

India - Finland Virtual Summit

16 March 2021

Joint Statement

H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and H.E. Ms. Sanna Marin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland, held wide-ranging discussions during a Virtual Summit on 16 March 2021.

2. The two Prime Ministers underlined the warm and friendly ties between India and Finland during more than seven decades of their diplomatic relations based on shared principles and values of democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights. They acknowledged the determined efforts on both sides in recent years to enhance and upgrade India–Finland relationship and bring it to an upward trajectory.

3. The leaders exchanged views on the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasized the unprecedented global efforts in speeding up the development and scaling up of manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines and promoting equitable access to all countries. Prime Minister Modi informed that India has provided 59 million doses to more than 70 countries including through COVAX. Prime Minister Marin stressed that Finland also is a firm supporter of vaccine solidarity, particularly through COVAX. Finland has also invested in R & D of new technologies for COVID-19 vaccines.

Both sides also shared views on the post-pandemic recovery.

4. The two Prime Ministers

i) Announced a Digital Partnership in Future ICT, Future Mobile Technologies and Digital Education.

- ii)** Announced a High-Level Dialogue in education between the Education Ministries of both countries.
- iii)** Announced a Sustainability Partnership involving Renewable and Clean Energy, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Mobility and noted that green growth is an essential element of bilateral cooperation.
- iv)** Endorsed the Joint Commission and the India-Finland Science & Technology Committee to steer and coordinate developments in their respective domains.
- v)** Urged systematic implementation of the existing MoUs and agreements made between concerned ministries, agencies and institutes.
- vi)** Welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the Indian and Finnish Meteorological Institutes.
- vii)** Look forward to signing of the renewed MoU between consortium of ten Finnish universities and 23 IITs in India for cooperation in higher education sector.
- viii)** Look forward to a successful outcome from the EU–India Leaders’ Meeting in Porto.
- ix)** Look forward to bilateral talks on Africa later this year.
- x)** Agreed that India and Finland are natural partners to enhance efforts for strengthening multilateralism, a rules-based international order, further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and combat climate change.

Trade and investments

5. The Prime Ministers agreed that there is great potential for growth in trade, investments and tourism, in both directions.

6. Both leaders agreed that the MoU between Geological Survey of India and Geological Survey of Finland signed in December 2020 on Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral resources was a step towards diversification of our relationship.

Digital Partnership

7. The Prime Ministers noted that the digital domain was one of the most promising sectors for an intensive India–Finland partnership. The emphasis would be in three key future domains, as follows:

- (i) Future ICT, focusing on quantum technologies and computing;
- (ii) Future mobile technologies, focusing on 6G research & development;
- (iii) Future education, focusing on digital transformation of teaching and learning.

8. Essential and cross-cutting elements of all these key domains are the utilisation of artificial intelligence, cyber security and blockchain technologies. In this partnership, the companies and universities of both countries can leverage their strengths for mutual benefit.

9. Prime Minister Marin briefed about the on-going comprehensive reforms in Finland's practices and regulations on immigration, with a goal of swift processing

for applicants be they experts, students or family members. India is one of the main target countries of Finland's Talent Boost programme.

10. The leaders stressed the importance of people-to-people contacts in all fields, especially in the areas of culture, education and tourism. This could be facilitated by the resumption of direct flights between India and Finland.

Sustainability Partnership

Energy

11. The two leaders welcomed the strengthening of the cooperation in the field of energy between the two countries. They encouraged the concerned companies, ministries and agencies to explore commercial activities, and R&D cooperation in the field of gas-based economy, biofuels, renewable energy, waste-to-energy, electricity storage and emerging fuels such as hydrogen.

Environment

12. The Prime Ministers noted that green growth and a clean energy transition were essential elements of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. They agreed that for tackling global sustainability challenges, it is crucial to continue to address the interrelated issues of biodiversity loss, land-use change, freshwater and ocean degradation, deforestation, desertification, pollution, and climate change in an integrated and coherent manner.

13. Both sides stressed the need for promoting an inclusive and fair circular economy for combatting climate change, protecting biodiversity and achieving

sustainable use of our natural resources. Both sides referred to the huge potential for cooperation on these issues.

