

Opening Remarks By the High Commissioner at the Webinar on Gandhian Methods of Nonviolence and its influence on the Freedom Struggle in Zambia (8th February 2022)

His Excellency Mr. Garry Nkombo, Hon'ble Minister of Local Government & Rural Development, Republic of Zambia,

Shri Vijay Goel, Hon'ble Vice Chairman, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti;

Ambassador(Retd) Shri Virendra Gupta, President Antar Rashtriye Sahyog Parishad (ARSP);

Prof. Luke Evuta Mumba, Vice-Chancellor, University of Zambia;

Ambassador(Retd) Shri Anup Mudgal, Chair for today's Webinar;

Shri Vedabhyas from Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti;

Mrs. Bandana Kumar. Senior Research Fellow, Department of Literature and Languages, University of Zambia;

and all distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen who have joined us in this webinar.

Namaskar & Good Afternoon,

I thank Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti and Antar Rashtriye Sahyog Parishad for taking lead in organising this first Webinar with the New Dawn Government of the Republic of Zambia on a very

pertinent and contemporary topic, 'Highlighting the Influence of Mahatma Gandhi's

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Methods of Nonviolence on the Freedom Struggle of Zambia'. I also thank the University of Zambia, which agreed to join this Webinar at a very short notice.

This Webinar is an important step to strengthen our bilateral relations, with the New Dawn Government led by His Excellency Mr. Hakainde Hichilema, the President of the Republic of Zambia. With the peaceful conduct of election and transfer of power in August 2021, Zambia has emerged as a shining example of democracy in Africa. This Webinar also provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen Gandhian values in Zambia.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to briefly dwell upon the bilateral relations between India and Zambia.

It's a note worthy feature that India's relations with Zambia predates Zambia's independence in 1964. Our bilateral relations are thus historic, warm and friendly and have evolved and strengthened over the years.

The leaders of Zambian freedom struggle led by late Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda drew inspiration from the leaders of India's freedom

struggle, particularly Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's thought and principles continue to inspire and invoke admiration in Zambia and among its leaders, even the younger generation. The warm relations have continued into 21st century. Over these last several decades, India has come to be seen as a reliable partner and an "all weather and time-tested friend". This relationship continues to be driven by mutual respect and is based in a spirit of partnership for mutual benefit. Today our relations have grown into multifarious areas of mutual interest.

There have been high level visits from both sides, which nurtured the bilateral relations. Late Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, the First President of Zambia, visited several times to India and had very deep understanding about Indian history and civilizational ethos. Indian leaders have also visited Zambia and extended full support for Zambia's development. I would like to specifically mention two important State visits in recent years. In April 2018, Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji Shri Ram Nath Kovind visited Zambia. In August 2019 the then President of Zambia Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu visited India and during these two State visits eleven MoUs and Agreements were signed. We are working with the New Dawn Government to implement those MoUs and Agreements.

One of the most important areas of bilateral relation is the development cooperation wherein India has provided considerable assistance and support to Zambia in the form of Government and Exim Bank's grants and line of credits, support during floods, food support, support of medicines, capacity building programmes through

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation. India has also provided scholarships through Indian Council for Cultural Relations. India has also started e-learning programme, I-learn programme, Pan-Africa e-network project. e-vidya Bharti and e-ArogyaBharti programmes are under implementation.

India has also supported the Lusaka City Descongestion Project by providing USD 245 million Buyers Credit to Government of Zambia. This road project got completed six months before its scheduled time and has received a widespread appreciation by the people of Zambia and they look forward for such development projects with the support of India.

India has also provided lines of credits for electrification, for construction of 650 pre-fabricated rural health posts. Cooperation in areas like geology, mines and minerals, health sector, defence, to name a few are also actively pursued.

Indian companies have also made big investment in different sectors of economy of Zambia and created thousands of jobs. The Indo-Zambia Bank established in 1984 is one of the shining examples of India-Zambia bilateral cooperation. Notable other investments are Vedanta Resources Ltd. in Konkola Copper Mines, M/s Nav Bharat Singapore Ltd a subsidiary of Nav Bharat Ventures Ltd. , Hyderabad in Mamba Collieries, which is producing coal and 300 MW of thermal power. Bharti Airtel is one of the most successful telecom companies in Zambia and now is the leading mobile service provider of Zambia. It has made more than USD 100 million investment. TATA Group has

also made substantial investment in power sector, in hospitality and vehicle assembly in Zambia. Apart from these major investments, there are hundreds of medium and small scale investments made by Indian companies in recent years.

