

**SPEECH OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE, FORMER  
PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE INAUGURATION OF  
THE 7TH ITERATION OF INDIAN INTERNATIONAL  
MODEL UNITED NATIONS (IIMUN) (THROUGH VIDEO  
CONFERENCING)**

I am delighted to be addressing this gathering today, of youth from across the world, who have converged together to symbolise that the world is indeed a **global village**.

Dear Friends,

2. It is heartening to learn that Indian International Model United Nation is an organization run by 26,000 youngsters of the nation. India is currently in the phase of demographic dividend and it is heartening to see our young inheritors already stepping into the shoes of the older generation. What makes me the happiest is that IIMUN is run entirely by young people between the age bracket 16-26 years. They put together 160 annual conferences in as many cities in India apart from in 22 countries across the globe. I have always believed that

the youth is the future of our country and young people, such as you, have the ability to revolutionize societies and Nations. As Mahatma Gandhi always said and I quote - ***“In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”***

3. It is indeed the case given that I am addressing this gathering from across the nation through a video conferencing session. In our generation, who would have thought that a distance of 1500 km could be traversed in such an innovative way. Technology has given us wings today. This is my first brush with a live video conferencing session after demitting the Office of President of India. I firmly believe that the electronic revolution around the world and the inter-connectedness of networks has indeed recreated the world as a global village.

4. As they say, age should not be a barrier to learn new things. And I am happy today for staying abreast with the technology and its constant evolution. And I wish to

continue to foster the young and lend them every feasible voice and support to help them grow and take India ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Indian youth today is hyper-aware about the activities around the world, thanks to the advent of Internet and the world-wide-web. This awareness has led to a demand generation, whereby the young demand and deserve a global education and international exposure. Organisations like IIMUN which have expanded their reach across the length and breadth of the country can take up this challenge and better equip the new generation of ideas to shape this global village into an ideal ecosystem.

6. Youth in the age group of 15-35 years dominate the demography of India. Unlike older generations, our youth today have an array of choices before them. There is an information explosion all around them. They are assertive.

It is, therefore, important for India to provide them with opportunities that channel their immense talents, capacities and energies into nation-building and creates a better living environment for everyone.

7. I am glad to learn that what was once considered to be an elitist classroom activity has today become accessible to everyone across the country and now slowly the globe. From Agartala to Ahmedabad, Srinagar to Kanyakumari & Lordz to Cairo, the work of IIMUN to enhance global citizenship in the Indian way, is commendable.

Dear Students,

8. I believe that our country has a rich heritage of celebrating diversity. We must build on that heritage to truly realise a multicultural global village based on the overarching principle of **Universalism**. This history that I talk about is well-elucidated in Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's "**Nationalism in India**" where he talks about how India, and I quote "***has tried to make an adjustment of races, to acknowledge the real differences between***

***them where these exist, and yet seek for some basis of unity.***” (Unquote) It is this unity that lay at the soul of his “**Vishva Bharti.**”

9. It is true that what India has always been, the world is becoming now by virtue of technological and scientific advancements. I feel what IIMUN is trying to achieve today is something that Rabindranath Tagore aspired for decades ago, that is, a basis of unity which is not just political but is reflected in every aspect of life. I quote him again:

***“If India can offer to the world her solution, it will be a contribution to humanity. [Because] There is only one history - the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one.”*** (Unquote)

Dear Friends,

10. This is the time, now more than ever, because distances are becoming smaller that people from all races, religions, countries, cultures are coming closer. Now is the

time to learn from each other and create a repository of knowledge for the progeny of mankind.

11. Whilst furthering the concept of '***Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam***' through the three-pronged strategy of **Comprehend. Congregate. Create.** I am told that the students will first be made to Comprehend the agendas being discussed, then they Congregate to debate possible solutions and then regardless of the committee they participated in, they Create. It is most satisfying to learn that every competition under the banner of IIMUN shall adopt one of the three goals - **Combating Climate Change, Food for All, Educate All.** And at the culmination of every conference, students will be given an elementary task to plant a plant or a tree, feed the needy or donate books, along parameters delineated by IIMUN. Only after this activity has been done, is the student awarded a certificate of participation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. These three goals are necessary for a worthwhile and sustainable development. It is also imperative that we do not treat them as mutually exclusive. At the same time, I would like to add that we cannot forget the role of technology in every aspect of our lives. Technology has played a key role in reaching to the citizens at a mass level and penetrating the grassroots level. It has impacted service delivery in not only urban areas but the remotest of villages as well. Every sector, from education to healthcare, has been a beneficiary of the advent of technology and internet of things. Years from now, there will be innovations that we cannot even imagine today. That is why, making our innovations sustainable and integrated with our societal challenges is the need of the hour.

Dear Friends,

13. While it is important to learn from our heritage, it is also pertinent to invent and innovate. Innovation is the stepping stone towards sustainable development in the

society. It is here that you as young citizens, with your idealism and a fresh world view step in to take charge of the future. It is your duty to carry forward the legacy of those before you, reach out to new ideas and provide them with a platform to learn and excel. Always remember, curious minds propel us forward, Dreamers change the world. Bring about that change. Be that Change.

14. Towards the end, I would like to congratulate all the participants of the conference and extend my heartiest wishes to IIMUN on successfully organising this prestigious educational extravaganza. I believe, to this day IIMUN has carried forward its mission and vision of bringing about real and sustainable change with poise and alacrity. I am glad to know that constructive debates, out of the box thinking and healthy competition is being fostered among the youth by this institution, which will go a long way in strengthening the foundation of the country and the global village that we are a part of. I congratulate



IIMUN, its Founder and all its Team members for their efforts and urge them to do its utmost to become a world class institution.

And with this, I am extremely happy to herald **INDIA'S INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT TO UNITE NATIONS (IIMUN)**

Thank You

Jai Hind