



The University of Melbourne



Confederation of Indian Industry

REPORT OF
PROCEEDINGS **The Asialink**
Conversations India 2008

17-18 OCTOBER 2008

MR SHIVSHANKAR MENON, MR SID MYER, MR RICHARD ARMITAGE



DR MONTEK SINGH AHLUWALIA, MR TARUN DAS, MS JENNY MCGREGOR





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CONVERSATIONS INDIA 2008 DELEGATES



LEFT TO RIGHT

Ms Sumani Dash
Ms Maureen Welch
Ms Indrani Bagchi
Ms Anna Song
Ms Jenny McGregor
Mr Vinod C Khanna
Dr Ly Qui Trung
Mr Debnath Guharoy
Ms Meileng Tam
Mrs Nguyen Thi Hong Thuy

Mr Rowan Callick
Ms Patricia Roessler
Ms Mara Bun
Prof Anthony Milner
Mr Sudhir T Devare
HE Mr Sayakane Sisouvong
Mr Sid Myer
Mr Tarun Das
Ms Gillian Bird
Ms Kiran Pasricha

Prof Tai Yong Tan
Ms Rinalia Abdul Rahim
Mr Greg Earl
Mr Sathit Parniangtong
Mr Nick van Gelder
Dr Aileen San Pablo-Baviera
Mr Vikram Nimkar
Mr Shahrman Lockman
Mr SN Menon
Mr Basudev Mukherjee

ABSENT

Mr Dilip Chenoy
Mr RS Ramasubramanian
Mr BJ Panda
Mr Madhu Goud Yaskhi

FROM THE CHAIRMEN

The Asialink *Conversations India 2008* brought together leaders in government, business, academia, non-government organizations and the media from six ASEAN member countries, Australia and India. The partnership between Asialink and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – India’s premier business association – was a marvellous experience for all of us. It was a privilege to be included in sessions with the India-Japan-United States Trilateral Dialogue being hosted concurrently. It was an honour to hear from current leaders of India like Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and Mr Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

The Indian delegates noted that it was the first time in 15 years that they had been encouraged to discuss the beliefs and historical role of Gandhi at an international forum and everyone felt enriched by the experience. The Indian delegates also appreciated this new opportunity to expand their ASEAN relationships. It is impossible to capture the complex *Conversations* in a summary but we would like to highlight the following points:

THE ‘ASIAN HOUSE’

India’s redefinition of ‘open regionalism’ to embrace the multiplicity of institutions and groups now competing for space in modern Asia was much discussed. The argument was put for adjusting to a new reality of overlapping groups with changing memberships and geographic definitions rather than pursue a single, neatly defined, regional architecture.

A NEW REGIONAL FORCE

There was strong support for India to develop its ‘Look East’ policy to engage more broadly with Northeast Asia, the ASEAN region and Australia. Delegates agreed this would provide more diversity to regional organisations and provide a new sinew to the region by reinvigorating an old cultural and trade connection.

ROOM FOR MANY BIG PLAYERS

There was a strong desire for regional institutions to reflect a multi-polar Asia rather than be dominated by any one country or be disrupted by tensions between any two major powers. India was seen as providing balance alongside older regional powers like the United States and emerging powers like China.

A PLACE FOR AUSTRALIA

Delegates welcomed the growing Australian involvement in the region with both Indian and Southeast Asian representatives noting how Australian institutions were sometimes more engaged with the region than institutions from their own countries. There was support for more ‘second track’ regional gatherings – perhaps drawing on the *Conversations* model – to pave the way for greater official cooperation.

THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

Delegates were confident that Asian countries would navigate the current economic crisis more skilfully than in 1997-98. But there was more pessimism about the prospects for a common approach to controlling climate change and energy demand. Delegates were confident, however, that regional players were more open to shared approaches to common problems like education and labour mobility.

Our sincere thanks to our major sponsors, the Sidney Myer Fund and Singapore Airlines, as well as our long term supporters, The University of Melbourne and The Myer Foundation. The Confederation of Indian Industry, particularly Ms Kiran Pasricha, Deputy Director General, and the Aspen Institute, Mr Basudev Mukherjee, Director, were invaluable in planning and delivering the *Conversations*. The generous support of CII in so many ways is gratefully acknowledged. We also thank the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

Professor Tony Milner, Professorial Fellow at Asialink, The University of Melbourne, and Basham Professor of Asian History at The Australian National University, and Jenny McGregor, CEO of Asialink, were both instrumental in the success of the *Conversations India 2008* and we are indebted to their vision and commitment.

Asialink *Conversations* are conducted under the Chatham House Rule and we are pleased to present the substance of discussions in this report of proceedings.

MR SID MYER

Chairman, Asialink
The University of Melbourne

MR TARUN DAS

Chief Mentor
Confederation of Indian Industry

SESSION 1

India Today – An Overview

SPEAKER Mr Tarun Das **CHAIR** Mr Sid Myer

The relevance of a rising India to Australia, the ASEAN countries and the rest of Asia was to be a constant theme throughout the sessions of the *Asialink Conversations*. Anticipating this, Asialink invited Co-Convener and Confederation of Indian Industry chief mentor Tarun Das to draw on his long career as an interpreter of his country to the world to set the scene.

Tarun Das explained that since independence India had been through four phases of economic development before getting to the point where it is now seen as one of the few potential areas of strength in the global economy in the midst of the global credit crunch.

During the period between 1947 and 1991 the challenge had been to keep the country together resulting in heavy regulation of the economy and government involvement in the management of business. After looking north to the Soviet Union for ideas the country had concentrated on developing its public sector. The first signs of change emerged in 1984 under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was keen to engage the world with the first prime ministerial visit to China in 26 years.



A new paradigm of development emerged after 1991 when India faced economic difficulties. This saw a liberalisation of the economy, a doubling of economic growth and the emergence of the Look East policy with the opening of the first Indian trade office in Southeast Asia (Singapore, 1994).

After another slowdown and a threat from Chinese imports, the years between 1997 and 2003 were a time of pain and restructuring amid a sense the country was finally getting its act together. By 2003–2008 Indian industry was already competitive at home and abroad. Companies were actively acquiring interests offshore with 3000 Indian companies operating in Singapore and several hundred in the United States and the United Kingdom. Perhaps more importantly there was a new sense of easy cooperation and trust between bureaucrats and industry.

With that brief economic history, Das said he wanted to set out nine basic points about the nature of modern India that might help provide a framework for the next two days of discussion. Here are some extracts.

COMPLEXITY “Every state has a different language from every other state. Every one of us sitting around this table if we come from a different part of India has different food, different marriage ceremonies, different everything. But we are all Indian. We are more complicated than the EU. We are a mess.”

CHALLENGES “India has every challenge that any country has anywhere in the world. We have challenges of poverty, inequality and therefore trying to have inclusive growth ... the challenge of educating everyone, the challenge of health for everyone ... of fresh water ... of transforming agriculture, the challenge of training 500 million young people in the next ten years.”

CHAOS “We’ve got probably too much democracy in this country ... we are very individualistic as Indians. I come from a part of the country, Bengal, where if you have two people you have three trade unions.”

CONTINUITY “We are not for sudden change. We are very much into process, slow steady change. This tradition bound society you need to understand.”

CHANGE “But because of television, IT and telecoms we have got huge change happening. This is a very, very conflicting situation – we are getting pulled into the 21st century much faster than we would normally do because of technology.”

CONSUMERS “We have got an amazing number of consumers. East Asians generally are much more visible now with their products than the westerners with their products. And they have been able to out-compete the western companies on price and they give good quality.”

INDUSTRY “Indian industry, which ten years ago was saying ‘Keep the world out. We’re scared.’ That has gone. Indian industry is not whining any more. They are not afraid of competition. There is a new feeling of confidence within Indian industry”

SELF-ESTEEM “If 1991 was a great change in our economic paradigm with the start of liberalisation, in 2008 the nuclear agreement with the world is a huge milestone in our evolution. We don’t know how big it will be in terms of bringing new technology and clean energy to India.”

YOUTH “We are a very young nation. Our children and grandchildren are turning us upside down. They are finding solutions to old problems in different ways.”

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Inspired by Tarun Das’ invitation to demonstrate the diversity and ferocity of opinion that a gathering of Indians can generate, participants in the day’s first conversation didn’t let him down.

India’s population, which is 1.1 billion and on track to overtake China, was often seen as its biggest problem, said one delegate, when it had actually turned out to be the country’s biggest strength. The figure of 500 million looming new entrants to the labour market was to become a frequently cited figure through the gathering but this delegate said these people were shaking up the country by creating new businesses, moving cities and cross pollinating talent across the country. “The more people get jobs, the more they start thinking about prosperity and thinking less about religion and tradition.”

