

Global Partnerships Focus of BioPharma Summit

By ANUPAMA GUPTA
Special to India-West

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The U.S.-India BioPharma and Healthcare Summit 2012, organized by the USA-India Chamber of Commerce at the Hyatt Regency here May 11, served as a powerful platform for American and Indian companies to come together and build global partnerships to deliver innovation in healthcare and the biopharma industry.

USAIC created a vibrant purpose-driven innovation ecosystem by bringing together the key stakeholders including healthcare and life sciences experts, corporate executives, investors, academic representatives and scholars and policymakers. The ambitious objective, to help facilitate collaborative research partnerships, public-private-academic partnerships and to take the global biopharmaceuticals and healthcare partnership to the next level, seemed to bring the attendees together into one community.

With India ranking third in cancer incidence globally, selecting oncology as the focus area this year was timely. It touched off



Karun Rishi, president of the USA-India Chamber of Commerce, addressing the attendees at the U.S.-India BioPharma and Healthcare Summit as he kicked off the event May 11.

discussions like India's prowess in IT and the need for it to be leveraged for cancer therapies.

India could benefit from setting up a cancer specific genetic database, translational research hubs

and nanotechnology centers of excellence to help discover and develop cancer therapies through

collaborative research and partnerships. Policy turmoil has led to flat growth in the industry. A comprehensive and transparent clinical trials policy is the need of the hour, keeping patient benefit as the top priority.

"India has moved from being called the services provider to a center for innovation," Sri Mosur, CEO, Global Drug Discovery and Development, Jubilant Life Sciences, told **India-West**.

The event drew attendance from leading Indian officials from the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Department of Biotechnology and the Government of India. It was stated that the Government of India has increased its total research and development spending from one to two percent of its GDP.

To support industry-academic interaction, the Indian union cabinet recently approved a Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council. Their mission is to make India globally competitive in biotech innovation, to support entrepreneurship and to create affordable products and services.

Boston Consulting Group's informational presentation, called

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“Moving the Needle on Innovation: Delivering Affordable Innovation Through Global Partnerships,” dealt with how India has a lot of potential but is in need of a supportive environment with respect to advocacy, policy and infrastructure.

“We have success stories of running clinical trials that are published in Lancet in India. India has the sixth largest population in the global economy. Companies are welcome to India, but we just need to learn what India is for things to work there,” Dr. Rajeev I. Modi, the managing director of Cadila Pharmaceuticals, told

India-West.

Karun Rishi, president of the USA-India Chamber of Commerce, kicked off the summit with a message to bring about clinical regulations in India and give oncology more opportunity while not allowing Indian patients to suffer the consequences of limited regulations.

“(The) goal is to provide affordable innovation by working in partnership, which is simple but not easy. Once the solutions to the problems are brought about, it will be a role model for global partnerships,” Dr. William Chin, executive dean for research at Harvard

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A panel discussion on oncology.

‘India Has Potential to Be Global Hub of Bio-Pharma Sector’

By **LALIT K. JHA**
Press Trust of India

BOSTON, MASS – Noting that India has the ability to be a “global hub” in the bio-pharma and healthcare sector, industry leaders here have said that New Delhi needs to take steps to realize huge untapped potential in this field.

Indian government officials, attending a day-long brain-storming May 11 at the US-India BioPharma and Healthcare Summit 2012 organized by the USA India Chamber of Commerce here, said that they are taking concrete steps in this regard.

“There is a lot of potential in India which is still untapped,” said Maya Said, vice president head of strategy external innovation and science policy, global research and development of Sanofi, a French multinational pharmaceutical company.

According to Said there are areas where India needs to work out in order to realize its full potential,

including regulatory reforms.

Academics and top executives of the bio-pharma and healthcare sector argued that it is important for the global community that India succeeds in its endeavor.

“I think India has incredible responsibility for helping us understand about what causes diseases... what I think India has the need and responsibility to create the new medicine for

the future not only for the Indian population, but also that of the world too... I think India has a role to help the world in getting drugs.

“If it does not, I think we all are going to fail. India has to be an important partner with all of us,” said William W Chin, executive dean for research at the prestigious Harvard Medical School.

