**High Commissioner Dr. Rajesh Ranjan’s speech on the occasion of Aran-getram of Ms. Megha Mary Mathew on 30 March 2019**

* **Mrs. Ela Gandhi**
* **Ambassador of the United States of America**
* **Ambassador of Turkey**
* **Ambassador of the Republic of Angola**
* **Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil**
* **Other Diplomatic Corps**
* **Mr. Joseph Puvimanasinghe**
* **Mr. Julian Mathew**

**High Commissioner Dr. Rajesh Ranjan’s speech on the occasion of Arangetram of Ms. Megha Mary Mathew on 30 March 2019**

* It is a joy for me to be among all of you for this special occasion. I am deeply grateful to the **Mr. Julian Mathew** for inviting me to attend Aran-getram and share my thoughts with you.
* Since my arrival in Botswana I have witnessed a very unique thing i.e. cultural activities performed by our fellow citizens and diaspora. I feel very proud and touched that Indian diaspora is very well connected with the roots of Indian culture and they are passing the baton to the youngsters through various activities to inculcate knowledge about the Indian culture so that our ancient tradition of India could continue and grow.
* It is often said that the measure of a culture is truly found in its creative expression. Artists, musicians and writers have long been the standard bearers for national culture, and sharing that culture can make you proud to be a part of it. it is an opportunity to bring our people closer and strengthen the people to people contact as it has transformative power.
* We are all here because we care about dance & music and how music & Dance and the rest of the arts awaken our imagination, enrich our lives, and compel us to think in new ways. There may be many reasons what role Art & Culture can play in our lives. To my mind, the first and foremost, art & culture creates togetherness, sharing & caring around us. The atmosphere of togetherness, sharing & caring either around us or its impressions which leave in our minds inspire us and help us in conducting our business more efficiently and with more passion.

Culture is a condition of being educated or cultivated. It’s an idea and philosophy of a specific society at a specific time. In fact, Culture is formed out of the ethics and moral values that control a society. While culture is the result of several factors like social, religious beliefs, customs, traditions etc, it is important that we cultivate our culture with rich and positive thoughts.

* India has always been considered a culturally rich country in the world because of its unity in diversity. India is a unique amalgamation of cultures, religions and beliefs. Perhaps no other country of the world presents such a fascinating medley of a rich and variegated heritage that is as old as the civilization itself. Our country has a wonderful capacity of assimilating other beliefs as well as deeply influencing other thoughts and traditions.
* Having said that, I would like to say that it is still easy to create culture but what is difficult is to preserve it. It has taken ages for our forefathers to form such a composite and ethnically rich culture, what is important for us is to preserve it. I compliment the efforts of Ms. Megha Mary Mathew to preserve our culture. I also acknowledge the efforts of Ms. Ajitha Manjeshlal in this regard.
* India has a long standing close and multifaceted relationship with Botswana. India and Botswana have a very strong and unique friendship. Our mutually beneficial partnership, driven by our common interests, is a perfect example of South-South Cooperation.
* One of the important aspect of our cooperation is people to people contact through STRENGTH. Where S stands for Share, T stands for Tradition, R stands of Responsibility, E stands of Entertainment, N stands for New Ideas, G stands for Growth and prosperity, T stands for Training & Capacity Building, Trade & Investment, Transfer of Technology and H stands for Health and Healing.
* I am confident that today’s event will definitely strengthen the people to people contact between India and Botswana through STRENGTH.
* May I end with warm congratulations to Ms. Megha Mary Mathew for her Aran-getram. Enjoy the celebration

**--Thank You--**