

Speech by Foreign Affairs Minister, H.E. Mr. Alfonso Dastis, on the occasion of the Inauguration of the 2nd Spain – India Forum

Madrid, 16th November, 2017

H.E. the Mayor of Madrid, Ms Manuela Carmena

H.E. the Ambassador of India in Spain, Mr Venkatesh Varma

H.E. the Ambassador of Spain in India, Mr José Ramón Barañano

H.E. the Secretary of State for Energy of the Government of Spain, Mr Daniel Navia

Representative of the Indian Confederation of Industry and Chairman and CEO of Bharat Light & Power Group, Mr Tejpreet Chopra

President of the Spain-India Council Foundation, Mr Antonio Escámez

Presidents, employers and representatives of the Spain-India Council Foundation and the Confederation of Industries of India,

Moderators and leading experts of the sessions of this Forum,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to participate in the opening ceremony of the 2nd Spain-India Forum organised by the Spain-India Council Foundation and the Confederation of Indian Industries. Our two countries are now experiencing a major political moment, with new plans to develop our economic relations and with growing contacts between our civil societies. Despite the specific difficulties that both countries can suffer at one time or another, India and Spain are embarking on a determined process of transformation, with the clear objective to search for progress, peace and security for their citizens and determined to making a constructive and solidary contribution to the major global problems. We are optimistic societies that face challenges and that place cooperation and mutual understanding at the centre of our action, as essential instruments for any political action.

In Spain we want to build a strong bilateral relationship with India with a view to the long term, with the certainty that in the two decades to come, India, which is already one of our main political and economic interlocutors in Asia, will play a fundamental role in the political and

economic projection of Spain in the world. We are fortunate that both countries have close complicity in the main issues of global governance and a growing number of shared interests in all fields, either political, security-related or economic.

Last May, as you know, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, made an official visit to Spain. It was an important visit, in which seven agreements and MoUs were signed and an ambitious road map was finalised, i.e. the Partnership for Peace, Development and Innovation between both countries. It is an ambitious document that starts from a clear and firm pillar –both countries are already established democracies and we share the same fundamental values, i.e. the defence of the Rule of Law, democracy and the protection and promotion of the citizens' fundamental rights. The Association orders our political action in four major sectors –the development of political and security relations, economic relations, relations in matters of science, technology and innovation and finally it addresses the areas in which the relationships between our civil societies should grow.

During the visit in May this year, President Rajoy and Prime Minister Modi gave great importance to strengthening the strategic political dialogue and to building a close and trustworthy relationship in key security issues for our citizens. In a world in which the challenges are increasingly complex, the orientation of both heads of government aims to strengthening our capacity to respond to these challenges –we seek to strengthen cooperation in the industries of defence, cyber-security and fight against terrorism, and we have also talked about strengthening energy security, a safer environment and improving health security and the promotion of scientific exchanges and sharing of lessons learned in the improvement of social services.

During the first session of this Forum we will address the future of our partnership in the coming years. We appreciate the report carried out by Rubén Campos and Jayshree Sengupta and we look forward to the results of the debate, whose conclusions we will integrate without a doubt in our strategic reflection and in the planning of our external action for the coming years.

Likewise, and very prominently, this Forum will focus on addressing various aspects of bilateral cooperation in energy matters, another of the fundamental components of security in a broad sense. The words of the Secretary of State for Energy have served to highlight the opportunities that are opening up for this sector in the coming years in

Spain and India and point to the significant synergies that can occur between both countries.

Without a doubt it is essential to establish a correct definition of long-term energy policies, as well as to develop renewable energies in a context such as the current one, marked by the certain risks of climate change. The path in the fight against climate change will be certainly won by reducing emissions, but also by optimising our energy transport networks and integrating measures for greater efficiency in the use of energy into our homes, buildings and factories.

Undoubtedly the conclusions of the sessions dedicated to these issues will provide important guidance and will allow us to define needs, explain experiences and perhaps illuminate joint projects. I thank all the experts and authorities present for their participation and for sharing their relevant experiences and knowledge with us.

I again thank the Spain-India Foundation Council, the Confederation of Indian Industries and all the authorities, experts and representatives of civil society present here, who, from mutual friendship and a wish to cooperate, have decided to accompany us to find the answers that society is looking for together, to light the way that Spain and India want to walk together.

Thank you very much.

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