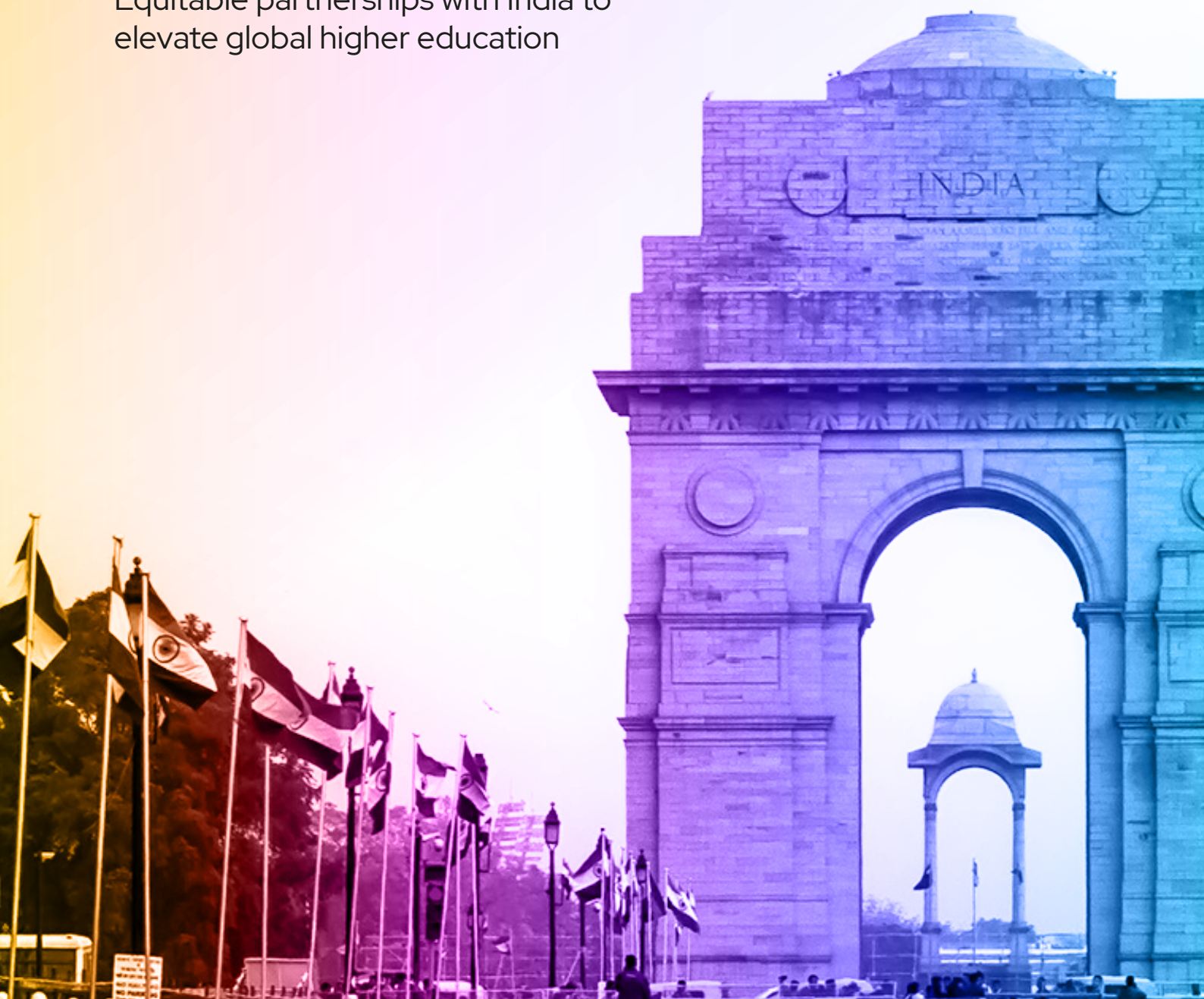


# India Summit 2025 Report

Equitable partnerships with India to  
elevate global higher education







# Contents

6

Key addresses

32

Building resilience  
through equitable partnerships

46

Innovative partnerships to  
advance Indian higher education

54

Achieving sustainable  
transformation

66

Afterword





# Your global enablement partner

QS offers unrivalled data, expertise and solutions for the higher education sector. Our mission is to empower students around the world to achieve their full potential, and we work closely with higher education institutions to help them take a data-driven approach to their strategic thinking.

## Our insights and expertise are unmatched

We gather billions of data points from our global network of employers, academics and prospective students, providing unrivalled insights into the higher education landscape. We are known and respected globally for our data-driven expertise, including the QS World University Rankings portfolio which incorporates data from millions of academic papers, and the views of academics and employers. The QS International Student Survey measures the preferences and motivations of over 100,000 prospective students each year.

## Partner with us and achieve your strategic goals

We partner with university and business school clients to deliver comparative performance analysis, advisory and global engagement support. We focus on metrics such as research impact, reputational standing, sustainability, student employability, and internationalisation to help institutions achieve their strategic goals.

## We are a trusted student recruitment partner for the sector

We reach over 60 million unique visitors per year through our digital platforms and our recruitment support covers every stage of the student journey, from initial awareness to offer acceptance and enrolment.

## We work with government bodies across the world

We are proud to have worked with the Indian government and others across Europe, Americas and the Asia Pacific region, helping them to build quality assurance frameworks and deliver national-level projects that bring together government, higher education institutions and QS to provide insights and actionable advice.

# Our sponsors & partners

Thank you for your generous support

<p><b>Title Sponsor</b></p>  		<p><b>Platinum</b></p>		<p><b>Country Partners</b></p>  	
<p><b>Gold</b></p>   		<p><b>State Partners</b></p> 		<p><b>Strategic Partner</b></p> 	
<p><b>Networking Reception</b></p> 		<p><b>Master Class &amp; Panel Session</b></p>  		<p><b>Conference Partner</b></p> 	
<p><b>Silver</b></p>    		<p><b>Bronze</b></p>     		<p><b>Academic Partner</b></p>  	





## SECTION 1

# Key addresses

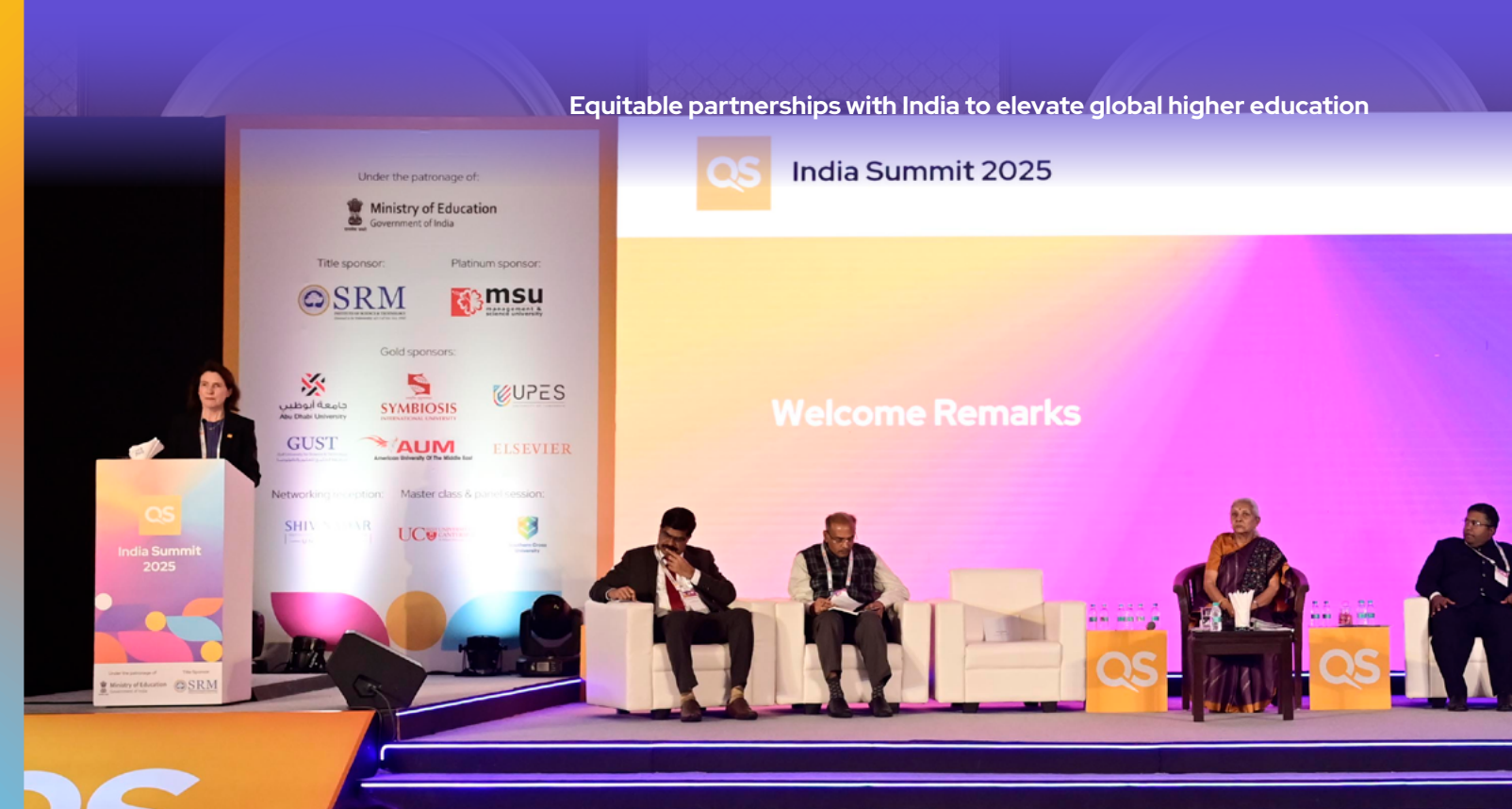




KEYNOTE

# Equitable Partnerships to Elevate Global Higher Education

Jessica Turner  
Chief Executive Officer  
QS Quacquarelli Symonds



The QS India Summit celebrated its sixth year this year - with QS Quacquarelli Symonds' CEO Jessica Turner noting in her keynote address that the Summit is now the leading thought-leadership forum for Indian higher education.

After thanking SRM University, the Government of India, and event sponsors for their support, Turner used her keynote address to set the tone for the Summit by highlighting the rapid rise of Indian higher education on the world stage, driven by the National Education Policy (NEP) and deepening global connections.

India's momentum is demonstrable. In the QS World University Rankings 2025, 26 of the country's top 30 institutions moved up - with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay leaping 31 places to 118 globally.

India has also excelled in reputation metrics, producing six of the world's top 30 biggest climbers in Academic Reputation and five in Employer Reputation.

Turner pointed to the inaugural QS World Future Skills Index, where India ranked second globally in the Future of Work indicator with a near-perfect 99.1/100, evidence of its agility in preparing a future-ready workforce. Turner noted that Prime Minister Modi framed this as part of a decade-long strategy to strengthen youth skills for self-reliance, innovation and wealth creation.

Prime Minister Modi described India's performance in the QS World Future Skills Index as "heartening", adding that over the past decade, his government has worked on "strengthening the youth by equipping them with skills that enable self-reliance and wealth creation", adding that "leveraging technology" had contributed to making India a "hub for innovation and enterprise."

Turner stressed that as the fastest-growing G20 economy and the most populous nation, India is uniquely placed to address challenges such as an ageing population, shifting GDP growth and the disruptive impact of AI on jobs.

Higher education, she argued, is at the heart of the solution - with India's institutions already demonstrating frugal innovation and a track record in nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators.

"The upskilling and reskilling challenge is global," she said, "and getting it right in India will help the world."

The Summit's theme - Creating Equitable Education Partnerships Amid Global Uncertainties: India's Role in Fostering Innovation and Research - reflected this urgency.

Turner called for meaningful cross-border collaboration between universities, educators, employers and policymakers to drive better outcomes worldwide.

With over 500 senior leaders from over 30 locations in attendance, she emphasised the opportunity for Goa to become a hub for forging these links.

Despite economic fluctuations, geopolitical shifts and climate challenges, however, Turner urged delegates to focus on the "huge potential for a new era in higher education" that equips graduates with transferable skills, innovation mindsets and a passion for lifelong learning.

