



November 17<sup>th</sup> 2014

Canada India Education Council  
Synergy Education Conference 2014 Ottawa

Dear participants,

I am delighted to welcome you to the Canada-India Synergy Education Conference 2014, organized by the Canada India Education Council (CIEC). The conference this year convenes people across the country to explore a new area in the bilateral relationship, the intersection between sports, entertainment and education.

Canada and India share a longstanding friendship that has grown tremendously in recent years. The relationship rests on a foundation of shared values - pluralism, democracy and the rule of law - underpinned by strong people-to-people connections. The flow of people and knowledge between Canada and India is at the heart of the relationship and the Government of Canada is committed to utilizing these ties to build a partnership that will lead to new opportunities and stronger economies in both of our countries.

India is an important strategic partner for Canada in education and skills development, as well as in the areas of infrastructure development, innovation and food and energy security. Canada and India solidified their educational partnership in 2010, with the signature of a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding in Higher Education Cooperation that encourages partnerships between our respective educational institutions. In January 2014, the Minister of International Trade, the Honorable Ed Fast, launched Canada's International Education Strategy. The Strategy recognizes India as a priority market and calls for enhanced international education marketing activities, including fostering increased Canadian student and researcher mobility. Education plays a particularly important role in our people-to-people links and is a driver of future prosperity for both our nations. India is a major trading partner and is the second largest source of international students in Canada – over 30,000 Indian students pursued higher education in Canada in 2013.

There is significant momentum in the bilateral education relationship and Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada works closely with partners and stakeholders to take it to new heights. The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, with member institutions in both Canada and India, has played a long-standing role in promoting bilateral education linkages. Mitacs Globalink, a not-for-profit research organization, attracts top talent to Canada and facilitates Canadian academic mobility abroad. During His Excellency Governor General Johnston's visit to India in February 2014, Mitacs signed a letter of intent with India to collaborate on Canada-India research exchanges. In addition, Colleges and Institutes Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India's National Skills Development Corporation aimed at developing projects and programs to promote skills development in India.



I look forward to hearing the outcomes of your discussions on how Canada and India can leverage their experience and expertise to advance cooperation in sports, entertainment and education. Sport is a universal language that can not only serve to build bridges between nations, but also serves as a powerful tool to promote health, development and respect for others.

I travelled to India in October 2014 with Minister Baird, where we met with the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and had the pleasure to watch a cricket exhibition match organized on the occasion of our visit. Minister Baird used the opportunity to invite the BCCI to hold exhibition matches in Canada next year and to collaborate with us to further develop the sport of cricket in Canada.

I am sure you will agree that much potential exists in this vibrant bilateral relationship. I encourage you to make the most of this gathering to explore ways to further deepen the links between our two countries.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Deepak Obhrai', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon. Deepak Obhrai, P.C., M.P.  
Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and for International Human Rights