

**Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
between Republic of India and Australia**

1. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia jointly participated in an India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit on 04 June 2020.

I. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

2. The meeting between the two Prime Ministers took place in a cordial atmosphere and was highly productive. During the meeting, both Prime Ministers noted the progress in the relationship across many fields, as well as the importance of a globally coordinated response to COVID-19 and working to build a prosperous, open and stable post-COVID-19 world. Affirming their commitment to strengthening India-Australia ties for the long term, they committed to elevate the bilateral Strategic Partnership concluded in 2009 to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)**.

3. The CSP is based on mutual understanding, trust, common interests and the shared values of democracy and rule of law. It reflects India and Australia's strong commitment to practical global cooperation to address major challenges like COVID-19. It is in line with India's increasing engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through her Indo-Pacific vision and Australia's Indo-Pacific approach and its Pacific Step-Up for the South Pacific. Both countries share the vision of an open, free, rules-based Indo-Pacific region supported by inclusive global and regional institutions that promote prosperous, stable and sovereign states on the basis of shared interests. Under the CSP, both countries decided to work together in the areas of mutual cooperation as per the following:

II. Enhancing Science, Technology and Research Collaboration

4. India and Australia recognise the importance of global cooperation for saving lives and managing the economic impacts of COVID-19, and future global challenges. We will share the benefits of scientific and medical research and development, strengthen healthcare systems, and reflect on the recommendations of the independent and comprehensive evaluation of the international health response to COVID-19 to improve capacity for global pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

5. India and Australia resolve to boost collaboration on science, technology and research to support their national COVID-19 responses. We have committed to a new phase of the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund to promote innovative solutions for responding to and treating COVID-19, as well as other jointly determined priorities, to be preceded by a one-off Special COVID-19 Collaboration Round in 2020.

6. India and Australia jointly decided to work cooperatively through multilateral, regional and plurilateral mechanisms to strengthen and diversify supply chains for critical health, technology and other goods and services. We will work together to strengthen international institutions to ensure they are inclusive and rules-based.

7. Both countries jointly decided to work together in the areas of digital economy, cyber security and critical and emerging technologies as identified by the **Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation**.

8. Australia conveyed that India could consider it as a stable, reliable and trusted supplier of high-quality mineral resources to India. Both sides jointly decided to diversify and expand the existing resources partnership. The **MoU on Cooperation in the field of Mining and Processing of Critical and Strategic Minerals** identifies specific areas where both sides will work together to meet the technological demands of the future economy. Both countries jointly decided to cooperate on new technologies for exploration and extraction of other minerals.

III. Maritime Cooperation for an Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific

9. Both countries share a view that many of the future challenges are likely to occur in, and emanate from, the maritime domain. We agreed to boost cooperation in the maritime domain as encapsulated in our **Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**. Our enhanced arrangements will facilitate deeper engagement between our two countries including maritime domain awareness, and expanded linkages between our maritime agencies.

10. Both India and Australia are committed to work together with partners and relevant regional organisations across the Indo-Pacific, including ASEAN, to enhance capacity for sustainable management of marine resources and challenge in maritime domains. In this regard, Australia expressed support for India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) which will promote better coordination and cooperation among the countries in the region on maritime related issues.

11. Both sides agreed to share technologies and resources to support the health and sustainability of oceans and water resources, including through regional institutions. They also concurred to build on existing commitments to combat marine litter and single-use plastic waste, and target Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

IV. Defence Cooperation

12. Both sides agreed to continue to deepen and broaden defence cooperation by enhancing the scope and complexity of their military exercises and engagement activities to develop new ways to address shared security challenges. Both sides agreed to increase military inter-operability through defence exercises through their Arrangement concerning Mutual Logistics Support (MLSA). It was agreed that the **Implementing Arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science and Technology to the MoU on Defence Cooperation** provides a framework for growing collaboration between the defence science and technology research organisations of both countries.

V. Regional and Multilateral Cooperation

13. Both India and Australia share a vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region to support the freedom of navigation, over-flight and peaceful and cooperative use of the seas by adherence of all nations to international law including the

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and peaceful resolution of disputes rather than through unilateral or coercive actions.

14. Both sides share a commitment to supporting a strong and resilient regional architecture, with ASEAN at its centre. Both countries agreed to continue to work with the East Asia Summit (EAS) and other ASEAN-led institutions; the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM Plus), Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to realise our long-term objectives for the region. Both sides committed to continue to work through plurilateral and trilateral mechanisms as mutually agreed.