Turner made clear that the Summit is not just a forum for discussion, but a platform to spark ideas, build partnerships, and accelerate transformation in global higher education - with India as both a leader and a bridge between worlds.





## KEYNOTE

# From Village to Global Stage - Driving Educational Excellence in India's Most Populous State

Honourable Smt Anandiben Patel  
Governor of Uttar Pradesh



Governor Anandiben Patel spoke with conviction about transforming public higher education in Uttar Pradesh - a state with 240 million residents - into a model of academic excellence and social responsibility.

When she took office in 2019, no university in the state ranked among the top 1,000 globally or scored highly in national assessments. Today, through coordinated effort, eight universities have earned NAAC A+ grades, with Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and Technology achieving the rare A++ on its first attempt.

Five state universities have secured coveted UGC Category One status - enabling them to hire foreign faculty - an unprecedented achievement for any Indian state.

A combination of academic ambition with community engagement under the "KG to PG" vision is the foundation for her strategy.

Universities adopt five villages each, casting their influence beyond campus walls, supporting early childhood, women's empowerment and access to government welfare schemes.

Anganwadi centres, previously lacking basic facilities, now benefit from university-funded furniture, learning materials and nutrition support - with over 30,000 centres receiving an upgrade without drawing on state funds.

Patel described higher education as a platform for tackling public health challenges, noting that the Prime Minister stated India needs to be tuberculosis free by 2025-26.

Patel says universities will adopt tuberculosis patients, providing nutritional and social support until recovery. But this isn't the only healthcare challenge they aim to solve, Patel states that universities have launched cervical cancer vaccination programmes for girls from low-income families, too.



According to Patel, agricultural universities are training women farmers in modern techniques, while medical universities run rural health camps that connect patients to specialist care.

Her call to action for the global audience was direct: adopt and mentor under-resourced Indian universities, sign MoUs, co-develop research and publish jointly.

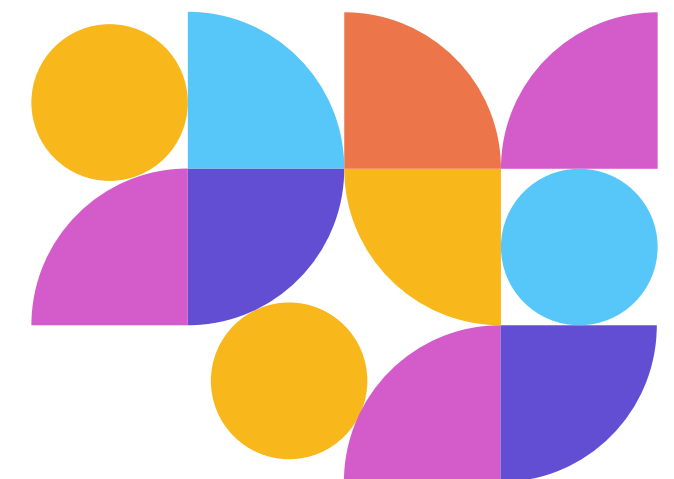
"Even a little collaboration from you will help," she said, pointing to opportunities in fields from agriculture to cultural studies.

She urged delegates to see India's diversity not as a challenge but as fertile ground for research and innovation, citing examples such as the Maha Kumbh festival as rich topics for global study.

By building cross-border academic alliances, she believes Indian public universities can overcome resource gaps and deliver transformative outcomes.

Patel closed with the ethos that underpins her work - Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam ("the world is one family") - and a reminder that higher education's role extends far beyond producing graduates.

It is about strengthening communities, driving equitable development and creating pathways for global collaboration that uplift entire societies.





KEYNOTE

# India Rising - A Vision for a Viksit Bharat Through Education

**Dr Ashwin Fernandes**  
Executive Director, Africa, Middle East,  
South Asia  
QS Quacquarelli Symonds



Dr Ashwin Fernandes was still beaming with pride following India’s 76th Republic Day celebrations, framing the nation’s future as a Viksit Bharat - a developed India powered by opportunity, innovation and values.

He envisions India’s future as a country that leads globally, not only in technological and economic capabilities, but in ethics, collaboration and social responsibility - with education as the catalyst.

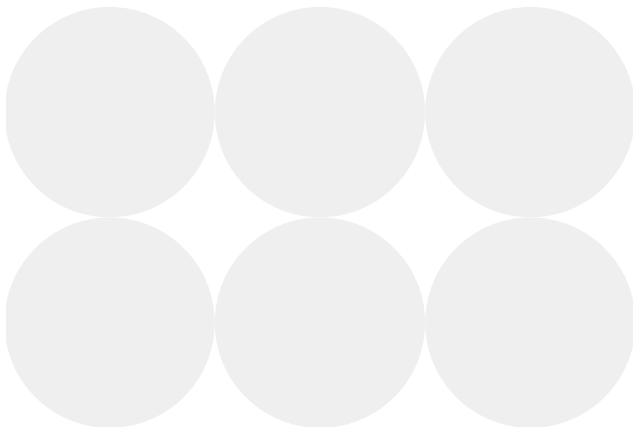
Fernandes detailed India’s academic tradition, reminding the audience it stretches back to Nalanda and Takshashila, and that its future depends on reviving this spirit of co-creation.

“We must move from talking about change to being the change-makers,” he said, calling for collaboration, concrete commitments and shared responsibility for shaping education’s future.

Fernandes identified Goa as the perfect setting for this mindset, with its harmony, creativity, and openness, he describes Goa as a rich tapestry of culture, history and natural beauty. He urged delegates to be inspired by Goa’s culture to think freely, partner boldly, and design solutions that meet the demands of a fast-changing world.

Fernandes emphasised that education must go beyond preparing students for exams - it should build character, curiosity and a sense of purpose, rooted in values like truthfulness, humility and self-reliance.

In this context, the Summit becomes a journey towards collective moksha - freedom from constraints that limit progress - and a launchpad for limitless possibilities in higher education.

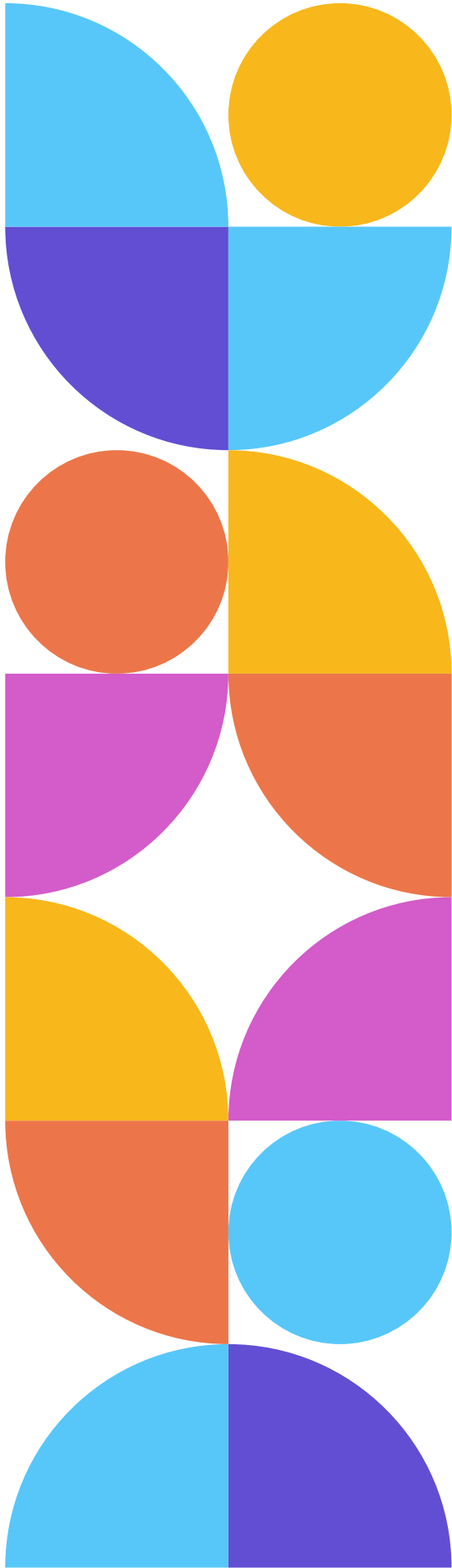


Universities have a deep duty to equip students with adaptability, empathy and the capacity to lead in turbulent times, according to Fernandes.

His message to delegates was both aspirational and practical: India’s rise is not a passing phase, but a movement driven by resilience and collective effort.

The challenge? To channel the momentum into cutting-edge research, equitable partnerships and initiatives that not only serve India’s needs but also contribute to global innovation and problem-solving.

“Let us create, collaborate, and capitalise on leadership,” he concluded. “The future of Indian higher education - and its role in the world - will be shaped by the partnerships we forge today.”



KEYNOTE

# From Mass Production to Empowering Everyone

Professor Vinay Kumar Pathak  
President  
Association of Indian Universities



“Creativity doesn’t only need resources. Give opportunity to the last mile, and innovation will follow.”

How important is our viewpoint as leaders? Professor Pathak, President of the Association of Indian Universities, urged higher education leaders to rethink their role through the lens of Gandhiji’s talisman: ask whether every decision serves the poorest and most vulnerable.

Working alongside Governor Anandiben Patel in Uttar Pradesh, he witnessed how resource-limited universities can reach global standards, noting how 18 universities in the state improved their NAAC ratings without major new infrastructure, driven by leadership and collective commitment.

He contrasted India’s approach with global trends, stressing the merit of education “with values” over purely technical training.

Low-cost and open-access learning initiatives such as NPTEL make degrees affordable, while public universities deliver quality education at a fraction of private-sector costs.

Citing research data, he noted that many of India’s unicorns, patents and innovations come from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities – proof that creativity is not a byproduct of wealth or status, and that it can – and will – thrive with modest resources and opportunity.

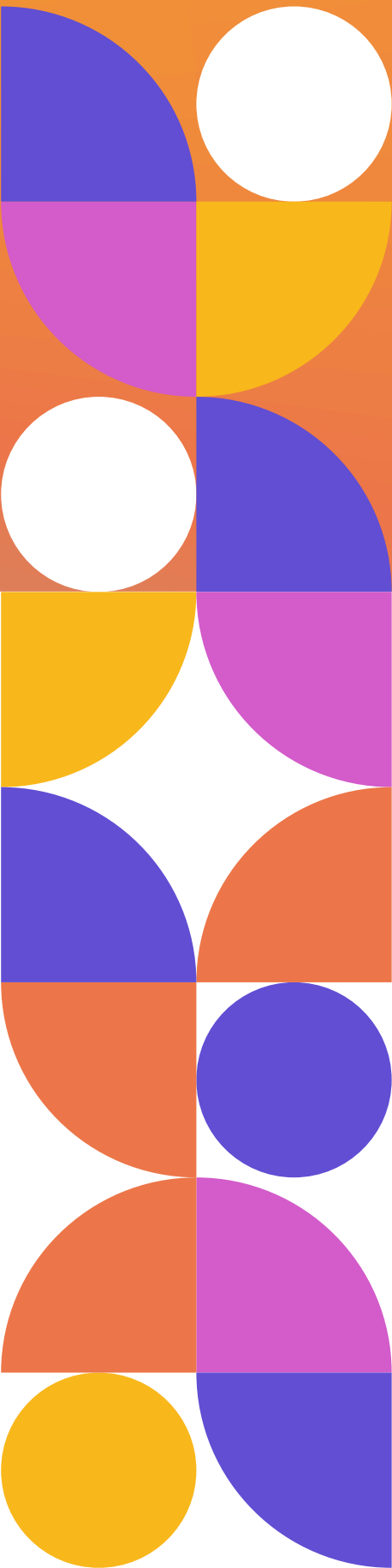
Pathak noted how fast the research landscape is shifting globally, with Chinese universities increasing their research output, signalling a new era in innovation geography.



“It shows that there is a turbulence and change in the whole world’s perspective on how to innovate and foster research. That, as well as the pace of change in technology, artificial intelligence and other disruptive technologies, the world is changing in a different direction,” he said.

Pathak called for equitable partnerships free from colonial hierarchies, with IT, internet access and AI levelling the playing field.

His closing reflection – drawn from his wise and illiterate mother – summed it up: “We need education, yes, but also wisdom. Technology, but also the knowledge of how to use it.”





