**Draft Banquet speech at Dinner hosted by the Vice President of Nigeria**

[27 September 2016]

**Your Excellency Mr. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure to be in your beautiful country. I bring the greetings and good wishes from the people of India to the government and people of Nigeria.

My wife and I, and indeed my entire delegation, greatly appreciate the gracious hospitality extended to us since our arrival.

We in India have great admiration for Nigeria, for its rich literary and cultural heritage, and for its leading role in the pan-African and regional organizations.

Our countries were in the forefront of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggle; and in the fight against racial inequalities. We are now working closely for the creation of a more just and equitable international order. We share common perceptions on the major issues before the international community today.

We are committed to work together for the maintenance of global peace and security, United Nations reforms, fight against terrorism, establishment of a fair and equitable global trading regime and addressing the vagaries of climate change and promoting green technologies.

As responsible nations in a changing international order, we are committed to work together to foster the ideals of equitable representation, and democratization of international institutions. In all these matters, both our countries seek to ensure that the interests of developing countries are kept uppermost.

India as the largest democracy in the world, and Nigeria as the largest democracy in Africa, have much to share and benefit from each other. We are natural partners.

Our strategic partnership is based on a common vision, shared interests and mutual trust and friendship. My visit underscores our keen desire to deepen the bilateral strategic engagement and to enhance flow of ideas, people-to-people contacts between our two countries.

We must continue to seize the complementarities and synergies to exploit the new opportunities while handling the present challenges. As part of our deepening engagement, we are ready to partner Nigeria in the economic and commercial domains, in expanding our military collaboration and in deepening our development cooperation.

I see a very promising future for our bilateral relations. Our talks earlier today have enabled us to further deepen our engagement through identification of new areas of collaboration.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen, May I now request you to join me in a toast :-

* to the good health and well-being of Your Excellency, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and his gracious wife , Madam Dolapo Osinbajo, and all of you present here;
* to the continued well-being and prosperity of the friendly people of Nigeria; and
* to the everlasting friendship between India and Nigeria.

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