Talking Points for Address of

HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE for COMMUNICATIONS & IT

Shri Milind Deora

during

India Innovation Day

At

Taj Lands End, Mumbai

On

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Padma Shri Dr. Deepak Phatak, Professor, IIT Bombay
Mr. Tom Mendoza, Chairman, NetApp
Mr. Senthil Chengalvarayan, President & Editorial Director, TV18
Mr. Farhad Wadia, CEO, E18 - Network18
Distinguished Guests,

It's a pleasure to be at the India Innovation Day Conference and Awards 2013. I'm grateful to my old friend Farhad, a fellow guitarist and innovator in his own right, for inviting me here.

I would like to congratulate Network18 Media & NetApp for constituting these awards. It's important for us to encourage and recognize organizations that leverage technology to reform their business processes and reinvent their business models, especially in these challenging times.

At its core, like any laboratory experiment, innovation is nothing but a Q&A session with nature. Every new technology that the human mind can imagine already exists in one form or another. These technologies have been around since the day the Universe was created. All that innovators need to do is follow the clues and ask the right questions. My advice almost sounds as easy as politics though, in reality, I'm quite sure it's not.

Having accepted that, let me begin by congratulating all the awardees and their teams for their ideas, conviction and hard work. I would also like to congratulate those of you who didn't get an award but innovated fearlessly nonetheless.

Innovation is all about being unreasonable. Charles Darwin said "there are two types of people in this world - the reasonable and the unreasonable. The reasonable man changes himself to suit the ways of the world, but the unreasonable man changes the ways of the

world to suit himself. Ultimately, the world always depends on the unreasonable man for progress".

Though I don't consider myself an innovator, or unreasonable for that matter, through their music, my heroes taught me early in my life that risk-taking is essential in order to innovate successfully.

The challenge, though, is in trying to create without seeking a reward, regardless of whether that reward is monetary in nature or simply about recognition. I recently saw this philosophy at work at the legendary Bell Labs, New Jersey where, ironically, their next big thing is a small Cell Site or BTS, the size of a Rubik's cube, that will replace traditional Macro Sites or Mobile Towers, consume less power and emit less radiation. This is a win-win solution, especially for India, where we have over 600,000 Mobile Towers connecting almost 900 million wireless subscribers, with each tower consuming approximately 8,000 liters of diesel each year. Through the years, Bell Labs has taken huge risks, and eventually, a lot of those risks paid off. They've won some very prestigious awards too - 7 Nobel Prizes, a Grammy and a Oscar at last count.

Innovation is also about determining the future. In a century, people will remember today's technology innovators the way we remember Renaissance artists like Da Vinci. He's remembered not just for his paintings but also for helping invent the glider and firearm. At the time, these technologies didn't add up. Nobody thought they would change travel and warfare forever.

Whether you take the IT sector or agriculture, it's a no-brainer that only innovation will keep India globally competitive, or even relevant for that matter. The Prime Minister set up the National Innovation Council (NIC) to develop strategies for inclusive innovation in India as well as to create a culture of innovation at all levels of government

and the private sector. If these initiatives are to yield any results, both must innovate obsessively and take calculated risks more frequently. When governments don't do this often enough, we fail to deliver on our political promises. However, through initiatives like Aadhar, the Direct Benefits Transfer and the National e-Governance Plan, we're trying to harness the power of IT to deliver basic services to our people.

But the canvas of innovation is too broad for us to limit it to IT. While there is always scope to improve information, communication and computing technologies, we still haven't found a way to put enough premium on R&D that addresses humanity's most basic problems - for instance, improving the way we renew our energy sources and recycle waste or making it more affordable to convert sea water into drinking water. For India and the world, these are game-changing innovations. In regions with no access to power or drinking water, they're far more disruptive innovations than the internet.

And to achieve this, I'm convinced that we have to build the right kind of environment. Da Vinci was undoubtedly talented but his environment transformed him into a genius. From ensuring that our education system spawns the world's best innovators or encouraging the private sector to take more products from laboratories to marketplaces, to nurturing a society that embraces change, risk and most importantly, failure, we've got our work cut out for us.

The Ministry of Communications and IT is building the hard backhaul infrastructure which we hope will usher in a data revolution. We're connecting 250,000 Panchayats to a non-discriminatory optical fiber network. The work is already underway and is progressing well. Our goal is to ensure that every Indian is on board, regardless of whether they live in Mumbai or in a remote village. In fact, unlike the voice revolution, which has been largely urban-centric, we want India's

villages to kickoff and lead the data revolution. We're also developing the ecosystem for this revolution, which will allow entrepreneurs to explore opportunities in everything from Cloud Computing to the indigenous production of semiconductor chips, that are not only designed and manufactured in India, but even come with Indian-owned IP.

If we want to keep India ahead of the competition, government and industry have to work as one. The IT industry has already made India proud and has a bright future ahead. But I'm sure a lot of you are asking yourselves whether today's business models, and even markets, will continue to be relevant a few years from now. Most of you are already developing business strategies around that question. That's an example of innovation, where we're not only reacting to situations but helping shape the future. The government, and my ministry, in particular, is always available to lend industry any support that it requires. But our partnership and dialogue must not limit itself to advocacy for fiscal incentives. We have to put our heads together and figure out ways to build an enabling environment for our youth that fosters academia and innovation.

I think awards like these encourage us all to do more to find practical and feasible answers to our present challenges and future opportunities.

With that said, let me reiterate that I'm truly glad I could be here today and I would like to sincerely wish each of the innovators my very best. I congratulate Network18 Media and NetApp for organizing this event and wish all the organisations present here a bright and innovative future.

Thank you