

Honourable Srimathi Sushma Swaraj, Member of Republic of India, External Affairs

The Right Honourable Sir Anerood JUGNAUTH, GCSK, KCMG, QC, Minister Mentor, Minister of Defence and Rodrigues

Honourable Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo, GCSK, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration & International Trade

Honourable Mrs Leela Devi Dookun, Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

Honourable Mr Prithvirajsing Roopun, Minister of Arts and Culture

Honourable Srimathi mridula Sinha, Governor of Goa

Honourable Sri K. Tirupathi, Governor of West Bengal

Honourable V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs

Honourable Sri J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs

Honourable Sri Kiran Rijju, Minister of State for External Affairs

Dear Brothers and Sisters, all lovers of Hindi,

Good morning.

Namaste

*'Mera Pyaar bhåra Namaskar,
Hindi Jagat ke pyaare sajano
Viswa ke kone kone se aaye Hué Hindi premiyan,
Mauritius Raastra aap logon ka
Hind Mahasaagar ke iss chöta Bharat
Swagat karté hey'.*

Ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is indeed a great privilege and a great honour for me to be part of this 11th World Hindi Conference which was opened on Saturday and closing today with this valedictory session.

2. We know that this conference is being organised with great joy and enthusiasm in the hearts and minds of all participants, to celebrate and promote the Hindi language.

But at the same time, we know that there is a great sadness in everybody's heart following the news of the sad demise of Honourable Shri Atal Beehari Vajpayeji, former Prime Minister of India; the more so, since Shri Vajpayeji has been very closely associated with the organisation of previous World Hindi Conferences over the past 33 years during the time he was Minister of External Affairs of India and during his Prime Ministership. On top of it all he is a great lover of Hindi, a writer and poet in the Hindi Language.

3. Shri Atal Beehari Vajpayeji has been a great friend of Mauritius. He was our Chief Guest for the 32nd. Independence Day Celebrations in the year 2000. We will forever be grateful to him for his significant and strong support in the realisation of a number of cultural and infrastructural projects in Mauritius including the setting up of the Cybercity in Ebene, which kickstarted with the construction of the first Cyber Tower with financial assistance from India during his Prime Ministership. The decision of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth to honour the memory of Sri Atal Beeharri Vajpayeji by naming the Cyber Tower as Atal Beeharri Vajpaye Cyber Tower is a fitting tribute to a great friend of Mauritius.

4. I went to sign the book of condolences at the Indian High Commission and I requested the High Commissioner to tender my personal expression of condolences to the bereaved family and to the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

5. Let me also express my sadness at the heavy loss of lives in floods in the State of Kerala.

6. Ladies and Gentlemen

I gather that the 3-day conference which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister in the distinguished presence of Shrimati Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs, Minister of India, has been a great success. It has been a great honour to have you in our midst madam for this conference. Since the visit of your Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi in Mauritius as the Chief Guest for the Independence Day Celebrations in 2015, you have honoured us by your presence a number of times, for which we are most grateful to you. You have indeed been instrumental in the realisation of a number of projects. Your presence in this World Hindi Conference has contributed immensely to enhance the seriousness of the sacred mission of preserving and promoting Hindi language in the world. We know how, in the Indian Parliament, you keep pleading in favour of proposing that the Hindi language be introduced as the seventh official language at the United Nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have to say also that it has been a great honour for Mauritius to have welcomed a number of dignitaries from India and other countries among more than 2000 delegates. This high attendance is itself a measure of the success of the conference. We are grateful to you all for attending the conference.

7. The overall theme chosen for the 11th conference- ***Hindi Vishwa aur Bharatiya Sanskriti*** --*Hindi in the World and Indian Culture*- was a most appropriate one because language is not an end in itself but a means to express the culture of the people and the values that they uphold.
8. Eight very interesting and challenging sub-topics were there for group discussion. I am sure that over the 3 days of lively exchange of ideas and experience, all the aims of the conference must have been achieved.

9. The major goal of the conference was, of course, to promote and propagate Hindi so as to establish it as a global language. Already the present status of Hindi in the world is quite nearly 540 million people speak Hindi as a first language in the world. Bollywood films and songs are taking the language to many countries across the world.
10. I was happy to read on this morning's newspapers that there were very hot debates in one group discussion yesterday on the topic: "Indian Cinema and the Hindi Language".

