

**Statement by H.E. GEN. (DR) V.K.  
SINGH (RETD), Hon'ble Minister of  
State for External Affairs of India  
at 2<sup>nd</sup> ACD Summit held on 9-10  
October, 2016 in Bangkok**

Mr Chairman,

Excellencies,

I am delighted to be here at the second Summit of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue. The ACD has been in existence for last fourteen years. This organization was born out of a felt need to address challenges faced by countries of Asia from the global financial and economic crises. This Summit is

therefore timely, given the challenges that our nations face today. I take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Thailand for hosting this Summit and for the sincere efforts to make this Dialogue into a forum of continent-wide cooperation with the aim of creating the idea of an Asian community. Asia is a continent of great diversity. ACD is an important forum that brings together so many of our people.

In the intervening period since its establishment, ACD has almost doubled its membership. We have now announced our ambition to move into newer areas of cooperation and dialogue as

encapsulated in the six pillars of cooperation that have been identified. Most of our countries are facing a crises of slowing GDP growth, stagnating international trade and challenges of job creation for a young and growing population with high aspiration levels. On top of all these challenges we are faced with the menace of terrorism.

Terrorism today continues to remain the single most significant threat to peace and stability in our region. We need to stand united against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. There can be no justification for acts of terror on any ground whatsoever. Terrorism knows no boundaries. We need to

resolve to eradicate this evil from our region and beyond. We strongly believe that the global fight against terrorism should not only seek to disrupt and eliminate terrorists, terror organizations and networks, but also identify, isolate and penalize States who encourage support and finance terrorism, provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups, and falsely extol their virtues. There should be no glorification of terrorists and there is nothing called a 'good terrorist'. There is an urgent need for measures to counter and prevent the spread of violent extremism and radical ideologies. All our resolve to create a peaceful prosperous community will fail unless we

cooperate with each other to end this menace. In this informal dialogue mechanism of leaders, we would be failing our people if we do not pledge to use all the mechanisms available to us bilaterally and multilaterally to rid us of this fundamental threat to our societies, communities and nations.

If the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to truly be an Asian Century, if Asia is to emerge as the engine of world economic growth, our nations have to be far more interconnected than what we are. This connectivity has to begin at the sub-regional level, progress to the regional and then expand to link regions. In our sub region of Bangladesh, Bhutan India

and Nepal, we are already seeing significant progress in this connectivity through roads, railways, waterways, pipelines and electricity grids. The trilateral highway through Myanmar will connect this sub-region with Thailand and eventually to other ASEAN countries. India has offered a billion US dollars to ASEAN countries for connectivity projects including digital connectivity. We are reaching out to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries through port and highway development with Iran. Our SAGAR initiative (Security And Growth for All in the Region), maritime cooperation and emphasis on Blue Economy seeks to enhance cooperation among coastal and

island nations of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. India sees connectivity projects as essentially cooperative ventures that address the requirements and concerns of partner countries and not as unilateral initiatives to serve a national purpose.

Mr Chairman, this organisation is taking the important step of establishing a Permanent Secretariat. However we should not lose sight of the significance of informality and voluntary nature that has been the hallmark of the ACD, even as we identify and implement cooperative projects funded from voluntary resources.