

# Joint Statement on the First U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue

**Media Note**  
**Office of the Spokesperson**  
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United States Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker welcomed India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman for the first U.S.- India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue held in Washington DC on 22 September 2015.

The Sides appreciated the intense engagement between India and the United States under various institutional bilateral dialogue mechanisms and people-to-people contacts. The Sides welcomed India's announcement to hold a regional Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) in Los Angeles in November 2015, to further increase people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Both Sides assessed that ties between the United States and India have never been stronger – as reflected by unprecedented strategic cooperation, record levels of bilateral trade and investment, and more than 2 million annual visits between their citizens, students, and entrepreneurs.

The Sides pledged to build on this momentum by pursuing new areas of collaboration, leveraging the talents of government and the private sector to make their nations more secure and prosperous.

## **Strategic Cooperation in Global Issues**

The Sides recognized that the India-U.S. partnership was a significant contributor to the peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions and around the globe.

Building on successful cooperation in Asia, the Sides welcomed continued cooperation under the Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region agreed by President Obama and Prime Minister Modi.

The U.S. Side commended India's leadership in evacuating foreign nationals including U.S. citizens, from conflict in Yemen, as well as cooperation between the United States and India on providing earthquake relief in Nepal. The Sides resolved that India and the United States would work as partners in responding to the needs of civilians in global crises.

Recognizing the centrality of peacekeeping to the UN's efforts for maintenance of international peace and security, the Sides committed to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping capacity building in third countries with a focus on training aspects for UN peacekeepers, especially in identified African countries.

The Sides announced that the first ministerial meeting of the India-United States-Japan trilateral would convene on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2015. They also welcomed Japan's participation in the MALABAR 2015 naval exercise later this year.

The U.S. Side affirms its support for India's membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime at its upcoming plenary, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and in the other global nonproliferation export control regimes.

The Sides pledged to continue high level consultations on Afghanistan, making clear the enduring commitment of India and United States to the Afghan people. The Sides agreed that a sovereign, independent and prosperous Afghanistan is in the interest of peace and security in the region, and will contribute to the global efforts to combat terrorism and extremism.

Reflecting shared objectives in advancing nuclear nonproliferation, the two sides expressed support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reached among the P5+1, the European Union, and Iran. They called for Iran's timely and thorough implementation of the JCPOA.

In order to strengthen institutional cooperation between ministries, the Sides announced a new Diplomacy Partnership between the Department of State and the Ministry of External Affairs which will include a new Policy Planning Dialogue and coordination on the training of their diplomats through collaboration between respective Foreign Service Institutes. They expressed satisfaction at the convening of the first meeting of an upgraded UN and Multilateral Dialogue in February 2015, the first meeting of the Space Security Dialogue in March 2015, and the first India-U.S. consultations on Africa in April 2015.

The Sides agreed to launch new High Level Consultations led by the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and India's Foreign Secretary.

The U.S. Side reaffirmed its support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member. Both sides committed to ensuring that the Security Council continues to play an effective role in maintaining international peace and security as envisioned in the UN Charter. Both sides are committed to continued engagement on Security Council reform in the UN Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on Security Council Reform.

Committed to strengthening their bilateral cooperation, the Sides pledged to work together to promote the responsible management and rules-based resolution of conflicts in shared maritime and space domains, and cyberspace.

The Sides reflected on their shared commitment to peaceful use of the oceans, freedom of navigation, and protection of the ocean ecosystem. They agreed to explore a new Oceans Dialogue to promote sustainable development of the blue economy.

Assessing their outer space cooperation, the Sides noted the launch of a new Space Security Dialogue in March 2015, the exchange of technical data from both countries' national Mars orbiters, and upcoming Civil Space Joint Working Group in Bangalore. The U.S. side applauded India's proposal to launch a satellite for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in order to expand information sharing and connectivity within the SAARC region. In this spirit, the Sides renewed the U.S.-India Technology Safeguards Agreement to facilitate the launch of U.S. satellite components on Indian space launch vehicles.

On cyber issues, the Sides supported an open, inclusive, transparent, and multi-stakeholder system of internet governance and planned to work together to promote cyber security, combat cyber crime, and advance norms of responsible state behavior in cyberspace. They agreed to improve cooperation among technical, law enforcement, cyber R&D, and capacity building. The Sides commended the resumption of the U.S.-India Cyber Dialogue. The Sides welcomed the decision to convene a Track 1.5 program to further cooperation on internet and cyber issues and contribute to the goals of Digital India initiative.

