

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2017
Plenary Session I(i)

8 January: 1500-1600 hrs

The Indian Diaspora: Catalysts for Realising India's Development Vision: India
Development Foundation of Overseas Indians.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on 9 January every year to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government, reconnect them with their roots and celebrate their achievements and contributions. PBD is celebrated on January 9 as it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa to lead India's freedom struggle.

In 2015 the Government of India revised the format of PBD and re-energized its engagement with the Indian Diaspora to enable sustained and more substantive engagement. Following the review, the PBD Convention will be held once in two years in a city outside Delhi. In the intervening year, smaller, outcome-based PBD Conferences will be organized in New Delhi on issues of concern to the Indian Diaspora. It was decided that Indian Missions and Consulates will also celebrate PBD every year.

Through the first series of PBD Conferences which commenced in February 2016 the Government is proactively engaging with the Overseas Indians in an issue-based dialogue.

As a run up to PBD 2017, 10 PBD Conferences (panel discussions) have been held in 2016 on issues of importance to the Indian Diaspora. Domain experts from the Diaspora, and stakeholders and policy makers based in India have been invited for day-long deliberations on various topics. Their recommendations have been submitted to the Government of India for consideration. At the 14th PBD Convention in January 2017, each PBD Conference will present their recommendations, and the Action Taken Report to PBD delegates for their suggestions and comments.

The 14th PBD Convention January 2017:

PBD 2017 which will focus on the theme "Redefining engagement with the Indian Diaspora" will

- Provide a platform for connecting with the Diaspora.
- Address issues of concern to the Indian Diaspora and seek their insights and suggestions.
- Deepen engagement with the young Diaspora and reconnect them with their roots.

Background for Plenary session I

This session on “India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians: Diaspora contributing to India's Social and Developments Efforts:” aims at facilitating philanthropy by Overseas Indians to social and development projects in India.

Overseas Indians have a keen desire to reconnect with their roots in India; and to give back to the country of origin in whichever way they can. There is a growing number of Overseas Indians who are, in their own way, leading philanthropic efforts in the social and development sector in India. While some have made investments in India; others send contributions for causes they support, or volunteer their time and share their knowledge and skills with deserving sections of our society. Government’s flagship programmes Swachh Bharat Mission and the Clean Ganga Mission have struck a deep emotional chord among the Indian Diaspora who want to participate in these programmes through philanthropic contributions, their expertise, and participate in India’s ongoing social and development efforts.

India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) was set up by the Government of India in 2008 as a not-for-profit Trust. It is exempt from provisions of Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010 and can facilitate Overseas Indian philanthropy into social and developmental projects in India. The Trust, chaired by the Minister for External Affairs, receives regular guidance from the Board of Trustees, which comprise prominent Indians and Overseas Indians, who are active in philanthropy.

The Fourth Board meeting in May 2015 revised the mandate of IDF-OI to promote for funding by Overseas Indians, projects related to flagship programmes – Swachh Bharat and Clean Ganga Mission, and social and development projects identified by State Governments

Under the PBD 2016 Conference in New Delhi experts from the diaspora, and policy makers based in India discussed on 27 February 2016 ‘**India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians: Diaspora Contributing to India’s Social and Development Efforts**’. They focused on the need to channelise the desire of the Diaspora to give back to projects in India, including in their own State. The panel examined the role of **India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI)**.

EAM, Smt. Sushma Swaraj & Chairperson, IDF-OI, invited suggestions as to how IDF-OI could become an effective platform for Diaspora philanthropy.

Some important recommendations made by the participants were:

- a) Strong branding and outreach are essential to make IDF-OI into an effective platform for Diaspora philanthropy.
- b) There must be a deeper connect with credible Indian social organisations.
- c) IDF-OI must be linked to specific Diaspora programmes such as “Know India”.

- d) 'Nodal Officers' have to be identified for IDF-OI in Indian Missions & Posts.
- e) There has to be strong Online branding and communication about the achievements of IDF-OI, to build credibility and visibility.
- f) IDF-OI should be reaching out to second generation Indians and enabling them to engage and contribute.
- g) Setting up a transparent project monitoring and fund utilisation mechanism.
- h) Creating a customised strategy to attract and channelize varying amounts of contributions including a scheme of tax and CSR acknowledgement.