A remarkable product of India’s embrace of deregulation has been the blossoming of its media – another delegate argued that this had played a little-recognised role in changing the country. With around 300 television news channels there is an insatiable appetite for news and this has become “part of Indian democracy, part of the chaos India is”. While this delegate argued the media was doing a good job of highlighting problems in the country, another was more sceptical and questioned whether many of these chaotic, competing media outlets really got to the heart of the country’s problems.

Indian progress on free trade talks with ASEAN, Korea, Japan, the European Union and Australia was held up as a motif for a new more outward looking India – with this openness now even penetrating the smaller cities. But it was also argued that this meant rural areas were falling even further behind and development disparities were opening up between the fast growing south and the slower moving north and east.

While school enrolments were rising and India was developing its high-level educational institutions, there was a problem keeping poorer students at school long enough to lift the overall quality of the workforce. In a hint of a more impassioned debate to come later in the day, one delegate quoted Mahatma Gandhi’s exhortation that the government needed to think of the lowest of the low.

The dichotomy in the education system was also reflected in infrastructure development, argued another delegate – who said that the private sector had been moving ahead with developing hard infrastructure but infrastructure services like water, sanitation and health were being left behind.

This prompted a reflection that while Indians were proud of their ability to maintain a democracy through challenges that have undone democratic government in other developing countries, they were also inclined to blame democracy for not dealing with difficult challenges. “We love our democracy, but we sometimes make our democracy an excuse,” a delegate said.

SESSION 2

The Big Powers: Japan, United States, India & China

CHAIR Mr Sid Myer

Living with the great powers is a significant theme of the *Conversations* because of the way they bring people from Australia and Southeast Asia together to talk about the region. But this year for the first time there was a substantial presence from one of those wider emerging great powers – India.

This was a session that produced a swift consensus when it came to great powers in Asia. It was better to have more rather than less— even if that made for some more challenging diplomacy on the part of the smaller countries.



MR SUDHIR T DEVARE



MR ROWAN CALLICK

While relations between China, Japan, India and the US were central to regional stability, it was preferable that there were four countries with a complex web of relations than a repeat of the Cold War with two powers eyeing each other warily.

While the Indian delegates certainly felt their country's future significance in the world was being overlooked in the slow reform of institutions like the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and the Group of Eight economic powers, they also felt an affinity with the other smaller countries in trying to assess the ambitions of China, Japan and the US. "China is the benchmark for India whether we like it or not," argued an Indian delegate, who could just as easily have been describing the way smaller countries need to think about China when making foreign policy.

There was general agreement that the US-India nuclear agreement had transformed their relationship and, according to one view, virtually given India its much sought status as a UNSC member. "This is the best thing that has happened in the region for five years," – so one delegate evaluated the agreement that gives India access to nuclear technology.

Southeast Asia delegates welcomed India's status as a fast rising power and expressed the hope it would swiftly increase its economic and diplomatic presence in Southeast Asia. For example, India was seen to be less interested in the Greater Mekong sub-regional development plans being pushed by ASEAN countries than either China or Japan. While there was enthusiasm for the idea of an expanded Indian role, some ASEAN delegates said that they did not want to create rivalry between India and China in their corner of the region. "I think India should see this as a big opportunity to strengthen its relationships," one of these delegates said.

HE MR SAYAKANE SISOUVONG



DR AILEEN SAN PABLO-BAVIERA



The rise of China was the constant theme throughout this session, with one delegate observing that China seemed to feel that history was moving in its individual direction rather than in the direction of Asia. As a result, while China liked to conduct its Asian foreign policy via the forum of the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea), it was not completely comfortable in the longer term with the idea that ASEAN should be the region's hub.

ASEAN country representatives were resigned to the idea that China would exert more influence in their part of the region as it overtook the US economically, but revealed a keen interest in finding ways to offset China's influence. "ASEAN sees some measure of threat but believes it is healthy to have a good relationship with China," said one delegate. While costs have risen in China, Southeast Asian representatives remained concerned about competition from China for the shrinking pool of foreign investment, with one delegate expressing amazement at how China seemed

to be able to keep producing items as basic as eggs more cheaply than ASEAN countries. But the discussions skirted around the sensitive issue of containing China – one delegate redefined containment in a more general way to say no one wanted a uni-polar Asia with one dominant player.

While the US was once the unchallenged power in Asia, much of the discussion about it at this session tended to focus on its relations with the other powers. There was a perception of a declining interest in the region – particularly in Southeast Asia – on the part of the US, but also a belief that it was not going to give up its ability to exert power. This perceived decline in interest was attributed to the single-minded US focus on the Iraq war and terrorism in recent years, and perhaps now the global financial crisis.

When the conversation turned to Japan there was considerable interest in whether it will embark on a sustained new engagement in regional political affairs but also suggestions that Japan was slower to take up opportunities for regional economic engagement than China and South Korea. The point was made that Japan couldn't complain about other countries seizing economic opportunities when it took up to four years to conduct studies before embarking on investments. But despite this criticism, Japan was still a much sought after investor because it was seen to produce higher quality products than China.

There was much comment on Japan's limited engagement with India with an Australian delegate pointing out that Australia had long had a greater trade relationship with India than Japan, despite Japan being a much larger economy. Likewise, India has limited engagement with ASEAN, as distinct from Australia's strong relationship with ASEAN. But the delegate pointed out that this situation was now changing on both fronts as India's Look East policy gained substance and Japan moved to develop its economic links with India.



MR NICK VAN GELDER, MS RINALIA ABDUL RAHIM



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

India's Look East Policy

SPEAKER Mr N Ravi, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

CHAIR Mr Tarun Das

India's Look East policy was a constant theme throughout the *Conversations* and this lunchtime session with one of the country's most senior foreign policy makers set the scene.

Mr Ravi explained that the policy had started in a small way in the early 1990s as India opened its economy.

India has always had links to Southeast Asia from the post-independence period but these links had not been developed until both sides could see complementarities in the early 1990s. It was now a key part of the country's economic and diplomatic landscape and a practical example of "South, South" cooperation.



While India was getting involved in development projects in the Mekong development region of Southeast Asia, Malaysian companies were major players in Indian highway development projects. Mr Ravi foreshadowed more cooperative research projects with ASEAN countries arguing that a joint approach brought more benefits to both sides. Mr Ravi said the Look East policy was now being effectively extended to Southeast Asia as India sought to develop relations with Australia. He noted India was just starting to invest tin, coal and gas assets in Australia and Australia was promoting its mining expertise in India.

Asked about how India saw the potential rivalry between different visions for Asian cooperation encapsulated by the existence of the ASEAN Plus Three group and the broader 16-member East Asian Summit, he said that countries with physical borders had always traded. But market size was important in the modern world, so larger groups were better than smaller ones.

Mr Ravi argued that foreign investors should not be put off by concern about Indian bureaucracy and would discover they could get comprehensive responses if they put forward specific projects. He cited India's evolution as the back office of the world as an example of how economic policy had changed. This was an accidental development rather than something that had been centrally planned. It was just the outgrowth of modern communications technology that the government supported.

SESSION 3

Is Gandhi Relevant Today?

CHAIR Mr Sudhir T Devare

Mahatma Gandhi's role in Indian and world history is assured. But is a man who chose an ascetic and non-violent approach to independence and communal violence still relevant today?

In a new element of the *Conversations* program, the delegates took a step back from contemporary events for an excursion to Gandhi Smriti – the memorial to Gandhi in the house where he was assassinated in 1948. And then an unexpectedly intense debate commenced.



The discussion started with an introductory view of Gandhi's life from B J Panda – a second term member of India's upper house and member of the Biju Janata Dal Party from the western state of Orissa. As a US-educated engineering and management graduate, Panda represents a new generation of Indian politicians who have entered politics after another career.

He swiftly shifted the focus from the sepia images of Gandhi's life at the memorial to the present declaring: "It is crucial to rediscover Gandhi the politician and not just Gandhi the 'god'."

While many people are inclined to hanker after the stability Gandhi brought to India through the all-encompassing umbrella political structure of the Congress Party, Panda argued the modern day splintering of Indian politics is a good development.

Citing the truism that all politics is local, Panda argued that India had benefited from the erosion of the old Congress party's hold on power because the system was now more democratic. This did not mean – as some pessimists assert – that the idea of India is under challenge. Instead small regional parties like his were a beacon of hope to ordinary people, allowing them to feel represented in the Delhi national parliament. "The idea of India can hold, will hold, is holding despite the forces against it ... but this idea is also evolving. If Gandhi had been alive today, he wouldn't be surprised. He might even have embraced the breaking apart."

