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Vice President's Secretariat

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VP Shri Venkaiah Naidu kick starts high level Latin American outreach with wide ranging talks with top leaders of Guatemala

Both sides agree to take 'complementary' relationship to a new high taking advantage of emerging opportunities in both countries

Governance issues, terrorism in different forms, poverty, economic disparities identified as common challenges

India agrees to Guatemala's request for supplying solar panels to its airports

India to train Guatemalan diplomats, English teachers; MoU and Letter of Intent signed

India's democracy a role model for harmonizing diversities, says Guatemalan Parliament Speaker

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Agreeing to push the 'complementary' and 'not competitive' nature of bilateral relations to a new level for mutual benefit from the emerging opportunities in both the countries, India and Guatemala today agreed to support each other's candidature for Non-Permanent Membership in the United Nations Security Council. Guatemala will support India's candidature for UNSC membership for 2021-22 while New Delhi will do so for 2031-32 for Guatemala.

This decision was one of the several outcomes of extensive talks Vice President of India Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu held with the President, Vice President and Parliament Speaker of Guatemala in the capital Guatemala City on May 7, 2018. Kick starting India's high level outreach to the Latin American countries, Shri Naidu held discussions

on a wide range of issues spread over two days with top leaders of Guatemala. Shri Naidu's visit is the highest level from either side since establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1972.

Presenting the context of his first overseas visit as Vice President, Shri Naidu told Guatemalan leaders that "India is keen about enhancing its engagement with Latin America and looks at Guatemala, the most populous and biggest economy in Central America, as the gateway. My visit to Guatemala is a clear indication of this thinking in New Delhi. Going by trade patterns and consumption needs, we are complementary in nature and not competitors and need to take our relation to a new high taking advantage of emerging opportunities in both countries for mutual benefit".

Guatemalan President Shri Jimmy Morales said his country could benefit from the "successful economic story of India" and stressed on the need for improving bilateral engagement in various fields. Referring to India's soft power, he said he was aware of popular TV serial Kaun Banega Karodpati and films like The Slum Dog Millionaire and The Life of Pi. He also referred to the huge popularity of Indian-made two-wheelers given their quality and after-sale service in Guatemala, beating the popular competitors. After talks with Shri Naidu and before leaving for Costa Rica on an official visit, he directed his deputy for detailed talks with the visiting dignitary for exploring new avenues of cooperation with India.

Vice President Shri Naidu later held detailed discussions with Guatemalan Vice President Dr. Jatheth Cabrera Franco and Speaker of Parliament Shri Alvaro Arzu Escobar.

Leaders of both countries agreed that India and Guatemala are faced with similar challenges including governance issues, terrorism in different forms, poverty and economic disparities and democracy is the best form of governance to address them. Guatemalan Vice President Dr. Franco noted that contrary to the perception their government was making determined efforts to check corruption and his country was facing a different kind of terrorism in the form of criminal gangs.

Guatemalan Speaker Shri Escobar said "India's vibrant democracy is a role model in harmonizing vast diversities and offers a lot to learn and India's economic success is equally inspiring". Shri Naidu suggested setting up Parliamentary Friendship Group to promote interaction among MPs of both sides.

During the talks, the Indian side agreed to the Guatemala's request for supplying solar panels to its airports. After discussions and in the presence of both the Vice Presidents, both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding for training of diplomats and a Letter of Intent for training Guatemalan English Teachers in India. These agreements will be valid for three years and will be extended thereafter, if required.

During the talks, Shri Naidu said "In the integrating world order, all the countries need to work together for mutual benefit and for this reason, India is keen about enhancing its engagement with Latin America. India is now making rapid strides with a stable government and able leadership with focus on Reforms and Performance for

Transformation. India and Latin American countries could benefit hugely from increased cooperation for enhanced trade and investments”.

At the banquet hosted for the visiting delegation, Guatemalan Vice President Dr. Franco invited India to send a delegation to the Conference of Ibero America to be held in Guatemala City in November this year which is to be attended by all the Latin American Countries besides Spain and Portugal. This is the first time India got such an invitation for the conference held once in three years. Shri Naidu invited Guatemala to join the International Solar Alliance stating it has found wide appeal with 61 countries already joining it.

Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Shri Jaswant Singh Bhabor and Members of Parliament Shri Anil Desai (RS-Shiv Sena), Smt. Chhaya Verma (RS-Congress), Shri Tiruchi Siva(RS-DMK) and Shri Kamlesh Paswan (LS-BJP) besides Smt. Preeti Saran, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs and senior officials participated in the delegation level discussions.

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