

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT
THE BANQUET IN HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MAURITIUS, H.E. MR. RAJKESWUR PURRYAG**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi : 04-01-2013

Your Excellency Rajkeswur Purryag, President of the Republic of Mauritius,
Mrs. Aneetah Purryag,
Distinguished Guests,

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you and your distinguished delegation on your first State Visit to India. You are a long standing friend of India and a strong advocate of closer ties between India and Mauritius.

Excellency, our nations, bound by our historical ties share a unique warmth and friendship built on the foundation of close bonds between our peoples. Present-day Mauritius is home to successful and progressive persons of Indian origin who have carved a niche for themselves in the country through their hard work and commitment to its progress.

Since the days of Mahatma Gandhi's deep interest in Mauritius and the active involvement of Manilal Doctor in advocating social and political change in Mauritius in the early 1900s, Mauritius has achieved much as an independent and progressive nation. The father of modern Mauritius, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, had laid the foundations for democracy and the prosperity that your people enjoy today. India welcomes the socio-economic progress made by Mauritius in a short span of over four decades after its independence. Despite the downturn that impacted the global economy, Mauritius has shown remarkable resilience and

Mauritians have persevered to maintain their impressive economic growth and high standard of living.

Excellency, the long-standing ties of co-operation between India and Mauritius have today evolved into a modern and vibrant partnership involving key sectors on both sides. This has been facilitated by our regular dialogue and inter-Governmental initiatives operationalised through a framework of bilateral agreements, public and private sector joint ventures and robust people-to-people contacts. The strong synergies and complementarities between our two economies indicate that there still remains a vast untapped potential - especially in the trade, investment, developmental and infrastructure sectors.

Excellency, we have a long history of co-operation in international fora. On issues of primary importance to us – including the fight against terrorism and our rightful claim to a permanent seat at the UN Security Council, we appreciate the shared perception and support of Mauritius. We look forward to working with you for the long term interests of both our countries - including on regional and global issues where we have similar concerns.

I also take this opportunity to emphasise that the safety and security of our respective peoples should remain a high priority in our bilateral agenda. Peace and stability throughout the region of the Indian Ocean that washes our shores is an objective that we both share. We face the common challenge of maritime piracy, that must be overcome by the collective efforts of all the littoral states that are affected. We value the active support and involvement of the Government of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.

Excellency, Mauritius was the venue for the 6th Overseas Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held recently. I take this opportunity to thank your Government, and the people of Mauritius for welcoming this multi-dimensional event with enthusiasm. They have been active participants in the events and initiatives

involving the 27 million-strong Indian diaspora. We are particularly honoured that you will be Chief Guest at this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Kochi.

Excellency, India's commitment to the progress and prosperity of Mauritius remains firm. We have taken several decisions on bilateral assistance and the economic package that we have discussed during your visit will, no doubt, take us forward towards our common objectives. We are fully confident that during your Presidency, the cherished ties, fraternal support and co-operation between our two countries will be strengthened and that our joint initiatives for the mutual benefit of our peoples will bring more progress and prosperity to them.

With these words, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
May I request you to join me in a toast:

- To the health and personal well being of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mauritius and Mrs. Aneeta Purryag;
- To the enduring tradition of close friendship and co-operation between India and Mauritius; and
- To the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the Republic of Mauritius.