

## **Welcome Remarks**

**By Pradeep S. Mehta, SG, CUTS International**

**“Ties that Bind: The India-U.S. Relationship in 2023”**

**It gives me immense pleasure to welcome our distinguished panel and esteemed audience to this significant event, as we celebrate 40<sup>th</sup> year of our organisation.**

**We at CUTS have diligently worked and happy to say that our voices have been heard around the world. With our 6<sup>th</sup> overseas center in Washington DC, we aim to become one of the leading advocates of the India-US relationship.**

**It is a defining strategic partnership and an evolving one! As we trudge along, this bilateral relationship would encompass more convergences on supply chain resilience, enhancing energy security, advancing inclusive digital trade, and robust defence partnership among others.**

**On the subject of today’s webinar, I would like to mention that It is an opportune moment for Hon’ble PM Modi to raise the need to revitalise multilateralism, particularly trade multilateralism, with President Biden. We had good cooperation in the run up to the**

**WTO's Ministerial Conference-12 at Geneva in June, 2022 which helped the international community to arrive at a consensus. One issue discussed there was the two-tiered WTO dispute settlement system with an effective Appellate Body, which needs to be restored, asap. This system has been of great advantage to the Global South, as poor countries could challenge and win trade disputes against rich countries.**

**Both India and the US are key stakeholders in the rules-based multilateral trading system, and need to lead from the front and work together to find solutions. In fact, we are organising another webinar on this very issue next Tuesday (20th June) to deliberate on how India and the US can collaborate to give fresh energy to trade multilateralism, and we hope to see many of you there as well.**

**Having said that both India's and America's strengths have derived from the diverse experiences, cultures, ethos, communities and common approach towards a functional democracy which is the bedrock of this relationship. This would be further enhanced when PM Modi celebrates the Yoga Day in New York on the 21<sup>st</sup> June! Do join him in this endeavour to keep yourselves healthy!**

**As of today, the United States is the largest trading partner for India and is on route to become its largest defence partner as well. This is subject to transfer of technology, making in India and at reasonable**

**prices. We understand the importance of this partnership in a shared commitment to address regional and global challenges and hence wish to buttress the economic and strategic ties between these two countries.**

**Furthermore, we do hope that the USA and India can cooperate in assisting African countries under a trilateral development model, with participation of the civil society, business chambers, academia etc, for the various issues which can help them to grow and reduce poverty. Most of them are now suffering from huge debt due to conditionalities imposed by China which has invested a large amount through loans in African infrastructure.**

**That said, what is important to see with the upcoming State Visit, is the road map to be laid out until 2047, as India plans to be a developed nation by then, leaving no one behind. I hope the distinguished speakers will address these issues in its full bloom.**

**Equally important is to see how both of us tackle common concerns such as the economic slowdown, impacts of climate crisis and biodiversity, unemployment, food and energy insecurity, global supply-chain disruptions, and concerns regarding free and open Indo-Pacific.**

**As India is hosting the G20 Summit in its capacity as the current chair of G20, we hope that the multilateralism is revitalised and we could jointly make this world a better place to live in!**

**I now would like to invite the esteemed panelists and the moderator to take forward this very timely and important discussion.**

**Jaipur, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2023**