

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF CEREMONY TO RECEIVE THE KEY TO THE CITY OF ABIDJAN

Abidjan : 15.06.2016

1. I am delighted to be here in Abidjan, Pearl of West Africa, on the very first State Visit by a President of India to this beautiful country.

2. I am deeply touched by your gesture of presenting to me a key of the City and conferring honorary citizenship on me. I am indeed very thankful to all for this honor bestowed upon me. I am very pleased to be henceforth an honorary citizen of the city of Abidjan. This city has embraced, with the same warmth, the people of India who have been living and working in Cote d'Ivoire. I thank you, Your Excellency, for your contribution in making Indian nationals feel welcome and secure here.

3. As the world's largest democratic and secular Republic, India sees the city of Abidjan as a melting pot of diverse ethnicities and religions. I am happy to see that Abidjan, after suffering extensive damage during the recent civil war, has regained its past splendour. Today, it is, once again, a symbol of national unity and solidarity and has developed into an important commercial hub. India lauds the spirit of the citizens of Cote d'Ivoire for swiftly pursuing national reconciliation and uniting to look forward to better days.

4. Your Excellency, I very much appreciate this Ivorian tradition – as it reminds me of India's age-old philosophy of "*Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*". These words in Sanskrit mean that mankind is one large family. I therefore accept the honorary citizenship bestowed by you in the name of the people of India – and as a valued symbol of the friendship of the people of Cote d'Ivoire and people of India.

5. With these words, I convey to the people of Cote d'Ivoire, the best wishes of the people of India for their continued peace, prosperity and happiness.

Thank you.