Panda said all parties in India found something in Gandhi's writing and life to support their contemporary activities – even if they couldn't agree with each other. To the surprise of many delegates still reflecting on the images from the memorial, Panda proceeded to stake his claim on the legacy and argued Gandhi was more relevant in a political sense than in a moral sense.

MS RINALIA ABDUL RAHIM



DR LY QUI TRUNG



This prompted a passionate rejection from one delegate who argued that at a time when the global financial crisis was forcing a review of modern values, Gandhi had a lot to offer as a moral force. “Here is an image right after Christ on the cross all the world can recognise,” the delegate said, adding that there appeared to be an absence of true recognition of Gandhi’s philosophy in modern Indian life.

While Indian delegates debated this point, participants from Australia and Southeast Asia drew a wide range of inspirations from Gandhi’s life. A businessperson argued that Gandhi was relevant to the conduct of modern commercial life. Another delegate noted how India was fortunate to have a unifying founding figure, something other countries including Australia lacked. Another regretted the divide over Gandhi as a spiritual or political figure, arguing that his spirituality could be transferred to different spheres of life.

Another Indian delegate cautioned against romanticising Gandhi noting how many political parties and non-government organisations claimed to be maintaining his legacy. Gandhi had transcended India’s ethnic and religious rivalries during the violence that had followed the country’s partition. But no one seemed to be able to step into those shoes today amid a resurgence of such tensions.

One other delegate saw Gandhi as an inspiration for regional integration as a British-educated post-colonial lawyer whose spiritual philosophy could have more appeal in Southeast Asia than Chinese culture. Might he be the ideal figurehead for India’s quest to project some soft power in a region becoming more open to the adoption of cultural trends from other regional countries? But an ASEAN delegate also noted that India had a cultural influence in the region for tolerance and non-violence that pre-dated Gandhi. This delegate suggested that Buddhism was arguably a stronger and longer lasting Indian contribution to regional harmony.

There was an intriguing debate about Gandhi’s relevance to the contemporary economic turmoil with one delegate pointing out that Gandhi had left an inward looking economic legacy that seemed at odds with the country’s modern quest to be a global economic player. He cited Gandhi’s support for the burning of foreign clothes and a tendency to question the need for technology.

But an Indian participant maintained it was wrong to present Gandhi as inward looking because his burning of foreign clothes had inspired Indians to produce their own textiles and go on to create a sustained export industry. He argued Gandhi still transcended all economic and demographic groups with his emphasis on integrity, living in harmony with surroundings, social inclusion, equal rights for women and looking to the long term.

An Indian delegate sought to sum up the session observing that he had not seen such a free discussion about Gandhi for a long time. The independence leader’s foundational role in the country had been overtaken by a tendency since his death to look outward for development ideas first from the Soviet Union, then the West and more recently to East Asia. He argued that Indian leaders since independence were “smaller people” than Gandhi and so didn’t want to be compared with him.

The Global Financial Crisis & India's Economy

SPEAKER Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission,
Government of India **CHAIR** Mr Tarun Das

“There’s no doubt in one respect that India is quite fortunate the financial crisis is centred on the financial system in the United States and in Europe. It has actually led to an amazing loss of confidence in the financial system with a lot of loss of confidence across banks. We are not that directly affected because Indian banks do not have any or almost any exposure to the kind of problem assets that have caused difficulty in the United States and in Europe.



Having said that we are obviously impacted by the shortage and the squeeze on liquidity that has resulted from the crisis. External commercial borrowings that were an important source of finance have dried up. Supplies of credits have dried up, so Indian industry is facing a shortage. We are reacting to that by pumping more liquidity into the system. It’s actually replacing liquidity that has been lost, so we don’t think it is going to lead to any adverse inflationary consequences.

We are looking to see how much is needed because there are no simple rules here. Like elsewhere you can make the liquidity available to banks, but you need to have willingness on part of banks to extend credit. That takes a bit of time to happen.

When I talk to my friend and colleagues who deal with industry, they say that while there has been a significant loosening of liquidity to the banks there is still a tightness of credit, especially in one or two sectors. So countering the liquidity squeeze is something that is still going on, but I think we are reasonably confident that we will be able to manage that situation.

As far as the real economy is concerned, a lot depends on how long and deep the recession in the United States and Europe is. India is much less dependent on exports than other Asian countries. I’m not saying this as a matter of pride. We want to be more dependent and we have been opening up and the degree of dependence has increased and all

of that is good. But right now India is not as dependent still and that means a temporary downturn in the west – we hope it is a temporary downturn – will have less of an impact on India's growth than it might for other countries.

We have made an estimate about a month ago that this very rapid growth that we have been having growing at about 9% on average for the last 4 years. This is going to slow down. The latest official statement we have made was that the growth rate of the Indian economy in the current year be between 7.5-8%. Since then the international news is much worse. We would be happy to be in the middle of that range. Depending on what happens internationally we could be even a little below that 7.5%. While that is a significant slowdown, I think that India's underlying growth capacity is in the 8.5% range going up to 9% area. So we will be experiencing a temporary fall, below from what on the supply side is our potential growth rate.

How quickly we can get back from that potential depends on how fast the world economy gets back to normal. Opinions vary on that. Right now everybody internationally is very pessimistic. But that's always typical when you get a severe recession. It's the news of the day that carries the most weight. We are hopeful that the very substantial and significant efforts around the world to put the financial system back on track will succeed. When that panic subsides we will be well positioned to resume a reasonably rapid growth rate going back to 8% or even a little higher.

The big drivers in the Indian economy remain what they were. There's a lot of strength in the economy, a very good savings rate, a lot of private sector capacity to invest, a lot of public sector commitment to build in infrastructure, So I think all of these are very strong fundamentals. We need the world to get back to normal for the full benefit of these fundamentals to be felt.

I had a research assistant do a graph of what is happening to our stock market compared with the Dow Jones index. If you look at it from the beginning of 2007 to now for the first year and a half the Indian index went way above the Dow, but then it came sharply down, but right now it is exactly where the Dow is.

I think what this reflects is that under normal circumstances India's rapid growth was fuelling an expectation that stock values had a lot of real value. But when you have a complete panic in the heart of a financial system, it is very hard for anybody to be an outlier and everybody gets back to square one. So we are hoping the US stabilises as quickly as possible. That India is a much faster growing economy on much lower per capita income levels than the US is all very positive.”

SESSION 4

What Makes a Region?

CHAIR Prof Anthony Milner

Are there architecture, boundaries and common definitions? No, the *Conversations* had not shifted ground to an engineering conference but was now turning to one of its core objectives – how to define Asia.

If everyone who eats dahl is a South Asian, what makes an Asian, one delegate asked in an effort to get this session off to a different start from the usual alphabet soup of regional acronyms from APEC to the ARF.



Much of the discussion was focussed around the big philosophical question of whether a region defines itself according to time, circumstances and culture or whether it is formally created by specific needs like trade liberalisation. If it is the latter, institutions matter and could well define a region in a way that doesn't always seem appropriate. To illustrate this point one delegate observed that his country's government saw the region as both a reality and a hope. The reality of its location defined the government's approach to existing regional institutions and relationships. But the hope led it to have larger ambitions about its role in a broader Asian region over time.

Those who felt a region really defined it searched for the common underpinnings of a broader Asia with a tentative agreement amongst some delegates that Buddhism provided the most common shared heritage for Asia.

An existing ASEAN project – supported by India – to revive an ancient Buddhist institution which is seen by some as the world's oldest university was endorsed as a promising way of pursuing this vision of the region.

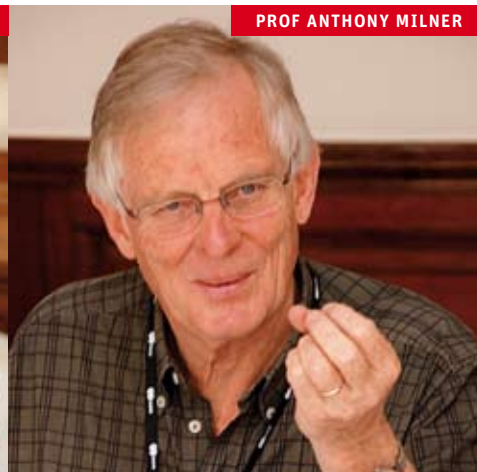
There was some discussion about whether Confucianism provided a similar common heritage, but one delegate argued that while China valued its Confucian heritage it would not be enthusiastic about the region being defined in any sort of religious terms. The delegate argued that while China was placing increasing emphasis on regional participation, it was also just as focussed on being a global player. "There is not too much sense of commonality between China and the rest of the region," the delegate observed.



