

First General Meeting

Venue: Conference Hall II, India International Centre, New Delhi

Report of the Secretary (October 6, 2006)

I welcome you all to the first General Body Meeting of the Forum for Global Knowledge Sharing (Knowledge Forum). As all of you are aware the Forum for Global Knowledge Sharing is in many respects different from other professional societies. It is mainly a web based or a virtual forum with a registered office housed at the Institute for Human Development (IHD). Its website is hosted by Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment council (TIFAC), Department of Science and Technology. The mode of exchange and interaction is mainly through a specially created interactive website. Individual members who are registered with our Society are given a unique ID and password by which they can login to our website in an interactive mode. Furthermore, it is an interdisciplinary forum that provides a platform for scholars belonging to different disciplines like pure sciences, technology, economics, other social sciences and business management to exchange their research findings and conduct joint research relating to technology and global business.

Economists have been working on themes relating to technology creation and transfer without having an in-depth knowledge of science and technology. Likewise technologists have also been working on these themes without much or any knowledge of their economic viability. Therefore, some of us felt the vital need for a forum where technologists and social scientists could meet and interact. We were, however, not sure of its success and some of our colleagues were sceptical of the ability of scientists, technologists and economists to come together on one platform and collaborate in research activities.

As a first experiment in bringing together scientists, technologists and social scientists, we organised an international seminar on **Future Directions for Indian Economy: Technology, Trade and Industry**. This was organised by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore jointly with the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), Delhi. It resulted in the publication of a volume published by New Age International Publishers on behalf of IISc. Professor Indiresan was the Chairman of the Steering Committee of the seminar, Professor M V Krishna Murthy was the coordinator from IISc and I was the coordinator from IEG. During that time Professor S R Hashim was the Director of IEG and he took a leading part in the seminar. The two-day seminar was a success and it gave us confidence that such an interdisciplinary venture could succeed.

It was still not clear whether technologists and economists could work together and produce a joint study, whether they would make an effort to understand one another's language and could decide to speak a common language. Professor Rajan and I decided to collaborate and work on a book. **Global Business, Technology and Knowledge Sharing** was published by Macmillan. In this book we emphasised that

unidirectional technology transfer from a MNE to a firm in India will not succeed and for technology transfer to succeed, mutual knowledge sharing among the firms was needed. The positive reception to our study enthused us to embark on a forum for knowledge sharing.

Professors Hashim, Indiresan, Rajan and I met and decided to register the Knowledge Forum. Even before registration, this forum has been in existence purely as a web forum hosted by TIFAC. While attempting to register, we realised that it is not possible to register a virtual forum – we need an actual address. Professors Y K Alagh and Alakh Sharma very kindly volunteered and graciously allowed us to use the address of Institute for Human Resources Development and also helped us with the registration process. However, TIFAC continues to host our website and we are grateful to them. The IHD has been helping us with the administration of the Forum and in the organisation of our seminars. We thank both these institutions for their support.

Knowledge Forum was registered on August 25, 2005. The Memorandum of Association was signed by the following desirous persons who also formed the Governing Council (GC): Professor P V Indiresan (President), Professor S R Hashim (Vice-President), N S Siddharthan (Secretary and Director), Professor Y S Rajan (Treasurer), Professor B L Pandit (Member), Professor Alakh N Sharma (Member), Professor Y K Alagh (Member), and Professor Ashok Jain (Member). The desirous persons are also the founder members.

The first Governing Council Meeting after registration was held at 3pm on 22nd October 2005, at IHD. In view of the fact that Professor Y S Rajan, the Treasurer, had moved his office to Gurgaon, with logistics in mind, the Governing Council requested Professor Sharma to be the treasurer in place of Professor Rajan and Professor Sharma agreed to the request. The GC further appointed Professor Sharma as the Convener of Conferences and Symposiums. The meeting also expanded the strength of the GC to thirteen members and included the following members for a period of three years – Professor Daniel van den Bulcke (Vice-President), Professor Stanley Nollen (Vice-President), Professor G Baskaran (Member), Professor K L Krishna (Member) and Professor Anand Patwardhan (Member). The GC also fixed membership fees for individual and corporate members. It also authorised the opening of a bank account with the United Commercial Bank, IIPA branch in the name of Knowledge Forum, and appointed B C Choudhary & Co as auditors.

The General Body consists of all the GC members and all the registered members who have paid the membership fees. At present about 170 scholars are registered in our website as members.

The most important part of our website is the folder on “**Research Papers**”. All the registered members are allowed to submit their research papers. The submitted papers are refereed (peer reviewed) and the accepted papers are uploaded on the website. It is not necessary to be a registered member to read the

research papers. There is open access for reading purposes and “Google” search covers our website and research papers. In addition, the website <http://www.esocialsciences.com> gives a link to our website. We would like our website to be a major source of search for scholars on the theme, ‘Technology and Development’. The website, in addition to disseminating the research findings of our members, will also help interested researchers locate members of the Knowledge Forum working on similar themes. This, we hope, will facilitate the forging of research teams to conduct collaborative research. I am happy to report that at present we have more than 35 research papers on our website.

In addition to research papers, members of the Knowledge Forum have also been posting recent developments in the area of technology and development.

One of the organisations, if not the main organisation, that inspired us to launch the Knowledge Forum, is the Santa Fe Institute, an interdisciplinary institution founded by Murray Gell-Mann and Philip Anderson, winners of the Nobel Prize for Physics. It therefore gave us lot of satisfaction that the very first lecture we organised was a lecture by Professor Geoffrey West, the current President of the Santa Fe Institute. Professor West delivered the lecture “Growth, innovation and the pace of life”, at IHD on 3rd February 2006 at 5 pm. It was followed by dinner at IIC.

I am happy that our General Body is meeting now during the International Seminar, **Knowledge Based Industries, Employment and Global Competitiveness**. It is good to have our General Body meeting during our conferences as is the practice with most professional societies. This two-day seminar with international participation, with four Plenary Sessions, two lectures and 16 research papers would not have been possible without generous financial support from ICSSR and TIFAC. We are grateful to both the institutions. Our grateful thanks go to TIFAC for hosting our website. IHD has been helping us in all our activities including organising special lectures and seminars. I thank IHD for all their help and cooperation.

Our resource needs will be limited if our activities are confined to web interaction. However, if we expand our activities beyond the web space and venture into organising lectures and conferences, we need funds. Our membership fee is nominal and it may not be wise to use it to meet our expenditures. We need to build an endowment to meet our modest expenditures. I appeal to all our members to help in raising an endowment and our registered members who have not yet paid their membership fees, to please do so.

I invite you all to the seminar Reception and Dinner.

N S Siddharthan
Secretary and Hon. Director
October 6, 2006