

Welcome Remarks of Shri Pratapsingh Rane, President of the International Centre Goa, and Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly, on 28 December 2007 at 10.00 am on the occasion of the Visit of the Hon. Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India to the Centre

Hon Prime Minister
Hon Governor
Hon Chief Minister
Distinguished Members of the Board of Trustees
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning. Today is a great day for the Centre. We are most honored and privileged to have the respected Prime Minister of India, Hon Dr Manmohan Singh visit our Centre and to inaugurate the *GOA DIALOGUES*.

I hope that through the work of the *GOA DIALOGUES* the Centre can play a role to help develop a vision for Goa in the 21st Century. That vision must be of a Goa that is GLOBAL, CREATIVE, and STRATEGIC.

Firstly, it is important that Goa must be a *globally connected* state that can serve as a *gateway* for the free movement of people, goods and services between India and the rest of the world. Goa needs to re-define not just re-invent its role to be a new dynamic hub that will serve India and the world without sacrificing its rich multi-cultural heritage and damaging its ecology.

Secondly, the people of Goa must be *CREATIVE*, and imbued with an innovative spirit and imagination. We must develop and encourage talent and professionalism. The people of Goa must develop their own areas of competence and turn Goa into a model of excellence.

Thirdly, because Goa is the smallest state in the Indian Union its leaders must be *STRATEGIC* in their vision. Goa cannot grow and progress unless the people and their leaders have long-term thinking. Our strategic thrust must be to make Goa a place of importance in India and the world.

To make Goa relevant, competitive and important in the 21st century has also been the mission of the International Centre Goa when we established it in June 1987. We wanted it to be a forum to bring together thinkers, scholars, achievers, and creative people from India and the world to develop new approaches and perspectives to deal with a fast changing world.

Goa and India needed such a centre of intellectual excellence, a centre which could take the lead in defining a new agenda of ideas and to initiate cutting-edge activities; and an institution which should ultimately become one of the best venues for all kinds of debates and discourses.

It is therefore most fitting that Dr Manmohan Singh who, as Finance Minister in the 1990s made it possible for the Centre to be established, is here today to launch the concept of the *GOA DIALOGUES* which is the vehicle that will make this vision a reality.

I hope that the *GOA DIALOGUES* can become a forum that can be well-known not only in India but in the world as well. The *Goa Dialogues* can become a transmitter of ideas and activities that will contribute to building a resurgent Goa, a progressive India, a better Asia, and a safer world.

The *GOA DIALOGUES* will promote Goa as a focal point in the larger pan-Asian and Indian Ocean regions for ideas of freedom and sustainable development, and India's place in the world. The *GOA DIALOGUES* will also stress the importance of dialogue in this violent world.

For the information of the Prime Minister I wish to say that beginning next week the *GOA DIALOGUES* will initiate some interesting programs. The well known novelist of "The Wild Swans", Jung Chang and her husband Michael Halliday will give a lecture on "*Mao Zedong: the Real Story and His Attitude To India*". This will be followed by a regional conference of young South Asian scholars on Promoting Freedoms in South Asia. At the end of the month as part of its program to promote chess in Goa the Centre will co-host a tournament for 500 young children.

In February the Centre will host a one-week ***Building a Better Asia*** retreat for 25 young leaders from 16 Asian countries. The keynote speaker will be the new Secretary-General of ASEAN, Dr Surin Pitsuwan. This will

be followed by a major conference on Climate Change Governance organized with the University of Bristol.

I want to end by taking this opportunity to thank the members of the Board of Trustees for their commitment to build this as a centre of intellectual excellence. I want to thank Governor Jamir and Chief Minister Digamber Kamat for their support of the Center's activities. I want to also urge all of you to support the Centre in its expansion plans. Finally, allow me to thank Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his visit to the Centre and in launching the *GOA DIALOGUES*.