KEYNOTE

# One Earth, One Family, One Future

Honourable Shri P.S. Sreedharan Pillai  
Governor of Goa  
India



Following the celebrations of India’s 76th Republic Day, Governor Pillai said he wanted to reflect on India’s journey from its constitutional beginnings to its modern role as a global unifier.

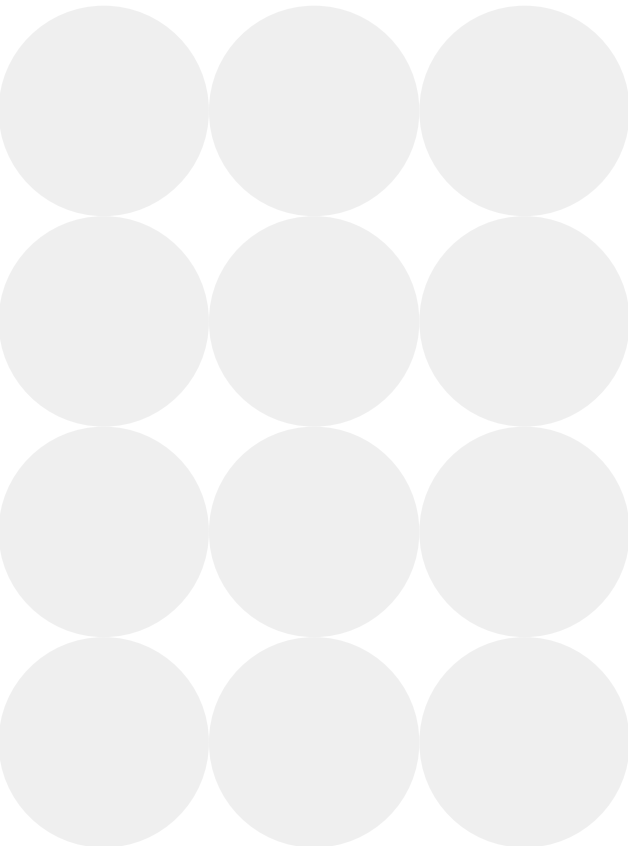
He recalled the 1950 debates over the country’s name, settling on “India, that is Bharat” - a bridge between ancient heritage and modern aspirations.

Drawing on India’s history of welcoming all religions without persecution, he linked this openness to Prime Minister Modi’s 2022 G20 message: One Earth, One Family, One Future.

Education is central to realising this vision for Pillai, as he believes knowledge drives enlightenment and development.

Quoting Swami Vivekananda: “Education is the manifestation of perfection within a human being,” Pillai urged universities to do more for their ecosystems, to shape not just skilled graduates but also artists, researchers and leaders grounded in values.

Pillai’s message was simple yet profound. Sustainable global peace and prosperity depend on equitable, values-driven education that develops both intellect and character.



“Education is the guiding light, the manifestation of perfection within us all.”

KEYNOTE

# Building a Modern UK-India Education Partnership

Lindy Cameron CB OBE  
British High Commissioner to India



“This is an education market like no other – young, ambitious, and ready to lead globally.”



Lindy Cameron celebrated what she sees as one of the most exciting moments in UK-India relations, with education at its core.

Fresh from high-level visits and agreements between the two governments, she emphasised the need for equitable partnerships that deliver mutual benefit in skills, research and innovation.

The UK-India higher education relationship is already deep, built on decades of collaboration and strengthened by the Indian diaspora in the UK, but Cameron sees untapped potential.

According to Cameron, India’s youthful demographic (65% under 35) is a global asset, and demand for education that leads directly to jobs is surging.

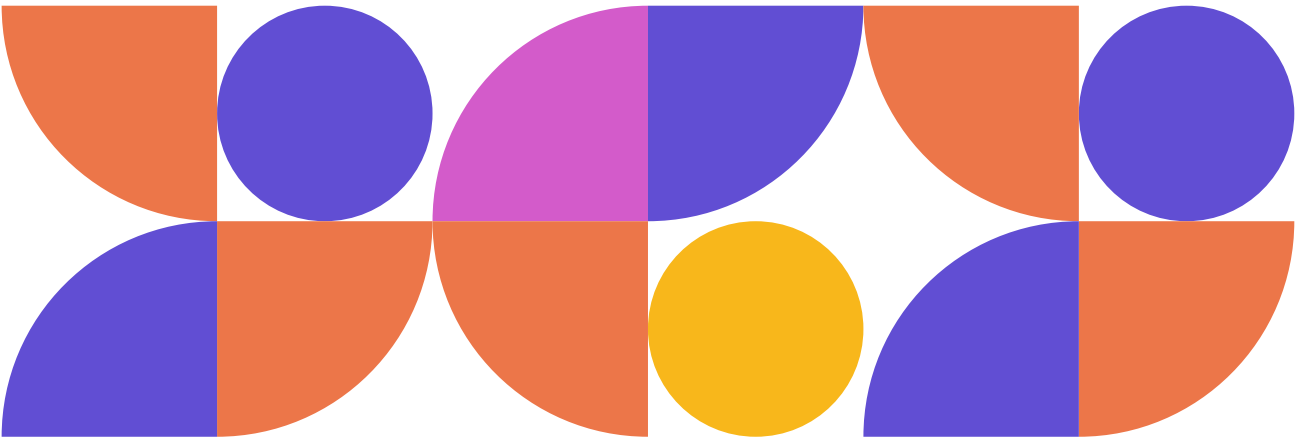
Cameron cited recent policy shifts that have opened new opportunities for institutions in India, namely the NEP 2020 and the mutual recognition of qualifications agreement; UGC foreign collaboration regulations enabling joint, dual, and twinning degrees; the 2023 international branch campus regulations and GIFT City incentives.

Cameron discussed UK-India partnerships and new jointly developed undergraduate and postgraduate courses being announced, laying the foundations for future innovations and enabling us to work together to tackle global issues.

Take University of Glasgow with IISER Pune on STEM teacher training; Durham University and Amity University’s joint Master’s in water and sustainability; and the University of Southampton becoming the first foreign university licensed to open a campus in India, to name but a few.

Cameron also pointed to joint work in climate resilience, water security and disaster preparedness – areas where skills gaps are global and urgent. She urged universities to look beyond India’s biggest cities, to form locally tailored partnerships, and to harness technology to expand choice for students.

Her call to action: UK and Indian institutions must co-create programmes that not only meet today’s skill needs but prepare graduates to lead in emerging fields like AI, green technology and global health.





KEYNOTE

# From Recruitment Market to Global Partner

Lord Kamlesh Patel  
Baron Patel of Bradford, House of Lords  
United Kingdom



**“It’s time to move from recruitment to real partnership - co-creating solutions for a better world.”**

Lord Patel called for a decisive shift in how the world engages with Indian higher education. He argued that for too long, universities have viewed India primarily as a source of student recruitment.

Lord Patel said that now is the time to embrace India as an equal partner in designing inclusive, accessible and globally significant education models.

He pointed to NEP 2020 and the establishment of the National Research Foundation as game-changers - policies that encourage joint and dual degrees, deeper research collaboration and innovation partnerships.

The University of Southampton’s planned Delhi campus, built on years of relationship-building and its India Centre for Inclusive Growth, stands as a model of strategic, long-term engagement.

Research, Patel stressed, is the “engine” that drives transformative solutions to global challenges like climate change, health inequities, food security and AI regulation.

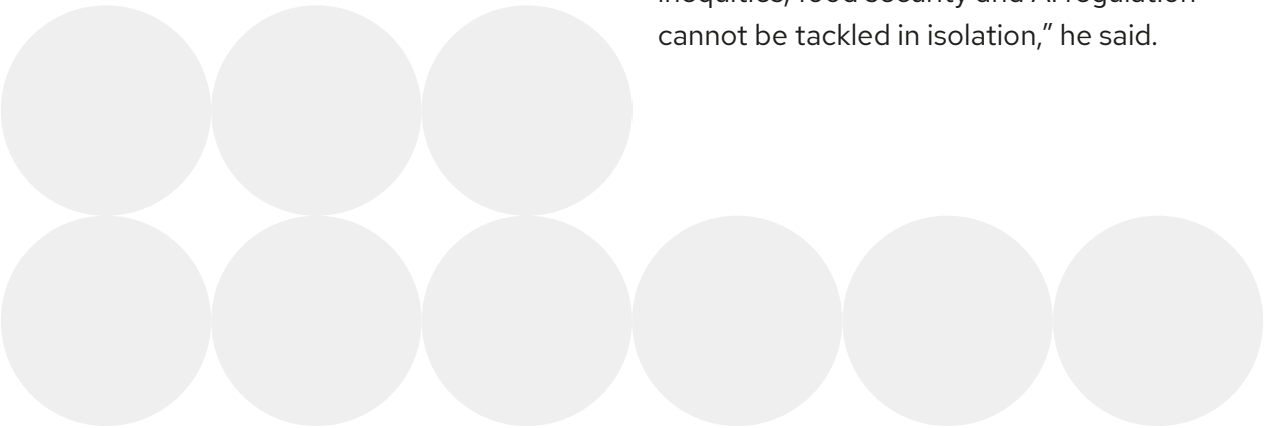
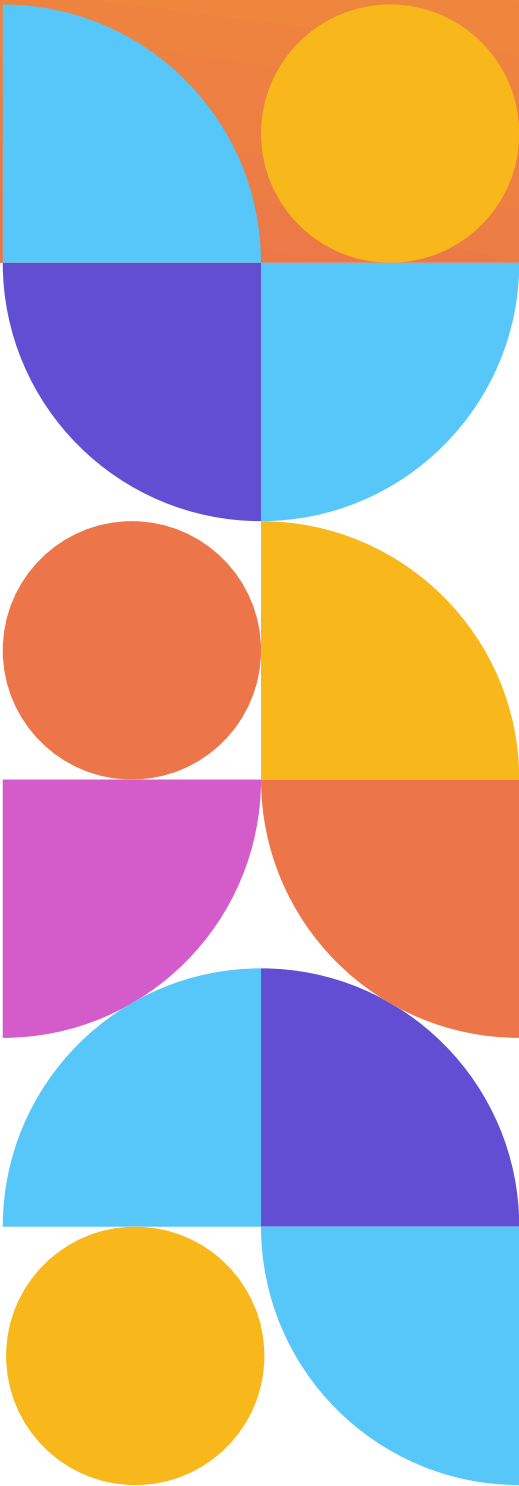
During his time working with the Commonwealth Secretariat, he said it became clear that achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals requires cross border partnerships.

“Challenges like climate change, healthcare inequities, food security and AI regulation cannot be tackled in isolation,” he said.

He calls for partnerships that bridge divides, co-create innovative solutions and drive progress towards the SDGs. This is how we create a brighter, more equitable future for all.

To make these partnerships effective, he urged leaders to focus on: open communication to build trust; aligned goals to ensure relevance; shared metrics to measure tangible social and economic benefits.