15. Both sides commit to continue to work together through various plurilateral mechanisms, including trilateral meetings with Japan, trilateral meetings with Indonesia and consultations on COVID-19 with Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Vietnam and the United States. They welcomed the inaugural Quad ministerial meeting with Japan and the United States in September 2019, and reaffirmed their commitment to ongoing Quad consultations.

16. Both sides recognised the importance of the prosperity and security of the South Pacific and will exchange views on their respective approaches to the South Pacific region under Australia's Pacific Step Up and India's Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC), with a view to cooperate in the region.

17. Both sides reiterated their support for continued bilateral civil nuclear cooperation and their commitment to further strengthen global non-proliferation. Australia expressed its strong support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

VI. Terrorism

18. Recognising that terrorism remains a threat to peace and stability in our region, both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and stressed that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever. Consistent with resolutions of the United Nations and the 2015 G20 Statement on the Fight against Terrorism, both sides support a comprehensive approach in combating terrorism, including by countering violent extremism, preventing radicalisation to terrorism, stemming recruitment, preventing the movement of terrorists including Foreign Terrorist Fighters, disruption of financial support to terrorists, countering incitement to commit terrorist acts and facilitating the investigation and prosecution of terrorist acts. Both sides reiterate our resolve to work with internet companies to strengthen transparency to prevent online terrorist activity consistent with the G20 Osaka Leaders agreement on Preventing Exploitation of the Internet for Terrorism and Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism.

19. Both sides will also assess and address potential risks associated with virtual assets and new financial technologies that may be abused for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing and take steps to ensure that such virtual assets service providers are subject to Anti-Money Laundering/Countering Financing for Terrorism (AML/CFT) regulations. Both sides called for early adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

VII. Economic Cooperation: A More Prosperous Shared Future

20. The two sides committed to encourage expanded trade and investment flows to the benefit of both the economies. In view of the remarkable growth in the trading relationship between India and Australia, both sides decided to re-engage on a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), while suitably considering earlier bilateral discussions, where a mutually agreed way forward can be found.

21. Both sides discussed the issue of taxation of offshore income of Indian firms through the use of the India-Australia Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and sought early resolution of the issue.

22. Both countries committed to work closely together on our approach to international economic issues through the G20 and in that context, Australia welcomed India's hosting of the G20 in 2022.

23. Both sides share a common commitment to the rules-based multilateral trading system and committed to work together to protect and shape the rules that promote economic growth, development, trade liberalisation and open markets in accordance with the Preamble of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO). This includes reforming and strengthening the WTO, while preserving its fundamental principles so that it continues to remain relevant to the needs of all WTO Members.

24. Both sides expressed their interest in ensuring that Australian businesses are aware of opportunities through India's "Make in India" program and the Smart Cities initiatives, and that Indian companies are aware of investment projects in Australia.

25. Both countries also jointly decided to continue to raise awareness among Australian investors and Superannuation Funds of opportunities in India's infrastructure sector under the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

26. India and Australia jointly decided to explore the possibility of launching the Indian RuPay Card in Australia.

VIII. Innovation & Entrepreneurship

27. In this context, both sides committed to continue fostering collaboration between entrepreneurs, developing innovative products and promoting start-ups and incubation centres. Both sides committed to enhance cooperation in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector and decided that major industries of both countries should endeavour to integrate the SME/MSMEs of the other country into their supply chains, thereby diversifying bilateral trade. Both countries jointly decided to take forward SME/MSME cooperation including through the Australia India Business Exchange program.

IX. Agriculture Cooperation and Water Resources Management

28. Agriculture is an important pillar of the Australian and Indian economies with shared challenges and climactic conditions. Recognising the long history of collaboration in agricultural research, education, development and capacity building, it was jointly decided to continue building on our mutually beneficial agriculture relationship including through exploring the development of a partnership on grains management and logistics to reduce post-harvest losses, rationalise costs and ensure farmer income is not affected by supply chain disruptions (particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic).

29. Both countries noted that on market access issues, some progress has been made and they demonstrated their strong commitment to continue the negotiations.

30. Water security is a critical challenge for both countries and it was jointly decided to deepen policy and technical cooperation on mutually agreed activities to improve water management and sustainable economic development through the **Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Water Resources Management**.

