

Welcome Remarks by High Commissioner Mr. B.N.Reddy
at the
Kathak Dance Group Performance by Ms. Surabhi Singh

[30 January 2018]

Thank you Dr. Deepti Joseph.

Mr. Otunba Olusegun Runseme, Director General, National Council for Arts and Culture representing H.E. Mr. Lai Mohammed, Hon'ble Minister of Information and Culture,

Excellencies,

Ladies & Gentlemen

I extend a very warm welcome to you all at this evening function – it is part of the celebrations of 70th Anniversary of India's Independence and to usher in 60 years of diplomatic engagement between India and Nigeria.

Nigeria and India are two large countries rich in their traditions and culture. Diversity is a pillar of strength that forges national unity and development. I am confident that the event such as the one today brings out the cultural affinity between our two countries, and convey a message of friendship at the people-to-people level.

This event also coincides with the launch of 2018 as Nigeria's Year of Breakthrough Culture by the National Council of Arts and Culture of Nigeria. The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) facilitated the visit of Ms. Surabhi Singh, a prominent Kathak exponent, to Nigeria. She presented two performances in Lagos

during the last two days, and she will be heading to Kano in the next leg of her cultural tour of Nigeria. We look forward to an enthralling performance of Kathak dance.

I am happy that we are launching a book 'The Beginning of Everything Colourful', by Mr. Onyeka Nwelue. Onyeka's simplicity and candour, coupled with a clear conscience and exceptionally perceptive skills, make the book an excellent reading. 'The Abyssinian Boy' and now the new book gives a well thought out portrayal of India from a unique perspective. A young and dynamic award-winning writer, cultural entrepreneur and filmmaker is here with us to make the beginning of India-Nigeria celebrations of 60 years of diplomatic engagement a 'colourful' one. I thank Onyeka for agreeing to join us at this celebration.

This evening also marks the beginning of a series of events to celebrate the States of India. I encourage you to look at the display of cultural artifacts of select Indian States at the entrance of the Auditorium. The Indian High Commission will present an event later this year together with the Indian Women's Association (IWA) and Indian Cultural Association (ICA), Abuja, dedicated to this theme

I once again thank the Director General of Nigeria's National Council for Arts and Culture for gracing this evening as the Chief Guest and also for sharing his vision of furthering cultural cooperation between Nigeria and India.

I thank you.
