**Delhi: British Council Reception**

It’s great to be back in India.

I was here about this time last year, when I was still Secretary of State for Culture.

And I made a flying visit in September, stopping off right here at the British Council.

It hasn’t all been one-way traffic.

In March I was honoured to join Finance Minister Jaitley in unveiling a statue of Ghandi in Parliament Square.

Although I think most of the crowd was there to see Amitabh Bachchan!

And last month we welcomed Prime Minister Modi to London.

More than 60,000 people turned out to see him at Wembley.

That’s something most British politicians can only dream of!

But the visit wasn’t just about playing to stadiums!

During the visit, we agreed that 2016 would be the first ever UK-India Year of Education Research and Innovation.

And this afternoon I was delighted to formally launch the year alongside Minister for Human Resources and Development Smriti Irani.

The UK and India have a long history of partnerships in education.

This year-long campaign will highlight the strength and mutual benefits of those ties, and help us to build new ones.

There are plenty of opportunities to work together on digital-enabled training initiatives…

…to improve co-operation between our higher education institutions…

…and to increase mobility of faculty and students between our nations.

And over the course of 2016, more than 25 events will help us do just that.

As part of the year of Education, we will also extend the formal UK-India Relationship in Education Research and Innovation for another five years.

Over the past decade this relationship seen the introduction of bilateral programmes such as the UK-India Education and Research Initiative.

So far it has supported over a thousand partnerships between UK and India, benefitting 35,000 academics.

By extending the relationship for another five years, thousands more will benefit in many different ways.

For each of the next five years we will also be investing £50 million in promoting science partnerships between our countries.

Allocated through the Newton Bhaba fund, with match funding from Indian partners, the money will support PhD partnerships, researcher mobility schemes, fellowships for post‐doctoral researchers and technical training.

With initiatives like this, the research ties between India and the UK are getting stronger and stronger.

So I’m delighted to announce that the UK will be the country partner for the Technology Summit here in Delhi next October.

Many thanks to the Department of Science and Technology and the Confederation of India Industry for helping to make that happen.

I’m sure it’s going to be a great event.

But of course it’s not just researchers who are travelling between India and the UK.

For well over a century, India’s brightest young minds have been coming to British universities to study.

Oxford and Cambridge can boast three Indian Prime Ministers between them – that’s almost a quarter of them!

And over the past decade alone, 160,000 Indian undergraduates and postgraduates have come to study right across the UK.

You can’t really blame them!

The UK is home to 30 of the world’s top 200 universities, many of whom are represented here tonight.

A degree from a top UK university is recognised around the world has a badge of honour, a passport to success.

Indian graduates who study in the UK earn, on average, three times as much as those who stay behind.

It’s not about a brain drain, it’s about giving today’s young Indians the world-class skills they need in order to build India’s future.

And they are most welcome in the UK.

There is no cap on the number of Indian students who can come.

Almost 90 per cent of applicants get a tier four student visa.

And they can work in the UK while they study – full-time during the holidays, and for up to six years afterwards if they secure a graduate-level job.

We want to give more young Indians the opportunity to study in the UK.

That’s why the UK’s flagship international scholarship programme, the Chevening programme, has quadrupled its budget for India.

It’s now the largest of its kind anywhere in the world.

And today I’m delighted to announce the launch of new Chevening Fellowship Programmes in financial services, clean energy and health.

On top of this, from September next year we’re launching nearly 300 new GREAT scholarships.

These range in value from £5,000 to 3£5,000, and will support undergraduates and postgraduates at more than 40 leading UK universities.

Combined with the Commonwealth and Charles Wallace scholarships, these two programmes mean that the UK now has the largest scholarship scheme India has ever seen.

But, just as the flow of politicians has not been a one-way affair, we also want to see more British students coming to India.

So today I can announce that we have signed an agreement for 1,000 internships for UK students in India with TCS.

The first of them will arrive in the summer.

We have also recently selected 10 Indian universities to host UK students on short courses next summer.

They’ll be studying everything from international relations to Indian history and politics.

It’s all part of our Generation UK-India programme, which aims to bring up to 25,000 British students to India over the next five years.

I also greatly welcome the launch next month in Gurgaon of the first of a series of British Education Centres in India.

It will provide world class British-designed facilities to deliver British education here in India with a plan to open 10 centres over the next three years.

Over the past 10 years, the education relationship between India and the UK has changed beyond recognition.

It has grown deeper.

It has grown wider.

But above all it has grown stronger.

After this fascinating year for UK-Indian relations, it’s good time to look back at what we have achieved.

To take stock.

And it’s also a good time to think and talk about what we can still achieve together.

The UK and India are two countries with a shared past and a exciting future.

And education is at the forefront of making that future as bright as it can be.

Thank you.