His closing challenge to delegates was practical and personal, asking attendees to leave the Summit with a commitment to form at least one impactful partnership this year. “In the words of Abraham Lincoln, the best way to predict the future,” he reminded the audience, “is to create it.”



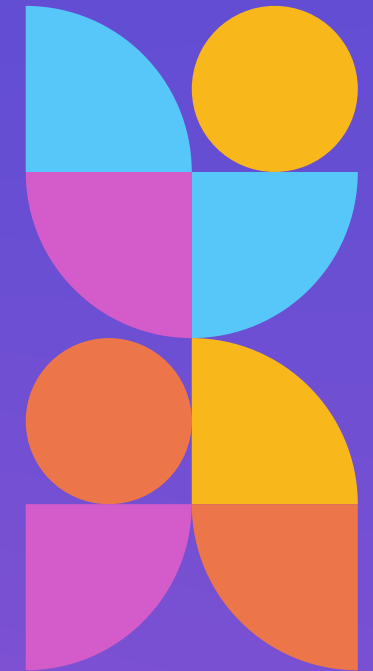
KEYNOTE

# Education as a Social Contract for Justice

Dr Fanta Aw  
Chief Executive Officer  
NAFSA



“Educational access is not an act of charity - it’s an act of justice.”



Fanta Aw spoke with passion, challenging higher education leaders to see their mission not as charity, but as justice. She urged leaders to treat it as a social contract to provide equitable access to quality education for all.

Speaking as both a global education and sociologist, Aw argued that the post-pandemic world cannot return to “business as usual”, it demands transformation.

Aw identified four forces shaping education’s future:

1. The “youth quake” which boasts unprecedented numbers of young people in the Global South seeking opportunity
2. Exacerbated inequities which see racial, ethnic and economic disparities in access and outcomes
3. Political and ideological divisions threatening openness and inclusion resulting in rising polarisation
4. And finally, she spoke of climate and environmental injustice which is disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities



Aw urged institutions to move students and community partners from the margins of solution-seeking to the centre, to design human-centred, equitable systems and to expand the “tables” where decisions are made.

“We must involve the whole of society in learning. We need learner-centred, human-centred and equitable systems willing to question the assumptions we have about how and where learning should take place, and who has the right to quality education.

“There is room for so much innovation in this space, and I’m heartened by what is being done here in India and other places.”

Collaboration must replace competition, she says, and empathy, humility and compassion must be treated as leadership essentials.

On AI, she noted its transformative potential but stressed that technology cannot replace the uniquely human qualities education must cultivate. “We need a playbook for how we can effectively coexist with AI, one that would allow us to be fully human,” she said.

Quoting an African proverb, she reminded delegates: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Her final message was a call for urgency.

India is both the present and the future, and leaders must act now to close the opportunity gap. “Talent is universal,” she said, “but opportunity is not.”





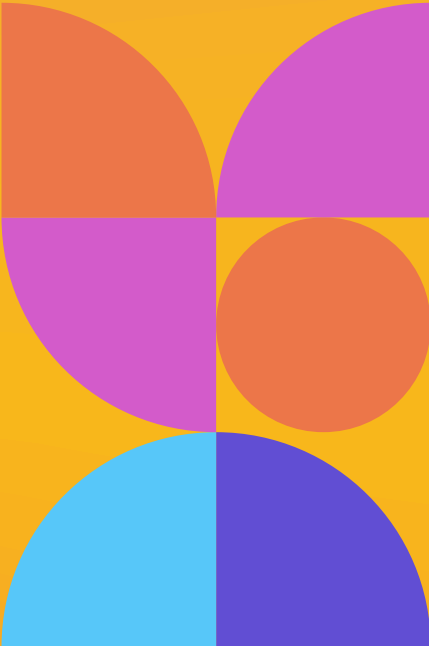
KEYNOTE

# India’s Moment to Lead in Skills, Research and Innovation

Honourable Shri Jayant Chaudhary  
Minister of State for Education  
Government of India



“India is ready to lead - not just for itself, but for the world.”



India’s higher education and skills ecosystem is at a pivotal turning point according to Minister Chaudhary - one where the country’s academic excellence, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit can shape the global future.

During his keynote, Chaudhary highlighted India’s strong positioning in the QS World University Rankings 2024, with over 45 institutions listed, praising the nation securing the second-place score in the QS World Future Skills Index 2025 for the Future of Work indicator (99.1%).

Chaudhary said that India’s second-place position reflects India’s commitment to preparing a workforce for the country’s emerging high-demand roles.

The transformation, Chaudhary said, goes beyond just premier institutions. “Our vision is far reaching,” he said.

This is where the National Education Policy comes in - which Chaudhary said is driving a transformative change by emphasising research and quality in higher education across all regions.

Initiatives like “One Nation, One Subscription” are democratising knowledge, giving 18 million researchers and students access to 13,000 scholarly journals.

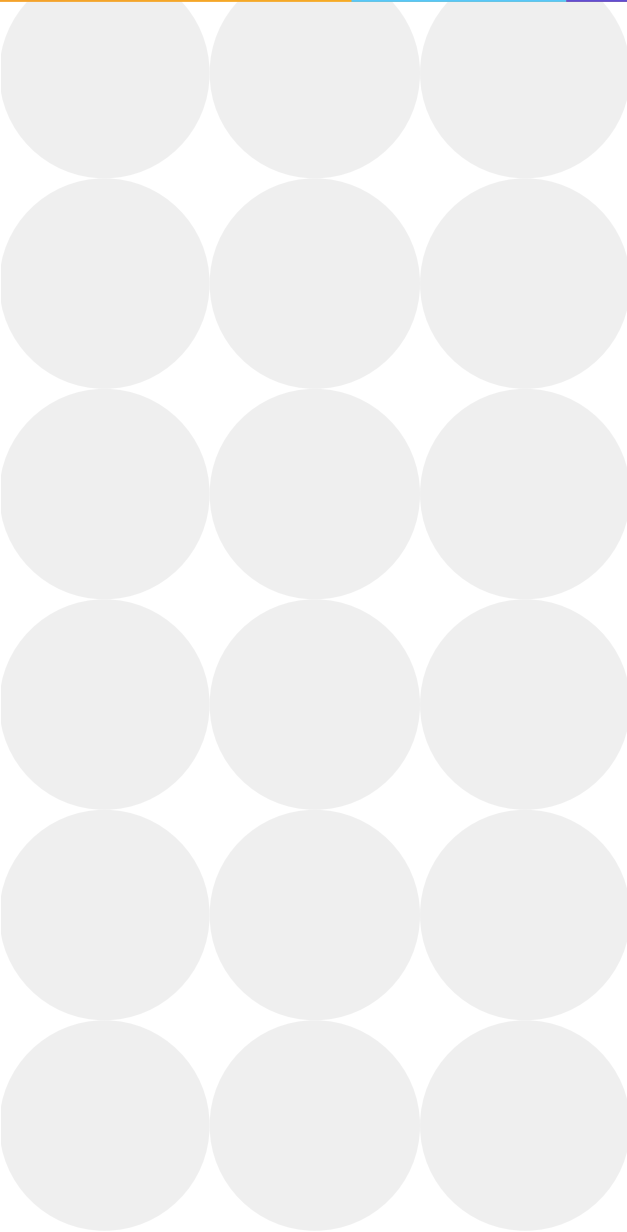
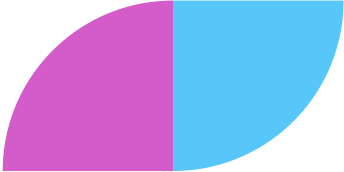
He linked this academic rise to India’s broader innovation economy - and with over 100,000 startups, 117 unicorns worth more than \$340 billion and more than 120,000 jobs created, India is now the third largest startup ecosystem globally.

But what is the challenge moving forward? To align education, skilling and entrepreneurship to create a dynamic, future-ready workforce.

AI and GenAI, Chaudhary noted, are already transforming industries and jobs, adding that the World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs report predicts that AI will trigger the most significant labour shift since the Industrial Revolution, with 170 million new roles created by 2030.

International partnerships, mobility and research exchange - fostered by platforms like the QS India Summit - are essential to ensure India’s growth benefits the world, according to Chaudhary.

He concluded his speech with optimism: “This is our moment,” he said. “Let us create a legacy of knowledge, innovation and opportunity that future generations will build upon.”





## KEYNOTE

# Research Collaboration for Resilient Futures

**Dr Marjorie Spooner O'Neill**  
Executive Director  
Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)  
Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Member for Coogee  
Parliamentary Secretary for Transport  
Member of the Australian Labor Party



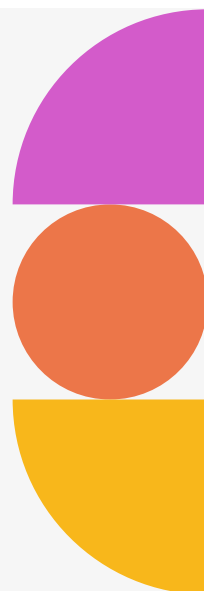
**“Resilience is not a solo act - it’s a global collaboration.”**

Dr O'Neill set out a clear vision for higher education as a driver of resilience – the capacity to adapt, innovate and thrive amid global uncertainty.

Drawing on her experience leading the APRU, a network of top Pacific Rim universities, she argued that solutions to complex challenges demand collaboration across borders, sectors, and disciplines.

She spotlighted three priority areas for joint action:

- 1. Climate resilience leveraging research to mitigate disasters, protect biodiversity, and ensure sustainable food and water systems**
- 2. Public health security to strengthen systems to respond faster to pandemics and health inequities**
- 3. Inclusive innovation to ensure technological advances benefit all communities, not just the privileged few**

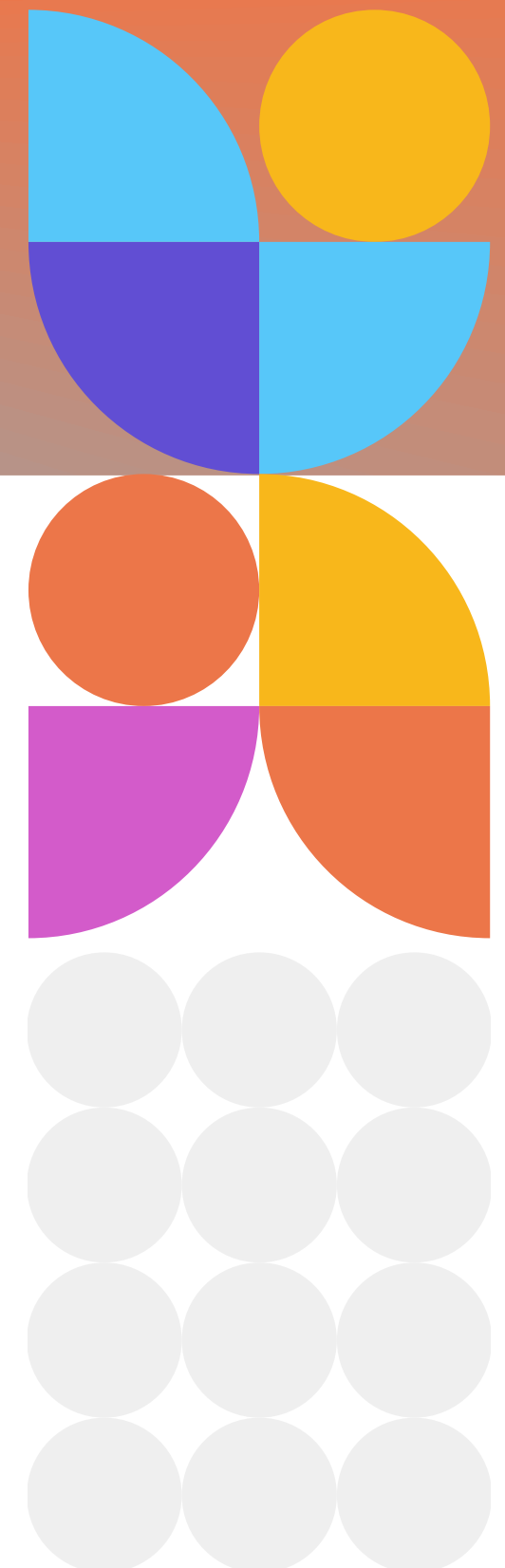


India, she stressed, is central to this agenda. Its scale, diversity and innovation capacity make it a natural partner in building the knowledge networks and research partnerships that global challenges require. NEP 2020's openness to collaboration creates fertile ground for projects that combine Indian expertise with global resources.