PROF TAI YONG TAN



MS GILLIAN BIRD



PROF ANTHONY MILNER

Another delegate argued that an overarching regional body was important because otherwise countries would not get together in a way that forced them to deal productively with common trans-border challenges. Only the ASEAN Regional Forum provided this structure at the moment because it included both the US and India, but it was slow moving and focussed only on security. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's proposal for an Asia Pacific Community was briefly discussed within this context as a potentially valuable new regional organization, although acknowledged as being in formative days at present.

There was general agreement that changing institutional structures was difficult once they were in place - which made it important to skilfully manage the next steps towards regional institution building. Amongst examples of old rigidities left over from past imperfect institution building were

Australia's exclusion from the Asian group in the United Nations and India's absence from the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group. A delegate noted that India had come into the East Asian Summit (EAS) as part of a diplomatic balancing exercise rather than as an obvious member of a new broad Asian security and economic group.

Discussing Australia's growing focus on a broadly defined Asian region, some Indian delegates expressed surprise at the increasingly comfortable relationship between Australia and Southeast Asia. This was something India should examine more closely. A positive development adding another layer of complexity to defining a region, was a recent opinion polling showed that younger Australians were more comfortable with Indonesia than older people.

The clearest theme that emerged from this session was that India seems to be less preoccupied with trying to settle on a single or pre-eminent form of regional institutional architecture than many other countries. India is big enough to have parts of its identity in different regions, a delegate observed, as others tussled over the flaws in the existing institutions. Why confine us to one institution when we can be flexible and engage with different institutions for different purposes, the delegate argued.

The discussion ended with no new boundaries agreed or even a working definition of an Asian region. But as one delegate observed he no longer felt that to be an Asian he had to eat durian, sing karaoke and play golf.



HE MR SAYAKANE SISOUVONG, MR GREGORY EARL, MR SUDHIR T DEVARE



MS JENNY McGREGOR AND DR AILEEN SAN PABLO-BAVIERA



MS SUDHIR T DEVARE AND MS JENNY McGREGOR



PROF TAI YONG TAN, MR SHAHRIMAN LOCKMAN, MR SN MENON, MR SUDHIR T DEVARE



MR TARUN DAS AND HE MR JOHN McCARTHY



MR DEBNATH GUHARROY AND MS KIRAN PASRICHA



MS GILLIAN BIRD AND MR SN MENON



HE MR SAYAKANE SISOUVONG, MR GREGORY EARL, MR TS VISHWANATH, MR DILIP CHENGY



SESSION 5

Climate Change, Energy, Food Security & the Economy

CHAIR Ms Jenny McGregor

These are the issues that have featured prominently at recent regional diplomatic gatherings but are now supplanted by the global financial crisis. But the financial turmoil received relatively modest attention as this discussion focused on the issues that would remain to be resolved once the global economy has stabilised.

The previous night's briefing by the Deputy Chairman of India's Planning Commission, Dr Montek Singh Ahluwalia, had also provided delegates with a reassurance that India believed it could ride out the turmoil and remain a source of positive growth for the world.



The discussions ranged over India's climate change policies, the diversion of agriculture production to bio-fuel, population movement, population growth, different attitudes to pollution in countries and when developing countries would be encouraged by internal forces to deal with climate change.

India's approach to climate change has been to adopt a range of initiatives at home but emphasise the need for common but differentiated approaches at the global level that do not undermine the growth of developing countries. An Indian delegate said the country understood that it faced a fundamental challenge maintaining its economic growth at the targeted 10% level while managing fuel security and climate change.

The key elements in the Indian government's policy are to protect the poor, achieve national growth objectives, pursue energy demand side management measures, develop necessary energy-related technology, use public private partnerships and pursue international cooperation on technology and research and development.

It was noted that India had played a prominent role in using flexible greenhouse gas reduction approaches and was now the world's largest user of the Clean Development Mechanism process. The Confederation of Indian Industry had established its own centre to do energy audits and certify green buildings.

India's nuclear technology deal with the United States was identified as an important platform for providing the country with cleaner energy, although there were also some questions over the viability of high-cost technological solutions.



MS MARA BUN



MS JENNY MCGREGOR

India is a small producer of ethanol and bio-diesel and it was noted that this production involved some diversion of resources that would otherwise be food, at a time of rising food prices. But an Indian delegate said it was still important to maintain research on second-generation bio-fuels despite the food price rises.

Another delegate argued climate change should be a key item on all Asian diplomatic agendas because sea level rise resulting from a rise in the global temperature would have a greater impact on Asia than any other part of the world. It was estimated that of the 145 million people who would be displaced by a metre rise in the sea level, 90% lived in the Asia Pacific region. This would create a major new refugee flow across the region but the existing refugee convention does not cover climate change and instead focuses on dealing with religious or political persecution.

With 500 million people due to be added to the Indian workforce over the next 40 years there was debate about whether this was a positive or negative development for India and what impact it would have on climate change abatement. It was argued that birth control should be a major part of the climate change debate in countries like India and countries that acted to curb their population growth could possibly receive carbon credits for this action. But others argued that India's young population was one of its greatest strengths in maintaining economic growth. It was noted that it was ironic that countries like Singapore were trying to boost their population and the ageing population in Japan was seen as a drag on the economy. This led to general agreement that population movement was not yet being treated as a big long term challenge for Asia which would become more pressing with climate change.

A more optimistic view saw some potential for climate change to bring different countries together to deal with the challenge. For example, Australia as a major coal exporter and China as a major coal user had an interest in trying to find ways of developing clean coal or alternatives. It was noted that while developing countries were slow to adopt climate changes policies because of concern about hurting economic growth, they were being forced to address pollution because of public pressure for change and higher living standards. This may become the avenue by which climate change is addressed.

There was an animated discussion about the practicality of allowing people in developing countries to own energy intensive consumer goods like cars but then try to discourage usage. One delegate had argued that it was difficult to curb aspirations in countries like India for people to own cars as they do in rich countries, but governments could still pursue policies to reduce their use like congestion taxes. Others questioned whether this was the best policy approach because once people owned technology like cars they would want to use them. It may be better to focus on providing public transport to curb aspirations for car ownership.

There was a growing sense of gloom as this session ended with delegates observing that they had again been reminded of the scale of the challenge of dealing with climate change but the way ahead to international agreement remained unclear.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

India's Engagement with the World

SPEAKER Mr Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India **CHAIR** Mr Tarun Das

Conversations delegates joined the members of the India-Japan-US Trilateral Dialogue for this presentation by India's top foreign policy official.

With an audience that spanned the Asia-Pacific region, Mr Menon provided a wide-ranging insight into how India was engaging with the world at a time of economic uncertainty and geopolitical change.

He said the global financial crisis had seen most countries respond with a "quick non-ideological approach" which was the first time the international system had managed to do this in an economic crisis.



Mr Menon said it was difficult to predict the extent of the crisis as the "past ways are no longer relevant." In view of this, he said the preferred approach would be to "go back to the basics". Stating that the countries represented at the gathering were all "joined at the hip," Mr Menon said the sub-prime crisis had demonstrated how a problem in one region would impact the rest of the world.

Underlining a recurring theme of the *Conversations*, Mr Menon said India wanted to be part of a new open architecture in the Asia-Pacific region that could deal with the security concerns in India's immediate neighborhood and in the broader region. One of the strengths of Indian

history in the current global climate was that it had always juggled multiple identities. It would not be prudent to view the South Asian, Southeast Asian and East Asian regions as concentric circles. "Bite size pieces won't work," he said in reference to the recurring debate about how to restructure regional organizations. But Mr Menon noted that India's "natural partners" were sitting in the room and the current trends presented opportunities for the trilateral partners to find new ways of cooperation.

Mr Menon also addressed India's quest for a greater role in global institutions, arguing that the relative weight of Asian countries in the management of international affairs would steadily increase. He said India was seeking a rules-based, predictable international environment. "We have an interest in the establishment of an open economic system," he said.

When asked how soon the Group of Eight countries would become a broader Group of 13, he said it was up to the G8 to take that step. But Mr Menon said that there was much in common between the G8 and the five developing countries (India, China, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa) touted as members of an expanded G8. “The mechanism is less important than what is achieved,” he said. India had not specifically pushed to become a member of the G8 but had found it had much in common with the other members of the developing country group. Mr Menon said the financial crisis has underlined the need to remake the instruments of the global financial system. Mere tinkering with the system would not achieve the desired results. Part of the solution would be found in democratizing the institutions, he said.