14. The Prime Ministers highlighted the need to integrate biodiversity values into national and local policies and strategies, ensuring by 2030, that biodiversity values are mainstreamed across all sectors that are important. Finland and India are committed to building back better and greener in a socially just manner after the COVID-19 pandemic.

15. India and Finland commit to pursuing stronger integration of water and climate policies to enhance the implementation of SDGs 6 on clean water and sanitation and 13 on climate action. This includes efforts to develop Global Water and Climate Observation Systems to inform climate resilient long-term water policy planning and implementation, and efforts to promote technology and R&D cooperation to solve water-related challenges.

Arctic

16. India and Finland have much potential for enhanced cooperation on polar issues, taking into account India's observer status in the Arctic Council and the fact that both are consultative members of the Antarctic Treaty and have active stations in Antarctica. Both sides underlined the key role of the Arctic Council as the main forum for circumpolar cooperation on Arctic matters and took note of the increasing international attention towards the Council. India as an active observer in the Arctic Council is welcome to join and concretely contribute to these efforts.

Africa

17. Both sides noted the growing importance of Africa and referred to their national efforts to enhance cooperation in and with Africa. In this context, they looked forward to bilateral talks on Africa later this year, which will offer an opportunity for more discussion on matters of mutual interest and possible further action.

EU–India

18. The two leaders noted that India and the European Union are valued partners for each other. They stressed the importance of continuing the implementation of the substantive results from the 15th Summit last summer and welcomed the upcoming India-EU27 Leaders' Meeting in Portugal in May 2021, which will be a new milestone for India-EU Strategic Partnership. Recently launched EU–India High-Level Dialogue on Trade & Investment is an important tool.

Multilateral cooperation

19. The two Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based international order. The United Nations is the cornerstone of multilateralism. Through UN reforms, we can strengthen all three pillars of the UN and achieve more effective multilateralism. In this regard, Finland and India continue to support constructive efforts during the 75th Session of UNGA to reform the UN Security Council which needs to become more transparent, more effective, and more representative. As part of the UNSC reform, India and Finland support its balanced expansion with both permanent and non-permanent seats to better reflect current

global political and economic realities. In this context, Finland supports the permanent membership of India in a reformed and expanded UNSC, and reminds of the candidacy of Finland for a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the term 2029-2030.

20. Prime Minister Marin recalled the importance of universal human rights as a base for Finland's foreign policy and emphasized that, if elected to the UN Human Rights Council later this year, Finland will combine its strengths and experience particularly in gender equality, education and digitalization in its work. Finland thanked India for its commitment to support in the elections to the UN Human Rights Council in 2021.

21. Prime Minister Marin highlighted, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of bridging the gender digital divide in education through the UN Women led Generation Equality campaign. Prime Minister Modi briefed on increased use of digital technologies by India for women empowerment initiatives including financial inclusion of women and Beti Bachao, Beti Padho (Save Daughters, Educate Daughters) schemes.

22. The Leaders also had an exchange on WTO matters. Both countries reaffirmed their support to an open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system. They reiterated their commitment to preserve, strengthen and reform the organization. On the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), both sides emphasized the need for ambitious, inclusive and forward-looking results maintaining the WTO's relevance including the restoration of a full-strength Appellate Body as part of the two-tiered Dispute Settlement System. They underlined the importance of promoting post-

COVID-19 economic recovery via the WTO and expressed their support to the WTO's new Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in her challenging tasks ahead.

23. The Prime Ministers reconfirmed their commitment to green growth and protection of the natural environment. They agreed on the need to ensure that the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 and Biodiversity Conference COP15 will produce positive outcomes. India and Finland will cooperate closely on fulfilling their ambitious national targets on climate in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

Climate-relevant initiatives

24. The two leaders discussed their initiatives in the area of climate change. Finland welcomes the universalization of membership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which is an important initiative. Prime Minister Marin emphasized the EU's announced intention to join the Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). India took note of the important role of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action (a Finland–Chile initiative).

Conclusion

25. The two Prime Ministers agreed that this first Virtual Summit between India and Finland shall act as an accelerator in the bilateral relations. The Prime Ministers looked forward to their next meetings in Porto, Portugal, on 8 May 2021, in the EU–India Leaders' Meeting. Prime Minister Marin invited Prime Minister Modi to visit Finland. Prime Minister Modi also extended an invitation to Prime Minister Marin to visit India.

Helsinki, New Delhi

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