STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR ASOKE K. MUKERJI,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
ON AGENDA ITEM 116:
FOLLOW-UP TO THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ABOLITION OF THE
TRANS ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE
AT THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NEW YORK NOVEMBER 21, 2014
Mr President,

I would like to thank the Secretary General for his report under the agenda item 116: “Follow-up to the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.”

Mr. President,

The tragedy of transatlantic slave trade has been undeniably one of the most inhumane chapters in recorded human industry. This slave trade, which happened over a 400-year period, completely altered the socio-economic fabric of African society, the effects of which are still visible today. The legacy continues in the form of racism and prejudice which are an affront to human dignity.

We welcome, and are committed to continue to support, various activities and programmes undertaken by the Department of Public Information to commemorate the “International day of Remembrance” in March every year. Wide participation in these events should lead to changed attitudes with salutary consequences for our global society.

The International Decade for People of African Descent, which will start in 2015, will also provide an opportunity to showcase the most valuable contributions that enslaved people and their descendants have made to the societies that forced them into bondage.

It is important that there is regular and adequate financial allocation to the DPI in organizing these events. The international community has an obligation to build upon the positive momentum gained in 2014 and foster greater awareness of the ethical, political, socio-economic and cultural dimensions of this history and memory.

Mr. President,

We welcome the initiatives undertaken to implement paragraphs 101 and 102 of the Durban Declaration which are aimed at countering the legacy of slavery and contributing to the restoration of the dignity to the victims of slavery.
Through education and remembrance, we must build in future generations an understanding of the causes, consequences and lessons of slave trade so that the horrors of the past are not perpetuated through racism and prejudice.

We should aim to reach a broader audience by strengthening the involvement of academics and institutions of learning.

Mr. President,

The initiative to erect a permanent memorial at the United Nations headquarters is a fitting tribute to the millions of victims of slavery and slave trade. We welcome the selection "Ark of return" as the winning design for the memorial.

India is proud to be the lead contributor to the United Nations Trust Fund for Partnerships- permanent Memorial" with a contribution of US $ 260,000/- . Our contribution reflects our firm belief that the international community must honour those who were the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. While we had no part to play in that trade, we are willing to jointly shoulder the responsibility that the international community has for its remembrance. We are sure others will not be found wanting as well.

We are happy to cosponsor, as we have been doing since 2007, the resolution "Permanent memorial to and remembrance of the victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade".

I thank you, Mr. President.