On India’s Look East policy, Mr Menon said that engagements with the ASEAN countries was a priority and there was dramatic shift in India’s trade and economic engagement towards the East with more than half of India’s international economic activity encapsulated by the Look East policy.

Referring to India’s approach to Myanmar, Mr Menon provided little hope of any swift change saying the current regime had displayed notable “staying power”. Myanmar not only had a long border with India but was a bridgehead to the Southeast Asia region with India’s highway and rail links to the region running through Myanmar. “So, we need to ensure stability in our periphery,” he said while noting that the Indian government would always listen to what its neighbours have to say.

Responding to a question on China’s emergence, Mr Menon said India was not seeking a geo-political competition with its large neighbour which was already its second largest trading partner.

On the issue of climate change, Mr Menon said it was in India’s interest to address the problem but it could not be solved unilaterally. India’s per capita carbon emissions were already lower than that in the developed countries. He stressed that India was not going to stop developing and it was impossible to tell people to stop growing. But at the same time, India would work with its neighbours on issues like protection of glaciers.

On the question of relations with Pakistan, Mr Menon said the Indian government had worked for the last four years to settle outstanding issues with Pakistan within a framework of cooperation, and by avoiding the use of hard options. The ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and the relative progress made in containing cross-border terrorism were the key results. The process of democratization in Pakistan put on hold some of the follow-up actions, but he said “we are happy to see a democratic government in power in Pakistan.” Mr Menon expressed hope that border trade between the two countries will grow, and said that while direct trade had reached US\$2 billion

from USD\$200 million three years ago, indirect trade was estimated to already be USD\$6.5 billion. “So, there is much more to the relationship than what it seems.” However, he referred to the violation of the ceasefire by the Pakistan army along the LoC, infiltrations from Pakistan and illegal cross-border activities, and the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul as key concerns that affect bilateral relations.

On the broader issue of India’s role in the political stability in its neighbouring countries, Mr Menon said the Indian government would provide support to neighbouring states in transition, like Nepal. He also talked about India providing support to tackle the humanitarian crisis in Sri Lanka. “We want to achieve the outcome”. As regards Bangladesh, Menon said that India was not overtly concerned about the elections in the country but the role of the army is an area of concern. He argued that democracy was winning the battle for hearts and minds on India’s periphery and this was a positive development for regional stability.

SESSION 6

Capacity Building, Manpower & Labour Migration

CHAIR Mr Sudhir T Devare

This session was a natural successor to the earlier discussions about climate change driving population movement across the Asia Pacific region but extended the Conversation to the crucial issue of developing the skills of that mobile population.

Much of the discussion focused on the dichotomy between the growth of higher education with both offshore study and the development of elite institutions at home and the slow progress in improving the quality of basic education.



One delegate observed that for all India's globally recognized achievements in building a world-class information technology industry, its basic education system was not in a very good state. Enrolment figures were growing amid massive urbanisation but big questions existed over how long the newly enrolled students stayed in the education system.

Another delegate argued that India's development of a business school provided a model that could be transferred to other Asian countries that wanted to provide more higher education at home. But this delegate said India's capacity to provide sufficient education to the 500 million expected new entrants to the labour market so they could make a basic contribution to higher productivity was in question.

There was discussion about the need for more public private partnerships to deal with this issue of the quality of the basic workforce with more effort to focus on less-skilled people, school drop-outs and people who needed career progression education.

An Indian delegate pointed out that contrary to what most people would think there were already signs of labour shortfalls in parts of the Indian economy that could restrain its future growth. "There is a huge shortage of labour in parts of India. It is a curious situation," the delegate said. This was supported by the example of Bangalore where it was pointed out that there was a shortage of plumbers and mechanics to do the most basic work rather than a shortage of information technology specialists. A delegate observed that this problem was widespread leading to too much emphasis on university education across the region. "The downside is universities are seen as the only way of educating children but a growing economy needs vocational education. A greater linkage between education and work is needed."



Some delegates expressed concern about the foreign exchange losses being suffered by developing countries as more students sought better quality education abroad and the need for more information sharing amongst these countries on successful models for improving domestic education. A delegate from an ASEAN country said education was an issue that was constantly on the agenda of developing countries and was a key issue in any diplomatic dialogues with other countries. A delegate with an educational background said that in the recent past many countries had not been interested in adopting ideas from more developed regional countries like Singapore but that had now changed dramatically and there was much greater interest in learning from neighbours. For example, it was suggested that India's efforts to establish a business school could provide a role model for Vietnam. Another delegate described how Vietnam had lowered

the educational requirement for foreign teachers because it was so anxious to boost the basic educational standards of its factory workers.

But some other delegates pointed out that the debate about a brain drain was getting more complex as more students were returning to countries like Vietnam after being educated abroad because of growing economic opportunities back home. Others argued even that even if more foreign graduates were returning, the ready access to foreign education tended to reduce pressure on government to improve domestic education. Another delegate argued that the shift towards one-child families across many parts of Asia was creating more pressure for better domestic education. While parents may only have one child to educate, they were paradoxically more inclined to want their one child to receive a good education at home and stay there.

There was considerable interest in greater use of distance education to both bring world best standards to Asian higher education institutions and to provide a better standard of education at the most basic vocational level in villages. Several delegates expressed interest in greater Australian involvement in distance education because of Australia's experience in this field.

The role and responsibility of the private sector for dealing with these issues produced some of the sharpest debate seen at the Conversation sessions reflecting some quite different views about the development process. It was suggested that foreign businesses in developing countries could be specially taxed to fund better vocational education because those businesses were often concerned about the quality of the workforce. Another delegate argued the growing involvement of the private sector in education in some Asian countries meant the system was distorted by their interests: "you can't build a country just with engineers". But others said that business should not be held responsible for providing education in countries even though it was a beneficiary of a good system. Some delegates said that while companies provided extensive training to workers this was because it was in the interests of their shareholders to have trained staff not because they had an obligation to educate the society.

CONVENORS, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND NATIONAL DELEGATES

CO-CONVENORS



MR TARUN DAS

President, Aspen Institute India and Chief Mentor, Confederation of Indian Industry

Mr Tarun Das is the President, Aspen Institute India and Chief Mentor, Confederation of Indian Industry. He is the Chairman of the Task Force on Skills Development as well as a Member of the National Security Advisory Board set up by the Indian government. ● He is the non-executive Chairman of Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd, India, holds non-executive directorships on the Boards of John Keells Holdings Ltd. (Sri Lanka) and GIVE Foundation India. He is also a member of the International Advisory Board of the Coca Cola Company USA and The Asia Society USA. ● Tarun is an Economics and Commerce Honours Graduate from Calcutta University, India and Manchester University, UK. He has an Honorary Degree of Doctorate in Science from The University of Warwick, UK and has been conferred an Honorary CBE by Her Majesty the Queen for his contribution to Indo-British relations. ● Tarun is the recipient of the 'Blackwill Award' by US-India Business Council, the Singapore National Award (Public Service Medal) by the Singapore Government (2004) and the Padma Bhushan (2006), one of the highest Indian Civilian Government Awards, for his contribution in the field of Trade and Industry, by the President of India.



MR SID MYER

Chairman, Asialink

Mr Sid Myer has a Bachelor of Economics from Monash University and a Graduate Diploma of Marketing from Chisholm Institute. ● As the Chief Executive Officer of Yulgilbar Group of Companies, a diversified investment group, Sid is responsible for the development and management of local and international investment portfolios. ● Sid has a strong association with Asia, having lived in Malaysia 1991–1995 where he managed a joint venture investing in businesses across Asia. ● In 2005 Sid was appointed as a founding member of the Australia Thailand Institute set up by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to promote relationships and expand institutional, cultural and personal links. ● Sid is also a Director of The Myer Family Company, a Vice President of the Myer Foundation, a Trustee of the Sidney Myer Fund, Chairman of the Myer Foundation's Beyond Australia Taskforce, which supports Australian initiatives in Asia, and Chairman of the Zoos Victoria Foundation. ● Sid was one of the two Australians to be invited by the President of Indonesia to join the Presidential Friends of Indonesia delegation in 2008. ● Sid was an invited attendee to the Prime Minister of Australia's 2020 Summit, which was a gathering of prominent business people, academics and persons of standing in Australia.

