



Talking Points for Address of
HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE for COMMUNICATIONS & IT
Shri Milind Deora

during

NASSCOM's India Leadership Forum 2013

At

Grand Hyatt, Mumbai

On

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Saurab Srivastava, Chairman, India Operations, CA Technologies Inc,

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman, NASSCOM,

Krishnakumar Natarajan, Vice Chairman, NASSCOM

Som Mittal, President, NASSCOM

Senior Officers from DEITY,

Members of the Industry and;

Distinguished Guests,

I'm very pleased to be at NASSCOM's India Leadership Forum 2013. I'm grateful to my friends Atul Nishar and Som Mittal for cajoling me into changing my travel program so that I could attend this event and meet India's brightest young innovators.

At its core, like any laboratory experiment, innovation is nothing but a Q&A session with nature. Every new technology that we 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 and hard work. I would also like to congratulate those of you who didn't get an award but innovated nonetheless.

Innovation is definitely about being unreasonable. Charles Darwin once 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 saw this philosophy at work recently 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.

NASSCOM's theme this year is therefore pertinent because it's important to put into perspective the fact that while we do need to improve 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, 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 infrastructure which we hope will usher in a data revolution. 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 was 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 India to remain globally competitive, government and industry have to work as one. The IT industry has already made India proud and has a bright future ahead. 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 later. 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 go beyond

fiscal incentives. It should also build an enabling environment for our youth that fosters academia and innovation.

I'm sure that these awards and this year's deliberations will encourage us all to do more to find practical and feasible answers for our present challenges and future opportunities.

NASSCOM enjoys a rich legacy for having represented and continuing to ably represent the aspirations of the IT sector. It has also played an important role in chalking out India's economic growth story, especially in the services sector. My association with NASSCOM dates back to 1999-2000 when I was fortunate enough to befriend the Late Dewang Mehta, who was a pioneer for having marketed what was then a fledgling industry. He enjoyed tremendous support from all sides of the political spectrum and although, I admit, late, I'm proud to have recently recommended his name for a posthumous Padma Award on behalf of the Ministry of Communications and IT. We should never forget our friends, especially when they've done so much for India and for each of us directly or indirectly.

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'm once again grateful to NASSCOM for inviting me here and I wish the industry a bright and unreasonable future.

Thank you