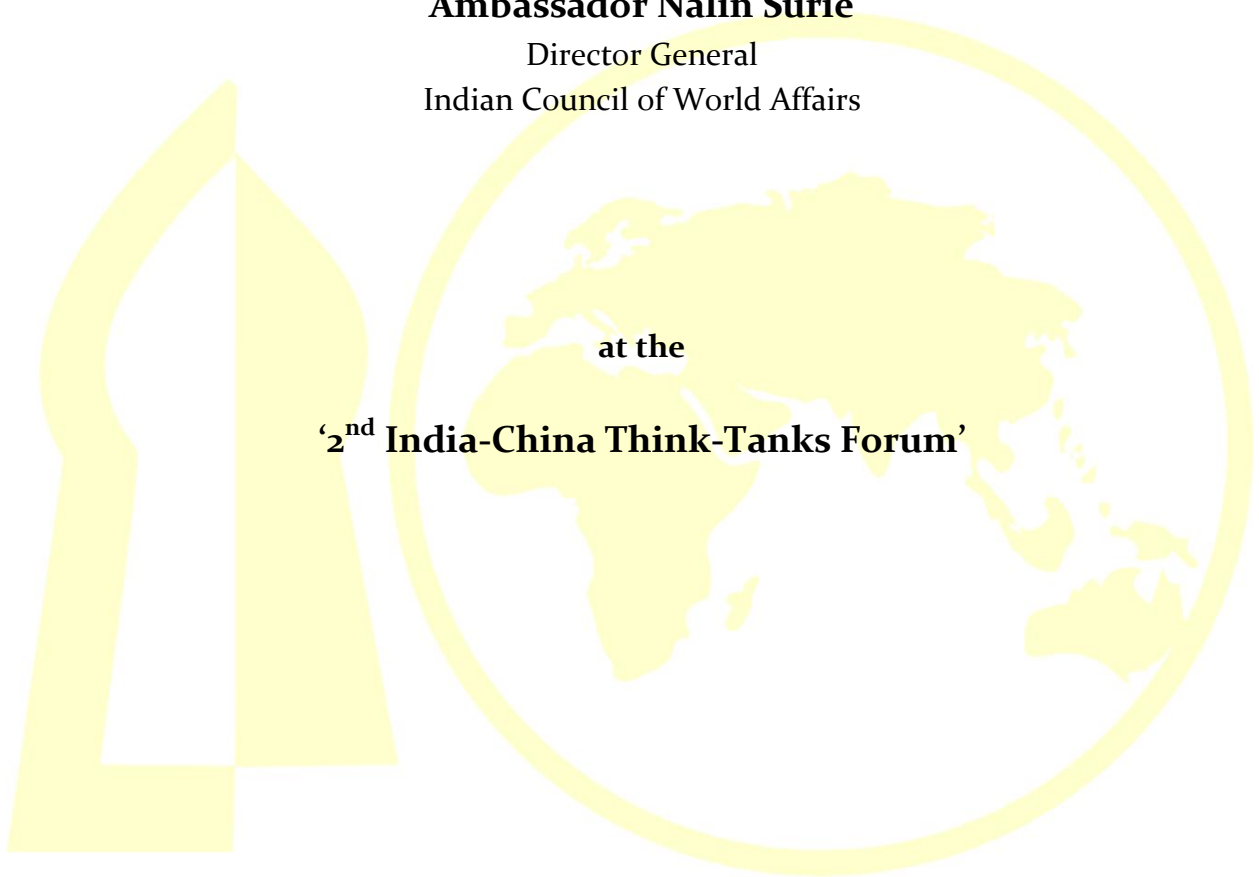


Opening Remarks

by

Ambassador Nalin Surie
Director General
Indian Council of World Affairs



at the
'2nd India-China Think-Tanks Forum'

at

Beijing, China
24 June, 2017

My delegation and I are very pleased to be in Beijing for the second meeting of the India-China Think Tanks Forum. The second meeting is being held in the backdrop of the successful first meeting held in New Delhi last December. The theme on that occasion was 'Towards a Closer India-China Developmental Partnership'. On this occasion, we have a theme that is further fleshed out and we will be discussing issues pertaining to India-China Strategic Cooperation and Developmental Partnership. To my mind, the former is inherently dependent on the latter.

We derive our mandate from an MOU signed in May 2015 between our two authorities. The objective is to enhance exchanges in the field of area studies, security, economy, strategic thought and demographics. Further, we are here to deliberate on contemporary issues of regional and global significance.

Our agenda for the second forum is consistent with the mandate we have and we will be covering areas ranging from strategic communication to bilateral trade and investment cooperation; to cooperation in agriculture, to people-to-people exchanges, to ICT and innovation, and green and sustainable development. To do justice to this agenda, we have with us a high powered delegation of seventeen experts/scholars from eleven Indian Think Tanks and institutions. They are all specialists who have made significant contributions in their respective areas of specialization. It is, therefore our expectation that we will have a very meaningful exchange of views.

This second forum is being held in the backdrop of a very cordial and positive meeting on 09 June 2017 between Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in Astana on the sidelines of the SCO Summit. We greatly appreciate China's support for our membership of this organization. Our inclusion will help in strengthening its ability to fulfill its objectives.

It is pertinent to recall that during their discussions, our two leaders agreed that there should be more Think Tank exchanges. Their discussions, of course, were much more broad based and included cooperation on trade issues, investment issues, some connectivity issues, cooperation in counter terrorism, security cooperation, defence exchanges, establishment of industrial parks, cooperation in railways and culture.

Our leaders also agreed that at a time of global uncertainty, complexity and change, India-China relations are a factor of stability and that we must work together more closely. This is particularly important as the world becomes more multipolar. This will require India and China to ensure the steady development of their bilateral relations in the pursuit of their common goal of achieving peace, stability and their comprehensive development.



Ambassador Nalin Surie, Director General, ICWA delivering the Opening Remarks.

India and China are the two most populous countries in the world. Both are growing rapidly and are expected to play a much greater role in international affairs. Our developmental and societal problems are very similar. We have a variety of reasons that require us to cooperate and collaborate rather than enter into needless competition or rivalry. We have differences. It is, however, necessary to ensure that these do not become disputes but are instead converted into opportunities for even greater cooperation. Our leaders are of the opinion that we need to address each other's concern very seriously. We need to take heed of this.

Later this year, China will hold the 19th Party Congress. This is an event of considerable significance not only for our friends in China but also for Asia and the world community in general. We look forward to understanding, from the decisions taken at that Party Congress, the direction in which China will proceed over the next five years.

Many of the Chinese Think Tanks represented at this Forum will, undoubtedly, have made contributions to what will finally emerge as the decisions taken by the Congress. Your expectations regarding the directions of future Chinese policies, both domestic, regional and international, would be of great interest and use to us.

Last month, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences commemorated the 40th Anniversary of its establishment. CASS is now rated as China's biggest and arguably most important Think Tank comprising of six academic divisions and thirty nine institutes that cover all major areas of philosophy and social science. Please accept our congratulations on your 40th Anniversary. We have no doubt that CASS will, in the years ahead, grow from strength to strength.

Before I conclude, may I take this opportunity to thank CASS for the arrangements made for our programme in China, for our stay and for the very warm hospitality that we have received since our arrival. We look forward to a productive dialogue that will contribute meaningfully to the deepening, development and diversification of our bilateral relations and to the further strengthening of our cooperation on regional and international issues.

The centre of gravity of the economic and geo-strategic equilibrium continues to shift from West to the East and for the 21st century to be the Asian century, collaboration and cooperation between India and China is vital.

Thank you