JOINT CO-CONVENORS



MR SUDHIR T DEVARE

Former Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India

Mr Sudhir T Devare was a member of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) from 1964 to 2001. He was Consul General in Frankfurt and Ambassador to South Korea; the Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia; and Indonesia. His last assignment in the diplomatic service was Permanent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. ● Additionally, Sudhir has held academic positions in India and abroad. He is currently a Visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Centre for East Asian studies, New Delhi. He was till recently a Fellow of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. Sudhir is an Associate Senior Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore; Member of the Eminent Persons' and Experts' Group, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; Vice-Chairman, Research and Information System (RIS) of Developing Countries, New Delhi; Member, India Chapter of Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and Member of the National Security Advisory Board, Government of India. ● Sudhir is the author of *India and Southeast Asia: Towards Security Convergence* (2006), and *A New Frontier of Energy: The Bay of Bengal Region* (2008).

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE



PROF ANTHONY MILNER AM

Asialink Professorial Fellow, The University of Melbourne
Basham Professor of Asian History, The Australia National University

Professor Anthony Milner's previous appointments include Dean of Asian Studies, The Australian National University (ANU) and Director of the Australian-Asian Perceptions Project, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. ● He has been a member of the Commonwealth Government's Foreign Affairs Council since 1997. He was a Panel Member of the Australian Research Council and was a member of the Australian National University Council (2000–02). In 2005 Tony was appointed to the inaugural Executive of both the Australia Malaysia Institute and the Australia Thailand Institute. ● He is Co-Chair of the Australian Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (Aus-CSCAP). With Jenny McGregor (CEO, Asialink), he has been closely involved in the development of the Asialink *Conversations*. ● Tony was educated at Monash University, the University of Malaya and Cornell University, and has held visiting appointments at The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, The National University of Singapore and the Research Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (Tokyo). ● His most recent publication is *The Malays* (Blackwell, 2008).



MS JENNY MCGREGOR

Chief Executive Officer, Asialink

Ms Jenny McGregor is the founding director of Asialink at The University of Melbourne. Under Jenny's leadership, Asialink has become Australia's largest Asia-Australia centre with an annual budget of over \$8 million and activities throughout Australia and Southeast, Northeast and South Asia spanning education, the arts, media and corporate and public programs. ● Jenny is on the Advisory Board of the Asia Institute, the Dunlop Asia Awards and the Confucius Institute all at The University of Melbourne. She is also a member of the Arts to Asia Advisory Committee and a member of the APEC Women Leaders' Network. ● Jenny worked as a political advisor and senior manager in the Australian and Victorian governments before joining the Commission for the Future in 1987 to research Australia Asia relations. ● In 1993 she received the Peter Brice award for outstanding contribution to teaching and learning about the Asia Pacific region and in 2008, participated in the Australia's Future in the World stream of the Australia 2020 Summit.



MS KIRAN PASRICHA

Deputy Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry

Ms Kiran Pasricha is the Deputy Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Head, CII, USA. In this position, she has been instrumental in initiating CII's Congressional Program, the US India Strategic Dialogue, India Business Forum (IBF) and the Indian American Council (IAC). She is the interim Executive Director & CEO of The Aspen Institute India. ● The CII US Office under Kiran's guidance is actively involved in promoting trade and economic cooperation between India and the US. The US office of CII also serves as a key contact point for US businesses, US Administration, Capitol Hill, Industry Associations, Universities and Think Tanks, State Governments and CII counterpart organizations in the US. ● During her 25 years with CII, Kiran has held various positions including head of department of Membership Services and the President's Office, before taking over the responsibility of the North America Desk in 1993. She moved to Washington in 1995 to establish and head CII's office in the US. She also worked in the private sector in Kolkata. She is a graduate from Kolkata University.



MR BASUDEV MUKHERJEE

Director, Aspen Institute India

Mr Basudev Mukherjee received his Masters in Business Economics degree from the University of Delhi and joined the Confederation on Indian Industry (CII) in May 1992 as a member of a Harvard Business School study team that examined the competitiveness of Indian industry under the guidance of Prof. Michael Porter. At the conclusion of the study, he joined the Economic and Taxation Department of CII. In this capacity, he worked extensively on the annual preparation of CII's recommendations for India's Union Budget as well as key issues such as privatization. ● In 2001, Basu moved to CII's US office in Washington DC. During his tenure, he worked closely with Head of the US office in helping promote trade and investment linkages between India and the US. As a natural corollary to his work in the US, Basudev moved to CII Headquarters in New Delhi in 2004 to head CII's U.S. Desk in India. ● In early 2008, he moved to the Aspen Institute India – a new non-profit organization dedicated to in-depth discussion of global issues, development of leadership based on values and a high-level exchange of opinions, information and values – as part of the start-up team for the institute.

AUSTRALIA



MS GILLIAN BIRD

Deputy Secretary and Ambassador to ASEAN, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Ms Gillian Bird was appointed Deputy Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in December 2004, and as Australia's first Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in September 2008. ● Before taking up her position as Deputy Secretary, Gillian served as First Assistant Secretary, International Division, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Prior to this appointment, she was Head, Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper Task Force (Advancing the National Interest) within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ● Gillian has held positions in the South and Southeast Asia Division, International Organizations and Legal Division, Peace, Arms Control and Disarmament Branch, and Executive Branch, of the Department. ● She has served overseas in New York, Harare and Paris. She has also worked with the Office of the Minister for Trade Negotiations since joining the Department in 1980. ● Gillian holds a Bachelor of Arts (First Class Hons), University of Sydney and is a graduate of French Ecole Nationale d'Administration.



MS MARA BUN

CEO, Green Cross Australia

Ms Mara Bun is the founding CEO of Green Cross. In the early 1990s, she was head of financial and corporate matters for Greenpeace Australia, and for eight years served as a Director on the Board of Bush Heritage Australia as Treasurer. Mara was a member of the NSW Sustainable Energy Development Authority Advisory Council for six years. ● Mara's private sector experience is grounded in the finance sector. She was a senior financial analyst with Morgan Stanley in the high technology area in the 1980s, and returned to investment banking in Australia as Senior Equities Analyst at Macquarie Bank covering Internet and e-commerce equities. As Director of The Allen Consulting Group, Mara advised companies such as Microsoft and Optus in relation to public policy and Corporate Social Responsibility strategy and programs. ● Before moving to Queensland two years ago, Mara combined her commercial and community interests in her role as Director of Business Development for the CSIRO, where for three years she helped to shape science funding partnerships involving government, academic and corporate interests. Mara was Head of Research at CANNEX, Australia's leading consumer finance research firm before joining Green Cross.



MR ROWAN CALICK

Asia Pacific Editor,
The Australian

Mr Rowan Callick grew up in England, graduating with a BA Honours from Exeter University. In 1987 Rowan moved to Australia, and is currently the Asia Pacific Editor for *The Australian* which he joined in 2006 as the Beijing based China Correspondent. He was also the *Australian Financial Review's* China Correspondent, based in Hong Kong, from 1996–2000. From 1990–92 he was a senior writer with *Time* magazine. ● Rowan was a member of the National Advisory Council on Aid Policy from 1994–96, a board member of the Australia Indonesia Institute from 2001–06, a member of the Foreign Minister's Foreign Affairs Council from 2003–06, and a member of the advisory board of the Institute of Excellence in the Asia-Pacific Region at the Australian National University from 2005–2006. ● His book *Comrades & Capitalists: Hong Kong Since the Handover* was published by the University of NSW Press in 1998. He won the Graham Perkin Award for Journalist of the Year for 1995, and two Walkley Awards, for Asia-Pacific coverage, for 1997 and 2007.



MR GREGORY EARL

Asia Pacific Editor,
Australian Financial Review

Mr Gregory Earl is the Asia Pacific editor of the *Australian Financial Review* (AFR) – the major business and economic newspaper in Australasia. He has more than 20 years experience working as a business/political reporter and editor. ● His interest in Asia Pacific affairs began as a high school student studying Indonesian, followed by a year as an exchange student in the central Philippines city of Iloilo. ● Until recently, Greg was AFR's Tokyo-based Japan and Korea correspondent. In 1994–99 he covered Southeast Asia from a base in Jakarta. In 1988–91 he was a New York based correspondent that also involved reporting from Canada and Mexico. ● He has also worked as a political and business reporter in Australia, opinion page editor and was the AFR's deputy editor in charge of national and international news in 2002–04. ● Greg studied journalism at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and economics at the Australian National University. He speaks some Indonesian and Japanese.



MR NICK VAN GELDER

Senior Managing Director,
Macquarie Capital Funds

Mr Nick van Gelder is the Head of Macquarie Capital Funds for Asia and the Middle East. Nick has been with Macquarie Capital since 1997 and has been based in Asia since 1998. Prior to joining Macquarie, he spent 10 years mostly in the United Kingdom, working in real estate project finance, construction, development and investment management. ● Over the past decade, Nick has gained specialized experience in the areas of infrastructure investment and funds management throughout Asia. In particular, Nick led the development of Macquarie's funds business in Korea, which saw Macquarie's investment in over 20 substantial infrastructure projects with an enterprise value in excess of US\$10 billion. ● Nick's present responsibilities include the development and management of the Macquarie Capital Funds business across Asia and the Middle East, where Macquarie has some US\$5 billion of infrastructure funds under management. He also oversees the development of a variety of new infrastructure and private equity fund initiatives planned throughout Asia, particularly in India, China and the Middle East.



