Honourable Vice President, Honourable guests, Ladies and Gentlemen…

We are so grateful that you have honoured us with your presence today, and for your powerful words of support and encouragement.

When we decided to hold the Union World Conference in Hyderabad back in 2017, the scale of the Indian government’s ambition and commitment was only just becoming apparent.

The National Strategic Plan to End TB 2017-2025 set out a bold and unprecedented vision, backed by a detailed implementation plan, with full political, administrative and financial commitment, involving all ministries and departments, all 36 State and Union Territory governments, and engaging with private, non-profit and community sectors.

The progress you have achieved already is impressive, and sets the pace for other countries to follow. As our President said, we at The Union are proud to be partnering with you in this noble enterprise.

We are deeply honoured by your support for this conference, the first to be held in India since 1957. So in some ways this conference is long overdue, but I believe it is perfect timing as India is now leading the way on TB and lung health.

I must also pay tribute to our hosts and partners here in Hyderabad, without whom this conference would not be possible.
Above all we give special thanks to Mr Venkateshwarlu, President of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry, to Gary Khan and the Hyderabad Convention Visitor Bureau, and to all the staff here at the Convention Centre who have worked so hard to make this conference a success.

I am confident that this will lay the foundations for a strong and lasting partnership.

As a token of respect to our honourable guests, we would like to present traditional gifts.