The recommendations of the PBD Conference were submitted to IDF-OI for their consideration and follow up.

The Plenary Session at the 14th PBD will focus on building the IDF-OI brand abroad, transforming it into a mass movement. The session will discuss and identify steps that can be taken to:

- Make **IDF-OI an effective platform** for Diaspora philanthropy
- Enhance **Outreach of IDF-OI** to Indian Diaspora
- **Connecting second generation Overseas Indians** to India's development efforts
- **Connect flagship programmes** of socio-economic development with Indian Diaspora
- Improving **brand recognition** for IDF-OI
- **Enabling contributions** from countries that don't allow philanthropy
- **Role of Embassies/ Consulates** and Indian Associations in reaching out to the diaspora

Confirmed Speakers:

1. Mr Balesh Dhankar, Senior Consultant: SAP BO/BW at Lion, Australia.
2. Mr. Arun Kankani, Executive Vice President, Sewa International Inc, USA.
3. Mr. Rameshchandra Shah, Founder & Chairman, Ekal Vidhyala, USA.
4. Prof. Sree Sreenath, Professor at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH.
5. Mr. Yusuff Ali, IDF-OI Board Member; Chairman & MD, Lulu Group of Industries, UAE.
6. Mr. Hari Kiran Vadlamani, Founder, cause First Ventures Pvt.Ltd, Singapore.
7. Mr. Krishnakumar Taori, Group MD, Hasan Juma Backer Trading & Contracting Company, Oman.
8. Mr. Susheel Saraff, Chairman, Saraff Group of Companies, Thailand.

Profiles

Balesh Singh Dhankar, is a social activist, speaker on eastern philosophy and comparative theology, journalist, Urdu poet, aspiring film maker and business intelligence professional. He acquired his academics from IIMC, Delhi University, IGNOU, Urdu Academy Delhi in India, and UTS and UNSW in Australia. He is active with number of community activities that includes - Clean Mission Australia as the founding Director: a platform to connect Indian Diaspora and wider community in Australia with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan; OFBJP Australia as founding President; Hindu Dialogue Australia as founding President etc.

Susheel Kumar Saraff, is the Chairman of Saraff Global, in Thailand with diversified businesses in Diamonds, Alternative Energy, Plastics, Real Estate and Information Technology. He has devoted his resources towards healthcare and education for the down-trodden in rural India. His generous contributions to philanthropy in India and Thailand have established him as driving force in mobilizing communities for social cause. His dedication towards community-empowerment has created superior socio-economic-cultural-religious environment in both countries. He is active in Indian Social Club, Ekal Vidyalaya Movement and many such Associations in Thailand.

Mr. Yusuff Ali, Chairman & Managing Director, Lulu Group. He ranks among prominent and reputed NRI business personalities around the world today. Lulu Group International, under his dynamic leadership, has achieved significant growth and diversified into various business lines. The Group has a vast organizational structure of over 40,000 staff and employs the highest number of Indians outside India. Lulu Group of companies is one of the leading importers, wholesalers and retailers with a world-wide business network. He plays a vital role in fostering the interests of Non-resident Indians and was conferred the prestigious Padma Shri and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards by the Hon'ble Presidents of India

Sree N. Sreenath, is a professor in the Electrical Engineering & Computer Science Department at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, USA. He is the Director of Complex Systems Biology Center and directs an Online Graduate Program. His research and educational interests are in complexity, focusing on Global Issues and Sustainable Development, and, Systems Biology (hydrocephalus and cancer). He has served on the World Water Commission (2002), UN WWAP (1998-2004), and co-Directed UNESCO GENIE (1996-2006). He is a volunteer President of Sewa International. He consults with developing countries on water, energy, and policy development.

Rameshchandra P Shah, is a Global Co-coordinator and Board of Advisor, EkalVidyalaya Foundation of USA, USA. He completed his B.E in Mechanical Engineering from M.S University, Gujarat and has his Masters in Business Administration Degree in Finance & is currently based in US. He works on integrated development of villages of Tribal and remote India for Education, Healthcare, Organic Farming, Skill development, Values and Empowerment. In USA, he raises fund for Ekal Vidyalaya, Gujarati Samaj of Houston BOD, community

services as well as travelled to Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Middle East for Ekal Vidyalaya.