



Confederation of Indian Industry

Kapil Sibal Outlines Business Opportunities for U.S.- India Cooperation in Higher Education

CII-USIBC host Kapil Sibal in Washington D.C.

Mr. Kapil Sibal, India's Minister for Human Resource Development laid out a five point agenda for private sector involvement at a discussion, focusing on innovative models and delivery mechanisms for U.S.-India higher education cooperation, jointly organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and USIBC on 14 October 2011 in Washington D.C.

First, the architecture of education in the 21st century needs to be built, where government creates the highway and private sector creates the content. Second, U.S. universities in partnership with Indian universities and industry can engage in R&D at one-third the cost, for which the U.S. government would need to make changes to its regulatory environment. Third, Indian private sector can invest in creating the infrastructure for setting up new universities and faculty and scholars from the U.S. can then operate from that facility in India. Fourth, US companies like Boeing, Motorola and Ford that have large operations in India should invest in establishing educational institutions in their respective fields where both Indian and U.S. students can study. Fifth, the Government of India can fund capital infrastructure in private sector where businesses will invest by employing highly qualified PhDs. This support can be extended to US companies in India as well with the support of the U.S. Government.

Mr. Robert O. Blake, Assistant Secretary, South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State in his remarks said that there are myriad opportunities for engagement in the higher education sector, such as online and distance learning program for students; increasing the number of US students going to India for internships; possibility of a domestic Indian peace corps program; and synchronizing the education systems in both countries.

Ms. Nirupama Rao, Ambassador of India to the U.S. said that education is the 'final frontier' as it enables disadvantaged populations. Because of the sheer scale and numbers, India needs innovative models in tackling the challenge of accessibility to quality education and much can be learnt from US experiences.

Mr. Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the prime Minister of India on Public Information Infrastructure and Innovation said that this is the decade of 'innovation and transformation', and expressed confidence in India growing at 8-10%. He emphasized the need for collaborations between the Government, private sector, academia and also U.S. counterparts to take advantage of this decade of opportunity. Mr. Pitroda highlighted technology as a key enabler of transparency and democratization.

Mr. Hari Bhartia, Immediate Past President, CII and Chairman & Managing Director, Jubilant Life Sciences remarked that one significant challenge in India is to attract the best talent into research—the government can play a role here by provisioning large research grants. Mr. Bhartia also said that clusters of academia-industry collaboration have emerged in India, such as Bangalore for biotech, and this is a trend that needs to be scaled up, and collaboration with U.S. institutions can help facilitate this.

The session also featured notable people like **Mr. P Rajendran**, Chairman, CII National Committee on Higher Education and Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer, NIIT Ltd; **Dr. P.V. Ramana**, Chairman, ITM Group, **Dr. Robert Brown**, President, Boston University; **Mr. Avinash Vashishtha**, Chairman and Managing Director, Accenture; **Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee**, Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and **Mr. Ron Somers**, President, US-India Business Council.

The discussion session was organized on the sidelines of the first ever U.S.-India Higher Education Summit which took place on October 13 in Washington D.C. and drew academics, private sector participants and government officials to discuss existing and future opportunities for collaboration.

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