

Opening Remarks by Shri S.M. Krishna

Minister of External Affairs

on the occasion of the visit of
Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

at Sapru House, New Delhi
Thursday, 16 December, 2010

Your Excellency Premier Wen Jiabao,

Ambassador Sudhir Devare, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs,

Distinguished members of the Chinese delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon!

It gives me immense pleasure to add to the words of welcome which Ambassador Devare just spoke.

We are privileged to have as our guest Premier Wen Jiabao deliver a major address. His visit to India symbolizes the rendezvous between 1.3 billion Chinese people and 1.1 billion Indians. It will set the terms of engagement between the two fastest growing economies in the world. It embodies the determination of the leaders of the largest Asian nations and contiguous neighbours to forge stronger political trust, maturely address differences and build global partnership. Little wonder, therefore, that interest in Premier Wen's visit is not limited to our two countries. How India and China interact with each other, and jointly with the rest of the world, is a topic of immense contemporary importance.

Very few people can speak about India-China relations as authoritatively and as comprehensively as Premier Wen. As Head of the Government of China for nearly eight years, he has presided over a period of unprecedented intensification of bilateral ties, personally steering our relations from strength to strength. It was during his previous visit in April 2005 that India and China established a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. Many of the initiatives and much of the progress in our relations benefited from the wisdom and sagacity of Premier

Wen and Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, and their shared vision of partnership.

The relationship that our leaders have envisaged for India and China is multi-dimensional. It encompasses vigorous political exchanges, wide-ranging government-level dialogues and consultations, across-the-board functional cooperation, mutually beneficial economic and commercial engagement, widespread people-to-people intercourse and strategic cooperation in regional and multilateral initiatives. As countries availing of historic opportunities for economic and social development, India and China see no contradiction in each other's rise. We increasingly realize that it is important to leverage each other's growth and development for our own prosperity and progress. As inheritors of ancient civilizations, the modern nation-states of India and China have the maturity and wisdom to deal with any differences through dialogue and diplomacy. Both of us have an abiding commitment to the Panchsheel principles that we jointly initiated, and realize the importance of mutual sensitivity to each other's core concerns and interests. Therefore, I am confident that we will jointly write an even brighter chapter in our history in the years ahead, with both assuming rightful place in the comity of nations.

As Vice President of the Indian Council of World Affairs, I am delighted that Premier Wen has set aside time in his busy schedule to reach out to scholars, media and the general public of India through his address at this Institute. As someone witness to the meeting between our two leaders this morning, I can say that he shares our own optimism about the strength and potential of India-China relations. I am as eager as all of you to listen to Premier Wen's lofty vision for our partnership and his prescription for attaining that.

With these words, ladies and gentlemen, I invite His Excellency Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, to address this audience.
