

Your Excellency Hon Justice Visram Aleem Alnashir,
Distinguished ICCR alumni,
Members of Academia,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening! Namaste. Jambo!

It gives me heartfelt pleasure to welcome you all to the celebration of the 77th Foundation Day of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, ICCR as it is popularly known across the world. My special gratitude to the Chief Guest Hon Justice Visram Aleem, who is representing Hon'ble Chief Justice of Kenya.

Today, we gather not merely to commemorate the foundation day of ICCR , but to celebrate a vision — a vision of connecting people, cultures, and ideas across borders. Since its establishment in 1950, ICCR has been at the forefront of India's cultural diplomacy, fostering mutual understanding and building enduring friendships between India and the world.

Friends,

India and Kenya share a long-standing, multifaceted partnership, rooted in historical ties, shared democratic values, and strong people-to-people connections. ICCR has played a pivotal role in deepening these bonds, particularly through education, cultural exchange, and intellectual engagement.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Kenya remains a key partner in ICCR's educational outreach. Under the India–Africa Maitri Scholarship Programme, 100 scholarship slots are allocated annually, for Kenyan students for undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral studies across a wide range of disciplines including engineering, sciences, humanities, arts, and commerce. In fact, the scholarships have been increased this year 80 to 100 due to the great

demand and success of this programme in Kenya. As we speak, the ICCR scholarship programme for 2026-27 is currently open for applications till 15 April.

In addition, ICCR also administers a couple of other scholarships. The Quad STEM Scholarship Programme offers 3 slots for Kenyan students to pursue B.Tech programmes in premier Indian institutions. The Lata Mangeshkar Scholarship provides 100 global slots for meritorious international students, including for Kenya. Scholarships are also offered under “Ayush” scheme for yoga studies.

These initiatives reflect India’s strong commitment to human capital development and capacity building in Kenya and across Africa. Kenyan students who study in India gain not only academic excellence but also lifelong cultural connections, and they continue to contribute meaningfully to Kenya’s growth and development.

Friends,

ICCR also promotes intellectual exchange through programmes such as the Academic Visitors Programme (AVP) and the Distinguished Visitors Programme (DVP). It has been our distinct honour to have Hon’ble Chief Justice of Kenya, Justice Martha Koome, visit India in 2023 under this programme. Such high-level exchanges play an important role in sharing best practices and deepening mutual understanding.

Culture remains at the heart of ICCR’s mission. Over the years, ICCR-facilitated cultural troupes have brought the vibrancy of Indian culture to Kenya. Performances during events such as Urafiki–Utsav and recent demonstration of Rajasthani folk dance by a ICCR sponsored cultural troupe “Balam Choto So” were warmly received and appreciated.

ICCR has also been instrumental in extending the outreach of yoga to people across the world. With the support of ICCR, Indian Embassies across the world organize International Day of Yoga every year. In Kenya, this is something that yoga enthusiasts look for every year. We

will be organizing the same this year as well on 21 June on a large scale. The High Commission's Yoga teacher under the aegis of ICCR conducts regular free Yoga classes in multiple batches 5 days a week, of which you are most welcome to enrol for. Some of his students will showcase advanced Yoga today.

I am also happy to share with you all that the High Commission plans to organize an Indian Film Festival at the Kenya Cultural Centre from 27th to 29th April 2026, showcasing the richness of Indian cinema. You all are most welcome to attend.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I encourage students, scholars, and institutions in Kenya to actively engage with ICCR programmes and take full advantage of the opportunities available.

Let us continue to build bridges of friendship, understanding, and cooperation — for a shared and prosperous future.

I thank the Chief Guest for his esteemed presence today. I also appreciate the presence of so many of ICCR alumni despite being a working day. Your presence is central to today's celebrations.

Asante sana! Thank you!