

ADDRESS BY DR. ASHWANI KUMAR AT THE COMMONWEALTH BUSINESS
FORUM, 2007 MEETING AT KAMPALA (UGANDA)
ON 20 NOVEMBER 2007”

‘Making Globalization work for all’

1. I am delighted to be here this morning among friends, eminent business and political leaders to represent India at the Commonwealth Business Forum, 2007.
2. The world faces enormous challenges in relation to the objective of poverty alleviation and satisfying the basic needs of the people. This is particularly so in the least developed and developing countries. The enormity of the challenge impels a global cooperative initiative through an effective public and private partnership. The initiative of the Commonwealth Business Council in promoting this partnership and facilitating concrete collaborative ventures is welcome indeed. It is particularly gratifying that this important meeting is being held in Kampala, in the heart of the African continent with which India is united by a shared past and a common future. It has been our endeavour at all times to consolidate our special relationship with Africa and with other members of the Commonwealth.
3. May I take this opportunity of complimenting the Commonwealth Business Council for selecting, perhaps the most pertinent theme for our deliberations this morning. Globalization, with its challenges and opportunities is an undeniable reality of our times. Indeed, what the future beholds for generations to come would be determined by our

collective response to the forces of globalization, which as Prof. Hobsbawm reminds us preponed the advent of the 21st century. The process of integration of national economies into a global economy has not been without its discontents, prompting a pronounced dissent in certain quarters in relation to its merits. Pierre Bourdeu, the French sociologist, Ralph Nader, Raul Prebisch were the early dissenters, joined subsequently by others including the well known anti-globalization NGOs who warned the world against the perceived pitfalls of globalization through protests on the streets of Seattle, Washington, Prague, Montreal, Genova and Davos. Their considered and conscientious critique of globalization, resulted in purposive initiatives and policy interventions by stakeholders to ensure a 'benign impact' of globalization, the inevitable pains at various stages of the process notwithstanding. The role of economic globalization as a factor in the expansion of world economy resulting in better living standards in greater freedom for a larger number of our people stands vindicated. The case of India is illustrative. Through a comprehensive policy of economic reforms with a human face initiated in the mid 80's, we have ensured that since 1985, about 431 million Indians have risen above extreme poverty. By 2005 the middle class in India would have expanded to 583 million people which is about 41% of our population. It is estimated that by 2025-27 India will have surpassed Germany as the world's 5th largest consumer market. Because we recognized and accepted the reality of economic globalization, our industry responded by harnessing all factors of national power to meet the challenges of an intensely competitive global economy. A Boston Consultancy Group (BCG) study has identified 100 global companies of the future from amongst developing countries. 21 of these are Indian companies. Our foreign exchange reserves, which stood at a little over one billion dollars in 1990 are now of the order of US Dollars 246 billion. India is today the world's 10th trillion dollar economy and is expected to become the world's 3rd

largest economy by 2030. PEW's Global Attitudes Survey ranks Indians as amongst the most optimistic people in the world. Indeed, there is a new India – a pulsating and dynamic India which lives in the optimism of our hearts. This India which is looking up at the sky and saying it's time to fly is the result of unshackling of the latent entrepreneurial capacities and energies of the nation as a whole.

4. The demands of an integrated global economy and response thereto have resulted in the emergence of globally integrated enterprises, standardized technologies with business operations across the world. The integration of production strategies with value delivery world wide and a shift from products to production have resulted in the movement of national policies aimed at convergence and symmetry thereby enabling countries to leverage their competitive advantages for the benefit of consumers and the people at large. The integration of work force in developing countries into a global system of production has raised living standards, improved working conditions and expanded the employment market in emerging economies, apart from reducing gender discrimination. Greater transparency in corporate governance, a heightened sense of corporate social responsibility, sharper focus on the maximization of human resource development are the other demonstrable offshoots of liberalization, free trade and the global enterprise.
5. At the same time, the forces of globalization have given a new dimension to challenges that we face in common. Terrorism and pandemics are no longer confined to the geographical boundaries of the past, the tremors of poverty and environmental degradation are felt globally, necessitating a global response. Globalization must fire global imagination.

6. Exclusion of large segments of humanity from the benefits of globalization and the consequential need to urgently construct a matrix in which the marginalized are integrated with the mainstream remains the most important challenge of our times. Also, the processes of globalization in the service of humankind must respect and recognize the value of identity and 'the dignity of difference'. We must ensure a harmonious co-existence of multiple identities in a world united not by blood but by belonging. In the debate on globalization India's perspective is anchored in the richness of its soul that respects plurality, diversity and equity in its widest connotation. We view globalization as an opportunity to be seized in aid of our cherished values of dignity and justice for all. For globalization to be sustained as a means of ordering the future world order, we need to ask ourselves with scholars like Jonathan Sacks, "Does it enhance human dignity? Does it create self-respect? Does it encourage creativity? Does it allow everyone to participate in the material blessings of this created world? Does it sustain a climate of equal regard – for employees as well as employers, the poor no less than the rich? Does it protect the vulnerable and help those in need to escape the trap of need? Does it ensure that no one lacks the means for a dignified existence? Do those who succeed share their blessings with those who have less? Does the economic system strengthen the bonds of human solidarity?"

7. We know that something new always comes out of Africa. Perhaps, here in Kampala, in the heart of Africa through the exertions of some of the wisest men and women we will find answers to these questions. I can say with Hegel that "we stand at the gates of an important epoch, a time of ferment when the spirit moves forward in a leap, transcends its previous shape and takes on a new one ...". The shape of the new world order would depend upon our collective response to the challenges that we face a la Prof. Toynbee who reminded us that "civilization moves forward on

the basis of challenge and response ...". The African renaissance tells us that history is signaling a turn. It is for us to turn the page and to do so now for there is no such thing as being too late.

8. The message of this meet should be loud and clear. The Doha Development Round intended to secure an equitable multilateral trading regime should be salvaged so that the rules of free and fair global trade that make sense of globalization for all, are established.

9. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is in our collective power to ensure that the process of globalization establishes not only a more creative and daring world but also a more humane and caring world. In thus scripting the contours of a just and fair economic order, we would have discharged the burden that is ours, for the benefit of humanity as a whole.

Thank you !