## **Economic Growth**

Emphasizing the importance of building commercial ties to drive the U.S.-India partnership forward, the Sides reviewed the outcomes of the first meeting of the reconstituted and expanded U.S.-India CEO Forum held on September 21, 2015. They were briefed on the Forum's recommendations by its U.S. and Indian co-chairs as part of enhanced discussions on commercial and economic issues.

The Sides applauded the focus on Innovation and Entrepreneurship as an area for cooperation. They agreed to facilitate an innovation forum in 2016, a platform for U.S. and Indian entrepreneurs to share best practices in promoting a culture of innovation and the creation of sister innovation hubs.

The Sides launched a joint work stream on Ease of Doing Business. They agreed to continue exchanges of information and best practices on cross-border trade, and to continue commercial law-related initiatives on issues like insolvency and contract enforcement, and transparency. The Sides also agreed to expand cooperation through quarterly discussions on these and other related issues, as may be mutually decided. They noted the U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue on investment promotion initiatives held in August 2015.

The Sides acknowledged the discussions on Totalisation held in August 2015 in Baltimore and welcomed the exchange of information on their respective social security systems. They looked forward to further engagement.

The Sides welcomed efforts toward the removal of barriers that impact their participation in global supply chains and sustained implementation of trade facilitation measures. They endorsed continued discussions on Standards, in consultation with industry in both countries that will identify priority sectors where cooperation could lead to positive outcomes for bilateral trade. The Sides

announced a private sector-led collaboration between the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to maintain and update a portal containing standards information for the use of industry, including small- and medium-sized enterprises. The Sides agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in the development of reference materials between the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in India and the National Institute of Standards and Technologies (NIST) in the United States. They committed to exchanges between certain regulators with a view to minimizing regulatory barriers to bilateral trade.

Building on the success of the 2014 U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue on corrosion control, the Sides agreed to continue this public-private collaboration. They recognized India's work to launch a National Mission on Corrosion Control Technologies and Standards.

The Sides will facilitate exchanges on Technical Textiles between centres of excellence in India and U.S. universities. They will encourage industry to participate in trade exhibitions focused on Technical Textiles in their respective countries. Both sides agreed to consider collaborating on standards in this area, and to address concerns regarding barriers to technical textile exports in the relevant work stream.

The Sides committed to accelerating progress in infrastructure collaboration. Both sides welcomed the start of Smart City master planning activities in Vizag led by a U.S. private sector consortium. Building on this momentum, the U.S. Side looked forward to working with the Indian Ministry of Urban Development on a Smart Solutions for Smart Cities Reverse Trade Mission visit to the United States coordinated by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency. India welcomed a Smart Cities Infrastructure Business Development Mission in February 2016 led by the Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

Responding to India's request for support in developing evaluation techniques for Massive Open Online Courses and Distance Education Courses, the United States agreed to facilitate discussions with U.S. industry experts specializing in this subject.

Reflecting that the strength of a nation depends on the health of its people, the Sides reviewed progress from the first meeting of the U.S.-Health Dialogue, welcoming recent cooperative agreements to enhance cooperation in the field of cancer research, prevention, control and management; environmental and occupational health and injuries prevention and control; and LOI on research on antimicrobial resistance. It was agreed that both sides will work together to consider signing a MoU in the field of Mental Health and a MoU between the Ministry of AYUSH and HHS on collaboration in various aspects of Traditional Medicine, including regulatory and capacity building. AYUSH will be organizing a joint workshop with NIH in early 2016 in India to discuss research collaboration on traditional medicine.

The Sides highlighted the global effort led by India, the United States, and other partners, to end preventable maternal and child deaths. They hailed the Delhi Declaration signed by 22 nations in August 2015.

Both Sides agreed to discuss a mutually agreed action plan and joint initiatives, including capacity building, to carry forward cooperation on women's economic empowerment, among other women's issues.

U.S. Side affirmed that it stands ready to assist in India's ambitious goal of providing skills training to 400 million people over the next decade. In anticipation of the next Higher Education Dialogue, the U.S. side intends to create new programs to build capacity for curriculum and teacher development. They also noted the need to continue efforts to implement the decisions taken during previous summits of leaders of the two countries including the knowledge partnership for supporting the IIT Gandhinagar through USAID and in India's Global initiative for Academic Network (GIAN).