MR DEBNATH GUHAROY

Regional Director Asia,
Roy Morgan Research

A graduate from Delhi University's St Stephen's College, Mr Debnath Guharoy's career began as an account executive at JWT Kolkata. It was with Brooke Bond's Middle East business that his endless journeys overseas first began in the 1980s. His years with JWT took him to Colombo, Jakarta, and Hong Kong in both CEO and Asia Pacific regional roles. In recognition, he was elected the youngest-ever Vice President International of the world's oldest advertising agency. ● His years as an internet entrepreneur led him finally to Roy Morgan and research. An adman-turned-researcher, he helped establish Roy Morgan in New Zealand. Today, he leads the company's expansion into Asia. In its fourth year, the Indonesian survey is now used by more agencies and marketers than any other syndicated survey in that country. The proving ground for the conversion of Western methodology in an Eastern milieu, the challenges posed by a multi-ethnic population of 230 million people puts his Asia team confidently in position to expand into ASEAN and India. ● Debnath is also a columnist and a delegate at international forums, adding a unique perspective to the development of research in Asia, his stomping ground for over two decades.



MR VIKRAM NIMKAR

Country Representative – India,
Westpac Banking Corporation

Mr Vikram Nimkar has 14 years of banking experience in India covering general management, corporate and institutional banking, capital markets and credit risk management. ● Vikram is currently the Country Representative – India, for Westpac Banking Corporation. Westpac is amongst Australia's largest financial services companies. Vikram joined Westpac in May 2007 and is responsible for growth strategies as well as increasing the brand awareness of Westpac in India. ● Prior to joining Westpac, Vikram worked for ABN Amro in India for 6 years and then with Deutsche Bank in India for 7 years as Vice President – Global Equity Services. ● Vikram has a degree in Mechanical Engineering and Masters in Business Management, both from Mumbai University.



MS PATRICIA ROESSLER

Director of Education Initiatives,
VinaCapital Foundation

Ms Patricia Roessler is the Director of Education Initiatives at VinaCapital Foundation and is leading the development of the MBA School and the IMIV for VinaCapital Foundation. ● Patricia has a background in tertiary education management, and her seven years in Vietnam have principally involved establishing and managing several large education institutions in Vietnam, including the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Vietnam), the country's first foreign-owned university, and the University of Danang – University of Queensland English Language Institute in Danang. ● Patricia has a Bachelor of Economics from The University of Queensland, and a Masters of Public Administration from Harvard University.



MS INDRANI BAGCHI

Diplomatic Editor,
The Times of India

Ms Indrani Bagchi is the Diplomatic Editor for *The Times of India*, New Delhi. She joined the newspaper in 2004. In this capacity, she covers foreign policy issues for the paper. ● Her areas of specialization include nuclear issues, India's engagement with the world, the changing nature of diplomacy, immigration issues as part of new foreign affairs issues. She has also focused on energy, technology as issues that are covered under foreign policy. She also writes extensively on terrorism issues. ● Between 2003–04, she was the Associate Editor for *India Today* covering foreign affairs. From 1998–2003, she was the Deputy Foreign Affairs Editor with the *Economic Times*. Indrani was the Deputy Features Editor for the *Economic Times* in Calcutta from 1993–98 and an Editorial Assistant with the *Statesman* in Calcutta from 1988–93.



MR DILIP CHENOY

Director General, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers

Mr Dilip Chenoy took over as Director General, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) in 2004. SIAM is the apex industry body representing 35 leading vehicle and vehicular engine manufacturers in India. ● Prior to his current role, Dilip served as Deputy Director-General with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). At CII, he was the head of the Associations Council (ASCN), which comprises 129 industry specific associations affiliated to CII and 23 industry divisions and 14 national sectoral committees representing major segments of the Indian economy. ● Mr Chenoy joined CII in 1985 and was a member of the CII senior management team. His work included consensus building across industry sectors and promoting the growth and development of these sectors. He was also the spokesperson for CII.



MR VINOD C KHANNA

Principal Consultant,
Tech Mahindra Foundation

Mr Vinod Khanna holds a degree in Politics from Bombay University; in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University; and a degree in Law from Delhi University. ● Vinod is a former member of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) specialising in Chinese affairs. He has also served in the Indian embassies in China, Japan and Germany before being appointed Indian Ambassador successively to Cuba, Indonesia and Bhutan. ● Vinod voluntarily retired in 1994 to pursue academic and social work, but was recalled to open the Indian office in Taiwan in 1995–97. Prior to working with the government, Vinod had a distinguished career in academia including positions as Fellow at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University; Visiting Ambassador, Department of Chinese and Japanese Studies, Delhi University and Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi where he is now Emeritus Fellow. ● Vinod is Principal Consultant with the Tech Mahindra Foundation which was launched to address the educational needs of the underprivileged, especially children, as well as espouse the cause of women's empowerment in education. ● Vinod is also Founder Trustee of the Pratham Delhi Education Initiative and Trustee, Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust. ● He has also co-authored two books: *India and China: The Way Forward* and *The Ramayana in Indonesia*.



MR SN MENON

Former Commerce Secretary,
Ministry of Commerce & Industry,
Government of India

Mr S N Menon retired as Commerce Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in 2006. Earlier, he had served in the Department of Commerce for almost three and a half years, initially as Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser and then as Special Secretary in which capacity he headed the Trade Policy Division (TPD) handling matters pertaining to multilateral trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and regional and bilateral trade agreements. ● In addition to international trade, he has a thorough knowledge of the energy sector, having worked both at the State Secretariat level and as the Secretary of the State Electricity Board for a number of years. ● Mr Menon had worked for 5 years in the North East between the period 1971–75 in the State of Manipur as Secretary to three Chief Ministers of Manipur and as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of West Bengal. ● Mr Menon is a Director on the Boards of B.S.E, WBSIEDCL, Tayo Rolls Limited and Chairman of Nicco Parks & Resorts Limited. ● Mr Menon holds a Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Delhi. He was awarded the Hubert H Humphrey North-South Fellow under the Fulbright Program, Humphrey Institute of Public Policy, University of Minnesota, USA.



MR B J PANDA

Member of Parliament,
Rajya Sabha (Upper House)

Mr Baijayant ‘Jay’ Panda was elected to the Parliament of India (Rajya Sabha) for his second term in April 2006 from the State of Orissa and represents the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) party of which he is the Parliamentary Party Leader in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House). ● Jay represents the new breed of younger generation politicians, educated abroad with alternate careers before choosing to serve the nation and contribute through public service. ● A graduate from Michigan, USA with a combined degree in Engineering and Management, Jay worked in the corporate sector before joining politics. In his earlier corporate career Jay was associated with industry organizations like the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the International Chromium Development Association. In the past he has also been associated with the Government of Orissa’s Industrial Advisory Committee and been a Director on the Industrial Promotion & Investment Corporation of Orissa (IPICOL). ● As a parliamentarian, he is currently a member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Coal, Steel & Mines as well as being the Convener of the Subcommittee on Coal. ● He was awarded the prestigious “Bharat Asmita National Award” for best parliamentary practices by the Hon Chief Justice of India, Sri K G Balakrishnan in 2008.



MR R S RAMASUBRAMANIAM

Vice-Chairman,
Feedback Ventures Private Ltd.

Mr R S Ramasubramaniam is the cofounder of Feedback Ventures, a leading integrated infrastructure services company, providing services in India, Middle East and SAARC countries. At Feedback, he is responsible for overseeing internal operations and for the management of select strategic initiatives. ● He has been actively involved in the fields of infrastructure policy and planning, design, project management and capacity building. He has led and participated in numerous projects in sectors such as integrated townships, highways, urban infrastructure, hospitality, water supply, etc. He has also been involved with policy issues and planning of infrastructure in rural areas. ● Mr Ramasubramaniam has an MBA degree from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and an engineering degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras. ● For the past many years he has continuously served on the National Committee on Real Estate and Housing of the Confederation of Indian Industry.



