

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE  
AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE FDI ANNUAL WORLD DENTAL  
CONGRESS**

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I am indeed happy to be amidst this august gathering of distinguished dental professionals from over 138 countries, dental industry leaders, academicians and research scholars. At the outset, I would like to compliment the FDI World Dental Federation and Indian Dental Association for hosting this prestigious Annual World Dental Congress in India with the theme “a billion smiles welcome the world of dentistry”. Smile is a universal language, and I am glad to see that you all, who play a vital role in bringing real smiles on the face of billions of people, have come together to deliberate on the critical and emerging issues in the field of oral healthcare and dentistry.

2. Oral health is integral to overall health and globally it is a challenging issue. Oral diseases are becoming the leading health problems and attributed mainly to rapidly changing lifestyles, wide-spread use of tobacco and increased consumption of alcohol. Due to prevalence and incidence, oral diseases pose a major threat to public health. I compliment FDI for pursuing with the United Nations for recognition of oral diseases as a part of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases and cancer, on account of their sharing certain common risk factors. The initiatives of World Health Organization for a public consultation on sugars intake to reduce public health problems like obesity and dental caries, will also create a platform for overall oral healthcare management.

3. The standards of oral and dental health is challenging in this subcontinent. Most people are ignorant of the significance of oral health and its impact on general health. Oral diseases and tooth decay were considered a part of the ageing process and ignored by a large number of people. I understand that IDA, as the custodian of oral health in the country, has launched several programmes and projects to raise awareness of the need for maintaining oral health and hygiene amongst different segments of the society. What we need today in India is an Oral Health Revolution similar to the Green Revolution and White Revolution. I am happy to note that IDA has been in the forefront of this campaign to bring about an Oral Health Revolution in the country along with FDI and its partners.

4. Dental caries affect 60-80% of our children and periodontal (gum) disease affect nearly 90-95% of our population. I am glad that consistent with the global perspectives on Dental Caries, IDA has started a Child Dental Centre with the singular aim of preventing dental decay among children. The National Oral Health

Programme of IDA that combines preventive measures with emphasis on education to create oral health awareness among the various segments of the population is a laudable initiative.

5. Globally, oral cancer is one of the major health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and India is also facing the major challenge of treatment and prevention of this disease. Tobacco use is one of the major causes of oral cancer. Dentists often are the first to detect any pre-cancerous lesions in the mouth. I am informed that IDA has set up an Oral Cancer Foundation for early detection and treatment of oral cancer along with Tobacco Intervention Initiative for tobacco cessation. I understand that an Oral Cancer Registry has also been set up to register exclusively oral cancer cases. The initiatives taken by the IDA gives us the confidence that *the* tools devised for early detection of oral cancer and tobacco cessation will make significant contributions to oral healthcare management in the country.

6. I am told that FDI's global programme titled LIVE.LEARN.LAUGH of twice brushing with fluoride toothpaste implemented by IDA in selected districts in India has reported significant beneficial impact on oral health of school children. There is a need to sensitize school children about the basic needs of oral healthcare with an emphasis on general health. Regular dental check-up camps at schools, which IDA has been organizing, will spread awareness of oral health and hygiene. IDA must work out with the school authorities to reach the maximum number of schools for preventive oral healthcare amongst the school children.

7. Dentistry today has attained new levels of excellence. We are witnessing revolutionary changes in dental technology. The usage of information technology and digitalisation of patient records have given a new dimension to the oral healthcare. Latest technologies have significantly improved diagnostic quality, patient comfort and efficiency in dental care. Healthcare is under digital transformation and it is redefining virtually every aspect of clinical practice and related business activity. The consistent breakthroughs in the field of dental science have had their impact on the professional dentists contributing to enhanced quality of treatment. Advances in dental research are making dentistry a technology-driven discipline. In this dynamic world, one needs to update oneself by embracing such evolving technologies which will have extensive use in clinical practices. This congress will equip the participants about the latest technologies and best practices.

8. Evidence based and minimally invasive dentistry is in focus nowadays. In bridging the gap between research and dental practice, evidence based dentistry provides a single source of ground breaking issues in dentistry. In line with the advancements in dental technology, the spectrum of dental diseases has also been undergoing a change owing to the sedentary lifestyle in vogue today. The

growing awareness about diseases among the patients and their expectations bring a challenge before the professional capabilities of healthcare service providers. To meet these expectations, you need to devise methodology to deliver comfortable and affordable dental care to the community and adopt innovative procedures and technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. India's biggest strength in the coming years is going to be her demographic dividend. More than fifty percent of our population is under 25 and soon one fifth of the world's working population will be in India. We have set the target of skilling 500 million people by 2022. IDA must work out that how the demographic dividend can be utilized by skilling more number of people in the oral healthcare sector with a twin purpose of generating the employment as well as creating access of quality oral healthcare to over 1.2 billion population of this country.

10. India, with her population base, offers a great opportunity for business in the area of oral healthcare. Providing quality and affordable healthcare to the population is a formidable task. Government over the years has increased the allocation for health sector. The central government outlay for the health sector in the Twelfth Plan has been increased by 200% to Rs. 300,018 crore over the actual outlay of Rs. 99,491 crore in the Eleventh Plan. The process of rolling out universal health coverage has also been set in motion. This emphasis offers a huge business opportunity in India. I am sure, the mini global dental market on display here, will be of mutual benefit to exhibitor and the relevant stakeholders in India.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. We all know that prevention is better than cure. We need to develop a holistic model to address the preventive needs as well as the disease specific requirements. I am hopeful that the deliberations in this Congress by the mighty minds from across the globe will bring out a model for oral healthcare, which can meet the demands of the individuals and make the oral healthcare truly affordable and accessible.

12. Sharing of information and knowledge, exchange of expertise and experience are the hallmark of successful dental practice. This Congress provides such a global platform and I am sure you will utilize this opportunity to deliberate on the emerging issues of oral healthcare. I will eagerly look forward to the recommendations of this Congress. I wish the Annual World Dental Congress a success and wish all the delegates a pleasant and memorable stay in India.

Thank you.  
Jai Hind.