

WELCOME REMARKS

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Man Mohan Singh, Chairperson of ICRIER Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Board of Governors, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests and friends:

On behalf of all of us at ICRIER, let me extend a very warm welcome to all of you. This is a very special day for us at ICRIER and also for me.

I started my career in 1982 at ICRIER as a young researcher and learnt the art of policy oriented research under the guidance of Dr. K B Lall, its founding Chairman and other founding members that include our Hon'ble Prime Minister. For me, therefore, it is a very proud and privileged occasion to be here welcoming you all on ICRIER's Silver Jubilee.

When I left the Ministry of Finance in 1995 to join the Asian Development Bank, Dr. Man Mohan Singh had advised me to come back to India and not stay away. Welcoming him today on this occasion, therefore, helps me to redeem my assurance to him

that I would return to serve the country. I thank and welcome my Board and its Chairperson to have given me this opportunity.

ICRIER was founded as, and has remained a rather unique organization. It is completely independent and we work hard to nurture and guard its independence and capacity to undertake objective research. Yet, we work extra-ordinarily closely with our Policy Makers and have, over the years, won their trust and confidence by providing objective and analytical research based inputs. Moreover, one of the founding principles that has been reinforced over the years is to subject our research findings to reviews not only by our peer group but also by the policy makers and industry representatives. We thus work actively to make our research grounded in reality and help to promote consensus without which policy reforms are perhaps impossible and at ICRIER we work as a team that is committed to excellence.

I say this to bring to your kind attention, Ladies and Gentlemen, that we are participating in a rather special occasion for a unique organization. I warmly welcome you again.

It is now my privilege to welcome the Chairperson of ICRIER, Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia to give her remarks. Dr. Ahluwalia and I were colleagues in ICRIER during 1982-84 during which time she produced her celebrated volume on "Industrial Growth – Stagnation since the mid 60's".

Having then spent 14 years away from ICRIER, she became its Director between 1998-2002 and contributed significantly towards building the solid foundations on which ICRIER stands today. She is presently the Deputy Chairman of the Punjab Planning

Board. She is also on the Board of Governors of IFPRI and active in several other international and national committees. I invite you Madam, to make your remarks.