

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**REMARKS TO JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA UNIVERSITY
New Delhi, 27 April 2012**

-

Mr. Chancellor, Lt. Gen. M.A. Zaki,
Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Najeeb Jung,
Distinguished Guests
Faculty Members,
Dear Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam Alaikum. Namaskar.

May ya haan aakar bahut khush hoon!
[I am so happy to be here.]

Thank you for this distinguished recognition.

For decades, I have been a student of India. Now I finally have a degree to prove it!

Today you do me and the United Nations a special honour.

In that spirit, I accept this honorary doctorate on behalf of the women and men who serve the United Nations around the world.

Because you have been so kind to recognize me – let me begin by sharing a bit of personal history.

My journey in foreign service started right here.

I arrived in New Delhi exactly 40 years ago, on my first diplomatic posting. It was one of the best things that happened to me.

Ever since, I have drawn lessons from the proud history of India. I have learned deeply from your traditions. I have been inspired by your example.

The bonds go deeper, still. My son was born in India.

Years later, my daughter chose to marry an Indian man. The couple produced what I consider to be the world's finest joint venture between our two countries – my grandson, Jai!

For all these reasons, I say: When I am in India, I am at home.

But far more important than India's role in my family, is India's role in the family of nations.

That is what I want to speak with you about today.

Now is the time.

We are in a period of great transition. New powers are rising. Technology is shrinking distances. More and more people are beginning to shape their own destiny, starting with the Arab Spring. From India, I go to Myanmar where once again new hope and change are taking root.

At the same time, there is unease everywhere I travel. Worries about economic uncertainties ... concerns about corruption ... tensions over growing gaps within societies ...and questions about whether institutions are up to the task.

The old order is breaking down and we do not yet know the shape of the new.

This 21st century mix of change and challenge brings me to India.

You are the world's largest democracy. You are an emerging economic leader. You are a superpower on the information superhighway.

You are a beacon for the world – proving that democracy and development are one and the same path.

As the world's third largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping – you are the backbone of our efforts to prevent further conflict and keep peace worldwide.

You are a co-founder and second-largest contributor to the United Nations Democracy Fund.

You are now serving as a crucial member of the UN Security Council, sharing your experiences throughout the Arab Spring.

But beyond that, something else stands out. I see it all around me today.

India is a union of cultures ... religions ... languages ... all coming together within the fabric of tolerance, understanding and collaboration.

Jamia Millia Islamia University richly encapsulates the best of the Indian Muslim tradition reflecting a true cosmopolitan creed.

Yet we know that tolerance is being tested here and around the world.

It is crucial for India to pass those tests – not only for the country but for our world in which your profile is so distinct and admired.

Maulana Azad, a founder of this great university, once said: “The Indian genius has always recognized that truth has many facets. And conflict and hatred arise because people claim a monopoly on truth and virtue.”

That Indian genius – that need for respecting and safeguarding diversity – is needed everywhere.

And at the United Nations, I count on India to help show the way.

All nations face challenges on human rights. It is imperative for India to tackle its own – through legislation, through policy, and through action to protect all citizens regardless of gender, identity, or social origin.

Ladies and gentlemen,

India is at a pivotal point in its own history.

In many ways, it faces the classic dilemma of a middle-income nation.

On the one hand, we see India as the rising global power.

On the other hand, India faces many of the challenges of a developing nation.

For both these Indias, great opportunity awaits.

I believe firmly that the secret to dynamic development lies at the intersection of challenges. The key, it seems to me, is finding the connections. If you drive at these linkages, you get an instant multiplier effect — solutions in one sphere unlock solutions in others

Let us start with women.

India has a rich tradition of outstanding women leaders. They include not only political figures but, also, vibrant voices of civil society speaking out for women's rights.

You have elected more than one million women to local village councils – a remarkable achievement.

As women have benefitted, so have their communities.

Here in India, women-led councils approved 60 per cent more drinking water projects than those led by men. And many of those communities have seen greater gains in health, food security and closing the gender gap in education.