O'Neill urged universities to embrace “research diplomacy” – building trust and mutual understanding through shared projects – and to treat students as co-creators of knowledge.

She noted that APRU's work on student leadership and resilience training shows that the next generation is eager to take on these challenges if given the tools.

Her closing thought was a call to action: “The future will not be built by any one nation or institution. It will be built by those willing to connect, to listen, and to work together for the long term.”



KEYNOTE

# India's Innovation-Driven Path to Global Education Leadership

**Professor Dr T. G. Sitharam**  
Chairman  
All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)



“India’s future in education is global, and the world’s future in education will have an Indian imprint.”

Professor Dr T. G. Sitharam opened with a sweeping view of India’s educational journey – from the world’s earliest centres of learning to modern global players like the IITs and IIMs.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership, he said, India is not just scaling up access, but reshaping itself into a hub of innovation, research and international collaboration.

Sitharam pointed to the National Education Policy 2020 as a “transformative blueprint” for multidisciplinary learning, digital integration and skills development. Central to this vision are initiatives like the Smart India Hackathon and AICTE Ideal Labs, which challenge students to solve real-world problems through technology. Female participation in engineering and management, he noted, is rising – a positive sign for a more balanced and inclusive talent pipeline.

Equitable partnerships with international institutions are key to this transformation. Sitharam urged deeper collaborations in joint research, curriculum co-design and student exchanges, particularly in tackling shared global challenges such as climate change, healthcare and sustainable development.

India’s expanding digital public infrastructure – coupled with a national push for entrepreneurship and skilling – is opening doors for students from diverse backgrounds, even as the country works to raise its gross enrolment ratio.



Reflecting on India’s pandemic response, he praised the nation’s resilience and commitment to global cooperation. India’s pivotal role in vaccine production and distribution, he said, showcased both its scientific capacity and its sense of global responsibility. The crisis also fast-tracked digital learning adoption, with platforms like Deeksha and Swayam closing access gaps and embedding technology into everyday teaching.

Professor Sitharam urged attendees to leverage the QS India Summit as a catalyst for meaningful partnerships, bold ideas and global impact.

By blending academic excellence with cultural heritage, and local ingenuity with global collaboration, India can help shape “a brighter, more equitable future for education worldwide.”





KEYNOTE

# Openness, Stability and Collaboration in Global Higher Education

**Lord Jo Johnson**  
Former UK Minister for Universities and Science;  
Chair, International Education Centre, King's College London



“Openness in higher education is not a weakness, it’s a competitive advantage.”



During his keynote, Lord Jo Johnson framed global higher education as entering a defining period – one where openness, stable policy and purposeful collaboration will determine which nations thrive in the knowledge economy.

Drawing on his experience as UK Minister for Universities and Science, he emphasised that consistency in higher education policy is a competitive advantage.

When governments maintain long-term direction, he said, institutions can plan strategically, attract investment, and deepen international partnerships. By contrast, constant policy changes erode trust and derail progress.

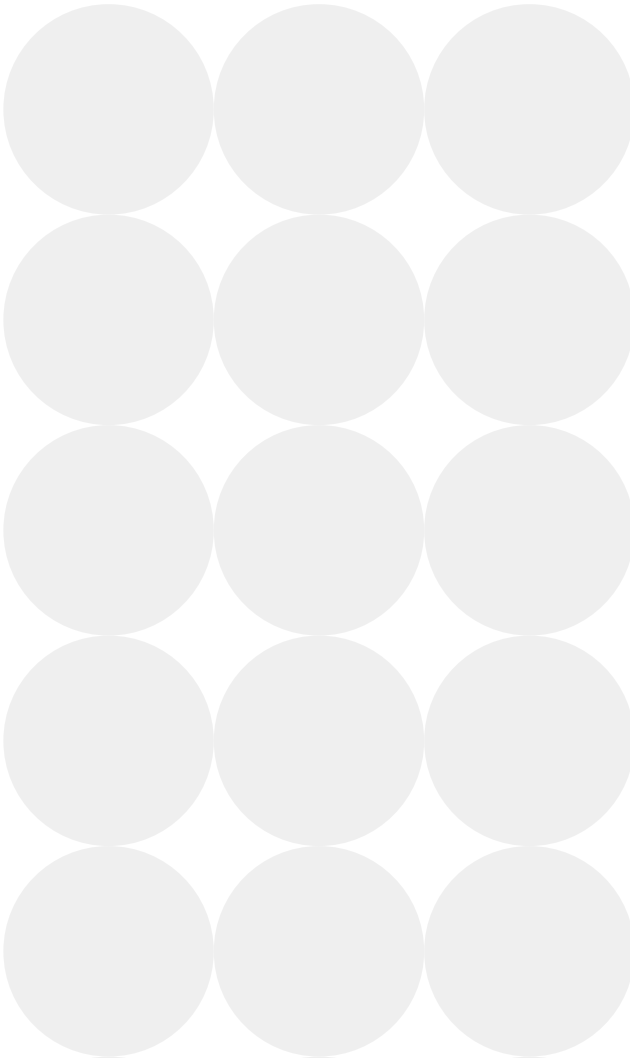
Turning to India, Johnson praised the ambition of the National Education Policy 2020, describing it as a “globally resonant blueprint” for building a world-class education system.

But he cautioned that regulatory reform alone will not make India a global study destination – it must be matched by investment in research capacity, modern infrastructure, and faculty development.

He underscored the role of partnerships in linking complementary strengths, from joint degrees to research collaborations and faculty exchange. Internationalisation, he stressed, should be measured not by recruitment numbers alone, but by the quality of outcomes and experiences for all students, domestic and international.

Concluding, Johnson urged leaders to see universities not just as pipelines to the job market, but as institutions that prepare graduates to thrive in – and shape – an interconnected, competitive world.

“This is not a market,” he said. “This is an opportunity to contribute to the biggest human capital development challenge that we all face as a population.”



## Setting Up an International Branch Campus



Dr Ashwin Fernandes, QS Executive Director for Africa, Middle East & South Asia, explores what Indian universities need to do to set themselves apart from international universities, what the new regulations are, and lays out a ten-point plan for setting up an international branch campus in India.

### What is the new regulatory framework for international institutions?

The National Education Policy 2020 has envisioned that “top universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.” For this, “a legislative framework facilitating such entry has been in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.”

The University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations on Setting up and Operation of Campuses of Foreign Higher Educational Institutions in India have been framed to allow the entry of higher-ranked Foreign Universities to provide an international dimension to Higher Education, enable Indian students to obtain foreign qualifications at affordable cost, and make India an attractive global study destination.

Two key aspects under the Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEI) Act are:

- The FHEI must hold majority ownership/equity in the joint venture which sets up the FHEI.
- The FHEI campus in India should have its independent campus with the physical, academic and research infrastructure and facilities required to conduct its academic and research programmes.

## SECTION 2

# Building resilience through equitable partnerships



# Setting up in India: The ten-point plan

Setting up campuses in India for international universities involves several steps and considerations due to legal, regulatory, cultural, and logistical factors. For more bespoke guidance, QS can be your strategic advisory partner.

- 1

Market research and feasibility study: Undertake thorough market research to assess the demand for programmes among students in India who prefer not to travel abroad or find studying abroad prohibitively expensive.
- 2

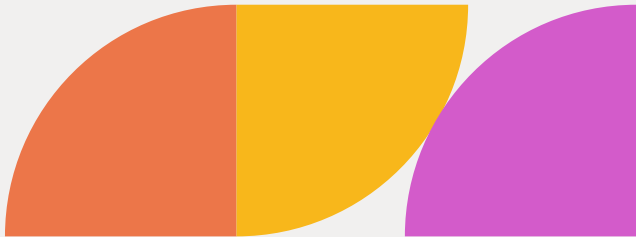
Legal and regulatory compliance: Develop a solid understanding of the regulatory framework governing foreign educational institutions in India. International universities must be FHEI-compliant and obtain necessary approvals from regulatory bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Education.
- 3

Partnerships and collaborations: Establish partnerships with local educational institutions, government agencies, or corporate entities to navigate the regulatory environment, access resources, and gain credibility in the local market.
- 4

Infrastructure development: Next, identify suitable infrastructure for the campus, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, administrative offices, and recreational facilities, while ensuring that they comply with local laws and regulations.
- 5

Faculty recruitment and training: Recruit qualified faculty members with expertise in relevant fields who can deliver high-quality education. They should also be provided training and support to ensure they understand local academic practices, cultural nuances, and regulatory requirements.
- 6

Curriculum development and adaptation: Adapting the university's curriculum to suit the needs and preferences of Indian students while maintaining the academic standards of the parent institution will be another challenge, though it can be greatly rewarding when done with care and attention. Incorporating local case studies, examples, and cultural perspectives to enhance relevance and engagement is key in this process.



- 7

Student recruitment and admissions: Marketing strategies to attract prospective students should be geared towards an understanding of education needs and student interest.
- 8

Financial planning and sustainability: Develop a comprehensive financial plan that accounts for initial setup costs, ongoing operational expenses, and revenue streams such as tuition fees, grants, donations, and research collaborations. Ensure that the business model is sustainable in the long term.
- 9

Quality assurance and accreditation: Implement mechanisms for quality assurance and continuous improvement to maintain academic standards and credibility. Seek accreditation from relevant bodies to enhance the reputation and recognition of your programmes.
- 10

Community engagement and stakeholder relations: Engage with local communities, government authorities, industry stakeholders, and other relevant stakeholders to build trust, foster partnerships, and address any concerns or challenges that may arise.



Setting up a campus in India for international universities requires careful planning, collaboration, and adherence to regulatory requirements, but it can also offer significant opportunities for academic excellence, cultural exchange, and global impact. Consulting legal experts, educational consultants, and industry professionals familiar with the Indian market can help navigate the complexities and maximise the chances of success.

As we've explored, top international universities should consider India as an expansion hub, and it is mutually beneficial for the Indian partners and students too.

Indian universities gain international recognition, increase their student enrolments and diversify their revenue streams. Students receive a high-quality education, fit for their dream career.

International universities gain ground as educational behemoths and tap into the vast resources India has to offer on its own soil. This way, the international university, in concert with India, can empower the next generation of workers and leaders through a skills-first approach, agnostic of where the education is imparted geographically.

PANEL

# Expanding Global Presence in India through International Branch Campuses: Unlocking Opportunities for Collaboration

**Chair:**

**Dr Helen Kelly**  
Principal Consultant  
QS

**Marisa Mastroianni**  
Managing Director and  
Group CEO  
University of Wollongong  
Global Enterprises

**Dr Abhay Kumar Sinha**  
Director General  
Services Export Promotion  
Council

**Professor Mark E. Smith**  
President and Vice-  
Chancellor  
University of Southampton

**Ravneet Pawha**  
Vice President (Global  
Engagement)  
CEO (South Asia)  
Deakin University

The first panel session of the QS India Summit tackled the bold and sometimes bumpy road to establishing international branch campuses (IBCs) in India.

The panellists shared their first-hand experience on what it really takes to succeed, from deep cultural understanding to patient regulatory navigation and implementation - demonstrating to delegates how to reap the rewards of international branches.

Ravneet Pawha began the discussion by talking about Deakin University's three-decade story in India, showing how relationships built carefully over time evolve from student exchange programmes to full

academic partnerships, joint academies and dual degrees.

She reminded delegates that a branch campus is more than bricks and mortar - it's a commitment to understand the cultural and regulatory terrain before a student, faculty member or professor steps foot on it.

Professor Mark E. Smith spoke about what success means to him, noting that success lies in the "Triple Helix Model", weaving education, research and industry into one fabric. To prepare graduates for the working world, Smith believes there is value in embedding employer perspectives into campus planning, helping employers to boost employability. India's National Education Policy 2020,

he noted, is opening fresh opportunities for such integrated approaches.

Marisa Mastroianni, Managing Director and Group CEO of University of Wollongong Global Enterprises spoke from personal experience, having seen - from Dubai to India - what makes an IBC thrive. She said long-term commitment, embedded industry links and a curriculum shaped with - not just for - local stakeholders. Mastroianni argued that working hand-in-hand with businesses and government moves partnerships beyond the transactional into true collaboration.

