



Remarks of USTDA Acting Director

Leocadia I. Zak

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Good morning, and thank you for joining us at this 2nd U.S.-India Aviation Partnership Summit. On behalf of the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and our many co-sponsors -- it is my great pleasure to welcome you here today. Looking out at the audience, I see many familiar faces. Many of you attended the first U.S. - India Aviation Partnership Summit in New Delhi in 2007 and I look forward to reconnecting with you. I am also looking forward to making new acquaintances with our first-time attendees.

I would like to begin by acknowledging and thanking the distinguished speakers joining me on the platform today.

First, I would like to welcome Mr. Madhavan Nambiar, the Honorable Secretary of the Government of India in the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Mr. Secretary, your leadership at the Ministry of Civil Aviation has been instrumental to the success of the ongoing India-U.S. partnership in Aviation. We are delighted to have you lead this distinguished delegation.

We also welcome a valued friend of USTDA, FAA Administrator Mr. Randy Babbitt. The FAA and USTDA have partnered around the world and we are particularly pleased with our partnership with India. Randy, thank you for joining us.

Finally, we welcome U.S. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Dennis Hightower. The Department of Commerce and its Commercial Service are critical longtime partners of USTDA in India and globally, in aviation ---and in many other sectors. Dennis, thank you for joining us this morning.

This Summit follows on the heels of a very important visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington. During that visit, both Prime Minister Singh and President Obama acknowledged the importance of the U.S.-India bilateral relationship. As a matter of fact, President Obama said: "I believe that the relationship between the United States and India will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century." Furthermore, both leaders emphasized

the importance of economic cooperation between our peoples not only as a means to speed economic recovery but also, in Prime Minister Singh's words, to promote "a deeper and better understanding between our countries."

Perhaps one of the best examples of economic cooperation and also people-to-people cooperation is the U.S.-India Aviation Cooperation Program that was launched at the First Summit in 2007. The ACP consists of Indian and US government officials, including USTDA and the FAA as well as private sector representatives and provides a forum for dialogue and a mechanism by which the members can highlight specific areas of bilateral technical cooperation, including appropriate training programs and technical activities.

The ACP's programs began in early 2008 with an innovative Air Traffic Management training program funded by USTDA that focused on improved high-density air traffic operations at several Indian airports. The program was year-long and featured both Indian and U.S. exercises.

In mid-2008, USTDA sponsored a technical trade mission to the United States focused on planning and certifying India's signature GAGAN satellite system. I'm pleased to note that our support contributed to India's award this past summer of a large contract to a U.S.-led consortium to help implement this advanced system.

Other mutually beneficial technical cooperation activities have been carried out since the ACP was established, and ACP membership has continued to grow from the seven founding U.S. member companies in 2007. Today the ACP has 29 U.S. member companies - large and small representing all aspects of the aviation industry.

Perhaps this increasing interest in the ACP and India's civil aviation is no surprise given the impressive growth trends in the Indian economy. Despite the global economic downturn, India's economy has continued to show growth as has its civil aviation sector.

We will hear more details during the Summit, but I am impressed by some of the basic statistics regarding India's civil aviation growth: annual passenger and commercial flights grew 8-to-12 percent over the past several years; new international airports were inaugurated and there are plans for new domestic and regional airports; air cargo volumes increased; and helicopter operations grew.

Our visiting Indian delegation is responsible for managing this very challenging growth trajectory. I am honored that we are hosting such a senior level delegation to this Summit representing all of India's civil aviation agencies. --I know it was difficult to get away from all of your responsibilities and I appreciate your efforts to be here.

We are also honored to have such a distinguished U.S. delegation including the members of our opening session as well as Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and U.S. Congressman Jim McDermott, Founder and Co-Chair of the India Caucus in the U.S. Congress, who will join us at tonight's dinner.

Given the impressive aviation statistics and star quality participation, no wonder we have such an outstanding turnout for the Summit.

I encourage you to take advantage of the expertise we have assembled here. Over the next two days you will hear about the current state and future prospects of India's aviation industry, air traffic management and airspace capacity, airport infrastructure development, aircraft maintenance and certification, aviation security and environmental best practices.

With the experts and delegations we've assembled, the Summit gives us the perfect opportunity to learn from one another, share ideas and make connections, establish new partnerships and reinforce existing relationships.

USTDA's goal for this Summit is to continue expanding the dynamic partnership we have enjoyed in the aviation sector for the mutual benefit of both our countries and for the safety and prosperity of our peoples. We have an exciting two days ahead of us, and I look forward to exploring with many of you just how we can work together toward these goals. If there is any way I or one of the other USTDA representatives can be of assistance, please let us know.

Thank you -- and welcome to the Summit.