But, of course, the struggle for gender equality continues.

I am here in India in part to highlight our work in improving the health of women and children.

There has been progress and innovation and I look forward to seeing that for myself tomorrow in Mumbai. But there is much we must do.

Every week, more than 1,000 Indian mothers die from pregnancy or childbirth.

Every 20 seconds, an Indian child under five dies from a largely preventable cause.

This is one of the most difficult development challenges we face anywhere around the world.

But if we can make progress on women's and children's health, we can unleash progress across the Millennium Development Goals.

Again, it's the multiplier effect. And here, too, I count on India to help show the way.

Just a decade ago, four out of five polio cases worldwide were here. Thanks to a determined effort, there has not been a single new case in more than a year.

That is Indian progress. That is Indian leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In a larger sense, we need to rethink our approach to development.

Growth is not enough. The world needs inclusive growth that reduces inequalities – growth that moves people from the margins to the mainstream – growth that integrates the economic, social and environmental instead of growth that pits these goals against each other.

That is why we have made the challenge of sustainable development the leading priority of the United Nations.

Twenty years ago, the world gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the Earth Summit.

In less than two months, leaders will meet there once again in an effort to change course... and to set the world on a more sustainable path of development.

By 2030, the world will need at least 50 per cent more food ... 45 per cent more energy ... and 30 per cent more water...and many millions of more decent jobs.

These and other challenges are linked. And we need to start connecting the dots in our policies and our programmes.

Rio will be an important opportunity to begin shaping sustainable development goals for the future – and India has a key role to play.

Rio will also be a chance to advance on our goal of sustainable energy for all. This is another challenge at the nexus of so many others.

When I was growing up, I did not have to worry about power blackouts – there was no electricity to begin with. I studied by kerosene lamp.

That was a long time ago. But today, 1.4 billion around the world are still living in the dark. Here in India, 55 per cent of the rural population lacks electricity.

We cannot power a 21st century economy without sustainable energy.

That is why I am making sustainable energy a major focus.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We must do better in harnessing another vital source of energy – and that is the power of partnerships.

In today's world, governments simply cannot do it alone.

That is why we are building partnerships for innovative solutions across our work.

And it is making a difference in our efforts to eradicate malaria ... to achieve sustainable energy for all ... to improve the health of every woman and every child.

These are victories because social movements beyond government are mobilizing for change.

That is the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, who was such a force at vital moments in the history of this University. And I quote: "in a gentle way, you can shake the world".

That is why it is so encouraging to see Indian business leaders, parliamentarians, mayors, NGOs, academics beginning to step up to our shared social responsibilities.

It will take the power of partnerships to forge 21st century solutions.

Let me add that I believe India will also find the way to build and strengthen partnerships of common ground with your neighbours. I know there are many challenges, but I see a future of steadily warmer ties built on a shared heritage and a common future.

As we look ahead, I encourage India -- as a regional and global force – to do even more in advancing peace and security – in sharing its experiences – in deepening south-south cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude with a special message to the young people here today. Not only does India have a growing role in our world. So do you.

Some of you may know my own story – a child of war ... growing up in poverty ... going to school under a tree because my school had been destroyed.

The UN saved me and my country and helped us rebuild.

Now I look out at you, the young people of India.

We hear of Generation X ... Generation Y.

I call today's youth "Generation UN" -- a generation that is global ... a generation that understands our common bonds ... a generation fluent in networks.

I imagine all that you can accomplish with your desires and your dreams.

The story of India's rise is your story. It is time for a new generation of Indians to write a new and dramatic chapter in your nation's history.

The main thread in that story will be India's role in a wider world. India as a global power, and yourselves as global citizens.

So today, I say: Have a big dream.

Look beyond your community. Look beyond your country. Be a global citizen.

Bring your energy and your ideas to the United Nations. Be part of our quest for peace, development and human rights everywhere.

Remember the words of your own great poet Rabindranath Tagore.

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and, behold ... service was joy."

Thank you.