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Shri Nitin Gadkari addresses the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in Nairobi says Blue Economy a critical aspect of India's economic development agenda

He also meets Kenyan Transport Minister, offered cooperation for building ships, coast guard vessels and fishing trawlers

Ministers say Africa could be a good market for Indian electric vehicles and two-wheelers

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation has said that India endorses the growth of the Blue Economy in a sustainable, inclusive and people centred manner through the framework of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**. He said the Blue Economy remains a critical aspect of India's economic development agenda, and more than 95% of our trade is being carried on by sea. The Minister was speaking at the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference in Nairobi today. Kenya is hosting the two day conference with Canada and Japan as co-hosts.

Emphasizing the importance that India lays on developing its maritime resources Shri Gadkari said that our National Vision in this regard is clearly articulated in the term "SAGAR"- Security and Growth for All in the Region coined by our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He said that Prime Minister says that the Blue Chakra of India's national flag represents the potential of the Blue Economy, and gave assurance that the Ministry of Shipping, Government of India is committed to realising its full potential.

Shri Gadkari talked about the government's ambitious Sagarmala Programme and how it is poised to revolutionize maritime logistics and port led developments in India. He said the programme has identified 600 plus projects entailing a huge investment of \$120 billion (around Rs 8 lakh crore) by 2020. This in turn would save India \$6 billion per annum in logistics costs besides creating 10 million new jobs and boosting port capacity by 800 Million Metric Tonne per Annum (MMTPA) to an overall 3500 MMTPA. Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) are being developed with a proposed investment of \$ 150 Million per location under the programme. These will become a microcosm of the blue economy, with the growth of industries and townships that depend on the sea and contribute to global trade through sea connectivity. He further informed that the programme is also focussing on the development of coastal communities and people through skill gap analysis, skill development centres to train coastal communities in the sustainable use of ocean resources, modern fishing techniques and coastal tourism. An investment of \$1.10 Bn is planned across various coastal districts in India for this purpose. In addition to this, several green initiatives are also being taken in the coastal regions like 31 MW of captive solar power generation being planned at various ports, installation of oil spill response facilities and study to identify ways to re-use waste water at ports.

Talking about the important role of the private sector for sustainable growth Shri Gadkari said the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), took lead in 2016-2017 by establishing a taskforce to develop a business model on India's engagement in the blue economy sector.

Shri Gadkari also held discussions with Mr James Wainaina Macharia, the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary (Minister) Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Development, during which he offered India's cooperation to Kenya for ship-building, vessels for coast guard, fishing trawlers. He invited the Kenyan Minister to visit India and see the expertise of Cochin Shipyard Ltd in building ships, which would be required by the newly established Coast Guard of Kenya, and also fishing trawlers for deep sea fishing.

Shri Gadkari further highlighted the development of electric cars and vehicles in India which could have market in Kenya. He also offered to encourage Indian car manufacturers to set up assembly plants in Kenya for the African market.

The Kenyan Minister offered cooperation to India for activating ship building in Kenya. He further suggested that the bilateral cooperation could extend beyond blue economy to other areas. He highlighted the existing medical tourism from his country to India and said enhancing direct flights would encourage this business for mutual benefit. He further suggested that given the strength of two wheeler manufacturing in India, and the big market for it in Kenya and rest of Africa, this could be a good investment opportunity for Indian companies.

The Kenyan Minister said he looked forward to visiting India. Official level meetings are to be organised between the two countries to prepare an agenda for Minister level meeting later in India.

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