Dr Abhay Kumar Sinha acknowledged that India's regulations can be complex, but stressed the government's intent to welcome serious foreign entrants. He urged universities to tackle policy hurdles in partnership with industry and local institutions, ensuring alignment with India's development goals.

During a lively Q&A, Professor C. Raj Kumar challenged the panel on regulatory realities.

Smith shared that his dealings with regulators have been largely constructive thanks to open dialogue, while Pawha agreed - but cautioned that the process itself can still be labyrinthine. Her advice? To keep the student experience as your north star.

The panel agreed that IBCs won't cannibalise overseas study demand. Instead, IBCs broaden choice for students and feed India's expanding job market with globally attuned graduates.

Launching an IBC in India is not for the faint-hearted. It demands patience, persistence and a deep-rooted partnership mindset - but for those willing to invest, the potential rewards are immense.

**"True success comes from weaving education, research, and industry together."**





PANEL

# Building Endowments for Sustainable Growth: Lessons and Opportunities for Indian Institutions

**Chair:**  
**Jessica Turner**  
CEO  
QS

**Professor Alec Cameron**  
Vice-Chancellor and  
President  
RMIT University

**Professor Stephen Jarvis**  
Provost and Vice-Principal  
University of Birmingham

**Professor Sally Mapstone**  
Principal and Vice-  
Chancellor  
University of St Andrews

**Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli**  
Principal and Vice Chancellor  
University of Glasgow

**Professor Ramgopal Rao**  
Group Vice-Chancellor  
Birla Institute of Technology  
& Science Pilani

How do universities in India grow their resources to secure their future? This panel explored the art and science of building endowments, bringing lessons from the UK, US and India – and the cultural shifts needed to make philanthropy part of the fabric of higher education.

Jessica Turner began the panel discussion by noting that while endowments are a cornerstone of financial sustainability for many Western universities, the concept is still developing in India.

What followed was a candid, comparative conversation on building lasting financial legacies.

Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli set the scene with the UK perspective. While British universities hold substantial endowments compared with many younger institutions globally, they still lag far behind the US giants. The key, he argued, is to align fundraising with strategic goals and to show donors the tangible, lifetime impact of their contributions.

**“Endowments are strategic tools - not just large bank accounts.”**

From India, Professor Ramgopal Rao brought a success story to the floor, noting the billion-dollar endowment fund launched at IIT Delhi. Rao explained how tapping US-based alumni – supported by favourable tax policies – was critical. He also stressed that in India, cultivating alumni giving requires patience, trust-building and a clear demonstration of how funds directly benefit students and research.

Professor Sally Mapstone recalled the UK’s 2008 matched funding scheme, which dramatically boosted donations. Government-backed incentives, she suggested, could play a similar role in India by encouraging first-time donors and magnifying the value of every gift.

The panel agreed on the need to diversify donor bases. Entrepreneurial leaders, women philanthropists and younger alumni are increasingly willing to give when they see their values reflected in an institution’s mission. Storytelling and impact reporting, they said, are as important as the ask itself.

Professor Alec Cameron and Professor Stephen Jarvis reinforced that endowments must be more than just large bank accounts – they are strategic tools that support innovation, scholarships and long-term resilience. To build endowments effectively, there needs to be cultural change, dedicated advancement teams and partnerships with government and industry.

Closing the discussion, Turner summarised the panel’s consensus: sustainable endowments in India will come from a mix of strategic vision, policy support, and a culture of giving rooted in shared purpose.





PANEL

# Addressing Global Uncertainties: Building Resilient Educational Institutions

**Chair:**

**Dr Vidya Yeravdekar**  
Pro Chancellor  
Symbiosis International  
University

**Professor Tariq Ali**  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for  
Global Engagement and  
Partnerships  
University of Liverpool

**Professor Theo Farrell**  
Vice-Chancellor  
La Trobe University

**Professor Sir Peter Mathieson**  
Principal and Vice-  
Chancellor  
The University of Edinburgh

**Professor Cheryl de la Rey**  
Vice-Chancellor  
University of Canterbury

**Professor Dr Sasha Roseneil**  
Vice-Chancellor and  
President  
University of Sussex

From pandemics to political instability, the world's universities face a barrage of unpredictable challenges. This panel explored how leaders are building institutions that can withstand shocks – and even emerge stronger from them.

Opening the session, Dr Vidya Yeravdekar set the tone by naming the realities: COVID-19, geopolitical tensions, climate change, economic volatility and other crises that test the resilience of educational institutions.

As delegates listened intently, the discussion unfurled to demonstrate that resilience is less about weathering the storm, and more about evolving because of it.

Professor Cheryl de la Rey linked resilience to innovation and entrepreneurship, stressing that universities must leverage alumni networks not only for fundraising, but for creating lasting partnerships built on trust and shared history.

Professor Tariq Ali recounted the University of Liverpool's rapid pandemic response - including mass community testing and the creation of the Pandemic Institute - as an example of how universities can pivot quickly when they tap multi-stakeholder collaboration.

When it comes to times of uncertainty, Professor Dr Sasha Roseneil urged institutions to face uncertainty head-on, grounding their strategy in enduring principles. She said at the University of Sussex, the focus on human flourishing, environmental sustainability and digital/data futures ensures agility while staying true to mission.

Of course, universities cannot succeed in big picture plans without the help of external parties, with Professor Theo Farrell emphasising the importance of partnering with communities. At La Trobe University, resilience is pursued through a net-zero emissions goal, AI-enhanced teaching and research that supports local economic growth. For Farrell, adaptability must extend beyond campus walls to benefit society at large.

Bringing a historical lens, Professor Sir Peter Mathieson reminded the audience that universities have survived centuries of change because they adapt without abandoning their core values. He warned against ignoring historical lessons and said adaptation was critical to universities' enduring role as engines of societal development.

The panel agreed that building resilience means combining internal innovation with external collaboration - engaging students, alumni, communities, and governments in the process.

Resilience, they concluded, is as much about empathy and connection as it is about infrastructure and policy.





PANEL

# India's Innovative Leadership: Shaping Global Research and Development

**Chair:**

**Professor Dr Sandeep Sancheti**  
Vice President (India),  
Research Relations and  
Academic Ambassador  
Elsevier

**Professor Kamakoti Veezhinathan**  
Director  
Indian Institute of  
Technology Madras

**Professor Max Lu**  
President & Vice-Chancellor  
University of Surrey

**Professor Claire O'Malley**  
Pro-Vice Chancellor Global  
Durham University

**Professor Lisa Roberts**  
President and Vice-  
Chancellor  
University of Exeter

**Professor Neil Quigley**  
Vice-Chancellor and  
President  
University of Waikato

India's innovation engine is thriving, but how can it accelerate into true global leadership in research and development? This panel explored the opportunities, gaps and partnerships that will define the country's next chapter in R&D.

In his opening statement, Professor Dr Sandeep Sancheti positioned India as a rising force in research and innovation - one with world-class talent and ambition, but still some distance to go in turning potential into global dominance. The task, he said, is not only to produce exceptional graduates and researchers, but to enhance the systems that enable them to innovate at scale.

A recurring theme during the discussion was India's need to boost research output to match its rapid knowledge creation and dissemination. Professor Claire O'Malley emphasised the power of regional collaboration, suggesting that universities cluster around their core academic strengths to achieve greater global impact.

Professor Max Lu spotlighted India's emerging intellectual leadership in sectors like semiconductors and health technologies, while also championing the concept of frugal innovation - creating cost-effective, sustainable solutions that can succeed in global markets. This is a distinctive competitive edge for India.

The conversation closed on a forward-looking note: India has the talent, creativity and ambition to become a global R&D leader within the next two decades - provided it invests in the right ecosystems, leverages regional strengths and forges international collaborations that are equitable and long-term.





# The Great Education Face-Off

“Hosting foreign universities in India will improve Indian higher education”

Watch the full video







### SECTION 3

## Innovative partnerships to advance Indian higher education





## PANEL

# Equitable Educational Partnerships: Expanding Beyond Traditional Agreements



**Chair:**  
**Professor C. Raj Kumar**  
Founding Vice Chancellor  
O. P. Jindal Global University

**Professor Dr Andrea Bréard**  
Vice-President Education  
Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg

**Professor Asher Cohen**  
President  
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**Professor Chris Day**  
Vice-Chancellor and President  
Newcastle University

**Dr Ramakrishnan Raman**  
Vice Chancellor  
Symbiosis International

**Lt. Gen. (Dr) M D Venkatesh**  
Vice Chancellor  
Manipal Academy of Higher Education

Educational partnerships have the power to break down borders - but only if they're designed for everyone, not just the privileged few. This panel explored how to expand beyond traditional agreements to create collaborations that are genuinely equitable.

Opening the session, Professor C. Raj Kumar challenged the audience to rethink how partnerships are formed, calling for more inclusive partnerships, warning that too many remain closed off to underrepresented groups. Inclusive design must be a starting principle, not an afterthought.

Professor Chris Day focused on the financial barriers that often block international student mobility. He pointed to in-country campuses, philanthropic funding and online global classrooms as ways to widen access, allowing more students to experience international learning without the cost and logistics of travel.

Professor Asher Cohen spoke about "symmetry" - the idea that partnerships must offer mutual benefit and equal respect, to ensure fairness and development. Cohen drew on examples from the Hebrew University's partnerships in Azerbaijan and Singapore to demonstrate the importance of maintaining equitable collaboration in international agreements.

Lt. Gen. M. D. Venkatesh called for deeper collaborations beyond student exchanges, advocating for joint degrees, micro-credentialing and jointly supervised PhDs. He stressed that research partnerships should be a pillar of any equitable collaboration.

FAU Erlangen's strong industry ties created dual education pathways according to Professor Andrea Bréard, enabling students to learn both in the classroom and in company settings - a model that blends academic rigor with employability.

Symbiosis International University has also put in great efforts in expanding opportunities for students, Dr Ramakrishnan Raman added, by creating scholarships for international students, joint seminar series and targeted outreach to underrepresented groups.

In closing, the panel agreed that building equitable partnerships in an unequal world demands creativity, sustained dialogue and shared commitment. Funding, regulatory hurdles and geography can all be overcome when institutions keep access and fairness at the core of their collaboration strategies.



PANEL

# Embracing the Third Mission: Universities as Catalysts for Community and Economic Development

**Chair:**

**Abhay Chebbi**  
Pro-Chancellor  
Alliance University

**Professor Uma Kanjilal**  
Indira Gandhi  
National Open University

**Professor Richard Follett**  
Vice President (Global)  
University of Sussex

**Professor Tod Laursen**  
American University of  
Sharjah / former SUNY  
leadership

**Professor Pradipta Nanda**  
Vice Chancellor  
Siksha O Anusandhan

**Dr Raul Rodriguez**  
Vice President  
Woxsen University

The pandemic accelerated online education's rise, but sustaining quality, engagement and accessibility is a different challenge altogether. This panel examined how universities can integrate digital learning into their core mission while addressing barriers to student success.

Professor Uma Kanjilal set the stage by pointing to India's NEP 2020, which positions digital education as a key driver in boosting the country's gross enrolment ratio. Platforms like SWAYAM and NPTEL have brought learning to millions, but completion rates remain stubbornly low. She identified the barriers: learner readiness, limited access to technology and online

assessment challenges. She stressed the importance of faculty training and the need for innovative instructional design to engage learners.

Professor Richard Follett described online education as part of a broader digital disruption. He identified key drivers of change: demand for new credentials, the education-work nexus, borderless competition, omni-channel learning, high-quality digital experiences, and the need for universities to future-proof themselves. He highlighted the importance of aligning education with industry needs and creating equitable partnerships. The winners will be those who align curricula with industry needs and offer high-quality, flexible digital experiences.

Bringing insights from the UAE and the State University of New York, Professor Tod Laursen stressed the importance of quality standards and communities of scholars to support online education. Seamless systems integration and personalised mentorship, he said, can make online learning feel as connected as in-person study.

Dr Raul Rodriguez spoke to the corporate education market, where demand for stackable micro-credentials and personalised learning experiences are high, noting the importance of mentorship and hyper-personalisation in online programmes for corporate clients today. Online platforms, he said, are uniquely positioned to deliver this - and can also facilitate cross-border collaborations and joint ventures.