One of the most important factors in strengthening and nurturing India Zambia bilateral relations is the presence of a large and vibrant Indian origin community (PIO/OCIs) which has been settled decades ago. Their number is around 25000 and they have made substantial contribution in the economic development of Zambia. Indian origin Zambians have been appointed even as Cabinet Ministers. Mr. Suresh Desai was Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Deepak Patel was Minister of Commerce and Industry during the Presidency of second President Mr. Frederick Chiluba. Mrs. Abha Patel is the Judge in the High Court of Zambia in Ndola in the Copperbelt Region. There are about 5000 NRI working in Zambia. Zambia has provided a peaceful working environment for the Indian community.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now I would like to say a few words about the Indian freedom struggle led by Mahatma Gandhi and its influence on the freedom struggle of Zambia.

India's freedom struggle against British Colonialism was though arduous and painful, yet Mahatma Gandhi led the freedom movement with his strong conviction of truth & non-violence. India's freedom struggle and Gandhian methods of Truth and Nonviolence (SATYAGRAH) had inspired many leaders around the world,

particularly the oppressed and sufferers under the Colonial Rule, including the First Republican President of Zambia, Late Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda, who was nicknamed as “Gandhi of Africa”.

Last year in June, in the death of Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda we have lost an icon of Africa’s liberation struggles and one of India’s staunchest and most steadfast friend. Late Dr. Kaunda led the freedom struggle of Zambia and his campaign was focused on civil disobedience, strikes and boycotts largely inspired by Mahatma Gandhi’s methods of peaceful boycott and non-cooperation with the Colonial Rulers. Like Mahatma Gandhi, who brought each section of Indian society into the freedom struggle, Dr. Kaunda also tried the same and brought all 70 plus tribes of Zambia ‘then Northern Rhodesia’ under the popular slogan ‘One Zambia One Nation’.

Recently I got a rare opportunity to meet two prominent freedom fighters - Mrs. Mama Bessie Nyoni, who is now 76 years old and Mr. Patwell Mushanga, who is 73 years old. Both of them participated in the freedom struggle of Zambia from 1960 to 1964. During that time, the freedom struggle was called **Cha Cha Cha** Movement, which was largely non violent and was led by Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda. These freedom fighters who were young at that time and part of Youth Action Group, took part in Civil Disobedience Movement. Like other Colonies and Protectorates, Zambians were also subjected to atrocities and discrimination by the Colonial Rulers, which forced them to join the freedom movement. These two freedom fighters vividly recalled the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on the thought and action of Zambian freedom fighters led by Dr. Kaunda, who was also a

staunch believer in Gandhian methods of nonviolence. The freedom fighters also recalled the contribution of Zambians of Indian origin in the freedom struggle of Zambia. The vivid recall of various episodes of the largely peaceful freedom struggle of Zambia by those two freedom fighters clearly shows the visible influence of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts of non-violence and peaceful resistance in the freedom struggle of Zambia. Mahatma Gandhi will always remain relevant and an iconic figure, who practised non-violence as a philosophy and a principle for building a better society. The implementation of Gandhian ideas for welfare of the downtrodden leads to just development of a society.

Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts were not just limited to truth and non-violence but also his vision covered the entire gamut of human life. Gandhiji believed in self-government and self-sustained development of villages to attain self-sufficiency through development of agriculture and small scale/home-based cooperative industries. I may refer the influence of Gandhian thoughts on local self government for empowerment of people in the New Dawn Government's path-breaking initiative to substantially enhance Constituency Development Fund (CDF) from 1.6 million Kwacha (less than 100,000US\$) to 25.7 million Kwacha (about 1.4 million US\$) for all of its 156 Constituencies could prove to be a game changer for decentralisation of resources and empowerment of rural people, especially women and youth by creation of a large number of jobs at local level.

The Gandhian thoughts are universal and time-tested. His thoughts particularly of compassion and help the down-trodden have also taken into consideration by the Government of India led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji and has successfully implemented several schemes like: Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission), Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojna (Prime Minister Scheme for loan to small businessmen), Ujala Yojana (Affordable LED bulbs for all), Stand-up India, Gramoday se Bharat Uday (Rise of India through Rise of Villages), Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (Prime Minister's Rural Housing Scheme) and many more.

I hope that today's webinar will further strengthen Gandhian values, which are universal and play an important role in building India-Zambia bilateral relations.

I thank you all.