Chin said one of the key to the Indian success is going to be come out with policies that would encourage academics to be more eager to commercialize their ideas/research.

The Department of Pharma-



An R&D panel discussion.

ceuticals Joint Secretary Dr. Raja Sekhar Vendru said that the government has commissioned a study to come out with recommendations to make India a global hub of research and development in the bio pharma sector.

The report, being prepared by Earnest and Young, is expected shortly, he said.

As part of its effort to make India a global hub in R&D by 2020, the 12th Plan proposal of Department of Pharmaceuticals are focused on making the National Institute of Pharmaceuticals Education and Research as focal institutes for such new drug discovery and innovation.

According to a Boston Con-

sulting Group report, emerging markets will drive 70 percent of growth in the pharma industry and India will require supportive policies to leverage the BioPharma opportunity to become an innovation hub for the sector.

Noting that for India to become an innovation hub, supportive

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Dr. Nirmal Ganguly, former director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research, said: "In partnerships the element of suspicion has to be removed to move things forward."

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Medical School, told **India-West.**

Dr. Elias Zerhouni, president of Global Research and Development at Sanofi, in his keynote speech said he believed that India can provide high quality care at low cost, with its large talent pools in IT, engineering, biology and medicine. He noted that U.S.-India partnerships can be a win-win

situation for translational drug discovery and can help to provide treatments for human diseases globally to people who have no access to it currently. The overall message was that there is a need for open innovation and the creation of a research ecosystem. It is not possible for one entity to solve the complexity of finding solutions for human diseases. In order for the discussion to be fruitful, it needs to bring in ideas on growing India-U.S. R&D relationships.

There were several panel dis-

cussions on industry-academia partnerships, clinical research, drug R&D and collaborations, funding innovation and investment opportunities in emerging markets, and oncology-science and research trends. All the panels included distinguished personalities in their respective fields from both the United States and India.

"In partnerships the element of suspicion has to be removed to move things forward," said Dr. Nirmal Ganguly, chairman of Jipmer and former director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research. Jipmer is the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research.

The main question addressed at the summit was how to bridge the wide gap between continents, within academia and with industry. Dr. Barbara Bierer, senior vice president of research and Brigham and Women's Hospital, is spearheading a team of American corporate leaders, research institution representatives and government officials to help build a system for the transfer of technology and training needed for building a highly functioning research and development ecosystem.

If successful in India, this system could act as a role model for entire world. The program, Multi Regional Clinical Trials Initiative, was recently launched at Harvard.

"(It is a) wonderful time to collaborate with India. The portfolio is robust, despite many hurdles," said Dr. Roger Glass, director of the Fogarty International Center at the National Institute of Health, who has been involved in rotavirus research in India for the last three decades, which has led to the creation of world's least expensive vaccine.

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'India Has Potential to Be Global Hub'

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policies are required, the position paper on India's BioPharma sector has sought to leverage the country's unique capabilities in genomic databases, translational research and nanotechnology.

A supportive environment is vital for India in particular as the commercial landscape in the country does not create enough pull to drive these opportunities by themselves, it argued.

"The Indian government has declared 2010 through 2020 as the 'Decade of Innovation.' Innovation in life sciences will be essential to make this happen," said Karun Rishi, president of USA-India Chamber of Commerce.

Rishi said achieving the promise of spending two per cent of GDP on R&D by 2017 will require a considerable jump from the current spend of approximately one percent.

Meanwhile, aiming to acquire technologies that have been developed and which can be commercialized to put for public good, the Indian government is planning to establish an ambitious technology acquisition fund by next year.

The one-of-its-kind technology acquisition fund, which would run on a parallel track of massive research funding that the government is now funding, is likely to be established by the next year, a top Indian science official said.

"The purpose is to buy and acquire technologies either nationally or globally. And these would be technologies for public good. Wherever there is technology which is already available, having affordable product development, we do not really need to reinvent the wheel, bring in those technologies and these would be then bought by the Government and made available to a consortium of industries," Dr. Renu Swarup, advisor to the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, told PTI in an interview.

"We are looking at setting up of this fund which would then be used for buying different technologies," Swarup said, adding that the modalities of such a fund are still being worked out.