Across the board, the panel called for faculty development, innovative pedagogy and stronger partnerships between universities. Real-world, project-based learning, they agreed, is key to keeping online students engaged. The consensus: online education is no longer an add-on - it's an essential part of the higher education portfolio.





## PANEL

# Addressing Brain Drain: Retaining Talent in the Global South through Academic Partnerships

### Chair:

**Alison Barrett MBE**  
Country Director India  
British Council,  
New Delhi

**Professor K. K. Aggarwal**  
President  
South Asian University

**Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya**  
Vice-Principal (Global Engagement)  
University of Aberdeen

**Vineet Gupta**  
Founder  
Ashoka University and  
Plaksha University

**Professor Isabelle Huault**  
Executive President and  
Dean  
EMLyon Business School

**Dr Ananya Mukherjee**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Shiv Nadar University

How can the Global South keep its brightest minds from leaving for good? This panel explored academic partnerships, industry collaboration, and policy innovation as tools to turn talent migration into talent circulation.

Dr Ananya Mukherjee opened with a call to connect students globally before graduation, giving them exposure to the international community ahead of them entering into the working world.

Professor K. K. Aggarwal proposed short-term study abroad opportunities as a strategic alternative to full-degree migration. "If the student goes there for a shorter duration, the chances of coming back are always much brighter."

Ensuring talent returns to India was also a large focus of Professor Siladitya Bhattacharya during the discussion, noting that policy measures such as mutual recognition of qualifications and career progression opportunities could facilitate the return of talent. He also highlighted the role of personal incentives in encouraging individuals to return to their home countries.

Professor Isabelle Huault drew from India-France collaborations to share insights, demonstrating how dual degrees can retain talent locally, also noting how offshore campuses can minimise brain drain across India.

Professor Vineet Gupta focused on the economics of brain drain, pointing out that as India's economy matures, the trend of students going abroad might decrease. He stressed the role of industry partnerships and collaboration, and suggested that online education can bridge skills gaps without requiring relocation.

The discussion circled back to the idea that brain drain isn't inevitable. The panellists agreed that coordinated action - involving governments, universities, industry and the alumni diaspora - can transform the Global South into a magnet for returning talent.





SECTION 4

Achieving sustainable transformation





## PANEL

# Beyond Digital Washing: Leading the True Digital Revolution in Higher Education

### Chair:

**Jacques de Champchesnel**  
Head of Global Consulting  
QS

**Dr Águeda Benito**  
Chief Academic Officer  
Cintana Education

**Professor Ali Khatibi**  
Senior Vice President  
Management & Science  
University

**Professor Dr Kunal Saigal**  
Vice Rector International  
(Acting)  
International IU International  
University of Applied  
Sciences

**Professor Aleks Subic**  
Vice-Chancellor  
Aston University

**Professor Sanjeet Singh**  
Pro Vice Chancellor  
Marwadi University

Digital transformation in higher education is no longer optional – but simply adding technology without rethinking purpose risks “digital washing.” This panel explored what it takes to lead an authentic, human-centred digital revolution.

Opening the session, Jacques de Champchesnel warned that too many institutions risk becoming “digital façades” – adopting flashy tech without the cultural, strategic and operational change to match.

Professor Aleks Subic grounded the conversation in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, emphasising the importance of aligning educational advancements with technological progress to

prevent societal disparities.

Subic introduced the concept of “University 4.0” which integrates socio-economic impacts and innovation across education, research, and community engagement. Subic demonstrated the importance of technology to the university, detailing Aston University’s role in the Birmingham Innovation Quarter, a hub for place-based innovation through digital transformation.

## Panel – Beyond Digital Washing: Leading the True Digital Revolution in Higher Education



Dr Águeda Benito reflected on the pandemic’s role as an accelerant for digital adoption, citing research across India, Turkey, and Costa Rica that revealed a preference for hybrid learning models from faculty and students. The data found that students and faculty alike want flexibility, strong connectivity, and meaningful digital integration in their courses and learning experiences.

Professor Kunal Saigal focused on the learner experience through learner-centric approaches, utilising AI to personalise and enhance educational experiences. He made the case for AI-driven personalisation to create adaptive, inclusive learning environments. Integrating AI into curricula isn’t just about teaching tech skills – it’s about preparing students for an uncertain

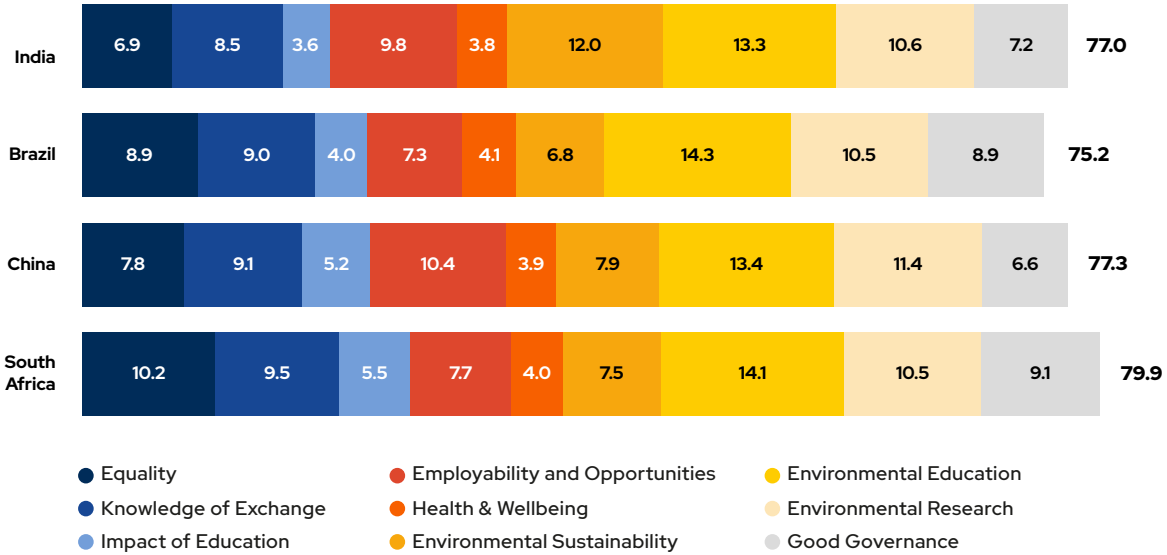
future and boosting student engagement and progression.

Dr Sanjeet Singh and Professor Ali Khatibi provided regional perspectives from India and Asia, respectively. Singh described India’s progress in digital education through initiatives like NPTEL and NEP 2020, while Professor Ali Khatibi stressed that tech adoption and advancements must be balanced with ethical considerations and cultural values.

The panel agreed that genuine digital transformation requires collaboration between institutions, bold curriculum innovation and a focus on human needs. Technology, they agreed, should be the means – not the end.



Performance in QS World University Rankings:  
Sustainability 2025 sub-indicators | Top 5 Indian institutions vs peer countries



Connect with us  
on LinkedIn to  
learn the latest  
higher education  
trends & insights





PANEL

# Achieving Sustainability and Net Zero Targets in Higher Education: Pathways to a Greener Future

**Chair:**

**Professor Mary Spongberg**  
Senior Deputy Vice  
Chancellor (Research)  
Southern Cross University

**Professor Milind Atrey**  
Deputy Director (ART)  
IIT Bombay

**Dr Sjoukje Heimovaara**  
President of the Executive  
Board  
Wageningen University &  
Research

**Dr Padmakumar Nair**  
Director  
Thapar Institute of  
Engineering & Technology

**Dr Karim Seghir**  
Chancellor  
Ajman University

Universities are not just educators, they're living laboratories for climate action. This panel explored how higher education institutions can lead the global push toward net-zero emissions and embed sustainability into everything they do.

The importance of universities in ongoing climate crises cannot be understated; universities are essential players in tackling climate change, not only by generating research, but by modelling the green future they teach.

Professor Milind Atrey described IIT Bombay's comprehensive sustainability policy, which threads environmental conservation, education and

research into a single, unified approach, noting that integrating sustainability into curricula and campus operations was of increasing importance for leading institutions.

From the Netherlands, Dr Sjoukje Heimovaara emphasised why a system-wide approach is necessary to address interconnected global challenges.

At Wageningen University & Research, sustainability is embedded within the institution – from achieving a net-zero campus to pioneering sustainable food systems research. Today, complex global challenges demand joined-up solutions.

Dr Padmakumar Nair addressed the pedagogical side of

sustainability, stressing that sustainability education must be interdisciplinary and instil an excellence-driven mindset in students.

Representing Ajman University, Dr Karim Seghir outlined their strategic plan that integrates environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

Green initiatives and financial viability are not opposing forces – they can, and must, work hand-in-hand for ESG initiatives to succeed.

The panel agreed that universities should not only implement sustainable practices internally, but also influence public policy and partner with industry to drive broader change.

Universities need to work collaboratively across disciplines to address sustainability challenges effectively, with panellists agreeing on the need for a collective effort to create a sustainable future, highlighting the role of universities as catalysts for change.





## PANEL

# Mental Health in Higher Education: Building Supportive Campuses for Student & Faculty Success

**Chair:**  
**Dr Ram Sharma**  
Vice Chancellor  
UPES University Dehradun

**Professor Rudolf Allemann**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor  
International  
Cardiff University

**Dr Prashant Bhalla**  
Chancellor  
Manav Rachna University

**Dr Madhu Chitkara**  
Co-Founder and Pro  
Chancellor  
Chitkara University

**Dr Dhruv Galgotia**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Galgotias University

**Professor Rajita Kulkarni**  
President  
Sri Sri University

With student and faculty mental health challenges on the rise, this panel explored how universities can move beyond crisis management to create truly supportive and resilient campus environments.

Dr Ram Sharma began the discussion by acknowledging the growing mental health pressures in academia - from substance abuse and social media stress to heavy workloads. He argued that universities must actively design supportive environments where mental well-being is prioritised alongside academic achievement.

Dr Madhu Chitkara advocated for a preventive approach to mental health, calling for institutions to take a proactive rather than reactive approach. She highlighted the role of yoga and mental health sessions in fostering a sound body and mind, helping students with both physical and mental strength.

Dr Dhruv Galgotia called for systemic education reforms, criticising rote learning and pushing for student-centred teaching methods that reduce anxiety and foster engagement.

From Sri Sri University, Professor Rajita Kulkarni emphasised the “three Es” - energy, empathy and enthusiasm - as key elements in supporting students’ mental health. She described programmes rooted in the Art of Living’s educational philosophy, aimed at instilling a positive mindset for long-term well-being.

Offering insights from the UK, Professor Rudolf Allemann noted rising mental health issues among UK students. He shared Cardiff University’s strategy to combat this, which aims to foster supportive environments, highlighting the importance of community and collaboration to achieve this goal. Collaboration, peer support and an inclusive culture are essential to preventing isolation and burnout among students today.

Dr Prashant Bhalla highlighted Manav Rachna University’s value-based education model, which incorporates spiritualism to promote empathy, purpose and emotional resilience.

Audience questions brought in perspectives on the role of parents in mental health support and the urgency of aligning educational reforms with well-being goals. To demonstrate their own understanding of the challenge, panellists shared personal experiences of dealing with stress and anxiety, the importance of institutional support and personal resilience.

The panellists agreed that mental health strategies must be holistic - combining preventive programmes, supportive infrastructure, community engagement and values-driven education to equip students and staff for the demands of modern life.

Empathy, community and value-based education will continue to be important in fostering mental well-being among students and faculty.





PANEL

# India as the Skills Capital of the World: Preparing Students for Corporate Success

**Chair:**  
**Vik Singh**  
Trade and Investment  
Commissioner-South Asia  
Austrade

**Harry Anderson**  
Deputy Director (Policy and  
Global Engagement)  
Universities UK International

**Professor Colin Bailey**  
President and Principal  
Queen Mary University of  
London

**Professor Rajul Gajjar**  
Vice Chancellor  
Gujarat Technological  
University

**Dr Tere McGonagle-Daly**  
Deputy Vice Chancellor,  
Students and Global  
Engagement  
Massey University

**Hemant Sahal**  
Founder & CEO  
Digii (formerly CollPoll)

With one of the largest youth populations in the world, India is positioning itself as a global skills powerhouse. This panel explored how universities can build a workforce ready to thrive in a rapidly evolving corporate landscape.

