

High Commission of India Nairobi

Seminar on "Connectivity Revisited: India, Kenya and the Indian Ocean"

The High Commission of India, Nairobi in association with the Asian African Heritage Trust, Nairobi and the Institute for Social & Cultural Studies (ISCS), India organised a seminar titled, "Connectivity Revisited: India, Kenya and the Indian Ocean" at the Louis Leakey Auditorium in the Nairobi National Museum on 28-29 March 2017. H. E. Amb. Dr. Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary (Minister) for Foreign Affairs of Kenya delivered the keynote address at the inaugural ceremony on 28 March 2017. In her remarks, the Cabinet Secretary highlighted importance of the Indian Ocean and connectivity in robust India-Kenya partnership. Amb Tom Amolo, Political and Diplomatic Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya delivered a valedictory address.



2. In addition to inaugural and valedictory sessions of the Seminar, other five plenary sessions focused on review of various aspects of India-Kenya bilateral relations including civilization linkages, archaeological evidences, Indian Ocean strategic dynamics, people to people contacts, socio-cultural exchanges, Indian-Kenyan literature, economic cooperation and development partnership, influence of literature, cinema, sports and the way forward. The Seminar engaged policy makers, academics, civil society and relevant stakeholders in addressing the issues of people-centric development and explored new areas of cooperation. The event exchanged ideas and experiences of scholars/experts from the two countries to further strengthen bilateral comprehensive partnership.

3. High Commissioner Ms. Suchitra Durai in her opening remarks recalled the historic Indian Ocean links between India and East Africa, particularly Kenya; recent development in bilateral relations and recommendations for future engagements. Panellists included Mr. Pheroze Nowrojee, Chair, Asian African Heritage Trust; Mr. Kiprono Kittony, National Chairman, KNCCI; Dr. Radha Upadhayaya and Mr. Sharad Rao, Chairman, Kenya Judges & Magistrates Vetting Board who chaired five plenary sessions. Key Speakers at the Seminar included Dr. Mzalendo Kibunja, Director General, National Museums of Kenya; Mr. Arindam Mukherjee, Secretary, ISCS; Ms. Nancy Karigithu, Principal Secretary, Department for Maritime and Shipping Affairs of Kenya; Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, former High Commissioner of India to Kenya and South Africa; Mr. Deba R Mohanty, Chairman, Indicia Research & Advisory (IRA), India; Dr. V. Selvakumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Epigraphy and Archaeology, Tamil University, India; Dr. Kalandar Khan, Director, Kenya Heritage Training Institute; Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS; Dr. Casper Cheggeh, Senior Policy Advisor and a Director at Africa Policy Institute, Nairobi; Dr. Tom Odhiambo, Dr. Kenneth Ombongi and Dr. Godwin Siundu of the Department of Literature of University of Nairobi; Dr. Rafique Keshavjee, Head, Academic Planning, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Aga Khan University, East Africa; Prof. Azim Nanji, Former Director, the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and Prof Renu Modi, Centre for African Studies, University of Mumbai.



4. This is the first ever Seminar organised by this High Commission on India-Kenya relations set in backdrop of the age-old Indian Ocean links. It is also the first Seminar on the Indian Ocean region organised by the Government of India in Africa after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative. Seven eminent Indian speakers came from India for the participation in the Seminar. At the inaugural ceremony 4 monographs/booklets

namely (i) Africa – a poem by Rabindranath Tagore; (ii) Mountain of the Moon – an English version of the famous Bengali novel “CHANDER PAHAR” written by Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay on East and Central Africa; (iii) Reflections on Africa: Select articles from the Modern Review edited by Arnab Nag (an English periodical published from Calcutta) on East Africa and (iv) Development Oriented Trade Policies and Cooperation: Exploring New Vistas for India-Kenya Partnership by Sachin Chaturvedi and Pratyush Sharma were released.



5. The Seminar was attended by over 120 participants, which included Dr. Vijoo Rattansi, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, senior government officials, members of civil society, academics, writers, media, students and representatives of business community as well as Kenya-India Friendship Association.

(Nairobi – 29 March 2017)