

INDO-US SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM (IUSSTF) GOVERNING BODY APPROVES 2007 WORK PLAN AND REVIEWS 5 YEAR PROGRESS

December 8, 2006,
New Delhi FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Indo-US Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) held its annual meeting of the joint Governing Body (GB) in New Delhi on December 6-7 2006. The GB meeting was held on the heels of the FICCI-DST-CSIR R&D India 2006 summit titled 'Mind to Market' for which the IUSSTF provided five lead speakers outlining the US perspective on taking innovation in the laboratory to the commercial marketplace.

The GB, co-chaired by Dr. T. Ramasami, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Dr. Norman Neureiter, Director, Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), approved the work plan for 2007 after reviewing the impact of the prior year activities. Since 2004 the IUSSTF program portfolio has doubled from Rs. 5.00 crores (US \$ 1.1 million) in FY 2004-05 to Rs.10.00 crores (US \$ 2.2 million) in the current FY 2006-07, reflecting the vigour of the bilateral S&T relationship.

Recognizing that IUSSTF's power has been exponential in terms of 'seeding' and 'auto-catalyzing' bilateral interactions, Dr. Ramasami acknowledged the unique contributions made by the Indo-US S&T Forum and expressed his full support for its programs. Dr. Neureiter noted that IUSSTF has been a 'nimble' and 'flexible' organization that has been able to respond to the needs of the scientific community by anchoring substantive partnerships of mutual benefit in science and technology within the shortest possible time.

Dr. R.A. Mashelkar, Director General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), lauded the efforts made by IUSSTF in promoting technopreneurship in India through devised programs with US academia.

Dr. M.K. Bhan, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology (DBT) noted that IUSSTF's strength has been the promotion of inter-disciplinary and multi-institutional collaborations involving researchers from government laboratories, academia and private industries.

IUSSTF Executive Director, Dr. Arabinda Mitra highlighted how the IUSSTF over the last two years has been successfully able to leverage the national resources, intellect and capital invested by both US and India in specific areas of mutual interest by matching together academia, laboratory and industries through devised contact programs like bilateral workshops, training programs, Frontiers of Science, Frontiers of Engineering Symposium, special initiatives involving industry and academia, etc. In particular, he mentioned about the 'knowledge R&D networked' and 'public-private' virtual Indo-US networked Centers created in partnership with leading institutions in United States and India. The joint center on 'Advanced and Futuristic Manufacturing' in which IUSSTF will typically invest Rs. 30 lakhs (US \$ 65 K) will network IIT Kanpur and Kharagpur with the University of California, Irvine; University of Illinois, UC and Northwestern University, Evanston, these institutions together investing about Rs. 148 lakhs (US \$ 329 K) as a part of their ongoing projects in this area.

Prof. Sanjay Dhande, Director, IIT Kanpur remarked that the IUSSTF has been 'remarkably smart' by adding value of sustained interactions by forging together partnerships amongst the right US and Indian institutions.

The IUSSTF GB expressed its enthusiasm for the January 2007 US-India Frontiers of Science symposium that will bring together the best and the brightest American and Indian minds, below the age of forty five at the Beckman Centre of the US National Academy of

Sciences at Irvine, California.

The Board unanimously endorsed the outstanding contribution made by IUSSTF through its program charter and encouraged IUSSTF to continue the good work and embark on new bilateral initiatives of mutual interest.

The Indo-US Science & Technology Forum was created in 2000 by formal agreement of the governments of the United States and India as an autonomous body established to enhance collaborations between the two countries in science, technology and biomedical research. The IUSSTF operates on interest from an endowment created by the U.S government and matching grant from the Government of India. The IUSSTF is headquartered in New Delhi with a representative office in Washington, D.C. For additional information please see <http://www.indoustf.org>

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