



Indian Council of World Affairs
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Press Release

on

Delhi Dialogue V
“India-ASEAN: Vision for Partnership and Prosperity”
February 19-20, 2013
New Delhi

As the Delhi Dialogue V came to a close yesterday after two days of intensive introspection, deliberations, and exchange of varied ideas and viewpoints, the shared opinion of the ASEAN and Indian political leaders, policy-makers, and multiple stakeholders was that the Delhi Dialogue has demonstrably emerged as the premier ASEAN-centric forum in India. A distinct message that emanated from the Dialogue was

that Southeast Asia starts from India’s Northeast, with Myanmar serving as a bridge between India and Southeast Asia. With the political transformation of Myanmar, enormous economic, commercial, and trade opportunities have opened up, which can lend a new dynamic to the Indian-ASEAN relationship.



Members of ASEAN countries during the Inaugural Session

The two-day event was hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, and supported by the SAEA Group Research, Singapore and the Economic Research Institute of ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), Jakarta. It drew a wide participation from India and 10 ASEAN member countries, including Secretary General of ASEAN, H.E. Mr. Le Luong Minh, three Deputy Foreign Ministers and high-ranking official representatives from ASEAN countries, as also strategic experts from think-tanks.

The inaugural session was kicked off with the welcome remarks by Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General, ICWA. The Keynote Address was delivered by Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Salman Khurshid. It was followed by remarks made by the Secretary General of ASEAN and representatives of ASEAN countries. Mr. Khurshid reaffirmed India's commitment to ASEAN integration and to the further strengthening of India – ASEAN ties.



(L-R) Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, President FICCI, H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary General ASEAN, H.E. Shri Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs, India and Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, Director General, ICWA

3.8 trillion. Some of the notable recommendations, made at the Dialogue, were: the setting up of an ASEAN-India Centre in New Delhi; the signing of the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Services and Investment, and a review of the India-ASEAN Plan of Action 2010-2015, to incorporate strategic aspects.

A wide range of issues, covered by the Dialogue, were: India-ASEAN security cooperation (maritime security, cyber security); non-traditional security challenges (food security, water management and pandemics); energy markets and new and renewable energy; cooperation between CLMV countries and Northeast India; expanding networks through connectivity (land, sea and air). The rise of China, US pivot to Asia policy, and efforts by ASEAN to conclude a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea as a collective commitment to peace, also figured in the discussion on the regional security architecture. For addressing non-traditional vulnerabilities facing the common people of India and ASEAN, the need for innovative

The message that echoed through the five sessions of the Dialogue was that connectivity - physical (road, rail, air and sea links); institutional (the civil society, media, and NGOs); people-to-people - should be accorded highest priority, along with digital and virtual connectivity, especially in the run-up to the creation of the ASEAN Community in 2015. Connectivity is the key to harnessing the potential of ASEAN-India — home to 1.8 billion people with a combined GDP of US\$



Speakers with Chair during Plenary Session 3

solutions and comprehensive strategies was underlined.

In the wake of Myanmar's re-emergence, new vistas of cooperation will spring up. Hence, the need to expedite the Mekong-India Economic Corridor, linking Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar with India; India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, the development of Dawei port, and maritime linkages should be top of the agenda. This sub-region would become a vibrant commercial hub, accelerating the economic and social development of the people of the region.



Audience at The Dialogue

From the corporate sector, Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, President, FICCI and Director, Asia-Pacific, HSBC Ltd., Ms. Jyotsna Suri, Vice-President FICCI, and Mr. Sunand Sharma, Country President Alstom India and South Asia, gave their insightful perspectives on the expansion of business linkages between India and ASEAN.

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia observed, in his concluding remarks, that the Delhi Dialogue V, as a platform for an unfettered exchange of ideas and opinions, is a unique mechanism of the India-ASEAN engagement. It was justifiably accorded a special mention in the Vision Statement issued at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit last December. The Valedictory Address was delivered by Mr. Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs. He opined that India and ASEAN were emerging as natural partners, working closely to deal with contemporary challenges. The vote of thanks was given by Mr. A. Didar Singh, Secretary General, FICCI.
