



Indian Council for Research
on International Economic
Relations

ICRIER-Wadhvani Programme for
India - US Policy Studies



**"Advancing the strategic potential of India-US Relations,
Accelerating India's economic development"**

PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday, 4 October, 2011

ICRIER and the Wadhvani Foundation are pleased to announce the establishment of the ICRIER-Wadhvani Programme of Research Studies on India-US Relations and Policy Issues.

The Programme is a collaborative project of ICRIER with the Wadhvani Foundation.

The launch event, jointly hosted on 4 October, 2011 by Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Chairperson of ICRIER and Mr. Romesh Wadhvani, Founder and Chairman of the Wadhvani Foundation, was attended by a large cross-section of dignitaries, including Cabinet Ministers, MPs, senior government officials, diplomats, leading experts on strategic and international affairs, senior business leaders and media representatives.

In a message felicitating ICRIER on the launch of its new Programme, Mr. Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, welcomed the special emphasis of the Programme on accelerating India's emergence as a major economy through enhanced India-US cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, energy and technology. The Minister further conveyed that : " With its new Programme, ICRIER will add a broader dimension to its on-going role as Secretariat for the India-US Private Sector Advisory Group to provide strategic direction, input and support to the Trade Policy Forum and allow for interaction between Governments and private sector experts. I am sure that ICRIER will make a significant contribution to public policy formulation in the years ahead, enabling India and the US to achieve the full potential of their multi-dimensional partnership."

In his address, Mr. Salman Khurshid, Minister of Law and Justice, recalled that in recent years India and the US have progressed from being "estranged democracies" to become "natural strategic partners", but more work needs to be done where disagreements remain to arrive at a broad consensus supportive of bilateral relations.

Mr. B.J. Panda, MP, stated that given common regional challenges the two countries face, the time has come for both sides to redouble efforts in forging strategic relations.

Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Chairperson of ICRIER, highlighted the important role played by ICRIER's linkages with several Think Tanks in advancing India's economic relations with the US and global economies.

In his remarks on the occasion, Dr. Romesh Wadhvani said that "the importance of the strategic partnership between India and the US and the changing dynamic in both countries requires us to take policy thought leadership to the next level... we are pleased to announce that Ambassador H.K. Singh has become the head of the this Programme at ICRIER. He will bring a great deal of strength not just to the development of this next generation framework between the US and India but also help create trilateral policy frameworks that include Japan and other countries as well." Dr. Wadhvani concluded by saying that "you have my full commitment to the support of the Programme for many years to come."

Sharing his views on the launch, Programme Chair Ambassador H.K. Singh said that "the spirit of the Indian nation is today marked by dynamism, self confidence and high aspirations. A robust India-US strategic partnership will play an indispensable role in India's emergence as an independent pillar of the global community. Based on this fundamental premise, the Programme will meet the demand for broader participatory frameworks to facilitate public policy formulation."

"The breadth and depth of the collaboration between India and the US across a number of policy initiatives has progressed well", observed Dr. Ajay Kela, President & CEO of the Wadhvani Foundation. "However, there is significant opportunity to develop further initiatives that not only accelerate the economic growth agenda but also deepen collaboration on geo-political issues, regional security and defence among others."

In addition to its focus on empowering India's economic progress, the Programme will prioritise India's soft power and demographic potential through the promotion of bilateral partnerships for quality education, vocational skills, entrepreneurship and innovation.

India's emergence as a major regional and global power sharing close affinities with the US will be strengthened by encouraging broad bipartisan support for bilateral relations in both countries. The Programme will conduct research and communicate issues of importance to policy makers in the areas of public policy; strategic, defence and security ties; and partnership for peace, progress and stability in Asia through open and inclusive regional architecture.

As a leading public policy and economic research institution, ICRIER in partnership with Wadhvani Foundation will endeavour to make this new Programme among the principal focal points in New Delhi of research, discussion and conferencing on India-US relations.

The ICRIER Programme will work closely with its parallel Wadhvani Chair at CSIS, Washington D.C., to create a policy climate through knowledge sharing so that the public and private sectors in India and the US can work together for the benefit of both societies.

Ambassador Hemant Krishan Singh serves as the inaugural Programme Chair of the ICRIER-Wadhvani Programme. As a former Ambassador of India to Japan, Indonesia and Colombia with wide ranging diplomatic experience, Ambassador Singh has played a role in shaping major transformations in India's relations with key partners like the US,EU,ASEAN, Indonesia and Japan. Ambassador Singh is a member of the Track-II India-US Strategic Dialogue, the India-Japan-US Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and the India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue.

The ICRIER-Wadhvani Programme is being established by ICRIER with the generous support of the Wadhvani Foundation. Founded by Dr. Romesh Wadhvani, Chairman and CEO of the US-based Symphony Technology Group, the Wadhvani Foundation is engaged in several economic development initiatives in India, including the National Entrepreneurship Network, the Wadhvani Opportunities Network for the Disabled and the Wadhvani Skills Colleges for Vocational Education.

Established in 1981, ICRIER is an autonomous, policy-oriented, not-for-profit economic policy Think Tank, with its main focus on economic research targeted at improving India's interface with the global economy. ICRIER's Board of Governors is chaired by Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia and the ICRIER team is led by Dr. Parthasarathi Shome, Director and Chief Executive.