



# OIFC at PBD Canada 2011

8-10 June 2011, Toronto, Canada

## A Report

Prepared by Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre: June 2011

## I. OIFC at PBD Canada 2011

Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC) in association with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) took a business delegation to Canada which coincided with the 5<sup>th</sup> Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) being held during 9 -10 June 2011 in Toronto, Canada.



*(L-R) Dr. A Didar Singh, Chairman OIFC & Secretary MOIA  
with Ms. Asha Luthra, Convener, PBD-Canada 2011*

The delegation visited Canada to explore the emerging business opportunities in India and Canada and the role that the Indian diaspora can play to not only capitalize on these opportunities, but also help build synergies between Indian and Canadian businesses.

The CEO's Mission program included participation at the Regional PBD and interactions with Indo-Canadian businessmen and Government officials. The event offered unparalleled opportunities for the Indian Diaspora in Canada to network with the delegation members.

There were two significant interactions organized by OIFC – CII, one with the Canada- India Business Council (C-IBC) and other with the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE).

C-IBC is comprised of senior executives from Canada's leading organizations involved in India and alongside industry leaders from both small and medium-sized enterprises. C-IBC is an organization that aims to bring together the "elite" of Canadian businesses with the elite of Indian businesses at the leadership level. On the other hand, CCCE is a not-for-profit, non-partisan

organization composed of the CEOs of Canada's leading enterprises and engaging in an active program of public policy research, consultation and advocacy.

The delegation was led by Mr. Deep Kapuria, Chairman & Managing Director, Hitech Gears; Ms. Supriya Banerjee, Deputy Director General, CII; Mr. Sriram H Iyer, President & CEO, ICICI Bank Canada; Mr. Deepak Sharma, SVP & Business Manager- NRI Service, Kotak Mahindra Bank; Ms. Sujata Sudarshan, CEO, OIFC; and Mr. Wikky Katyal, Director-North America, were some of the members of the delegation from India.

## II. Moving Forward

OIFC will continue its engagement with the PBD Canada 2011 delegates and members of C-IBC and CCCE, who interacted with the delegation members during their visit to Canada. This will help strengthen the interface and their reach with India. Some of the activities include:



*(extm L) Mr. Ashook Ramsaran, Executive Vice President, GOPIO International with Ms. Sujata Sudarshan, CEO, OIFC (extm R)*

- Regularly updating them with sector and state specific investment opportunities through OIFC's online business networking portal and monthly e-newsletters.
- Inviting them to sign in for the online business network and directory to enable them to reach out to the Indian market.
- Inviting like-minded associations in Canada to become OIFC's Associate Partners.

### **III. The Regional PBD Canada 2011 and few key points of discussion and various comments during the event**

On 9th June at Regional PBD Canada 2011, three pre-Convention seminars were held. The first was a 'Roundtable on Business Prospects between India and Canada'. The other two seminars were 'Roundtable on Building Bridges: People to People Contacts and Building Bridges' and 'Seminar on Synergistic cooperation in Arts, Culture and Visual Media'. All three pre-convention seminars were well attended.

Three plenary sessions were held on 10th June, 'Role of Indian diaspora: Building economic bridges', 'Engaging diaspora youth in Education and Innovation', and Interactive panel discussion on 'Engaging the Global Indian'. Mr. Harinder Takhar, the Ontario Minister for Government Services attended the session on 'Engaging the Global Indian' and Smt. Preneet Kaur, Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, gave the key-note address. It was emphasized that India and Canada should expedite signing the 'Social Security Agreement', 'Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement' and the 'Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement' to boost bilateral trade and economic engagement.

Five concurrent sessions were held during PBD 2011 on, 'Small and Medium Enterprises', 'Innovation, Science and Technology', 'Innovation and Economic Development', 'Healthcare and Telemedicine', and 'Advancing Equity: Focus on Gender' with eminent panelists.

India-Canada ties are developing at a time of enormous opportunities in India. India needs \$1 trillion in the infrastructure sector over the next decade and foreign investment (and trade) will continue to be an integral part of our growth.

Hence, at the inaugural speech of the fifth regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Smt. Preneet Kaur, India's Minister of State for External Affairs, said the Indian diaspora has become "an important partner for India's prosperity" by sending remittances back home, making investments, transferring technical know-how, and projecting India's soft power by popularizing its culture, films and dance.

At the concluding session "Canada-India Relations", Dr. Didar Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and Chairman, Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre (OIFC), said he was impressed by the views expressed at the two-day event.

He said, "This is probably the best Overseas or Regional PBD we ever had. These have been two days of exceptional interactions, and there have been excellent contributions from both, delegates and speakers. The message from the PBD is clear. The diaspora has an important role in India's engagement with other countries. Two days have generated many new ideas for India and Canada."

He further added that though the diaspora now realizes the potential economic benefits from engagement with rising economies like India and China, they will have to show perseverance and patience in their engagement with emerging economies like India. He recommended the three Ps – purpose, perseverance and patience – on the part of the diaspora to deepen their engagement with their ancestral land.

The Indian government would especially like to engage the second and the third generation of Indo-Canadians to come to India "voluntarily." To encourage the youth and young professionals, the Indian government has put in place several programs like Know India for the young professionals and youth to experience India.

In response to the question that why there is so much emphasis on the second and the third generation of Indo Canadians, Dr. A. Didar Singh, said, “The answer is obvious. We want them to connect with the homeland. The more important thing is we want them to want to connect. We don’t want to force the connection.”

Dr. Singh also pointed out that “India is the one country that is witnessing serious reverse migration” with the return of more than 100,000 Overseas Indians to India to be part of the booming Indian economy. The Indian government is targeting young Indian professionals across the globe because they are “professionally adept” and can straddle the two economies better.

He invited the NRI community in North America to join the next PBD in Jaipur from 7-9 January 2012. He also stressed on building comprehensive partnership in sectors such as Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and entrepreneurship, innovation, science and technology.

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