

International Relations Conference on India and Development Partnerships in Asia and Africa:  
Towards a New Paradigm (IRC-2013)

## Rapporteur's Report on the International Relations Conference

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### Abstract

Over the past few decades, global financing for development has changed dramatically. The growing importance of emerging economies in the world economy calls for a paradigm shift in development cooperation and the pursuit of new, more inclusive partnerships to maximize the impact of all sources of development finance. New forms of South-South cooperation (among developing countries) are gaining ground by bringing to the table not only additional financial resources to fill critical funding gaps (such as in infrastructure) but also developing countries' own knowledge and experience in addressing development challenges at home. The recent decision of Government of India to establish a separate division of Development Partnership Administration within Ministry of External Affairs reflects plans for expansion of India's assistance to developing countries and its firm commitment for timely delivery and effective implementation of its programmes. A new paradigm is clearly discernible in South-South cooperation, for which India's active role needs to be crystallized. A conference to deal in depth with these questions was planned for 14-15 December, 2013 in Pune, India at which leaders, senior officials, eminent academics and experts in the area of development from a number of countries was expected to take part. The Symbiosis Institute of International Studies (SIIS) was proud to announce this conference, in collaboration with the MEA, GOI, wherein constructive dialogue will contribute in shaping the contours of this evolving agenda. The objectives of the Conference were: (i) To provide a platform for academicians, researchers, corporates and policy makers to delve into the multifarious aspects of development partnerships; (ii) To present an opportunity to look into how India's role in the development landscape has evolved over the past decade, and as a provider of development assistance, what are the distinguishing features of India's development partnership approach; (iii) To discuss different ways in which India's corporate sector has engaged in Asia and Africa; what has been the role of the government, and; how can the civil society be effectively engaged in the same; and (iv) To facilitate discussion of partnerships for inclusive development, especially with the objective of innovating South-South Cooperation.

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## 1. Inaugural session

**Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar**  
Principal Director, Symbiosis

Dr. Vidya Yeravdekar, Principal Director, Symbiosis, opened the inaugural session by extending a warm welcome to the guests. She expressed her sense of deep gratitude at seeing such illustrious guests gathered together for the event.

The Conference is the culmination of the Symbiosis International University's commitment to international fraternity and academic excellence. In a warm and sincere speech, she conveyed what internationalization means to the Symbiosis family. It is the creed that defines the organization, and the occasion is yet another stride forward in that direction. It was brought forth from a good and true spirit of benevolence for the international student community.

She related her childhood memories of the Mujumdar household, which was flocked by international students, and of her parents, who went all the way to make the students feel at home. At present, the Symbiosis International University comprises 45 institutions spread across five cities, and over 30,000 students from all over India and as many as 85 countries. The University's newest offering, the Symbiosis Institute of International Studies, will also function by way of a think tank so that conversations on international relations find a worthy medium of expression. The Conference is well-favoured to have participants who run the entire gamut from policy makers and diplomats to academics and corporate leaders from over 20 countries.

The forum would have achieved its goal if it can enthuse participants to deliberate on the subject of development partnerships and forge collaborations across the Asian and African continents. The present is an opportune time, and Pune, the intellectual capital of the country, is a fine place to convene a meeting of the minds to consider issues in international relations. She hoped that the Conference will be an annual event, and that the audience will return to the event year after year.

**Welcome speech by Dr. S.B. Mujumdar**  
Chancellor, Symbiosis International University

Padma Bhushan Dr. S.B. Mujumdar, Chancellor, Symbiosis International University (SIU), in a deeply earnest

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