

**Ambassador Hiramatsu's Address  
on the occasion of  
Foreign Minister's Commendation on FICCI  
on 15 November 2017  
at Ambassador's Residence, Embassy of Japan in India**

*Mr. Pankaj Patel, President of FICCI*

*Mr. Onkar Kanwar, Chairperson of India-Japan Business Cooperation  
Committee of FICCI,*

*Past Presidents of FICCI (Ms. Suri, Mr. Kanoria, and Mr.  
Singhania),*

*Distinguished guests,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Thank you very much for joining me at this occasion to celebrate the distinguished service by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) to Japan-India economic and business relations. It gives me immense pleasure to convey the honour awarded to FICCI by Foreign Minister of Japan this year. The award acknowledges a half century of FICCI's tireless efforts to promote bilateral economic relations.

As you all know, FICCI was founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1927, composed of chambers of commerce and industry from all over India. The largest umbrella organization of the Indian businesses with 250,000 memberships is best positioned to represent the broad interest of the Indian business world. FICCI has set up business cooperation committees for Indian businesses to directly engage foreign corporations to seek their future business collaborations. *India-Japan Business Cooperation Committee*, currently headed by Mr. Onkar Kanwar and co-chaired by Mr. Rohit Relan, is no exception. Both of them dedicated their time and energy to enhance Japan-India

economic relations beyond their own business interest. Thank you very much Mr. Kanwar and Mr. Relan.

In 1966, FICCI reached out to Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) and invited its member companies to have a frank and constructive discussion with Indian counterparts, resulting in an agreement to hold regular business dialogues. The Joint Meeting between the Japanese and Indian business cooperation committees has become an annual event and has been the centrepiece for enhanced mutual understandings and productive discussions ever since.

The Joint Meetings of Japanese and Indian Business Cooperation Committees in the last 51 years have been a true history of our bilateral economic relationship. They continuously made their best efforts to advance bilateral economic relationship. Their tireless efforts and encouragements have brought us several tangible results in our economic relationship. *Japan-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement* is one of the good examples that were realized by the strong support by the Joint Meeting of Business Cooperation Committees.

Candid discussions at the Japan-India Joint Business Cooperation Committees also have helped positive influence on the expansion of Japanese business establishments in India. The sheer amount of Japanese commercial establishments in India grew five times (from 267 (2006) to 1305 (2016)), accompanied by the ever-accelerating Foreign Direct Investment (from 512 million US Dollars (2006) to 4.7 billion US Dollars (2016)).

In the midst of the historically amicable Japan-India bilateral relations, FICCI's distinguished service has never compromised its creativity. In fact, FICCI has continued to take the lead in exploring possibilities and served as the springboard for initiatives aimed at tighter linkages between Japan and India, even beyond business relations.

The *India-Japan Forum of Parliamentarians* of FICCI, which was revitalized last year, is the de facto non-partisan Indian parliamentary friendship league for Japan that interacts with Japanese policy makers regularly as well as corporate representatives. In 2016, FICCI opened its liaison office "*India Plus*" in Japan, thereby easing the entry of potential Japanese investors to India. Also last year, FICCI facilitated convening the first *Japan-India Tourism Summit*, with great help of FICCI's Past President Dr. Jyotsna Suri. Without her leadership, we could not realize this epoch-making event to further promote tourism between Japan and India. This year, FICCI Ladies Organization, chaired by Ms. Bharat Ram, kindly supported our event for women empowerment in July and sent a 40-member delegation to Japan in September. FICCI continues to inspire Japan and cultivate our relationship with more initiatives to come – defence cooperation, space programmes, North East development, to name a few.

The scale and the scope of FICCI's service truly cannot be emulated by an individual and thus deserve distinction by high honours from the Government of Japan. While all of you must be taking part in the endeavours to bring the two great Indo-Pacific nations even closer, FICCI shines as one tremendous exemplar of goodwill enterprise and perpetual

friendship extended to Japan. With its newly-established Japan office in place, I am more than convinced that Foreign Minister's Commendation will encourage FICCI to proactively seek further endeavours for enhancing Japan-India linkages. Let me also look up to Mr. Patel's strong leadership in the future activities thereof.

In recognition of its contribution to advancing bilateral relations, ladies and gentlemen, kindly join me in giving a big round of applause to FICCI and its brightest future. Congratulations.