

Address by Minister of State for External Affairs
Shri E. Ahamed at the Silver Jubilee Celebrations and Valedictory
Function for the IFS Probationers of 2009 batch at FSI on
Wednesday, June 29, 2011

Dean, Foreign Service Institute, Shri Ajay Choudhry
Members of Association of Indian Dipomats
Probationers of the 2009 and 2010 Batches
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted to be here again with all of you today for the Silver Jubilee celebrations and the valedictory function of Probationers of the 2009 batch of the Indian Foreign Service. I have had the opportunity to interact with you on a couple of occasions this year.

2. I congratulate the probationers of 2009 batch for successfully completing the training programme of the Indian Foreign Service. It is a matter of pride for me to present the first External Affairs Minister Gold Medal for Best Probationer which has been introduced this year. All of you should take pride in the fact that after having been selected through a rigorous selection process and the people of India have reposed their faith in you to represent the country. I understand that you have worked hard and put in your best efforts at the training programme. Over the last year and a half all of you have attended a diverse and rigorous training regimen which includes different modules exposing you to the functioning of the Ministry of External Affairs, lectures on a wide range of issues related to diplomacy and international relations and attachments with several think tanks, organisations and institutions in India. You have also extensively travelled within India to understand the diversity of the country and in the neighbourhood for orientation visits in Maldives, Nepal and Myanmar. I am happy to note that the training programme for the Foreign Service probationers has evolved and improved

qualitatively over the years to meet the training requirements of Foreign Service officers.

3. You have joined the Foreign Service at an important phase for Indian diplomacy. India buoyed by its rapid and sustainable economic growth is seeking to play a role commensurate with its size and destiny. We have emerged as a major player in International and regional affairs. India is an acknowledged leader in forums like the Non-Aligned Movement and other groupings of developing countries. We have also recently joined the UNSC as the non-permanent member and hope to join the Security Council as permanent members in the near future.

4. I have been personally associated with the Ministry for the last several years and I can say with confidence that we have one of the most competent and professional Foreign Services in the world. Our diplomats have played a commendable role in enhancing India's global image and promoting our interests.

5. As you leave the academy as young Foreign Service officers, let me assure you can look forward to an exciting and a challenging professional career. Diplomats today work in an increasingly challenging environment having to deal with a range of complex issues. Your training would have exposed you to many of these specialised issues like International Trade and Finance, Terrorism, Climate Change, Energy Security, social challenges, etc. Given the complexities, diplomats need to be versatile, adaptable and have in good measure qualities like modesty, loyalty, patience and also deep understanding of various issues.

6. The Foreign Service career will provide you ample of opportunities for career growth and also place a very important responsibility on you to represent and contribute towards the development of India. All of you should constantly strive to update your skills and take up the challenges with a positive and open mind. I have also seen and felt that at times our diplomats work in some of the most difficult and trying circumstances and living conditions, often risking their lives. They also make several sacrifices on the personal front. However, despite these difficulties

which you may face at times the service will provide you great opportunities and tremendous amount of job satisfaction.

7. The Foreign Service Institute established in 1986 is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year. The Silver Jubilee commemorative issue of the Institute released today traces the history and achievements of the Institute over the past 25 years. FSI has diversified its activities to include courses for staff and officers at all levels of the Ministry of External Affairs, officers from other civil services and programmes for foreign diplomats. I have seen the Institute growing over the years and have put in my best efforts as the Minister in charge to strengthen its infrastructure. I am confident in the coming years the Institute will further augment its resources to meet the growing training needs of the Foreign Service.

8. Let me assure all of you that Government of India remains fully aware and sensitive to the needs of Foreign Service officers and our missions abroad. Over the last few years the Ministry has considerably strengthened the infrastructure and facilities in the Missions abroad. We have opened several new missions and posts, new chanceries and residential buildings have been built and several are under construction. Information technology and modern tools of communication are being widely used. The Foreign Service is also being expanded to meet the growing manpower needs of Indian diplomacy.

9. I take this opportunity to wish all of you all success for your careers as you embark upon this exciting journey as Indian Diplomats in the 21st century.

Thank You.