

**ITEC Day, India House, 298 Mons Road Waterkloof, Pretoria 18 February  
2026  
(Remarks by High Commissioner)**

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Colleagues from Department of International Relations and Cooperation (**DIRCO**), The Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation for Artisan Skills (**GMCOS**), esteemed ITEC alumni, distinguished guests, colleagues and senior officials from the Ministries and Institutes who partner in ITEC programme, senior officials from The South African National Defence Force (**SANDF**), Friends of India,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Good afternoon.

It is with immense pleasure and pride that I stand before you and welcome you to the ITEC Day celebration in the Republic of South Africa.

The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation is one of the flagship programmes of India, which embodies spirit of cooperation and empowerment. ITEC programme was instituted on September 15, 1964, one of the oldest programmes of developmental aid from Ministry of External Affairs of India. ITEC programme aims to promote collaborative and mutually respectful relationships through training and capacity building. It is sharing India's developmental journey and upholds the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kudumbakom - the world is our family and sharing India's knowledge and experience with the world and providing transformative opportunities through capacity building.

Each year, under ITEC, India offers fully funded in person training programmes to government officials, employees from public and private sector, training through more than 100 eminent institutions which includes premier institutions like Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), Indian Institutes of Management (IIM), Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT), National Academy of Taxes, National Human Rights Commission, National

Security Guard, etc. Additionally, we offer special courses for defence personnel in esteemed Army institutions such as the National Defence College, Defence Services Staff College, and the College of Defence Management.

More than 160 countries, 200 plus courses, in various disciplines like public administration, Governance, rural development, management, agriculture, medicine, forensics, woman leadership, entrepreneurship, banking, renewable energy, yoga, information technology, robotics, artificial intelligence, disaster management, and many more including training by tailor made programmes and customised skill development courses are offered under the ITEC programme.

We can proudly claim that ITEC programme has more than 2,50,000 beneficiaries from Asia, Africa, Latin America, East Europe, Island countries in Caribbean and Pacific region.

Excellencies,

India and African countries share same developmental challenges as a result of our overlapping histories of colonialism. ITEC programme India's commitment to South South cooperation. ITEC is a demand driven and response oriented programme which fully aligns with the developmental priorities of partner countries.

ITEC programme continues to strengthen the bonds of friendship between India and South Africa. We have a long history in South Africa of contributing to capacity building and resource development.

Under ITEC programme, in current FY 2025-26, **54** (36-Civillian & 18-Defence), in FY 2024-25, **25** (19-Civillian & 06 Defence), and in FY 2023-24, **58** (45-Civilian & 13-Defence) Officials of The Republic of South Africa, have been to India to enhance their technical or other skills, which in turn helps them in their own career development and ultimately contributes to the overall institutional advancements of the Government of South Africa.

Fifteen (15) participants had the distinct honour of travelling to India to undertake the prestigious ITEC Special Training Programme for Yoga Trainers – Iteration I. The programme was conducted at the renowned Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (S-VYASA), Bengaluru, from 05 January to 31 January 2026. Notably, seven (07) South African participants formed part of this distinguished cohort. Their participation underscores the strengthening educational and cultural ties between South Africa and India, and reflects the growing commitment to wellness diplomacy and professional capacity-building through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme.

South African National Defence Force personnel have been benefitting from ITEC Programme in various Training Institutes and Military Colleges in India. In the last 5 years, over 70 personnel from Defence have been trained in India. The last calendar year saw 17 members proceeding to India for professional military training. While the higher leadership and strategic programs like National Defence College at New Delhi and Defence Services Staff College saw continued participation over one year curriculum, there were many firsts as regards to professional training in niche domains is concerned.

Training of South African Airforce Pilots to be the Qualified Flying Instructors was a major highlight in 2025. While one Officer graduated in September 2025 from Indian Air Force Flying Instructors School Tambaram near Chennai, two officers are currently undergoing the course to be Instructors.

Furthermore, Indian Navy conducted the prestigious qualifying course for the Submarine Commanding Officers of South African Navy at Visakhapatnam, the first for a friendly Foreign Navy. A team from Indian Navy also conducted Submarine Operational Sea Training at Simon's Town for the crew of South African Navy Submarine Manthatisi in June last year. One year specialist training courses in Communications, Navigation and Gunnery & Missile Technology were also subscribed to by South African Navy after a gap of over 10 years. Training Cooperation is likely to be further strengthened in coming years with such unique opportunities

directly helping the South African National Defence Force in capacity building and capability enhancement.

Apart from organizing training programmes, ITEC also covers deputation of experts abroad, gifting of equipments, feasibility studies, consultancy services and humanitarian assistance in disaster relief.

ITEC has adapted to the changing times by incorporating e-courses in tune with the digital innovation and available technology so that capacity building programmes were uninterrupted even during COVID pandemic. Apart from imparting training and skill development, ITEC provides new perspectives and valuable networks. As digital innovation is going to have a great impact on our future lives, ITEC is including programmes in cutting edge technology like AI, Robotics, nano technology.

India also provides India-Africa Maitri or Friendship Scholarship under ICCR for South Africa students. For 22 slots, we get hundreds of applications and it is always filled up. Increasing number of slots is under consideration. We are confident that these scholars return to South Africa highly skilled, which serves the purpose of development and nation building.

Any programme for capacity building is made successful with dedicated participation from people. I take immense pleasure to thank all the ITEC alumni present here today. I am sure we can listen to some of their experiences today.

My heartfelt gratitude to the Republic of South Africa, partner Ministries and academic institutions and most importantly ITEC students for making ITEC programme a great success.

Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation for Artisan Skills (GMCoS) in South Africa was officially opened in Pretoria on 28 October 2021. The Centre, set up with the collaboration of Hindustan Machine Tools International (HMTI) offers technical expertise, training material, machines and equipment. GMCoS is instrumental in providing training to students from South Africa

and they were employed in various sectors after completing the skill development training in GMCoS.

Keeping with the times, India has developed more capacities and strengths in the last decade which is mainly technology related and which is more people centric. I believe more south Africans will use the ITEC initiative wherein we will share our best practises and knowledge for our mutual benefit.

Thank you!

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