I definitely agree with those who affirm that not only do Indian films promote the language across the world but they also promote Indian values and Culture.

I tend also to agree with the opposers to some extent. This is because I personally find that many films depict behaviour, which are not true to Indian values and Culture in addition to a lot of exaggerated violence and fake fights.

I wish that the way forward should be "to keep up and improve on what has been so far appreciated by the general public, incorporate more natural human behaviour and manners, but also be attentive to the critics and reduce or eliminate exaggerated violence and situations that go against Indian Values and Culture".

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not just a question of speaking the language but the fact is that there are millions of people across the world who may not speak the language everyday but who are interested in listening to and appreciate the message therein is also important to consider.

11. This brings us to the second objective of the conference which is to have Hindi recognized as one of the official

languages at the United Nations. As of now, there are six official languages used at the UN. English and French are the two working languages. Mandarin is on the list by virtue of the number of native speakers- 990 million; Spanish is on the list because it is so widely spoken in the world specially in South America. Same for Arabic and Russian in Asia. However, the number of people speaking and using Hindi is greater than the number for Russian and Arabic. So it stands to reason to claim that Hindi should be introduced as an official language at the UN.

12. This conference has shown that the desire and the will to make this happen is very real and strong. Therefore, far from Hindi disappearing like the Dodo, it will not only survive but it will find its rightful place as the seventh official language at the UN. We all have to join hands to make it happen. Mauritius will definitely be with India at the forefront, specially that Mauritius is the seat of the World Hindi Secretariat, has always been promoting Hindi in the country and is presently holding the World Hindi Conference for the third time.
13. Indeed, Mauritius is the only country after India which has got the privilege of hosting the World Hindi Conference for the third time. This privilege given to Mauritius was just natural, because of its unique and determined efforts to promote the Hindi Language and literature. Mauritius is the only country outside India where the majority of the population is of Indian origin. In addition, the affluent Indian diaspora in Mauritius is a strong driving force for developing the special relationship between the two countries.
14. Hindi is taught at all levels in the education system. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute in collaboration with the University of Mauritius offers degree and PhD courses.
15. Organisations such as the Hindi Pracharini Sabha, the Arya Sabha and the Hindi Speaking Union have contributed and

are largely contributing to promote and propagate the language.

16. We must also pay homage to the long list of Mauritian writers in the Hindi language who have contributed immensely to give life to the Hindi language. Among others, mention could be made of: Pandit Atmaram Vishwanath, Jaynarain Roy, Pandit Basdeo Bissoondoyal, Somduth Bhuckory, Dr. Moonishwarlall Chintamane, Pahlad Ramsurrun and Abhimanyu Aunauth. The writings of many of them have attained international recognition. They deserve our thanks and appreciation for their contribution to preserve and propagate Hindi language and Literature.
17. I would like to share with you an extract from the poem ***Hindi is my language*** by late Dr Moonishlall Chintamunee, which, in very simple language, summarises the importance of knowing and practice speaking Hindi.

***Go and tell the man that
Hindi is my language
It's such a beautiful thing
It has preserved my culture.
Hindi is my language
It's such a beautiful thing
It has still saved
My identity till now.***

18. Let me conclude by congratulating and thanking each and every delegate for their presence and participation in the proceedings of the conference. Special thanks to all the organisers, to each and everyone who has contributed in their personal manner to the good running and success of the conference.
19. My congratulations to those of you who have received special award for your personal contribution to the advancement of the Hindi language.

20. First and foremost all Hindi scholars from abroad

And from the Mauritian side

Dr. Oodaye Narayan Gangoo
Shree Hallooman Dubey Girdhare
Shree Kessen Budhoo
The Hindi Pracharini Sabha
And The Arya Sabha.

21. Brothers and sisters, lovers of the Hindi Language
Like the peacock, the national bird of India,
The Hindi language is beautiful
It is multi-faceted. Multi-coloured
And will spread its wings to all corners of the world
It will become global
And it will be used at the UN
Because that's what we all want
That's what we have come here for
In this 11th. World Hindi Conference 2018

Hindi Hamaari Pehechaan hein

***Mujhe poorna vishwaas hein
KI Hindi vishwa mein shaanti Ko
Shakti pradaan karenge.***

Jai Mauritius
Jai Bharat
Jai Hindi Basha.

I now have the duty to declare the 11th World Hindi Conference
2018 closed.

Dhanyavaad