

## **86<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting December 21, 2013, New Delhi**

### **Valedictory Session**

#### **Vote of Thanks by Mr Sidharth Birla, President – Elect, FICCI**

Hon. Sri Rahul Gandhi ji  
Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, President FICCI  
Business Leaders, Ladies & Gentlemen

I am honored to propose a Vote of Thanks to Hon. Sri Rahul Gandhi ji for gracing our AGM. Sir, we greatly appreciate your being with us this afternoon and candidly sharing your thoughts and vision. This is particularly valuable in the context of India's need for bold policies and bolder action to address its domestic and global challenges.

Sir, FICCI advocates job creation and work ethic as key to growth which, while not an end in itself, is the means to meet the nation's aspirations of social cohesion, and living standards with food, energy and water security. As a key enabler, we look to your passion in driving and setting new standards of work ethic, which can only yield rich dividends for the nation, and enhance our attractiveness as an investment destination. India needs its entrepreneurial spirit to flourish. This can be more fully supported by a stable macro-economic atmosphere, efficient labor and product markets, and enhanced softer factors such as greater civic responsibility and value systems.

Our strategy to address poverty must necessarily center on productive work and creation of assets. Also, as global data suggests that social protection can generate issues, we can work on well informed corrective strategies. In essence we must ensure that economic growth generates greater prosperity, and provide space for both individual reward and social equity.

Friends, in closing, I glance at the past in order to look at the future and recall with pride the extraordinary vision of FICCI's forefathers. On the eve of India's independence, a group of stalwarts including my great grandfather, visualized an economic blueprint later called the Bombay Plan, to capture aspirations for development of a Free India. This plan spoke for the nation and not just for business.

FICCI's origin and values were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. He said at our AGM in 1931 that "the industry should regard themselves as trustees and servant of the poor...". These same attitudes of wide national interest endure in FICCI. We engage across a spectrum of polity, business and society on what we believe to be worthy. We trust you will view our submissions here, as well as in future, in the same spirit.

On this note, I request this Vote of Thanks be carried with acclamation.