

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY FAIR 2023**

New Delhi, February 16, 2023

I am pleased to join you at the inaugural ceremony of the International Engineering and Technology Fair 2023. I am delighted to note that IETF is celebrating the Silver Jubilee Edition of the biennial event which has covered an interesting path since its beginning in 1975.

It began with showcasing India's manufacturing prowess at a stage when the country was still struggling to keep pace with the industrial revolutions of the developed countries. That was the age of the Cold War when the world was divided in two camps. Globalisation and economic integration were distant concepts. In such a difficult time, the setting up of IETF was indeed a praiseworthy move which found its resonance right at the beginning.

Indeed, the IETF's journey has an impressive trajectory. This year, the event is not only a celebration of India's growth story in the engineering and manufacturing sector, but also a testimony to the nation's collaboration with the best in the world in advanced technologies. Therefore, I commend the IETF and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for developing this event as the leading technology and innovation forum for India's development.

I am happy to learn that representatives of 34 countries are participating in this event. What is really encouraging to note is that nearly 400 exhibitors from 25 countries are enthusiastically contributing to make the event a grand success.

In 1985, the IETF developed the concept of a partner country to encourage overseas participation. Italy then became the first partner country by sending a large contingent of entrepreneurs and technology experts. Japan earned the distinction of becoming the partner country for the maximum number of times in the IETF events.

I am given to understand that this year Finland has partnered for the second time for IETF and we see the India-Finland economic relationship deepening in many areas.

Ladies and gentlemen,

India has come a long way in the 48 years since the first IETF, and the engineering industry has achieved new heights during this period. Today, it is a robust, multi-level, diversified segment of India's industry, playing a critical role in driving growth, creating jobs, and boosting exports.

The policies adopted in the recent past have given fillip to an unprecedented inclusive growth. Rapid digitisation of the economy and its acceptance at the social level has unleashed a new potential which has created new pathways for high growth. It is not without reason that India ranks as third country in the growth of start-ups and unicorn.

Today India's manufacturing sector is globally competitive and thriving. From highly sophisticated areas like defence, aerospace to manufacturing of mobile phones, India has been emerging as the most favoured destination. India has significant potential to engage with the international markets. Our commitment to clean energy has been driving our green growth which is internationally appreciated. India has been marching ahead steadfastly to attain the net zero emission target in 2070. We are being appreciated world over for our rapid stride in producing clean energy.

We are equally conscious of conserving nature's bounty to save this beautiful planet for posterity. The drive to clean the holy river Ganga and emphasis on conserving water bodies across the country is a step in this direction. Similarly, the biggest campaign to provide tap water to every house has achieved its substantial objective by supplying piped water to more than 11 crore households in rural areas. India has been learning from other countries to enhance its capacity in this field. I am told that Germany has set up platforms to showcase water technology and waste management. I appreciate such international collaborations for the collective good of humanity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is no doubt that technology is going to change the way we live. I am given to understand that this fair covers 11 areas of emerging technologies which will have profound impact on our economy and society. Take for instance, artificial intelligence, which is going to revolutionise healthcare beyond recognition in time to come. Similarly, industrial automation and robotics would dramatically transform manufacturing in a way that was inconceivable a decade back.

The importance of technology in healthcare cannot be overestimated. The world is seemingly coming out of a great crisis that was Covid-19. A variety of technologies proved their worth during the pandemic. Focus on this area will continue to be a priority in the coming years.

Here, I would like to reiterate what I have been saying in the past, that we should strive to use technology for social change. Any technology that confines itself to a section of people would gradually wither away. On the other hand, the technologies that change the lives of ordinary people in a positive manner get traction. The wide acceptance of the world's biggest digitisation drive in India is a prime example of the society readily embracing technologies that bring about positive changes in people's lives.

It gives me immense pleasure to learn that there is a determined attempt in this fair to showcase feats of engineering and technologies that promote harmony between nature and science. I feel that human ingenuity should be put to its best use when it is oriented to nourish the nature. The use of science to exploit the environment will lead to destruction.

Here, I would like to speak about the admiration that the greatest scientist of our time, Albert Einstein, had for the greatest man of our time, Mahatma Gandhi. He said about Gandhi [and I quote]: "I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men of our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use

violence in fighting for our cause, but by non-participation in anything you believe in evil.” [I unquote] Mahatma Gandhi also held two-time Nobel Prize winner Marie Curie in high esteem and described her as “sachchi tapaswini” (true saint). My belief is that if the knowledge of science is combined with the pursuit of spirituality, it can do miracles. Spiritualism and science must work in tandem.

Ladies and gentlemen,

India is on a mission to expand its global engagement taking advantage of its excellent manufacturing experience, high-quality talent and cutting-edge advanced technology attainments. There are many critical areas where international collaboration in engineering and technology will bring about changes to make the world a prosperous and safer place for the posterity.

In conclusion, let me wish the 25th IETF and CII all the very best. I wish all the participants productive days ahead and look forward to your continued engagement with the Indian industry.

Thank you.
Jai Hind!