

Good Evening, Distinguished Guests and Participants,

Welcome to our webinar on "I2U2: Towards a Transformative Quadrilateral Partnership". You might wonder why we've chosen a theme that resonates with such profound optimism. The answer lies in the unique potential of this strategic collaboration between Israel, India, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

The I2U2 Group, born in October 2021, represents more than just a traditional diplomatic alliance. It's a forward-thinking partnership that deliberately moves beyond conventional geopolitical constraints, instead focusing on economic pragmatism and strategic collaboration. This quadrilateral grouping represents a cross-continental bridge that defies traditional geopolitical alignments in which have a resource-rich Middle Eastern nation (UAE), a South Asian powerhouse (India), a technological innovator (Israel), and a global superpower (USA) collaborating in ways that challenge existing diplomatic paradigms.

I2U2 deliberately sidesteps traditional conflict narratives. Instead of focusing on historical tensions or regional disputes, the I2U2 partnership prioritises pragmatic economic cooperation and technological innovation. It's a model of diplomatic engagement that puts shared economic and strategic interests ahead of historical differences.

Earlier, this month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar speaking at the Manama dialogue in Bahrain affirmed hope for progress of 'I2U2' grouping. He captured the spirit of I2U2, highlighting the Gulf region as a vital bridge between Europe and Asia. This perspective underscores the strategic significance of our partnership. Launched during the 2023 G20 Summit, this landmark project aims to enhance connectivity between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe through integrated maritime, road, and railway networks.

A testament to our ambition is the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), an ambitious project that promises to reshape connectivity between continents. Launched during the 2023 G20 Summit, this landmark project aims to enhance connectivity between

Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe through integrated maritime, road, and railway networks. Through IMEC we're not just building infrastructure – but we're building bridges between cultures and economies.

Despite the complex geopolitical challenges – from regional conflicts to ongoing tensions – the I2U2 Group stands as a beacon of collaborative potential. We demonstrate that nations can come together, transcending traditional boundaries to address shared challenges and create mutual opportunities.

Therefore, our optimism is not blind hope, but a carefully calibrated approach rooted in concrete possibilities. We see immense potential in targeted joint investments that can truly make a difference. Imagine integrated food parks that address food security, hybrid renewable energy projects that combat climate change, and innovative space-based ventures that push the boundaries of technological cooperation.

The I2U2 partnership represents a new paradigm in international relations – one that prioritises economic integration, technological innovation, and strategic collaboration over historical divisions. Through this webinar, we expect our esteemed panellists to provide deep, critical insights into the strategic potential, economic opportunities, and geopolitical implications of the I2U2 partnership, exploring its innovative approach to addressing global challenges.

Through their expert perspectives, we aim to understand how this quadrilateral collaboration can transcend traditional diplomatic boundaries and reshape international economic and strategic cooperation.

Thank you.