X. Education, Culture, Tourism and People-to-People Ties

31. Education, research and skills are a central component of the relationship. Both sides noted they underpin the progress and growth trajectories of our nations, and the exchange of students and academics between our countries generates valuable people-to-people links. We agree to continue efforts to expand our partnership in these areas, including to deepen research collaboration. We will work together to support the development of education campuses in each other's countries.

32. As India continues its ambitious skills reform agenda, we have concluded a new **Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training** to forge new bonds of cooperation in policy development, program delivery and information exchange.

Tourism

33. Building on the 2014 bilateral MOU on cooperation in the field of tourism, both sides jointly decided to renew the MOU in order to identify opportunities to strengthen, deepen and broaden cooperation in the travel, tourism and aviation sector.

Parliamentary Cooperation

34. Both sides noted the importance of inter-parliamentary interaction as a valuable component of their bilateral relations.

People-to-People Connections

35. The expanding linkages between our people are enriching all aspects of bilateral ties. The Indian diaspora in Australia is now the fastest-growing large diaspora. In recognition of the growing contribution of Indian-Australians to the bilateral relationship, we will continue to work to deepen diaspora and community-level contact.

36. Both countries agreed to hold a senior-level dialogue to discuss India's proposed draft Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement, which outlines ways to cooperate on the prevention of illegal migration, people smuggling and trafficking in human beings and is also designed to facilitate mobility of students, academics and researchers and migration for professional and economic reasons.

XI. Support in UN and International Bodies

Reformed Multilateralism

37. Australia reiterated its support for India's candidacy for permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council (UNSC) and India's candidature for a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council for the 2021-22 term.

38. Australia welcomes the International Energy Agency (IEA)'s strategic partnership with India, and looks forward to continuing to work closely on building stronger ties between India and the IEA community.

Energy and Environment

39. India and Australia jointly decided to progress their Energy Dialogue, which will further cooperation in areas such as pumped hydro storage, cost-effective battery technologies, hydrogen and coal gasification, adoption of clean energy technology, fly ash management technologies, and solar forecasting and scheduling. Both countries committed to continue to collaborate on climate change, energy security and other issues of importance to the region and wider world, especially through the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Australia is proud to be a founding member of both organisations.

XII. Public Administration and Governance

40. India and Australia are proud, diverse and multicultural democracies. Both nations have similar systems of governance founded on robust and accountable public institutions. In this regard, both sides committed to work together in the field of public administration to exchange knowledge in areas of mutual interest through an **Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the field of Public Administration and Governance Reforms.**

41. Recalling the celebrations of his 150th anniversary, both leaders paid tribute to the lasting legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of non-violence and harmony.

XIII. Implementation

42. To provide oversight of the CSP and to deepen economic and strategic cooperation into the future, India and Australia affirm their desire to increase the frequency of Prime Ministerial contact through reciprocal bilateral visits and annual meetings in the margins of international events.

43. To pursue CSP, our Foreign and Defence Ministers will meet in a '2+2' format to discuss strategic issues at least every two years.
44. Both countries also jointly decided to continue their regular interactions under the **Foreign Ministers Framework Dialogue (FMFD)**.
45. Both sides jointly decided to continue regular meetings of the annual Australia-India Joint Ministerial Commission to enhance trade and investment relations between the two countries.
46. India and Australia reiterated their commitment to enhance cooperation under the annual Australia-India '**Energy Dialogue**.'
47. Both countries also jointly decided to use the existing '**Consular Dialogue**' Mechanism to address the entire gamut of consular matters.
48. Both sides jointly decided to enhance their partnership in the domain of education through the **Australia-India Education Council**.
49. The Virtual Summit is yet another milestone in furthering the longstanding, deep and cooperative ties between India and Australia. The list of the joint declarations announced and MoUs/Arrangements signed, during the Virtual Summit is enclosed at the Annexure.

New Delhi and Canberra, 04 June 2020

Annexure

1. Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Republic of India and Australia
2. Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
3. Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation.
4. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Mining and Processing of Critical and Strategic Minerals.
5. Arrangement concerning Mutual Logistics Support (MLSA).
6. Implementing Arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science and Technology to the MoU on Defence Cooperation.
7. Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation in the field of Public Administration and Governance Reforms-
8. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training.
9. Memorandum of Understanding on Water Resources Management.
