

## **Remarks by Ambassador on World Hindi Day**

Respected Mr. Erulan Zhienbayev, Principal, Mahatma Gandhi School, Ms. Akmaral Kainazarova, Director, Center for Indian Classical Dances in Almaty, distinguished guests, dear friends and students.

I am immensely pleased that the World Hindi Day is being celebrated today in the premises of Mahatma Gandhi School. I heartily congratulate you on this occasion.

Hindi is the most popular language in India. It is the mother tongue of over 400 million Indians. Besides India, it is also spoken in many other countries. In South Asia, most people can speak and understand Hindi and often use it as a link language.

In other parts of the world too, wherever there are people of South Asian origin, Hindi is widely spoken. According to estimates, Hindi is either the third or the fourth most spoken language in the World. Besides Indians, people from other countries, who have a keen interest in Indology, also learn Hindi. This allows them to better understand the Indian culture.

Hindi is a pleasant and easy to learn language. Whoever learns it once, he starts liking it forever. I am extremely glad that Hindi is being regularly taught in Kazakhstan in Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and Center for Indian Classical Dances in Almaty. For few years, it was also taught in the Eurasian National University. Several students from Kazakhstan have also gone and studied Hindi at Central Hindi Institute in India. Government of India provides scholarship for this purpose.

This year, with the help of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, we are going to publish first Hindi-Kazakh-Hindi dictionary. This will help students in India to learn Kazakh language and students in Kazakh to learn Hindi language. You may be surprised to know that there are lots of common words in Hindi and Kazakh languages. We have found some 200 such common words. Commonness of the words in the two languages, is an evidence of our close historical and cultural relations. Two such words, Tej Kadam, became the title of the Joint Statement issued during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Kazakhstan.

Taking into account the increasing popularity of Hindi, a World Hindi Secretariat was established in Mauritius in 2008 with the objective of promoting Hindi as an International language. Last year in September 2015, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference in Bhopal. Representatives from 39 countries, besides India, participated in the Conference. They recommended making Hindi as an Official language of the United Nations. We will continue to make efforts in this direction.

I am pleased that the World Hindi Day is being celebrated in Kazakhstan for last several years. I thank the Centre for Indian Classical Dances to take the lead in organizing the World Hindi Day this year and Mr. Erulan Zhienbayev, Principal, Mahatma Gandhi School for offering the premises for the event. I thank you all for joining in the celebration.