MR MADHU GOUD YASKI

Member of Parliament,
Lok Sabha (House of the People)

Mr Madhu Goud Yaskhi is a lawyer by profession. He was elected to the Lok Sabha (House of the People) in 2004, and is currently serving as a Member, Committee on External Affairs and Member, Committee on Subordinate Legislation. ● He founded “Madhu Yaskhi Foundation” in 2003 and donates 25% of his personal income to the Foundation. The Foundation provides financial help to distressed farmers’ families and educating their children up to Year 12 standard; providing health care facilities and education in rural areas; provides legal assistance to Indian artists who perform in the US; and provides free legal services to the needy. ● His special interests involve working towards upliftment of the rural poor; fighting for the cause of social justice; primary health care and education; providing medicines to lakhs of beedi workers, especially women who suffer from TB and asthma.



HE MR SAYAKANE SISOUVONG

Ambassador at Large,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lao People’s Democratic Republic

HE Mr Sayakane Sisouvang is the Ambassador at Large and Lao SOM Leader at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lao People’s Democratic Republic. ● Sayakane’s career in the Ministry reflects his aptitude for diplomacy with over 20 years experience in intergovernmental bodies and regional structures. He joined the department in 1983 as the USA and Canada Desk Officer and soon after posted to the Permanent Mission to the UN in New York. He has held Directorship in the North America Division as well as the ASEAN Division. Prior to his current position, he served as the Deputy Directory-General of the ASEAN Department from 1996–98, before becoming the Director-General in 1998. ● Sayakane holds a Masters Degree in Linguistics from the Universidad Central de Las Villas, Cuba and another Masters from the Australian National University in International Relations. Sayakane speaks three foreign languages: English, Spanish and French.

MALAYSIA



MR SHAHRIMAN LOCKMAN

Researcher, Institute of Strategic and International Studies

Mr Shahriman Lockman is a researcher for the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia's premier think-tank. His core research interests are Malaysia-Indonesia relations and Australia's engagement with Asia. He also closely follows developments in regional processes such as ASEAN, the ASEAN Plus Three and the East Asia Summit. Through ISIS' membership in the influential ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) network, Shahriman has been involved in the formulation of policy recommendations to the senior officials and leaders of ASEAN. ● Shahriman serves on the Malaysian member committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), a Track II organization that provides policy recommendations to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). He has been involved in the deliberations of the CSCAP Study Group on Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Asia Pacific and the CSCAP Study Group on Preventive Diplomacy and the Future of the ARF. ● In early 2007, Shahriman was awarded a fellowship from the Australia-Malaysia Institute (AMI) and was a visiting fellow at the Australian National University's Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy.



MS RINALIA ABDUL RAHIM

Executive Director, Global Knowledge Partnership

Ms Rinalia Abdul Rahim is the Executive Director of Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP), the first global, multi-sector network committed to harnessing the potential of knowledge and ICT for sustainable and equitable development. ● She is one of the world's foremost experts in the field of Knowledge and ICT for Development. Rinalia was appointed Executive Director of GKP in 2001 and was responsible for moving the GKP Secretariat from Washington DC to Kuala Lumpur. ● Prior to joining GKP, Rinalia advised the Malaysian Government on its ICT policies and strategies. While working with Malaysia's National Information Technology Council, she designed and managed various national ICT projects and programmes and provided advice to Parliament on ICT policy issues. ● Rinalia is currently the advisor for the UN-Global Alliance for ICT and Development and the International Task Force on Women & ICT and a member of the Strategy Council of UN-GAID. She is also the Vice Chair of the Global Action Network Council, Member of the Jury for Malaysia's Prime Minister's CSR Award 2007 and Council Member for Wawasan Open University. ● Rinalia holds a Master in Public Policy Degree from Harvard University and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Princeton University.

PHILIPPINES



DR AILEEN SAN PABLO-BAVIERA

Professor and Dean, Asian Center, University of the Philippines

Dr Aileen San Pablo-Baviera is currently Professor and Dean of the Asian Center, University of the Philippines. She lectures regularly at the Foreign Service Institute and the National Defense College of the Philippines. ● Her research interests include contemporary China studies, international politics and security in the Asia Pacific, civil society in Asia, and maritime affairs. ● Among her recent publications are: *Regional Security in East Asia: Challenges to Cooperation and Community Building* (2008), *Regionalism and Community Building in East Asia: Challenges and Opportunities* (2006), *Post-Cold War Strategic Interests of China and ASEAN: the Role of the United States* (2005), and *South China Sea: Managing Territorial and Resource Disputes* (2004). ● She has held research and teaching fellowships at Xiamen University, National Chengchi University, Japan Institute of International Affairs, Beijing University, and the Shanghai Institute of International Studies.

SINGAPORE



PROF TAI YONG TAN

Professor of History & Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore

Professor Tai Yong Tan is Professor of History and Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He is concurrently Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies at NUS. He headed the History Department from 2000 to 2003, and was chairman of the National Museum Board from 2003-07. ● He serves on the editorial boards of a number of academic journals, including *Modern Asian Studies*, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* and *India Review*. ● He has written extensively on South and Southeast Asian history, and some of his major books include *Creating Greater Malaysia. Decolonization and the Politics of Merger* (2008); *Partition and Post-Colonial South Asia: A Reader* (3 Vols, 2007); *The Garrison State: Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab* (2005), *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (co-authored, 2000) and *The Transformation of Southeast Asia: International Perspectives on Decolonization* (co-edited, 2003). ● Tai Yong is a Singapore delegate representative of the India-Singapore Strategic Dialogue, a joint initiative by the governments of Singapore and India. The first dialogue took place in Singapore in 2008.

THAILAND



DR SATHIT PARNIANGTONG

Associate Professor of Management, Sasin Graduate, Institute of Business Management

With over 20 years of experience in management and consulting with leading companies and government agencies worldwide, Dr Sathit Parniangtong is striving to bridge the gap between the academic and business worlds. His current focus is in developing a new strategic direction for achieving a sustainable competitive edge. Sathit also led a team of over 30 professional staff to complete a highly visible project in collaboration with Professor Michael E Porter to formulate Thailand's national competitiveness. ● Prior to returning to Thailand in 2000, Sathit spent over 27 years in the US. He held senior management positions where he consulted for leading US companies such as General Motors, Lucent Technologies, Inland Steel and Staples. Internationally, he consulted for business and government organizations in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, New Zealand, UK, Canada, China, and Russia. ● Currently, Sathit is Associate Professor of Management at Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, where he serves as Executive Director and Head of General Management Program. He holds a B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. all from University of Wisconsin.

VIETNAM



DR LY QUI TRUNG

Founder and CEO, Nam An Group

Dr. Ly Qui Trung is the Founder and CEO of Nam An Group that owns and operates several successful F&B businesses including the award-winning PHO24 franchise in Vietnam and overseas. Trung has a distinguished career as a pioneer of franchising as well as an acknowledged hospitality expert in Vietnam. ● Trung is the Co-founder of Tri Viet University, Institute of Potential Leaders and Chairman of the Leading Business Club. He has also served as Vice Chairman for Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Association (HTA) since 2006 and most recently, he joined the Committee Council of Asia-Pacific Center of Franchising Excellence based in Australia. ● In recognition of his contribution to the hospitality industry, he has been awarded "The Australia-Asia Pacific Executive Award" and "International Alumnus of The Year 2008" by the Australian Government; "Saigon Entrepreneur of the Year" (2005, 2006 and 2007) and "One of the three leading entrepreneurs of Vietnam" (Saigon Tiep Thi Magazine). ● In 2007, Trung was appointed Professor of the Business School, Griffith University in Australia. He has Bachelor and Masters degrees in hospitality management in Australia in 1994 and 1995 respectively. In 2004, he completed his PhD research on business administration for hospitality application in the US.



MRS NGUYEN THI HONG THUY

Director of ASEAN Division, Multilateral Trade Policy Dept., Ministry of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam

Mrs Nguyen Thi Hong Thuy is the Director of ASEAN Division, Multilateral Trade Policy Dept., Ministry of Industry and Trade, Viet Nam. Thuy is responsible for overall economic issues under ASEAN cooperation. She participates intensively in the negotiation process of ASEAN internal agreements and free trade areas between ASEAN and its dialogue partners. Her fields of interest include economic integration policies and impact to developing countries. ● Before joining the Ministry, Thuy worked as a Manager for CeTE APAVE Southeast Asia, a French consulting Group. ● Thuy has degrees from the Foreign Studies University, National University and Foreign Trade University in Viet Nam in Russian, English and Foreign Trade. In 2004, she won a scholarship from the Lee Kuan Yew Programme and obtained her master degree in Public Management from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

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Confederation of Indian Industry



50 YEARS



75 YEARS

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HE MR SAYAKANE SISOUVONG, MR SUDHIR T DEVARE, DR LY QUY TRUNG