The Sides expressed satisfaction at the progress made on Science, Technology and Innovation collaboration after the meeting of India-U.S. Joint Commission on Science & Technology in November 2014 in New Delhi. A new working group on Agriculture Biotechnology has been established to promote Agriculture Science & Technology Research collaboration led by India's Department of Biotechnology and US Department of Agriculture. Under 'Discovery Science' India's Department of Atomic Energy and U.S. Department of Energy are working together to develop a High Intensity Superconducting Proton Accelerator (HISPA). Under the U.S.-India Endowment Fund, prototypes of several innovative technologies have been jointly developed with potential for societal use and commercial application.

## **Defence and Security Cooperation**

Building on the conclusion of their 10-year Defense Framework Agreement, both sides expressed satisfaction with progress on Defense Technology and Trade Initiative pathfinder projects, including the establishment of the Working Groups on Aircraft Carrier Technology and Jet Engine, and the growing cooperation between U.S. and Indian defense industries through the “Make in India” initiative. They looked forward to an early visit of Indian Minister of Defense Parrikar to the United States to deepen discussions on military exercises, defense trade and technology, and areas of cooperation.

Honoring the memory of victims of terrorism from around the globe, including citizens of India and United States on 26/11 and on 9/11, the Sides resolved to deepen cooperation to prevent terrorism, endorsing a Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism to expand our partnership.

## **Energy and Environment**

Recognizing the profound threat of global climate change, the Sides stressed the importance of working together and with other countries to conclude an ambitious climate agreement in Paris in December 2015, understanding that meeting this goal will require concerted action by all countries and the international community.

The Sides looked forward to the early signing of a new five year Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Security, Clean Energy and Climate Change. The Sides welcomed the productive meeting of the U.S. - India Energy Dialogue and looked forward to expanding bilateral engagement in this field including in the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as to develop and exchange information on cleaner fossil energy resources such as unconventional oil and gas and carbon capture sequestration. In particular, the two sides welcomed significant progress in implementing President Obama and Prime Minister Modi’s commitment to strengthen and expand the highly successful U.S.-India Partnership to Advance Clean Energy (PACE), including:

Greening the Grid, a U.S. \$30 million, 5-year initiative to scale up renewable energy integration into India’s power grid.

Two activities to promote off-grid clean energy access: the PACEsetter Fund, a joint U.S. \$7.9 million fund for innovative off-grid clean energy projects and a new public-private partnership that will work to mobilize U.S. \$41 million in finance for clean energy entrepreneurs.

Research on smart grids and energy storage for grid application as the fourth stream under PACE – R.

The Sides noted conclusion of the first phase of the U.S.-India Clean Energy Finance Task Force and in the next phase will deepen engagement through design and implementation in a time bound manner of select pilot projects in catalyzing accelerated flows of untapped sources of capital to support India’s ambitious clean energy goals.

The Sides convened the second round of bilateral consultations under the India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Combating Climate Change, continuing their enhanced dialogue on multilateral negotiations and strengthening bilateral efforts in the areas of clean energy, adaptation, forest sector programs, and air quality.

Drawing on the academic and scientific cooperation that underpins the U.S.-India partnership, the Sides looked forward to launch a new Fulbright-India Climate Fellowship for capacity building in climate research between India’s Department of Science and Technology and the U.S. Department of State.

Noting the importance of preserving the environment and sustaining diverse ecosystems, and acknowledging the rise of international criminal networks engaged in wildlife trafficking, the Sides appreciated finalization of an MOU to enhance their cooperation on conservation and combat wildlife trafficking. The U.S. Side offered support to India’s Project Tiger designed to protect the population of Bengal tigers in their natural habitats. The Sides agreed to work together to use the latest technology to combat poaching and protect of tigers in India.

Rooted in shared democratic values and sustained by the ties between Indians and Americans that have strengthened and enriched both nations, both sides affirmed at the close of the dialogue that together the United States and India would continue to expand and deepen their engagement, to build a defining partnership for the 21st century.

Minister Swaraj, on behalf of the Indian delegation, thanked Secretary Kerry and the U.S. delegation for hosting the first Strategic and

Commercial Dialogue in Washington DC. It was agreed to convene the next round in India in 2016.