Chairing the discussion, Vik Singh set the tone: if India is to be the "skills capital" of the world, higher education must work hand-in-hand with industry, government, and technology to produce graduates who are adaptable, confident and globally competitive.

If institutions are to prepare the leaders of tomorrow, education is no longer just about a degree. Dr Tere McGonagle-Daly

emphasised the importance of lifelong learning and creating global citizens who can adapt to various disciplines and shifting industries. He called for flexible pathways that respond directly to market needs to achieve these goals.

From the UK, Professor Colin Bailey stressed the value of embedding global skills into the curriculum and listening to industry feedback, producing graduates with global skills adaptable to the ever-changing market. He spoke passionately about social mobility, urging universities to open doors for first-generation students and challenge themselves to innovate continuously.

Professor Rajul Gajjar shared Gujarat Technological University's approach to integrating industry demands with academic frameworks, highlighting the use of leveraging the Academic Bank of Credit, and the importance of flexibility in curriculum design to accommodate industry-driven skills training.

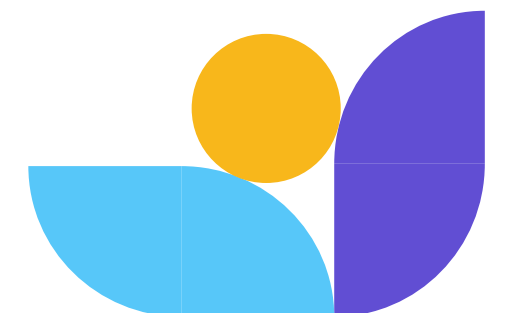
Harry Anderson pointed to the UK's long-standing track record of university-industry collaboration, underscoring that soft skills and adaptability are just as critical as technical expertise in preparing students for the future job market.

Hemant Sahal brought an entrepreneurial perspective on soft skills, arguing that students need systems that build self-awareness and help them understand their learning styles and strengths. Consciousness and self-awareness, he argued, are the foundation for aligning individual competencies with industry needs.

The panellists agreed on the critical interplay between education and skills, and called for continuous adaptation and collaboration with industry to ensure graduates are equipped with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

Panellists also agreed that rapid technological change - from AI to automation - requires agile, inclusive, and future-focused education ecosystems.

Curricula must evolve in real time, in partnership with industry, to ensure graduates leave not just with knowledge, but with the skills and confidence to lead.







SECTION 5

Afterword



## AFTERWORD

# Professor Dinesh Singh

Padma Shri and Former Vice Chancellor  
University of Delhi



**“Let noble thoughts come to us from every direction – but let us stand firm on our own feet.”**

Professor Dinesh Singh called for courage in reimagining the purpose of education – moving beyond rote systems to inspire curiosity, creativity, and civic responsibility.

As the QS India Summit drew to a close, Professor Dinesh Singh took a moment to reflect – not as a speaker ticking through prepared notes, but as an attentive listener inspired by two days of ideas, exchanges, and unexpected sparks of insight.

“What I’ve seen here excites me,” he began. “So many voices, from India and abroad, speaking as equals.” It reminded him of a line from the Rig Veda: “Let noble thoughts come to us from every direction.”

Over the course of the Summit, those noble thoughts had flowed freely, must now be absorbed, tested and put into action.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, he cautioned that while we should welcome the culture and learning of all lands, we must not be “blown off our feet” by any of them. The message was clear: Indian institutions should approach global partnerships with open doors, but also with the confidence that India’s own academic heritage has just as much to offer.

Professor Singh spoke candidly about the need for balance. He noted that while he deeply respects his international collaborators – from his own studies in the UK to his decades-long professorship in the US – the flow of value is not one-way. “Let us not forget,” he said, “that the 2008 financial crisis was fuelled in part by graduates of some of the world’s most elite universities. So much for infallible wisdom.”

His gaze then shifted to the future – and to technology, admitting that while his understanding of artificial intelligence might be limited, he can see its transformative potential. He described a moment with Khanmigo, an AI-powered learning platform partnered with ChatGPT 4, where The Great Gatsby came alive for a student through a fully interactive conversation with the novel’s titular character. “That is the way of the future,” he said – but reminded the audience that technology alone is not enough. It must be backed by great pedagogy and great ideas.

To make his point, he returned to India’s own history: the Rig Veda was transmitted flawlessly for centuries without written technology, simply through the discipline of oral tradition. The key, he argued, was not the medium but the quality and application of the knowledge itself – echoing the Mimamsa philosophy: “Knowledge without action is meaningless.”

That action-oriented approach, he reminded the audience, once enabled India to anticipate discoveries like the Pythagorean theorem centuries before the Greeks. And it can do so again.

His closing vision was bold: “A day is not far off when Indian universities will have regained the confidence of the old, and Indian professors will set up campuses in Washington, DC.”

It was a fitting end to the Summit: a call not just to think big, but to act decisively, with pride in India’s past and confidence in its global future.





## AFTERWORD

# Karan Rathore

Chairman  
Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC)



“Partnership, innovation, and inclusivity — this is how we shape the future.”

As the QS India Summit came to a close, Karan Rathore took the stage with a clear message: the conversations of the past days cannot remain just words — they must become a shared blueprint for action.

On behalf of SEPC, he thanked the academics, policymakers, industry leaders and innovators from around the world who had shaped the dialogue.

“The energy, the ideas, the willingness to collaborate — this is what makes change possible,” he said. “Together, we’ve shown the transformative potential of partnership, innovation and collective action in reimagining global higher education.”

He reminded the audience that India is no longer a peripheral player in the global education economy — it is moving to the centre. As that happens, SEPC’s role is to open doors by building alliances, creating opportunities and positioning India’s education services as a world-class export.

Rathore framed SEPC’s priorities for the road ahead:

- **Forging international collaborations by streamlining partnerships between Indian institutions and top universities abroad, SEPC aims to drive transformative knowledge exchange and cross-border education delivery.**
- **Supporting foreign branch campuses: With the NEP 2020 opening a clear regulatory path, SEPC is ready to guide world-class institutions in setting up in India — making sure they are both globally competitive and accessible for Indian students.**
- **Scaling digital and cross-border learning: SEPC will connect India’s thriving edtech sector with global opportunities, fostering innovation in transnational education models.**

- **Leveraging trade policy: Through active advocacy, SEPC is pushing for higher education to be prioritised in free trade agreements, ensuring the sector gets the recognition it deserves in global trade dialogues.**
- **Driving inclusivity and skills development: From tier-two and tier-three cities to underserved communities, SEPC is committed to making India’s global skill footprint more inclusive while keeping education aligned with international standards.**

Rathore stressed that building a resilient, innovative and equitable education system will take more than isolated efforts — it will require a genuine multi-stakeholder ecosystem where universities, governments, and industry work in lockstep.

His closing call was direct.

He called for foreign universities to partner with India — a nation ready to become a global hub for education and skills.

Speaking to Indian institutions, he told them to use SEPC’s support to expand their global reach through research, collaboration and export-oriented strategies.

And to policymakers and industry leaders, he urged them to keep building the frameworks and infrastructure that make such partnerships thrive.

“Together,” he said, “we can shape a future where India’s education system is synonymous with innovation, quality and inclusivity — contributing not just to our nation’s growth, but to the global knowledge economy. Let’s make this the start of something bigger.”



## AFTERWORD

# Dr Rajesh Pankaj

Director & Head – Education & Skills  
FICCI



**“India is going to be a nation that produces the global workforce of the future.”**

Dr Rajesh Pankaj closed the Summit with an unmistakable sense of optimism about India’s role in the future of global higher education. Speaking on behalf of FICCI – India’s oldest and largest industry body, founded in 1927 – he reminded the audience that education and skills are not just a portfolio for FICCI, they are a national priority.

Over the years, FICCI has shaped policy and inspired change through its Vision reports and industry-led research, including the Vision 2030 for Higher Education. That document set a bold target, that by 2030, India will have 70 million students in higher education – up from today’s 44 million – making one in four graduates worldwide a product of India’s education system.

“We will be one of the biggest suppliers of the global workforce,” he said.

Dr Pankaj pointed to three critical levers shaping that future:

First, he spoke about the importance of collaboration in research, noting that partnerships between Indian and global institutions are already growing. The creation of the National Research Foundation – a long-standing FICCI recommendation – is building an ecosystem for joint research that addresses real-world challenges. FICCI itself has invested in collaborative projects, including one with the Royal Academy of Engineering, which supported 30 Indian institutions in driving industry-academia partnerships, producing “incredible outcomes” within just three years.

Secondly, Dr Pankaj spoke about the internationalisation of education, noting that FICCI has examined how to make study in India more inclusive and attractive, creating space for richer cross-border exchanges. From attracting global students to enabling Indian learners to thrive in multicultural environments, this push aims to make India a central node in the world’s education network.

And finally, he discussed employability and the future of work in India. Building on the World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs work, FICCI has released its own sector-specific reports since 2017. These map where jobs will emerge, in which geographies, and in what roles – giving both policymakers and institutions a blueprint to prepare students for the careers of tomorrow.

Dr Pankaj also stressed that leadership and governance are make-or-break factors. “No matter the reform or technology,” he said, “a school, college or university is ultimately defined by its leadership – the dynamic teacher, the inspiring principal, the visionary vice chancellor.” Strengthening that leadership pipeline, he argued, will be a cornerstone of sustained excellence.

His closing challenge to the audience was one of collaboration and shared ambition:

“India is going to be the nation that produces the global workforce of the future. Let’s work together to take higher education to the next level – through research, through partnerships, through leadership that inspires.”

As the Summit ended, his message was clear – India is not just preparing for the future of education, it is helping to define it.

## AFTERWORD

# Professor C. Raj Kumar

Founding Vice Chancellor  
O. P. Jindal Global University



“The Summit became a forum for connecting and networking, but also for understanding each other’s vision and aspirations.”

As Chair of the QS India Summit 2025, Professor C. Raj Kumar closed the three-day gathering with both gratitude and reflection – celebrating what made this edition truly distinctive.

He identified five defining qualities of the Summit:

First, he noted it was a meeting of the global and the local, with the Summit balancing an international perspective with strong representation from Indian higher education. Rarely, he noted, do education summits bring both worlds together so seamlessly, allowing global trends to meet India’s unique aspirations.

Secondly, he described the Summit as a space for both scholars and practitioners. Kumar noted that the programme featured eminent academics alongside policymakers, administrators and sector leaders. This mix ensured the conversations were not only intellectually rich but also actionable.

Thirdly, Kumar spoke of the Summit’s engagement beyond academia, with ambassadors and High Commissioners joining the discussions (which is unusual for a higher education summit). Kumar said their presence reinforced the idea that higher education is a bridge for diplomacy, collaboration, and global influence.

Next, Kumar described the Summit as a platform for aspirational institutions. Even leaders from universities who didn’t speak on stage, or ask public questions, were here to observe, learn and be inspired. This “silent revolution,” he said, is part of how QS is democratising excellence – widening the circle of those who aspire to global standards.

And finally, Kumar spoke of delegates’ willingness to debate the hard questions. The QS India Summit wasn’t a self-congratulatory forum; participants engaged in open, sometimes challenging dialogue, debating ideas that touch on the very character of universities – especially at a time when academic freedoms and institutional missions face pressure worldwide.

Professor Kumar praised the candour, openness and vision of the leaders in attendance. The Summit, he said, became more than a networking event – it was a place to understand each other’s aspirations and lay the foundations for future collaborations.

“The Summit became a forum for connecting and networking, but also for understanding each other’s vision and aspirations.”

Looking ahead, he extended an invitation to QS India Summit 2026, envisioning an even broader participation from institutions across India and the world.

He ended his speech – and the Summit – with appreciation for the diverse voices, the shared ideas and the collective ambition to make higher education a transformative force for the future.









# Join us in Goa for QS India Summit 2026

1-3 February

Under the patronage of India's  
Ministry of Education, we will explore  
this year's theme:

**India@2047: Building Skills,  
Achieving Scale, Driving Innovation**

Co-Hosts



**SRM**  
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY  
(Deemed to be University u/s 3 of UGC Act, 1956)



**Register now**

