

29th All India Accounting Conference and International Seminar
on Accounting Education and Research, University of Delhi

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Inaugural Session Remarks

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Dear Dr. Ahluwalia, Vice Chancellor Pental, President Shukla,

Prof. Prabhakar Rao, Prof. Rathore, Honored Guests, and Friends:

I am delighted to have this opportunity to attend the All India

Accounting Conference for the first time. In my role as the

president, I bring you the greetings and best wishes of the

American Accounting Association for the 29th All India

Accounting Conference and the International Seminar on

Accounting Education and Research. It is a very special pleasure

for someone born in a town less than sixty kilometers from this

campus to represent the AAA here today.

The American Accounting Association was founded ninety years ago to promote teaching and research in accounting. Today it has more than eight thousand members from seventy five countries of the world, with about 25 percent of its members residing outside the U.S. The Association publishes twelve scholarly journals, sixteen newsletters, and a series of research monographs. It organizes the annual meeting of the Association as well as meetings of its fifteen sections, seven regions, seven doctoral consortia, a new faculty consortium, and many other meetings and conferences for special purposes. We also collaborate with sister organizations around the world to advance our common goals to improve accounting scholarship and education. We engage with various government, regulatory, legislative, standard setting, and professional organizations in the U.S. and other countries for the same purpose.

These are exciting times for the Indian economy, especially since Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and our

distinguished guest Dr. Ahluwalia, launched the initial steps to liberalize the Indian economy in 1991. Modernization of India's economy needs, among other things, development of all aspects of accounting including financial reporting, management accounting, internal controls, government and not-for-profit accounting, corporate governance, financial analysis, forensic and investigative accounting, taxation, and internal as well as outside auditing.

Development of these dimensions beyond the traditional bookkeeping will help India increase the efficiency of its administrative structures and economy, and compete more effectively and equitably in the world markets. In addition, advancement of the practice, education and scholarship of accounting will help India develop an internal and exports market for accounting-related services listed above. I would like to expand on these themes in my remarks during a session later this morning. In addition, a paper by Prof. Guru Datt Sharma, Jai Prakash Tailor, and P.R. Verma also deals with these issues.

Please forgive this expatriate for sharing one concern I have about a critical weakness in India's ability to realize its goals. This concerns research and scholarship, as reflected in high quality PhD programs, not only in accounting and management, but in virtually all aspects of academia (with the fortunate exception of chemistry). Creating world class universities is not a luxury for an economy that wishes to be among the top in the world. Nations today are competing for the best winds. The most important capital is the human capital, not gold, cars and buildings. The future of India depends on its ability to build that capital. PhD programs, like high quality seed needed for agriculture, are expensive in time and money. Yet, unless we have the foresight to find ways of attracting at least 5 percent of the brightest students in each year's class to scholarly careers, India would have no hope of being able to compete in the world awash in talent and excellent educational systems. Since there is not enough time today, I shall expand on this analysis in my address at the India Habitat Center at 6:30 PM on January 9.

The next meeting of the American Accounting Association will be held in Chicago on August 5-8, 2007, with the theme “Imagined Worlds of Accounting.” At this meeting, usually attended by about 2,500 delegates from around the world, we hope to explore finding ways of improving the world and its economy with better accounting. I hope that it would be possible for some members of Indian academic community to join us in Chicago.

Thank you for your kindness and attention.

Shyam Sunder