutual respect.

- **In multilateral forums**, India has been vocal on issues such as climate change, reform of global governance institutions, and the equitable distribution of technology.
- **The G20 Presidency**, which India held recently, was a reflection of our commitment to inclusive global growth. We focused on priorities such as digital public infrastructure, women-led development, and energy transition. We also brought the south – south cooperation on the forefront. India has consistently championed the cause of the developing world. Through initiatives like the **Global South Summit**, we have created forums where smaller and emerging economies can be

heard. Our development partnerships span Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific, covering areas such as health, education, energy, and infrastructure.

- **In the Indo-Pacific**, we are committed to a free, open, and rules-based order. Our ties with ASEAN, QUAD partners, and neighboring countries continue to deepen.

Social Transformation and Inclusivity

At home, India is undergoing a social transformation. Landmark legislation for gender equality, education reform under the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), and the empowerment of marginalized communities are reshaping the socio-economic landscape.

India's success in administering over 2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses and exporting vaccines to over 90 countries under *Vaccine Maitri* reflects both our scientific capability and our sense of global solidarity. India is known as the Pharmacy of the world because of low cost and high quality generic medicines produced in bulk.

India and the Youth

To the young minds in this room: India believes in the power of youth. Our median age is 28, and this demographic dividend is being channeled into innovation, climate action, education, and entrepreneurship.

I encourage you to engage with India — academically, culturally, and professionally. There are countless opportunities for collaboration in areas ranging from technology and research to policy and people-to-people exchanges.

A Shared Future

In an era of global interdependence, India is not just charting its own path — it is contributing to shaping the world order. Whether it's through climate leadership, digital innovation, or peacekeeping, India stands as a responsible global partner. Our vision is one of a connected, peaceful, and rules-based global order.

Let us remember that the world we inherit depends on the ideas we nurture today. In that spirit, I invite you to think of India not only as a country, but as a civilization of ideas, open to dialogue and dedicated to shared progress.

I look forward to your questions and to a lively exchange of views.

Thank you. *Dhanyavaad*.