

Bar Leadership Summit on reforms in the Indian Legal Services Sector

The Indian National Bar Association (INBA) in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade organized the 'Bar Leadership Summit on Reforms in the Indian Legal Sector' on Saturday, November 11, 2017 in New Delhi. The occasion was graced by Shri. Satya Pal Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for Human Resource Development (Higher Education), senior officials from the Government of India and several leading lawyers and professionals from the legal sector.

The Summit explored the issues and concerns surrounding the liberalization of the Indian legal services sector. The summit involved discussions on three major issues: (i) the conduct of arbitration in India; (ii) reforms in the Indian legal regulatory sector; and (iii) the liberalization of Indian legal services.

Shri. Suresh Prabhu, the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry who addressed the Summit through a video message emphasized the growing importance of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism and encouraged the legal community to increasingly make use of this mechanism for enhancing ease of doing business.

Shri. Satya Pal Singh, the Minister of State for HRD, in his inaugural address, stressed the importance of law as an enabler of justice and spoke on the importance of the impartiality and neutrality of the judicial system in India. Shri. Satya Pal Singh noted that the justice system should focus on the difficulties faced by the victims in particular.

Dr. Subhash C. Kashyap, President, INBA, who welcomed the gathering highlighted the importance of initiating discussions on the much needed reforms in the legal sector.

Shri. Suresh Chandra, Law Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, stated that India has huge potential to increase the size of the legal market in India which is around \$9bn dollars at present. He suggested that reforms

in this sector could tie in with the Prime Minister's agenda of "reform, transform and perform".

Ms. Sangeeta Saxena, Additional Economic Adviser, Department of Commerce highlighted the benefits that could accrue from liberalization in the legal sector including facilitating India's participation in global value chains.

Mr. R. S. Suri, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), noted that the "gulf of understanding between the Bar Council of India, State Bar Councils and the government need to be bridged" and that frequent consultations and deliberations are needed in reforming this important sector.

Professor James Nedumpara, Head, Centre for Trade and Investment Law, spoke about the need to introduce major challenges in the curriculum in law schools in India to enable the young Indian lawyers become 'global Indian lawyers' and avail the opportunities in the rising global corporate sector.

The discussion ended with a presentation on the myths and realities surrounding the debate on liberalization of legal services. The Summit on the whole agreed on the need to reform the legal sector to align itself with the new global realities in the profession.

The agenda of the conference and the background paper at the following link.

Agenda:

http://ctil.iift.ac.in/docs/LatestUpdates/INBA_agenda.pdf

Background Paper:

http://ctil.iift.ac.in/docs/LatestUpdates/INBA_11112017.pdf

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