

India's pharma sector gets a relook in Boston

Release of Special Report by PWC on the Pharma Landscape

Networking session in progress



The annual US-India BioPharma and Healthcare Summit, organized by the USA-India Chamber of Commerce (USAIC) in Boston in early June saw yet again a galaxy of healthcare leaders from both India and USA taking forward the momentum for collaborations in the field

built over the years.

Curated by USAIC President, Mr Karun Rishi, and anchored competently by Dr Raju Kucherlapati, Professor of Genetics, Harvard Medical School, the day-long event took a realistic look at the state of the healthcare industry in India.

The galaxy of pharma leaders from top US companies grudgingly admitted despite many difficult areas, India remains a huge emerging market for pharmaceutical products. They urged the nearly 200 participants to build a capability-driven strategy to emerge winners in this promising marketplace.

Participating in a fireside chat, moderated by Dr William Chin of PhRMA, eminent Japanese leader, Dr Tachi Yamada of Takeda confessed: "I prefer India over China due to the felicity with English and also the tremendous expertise offered by the returning Indian diaspora." He referred to a competitive pharma project handled by Takeda's internal team as well as that by Advinus Therapeutics of India. On every count of quality, time



*Ongoing Oncology
panel discussion*

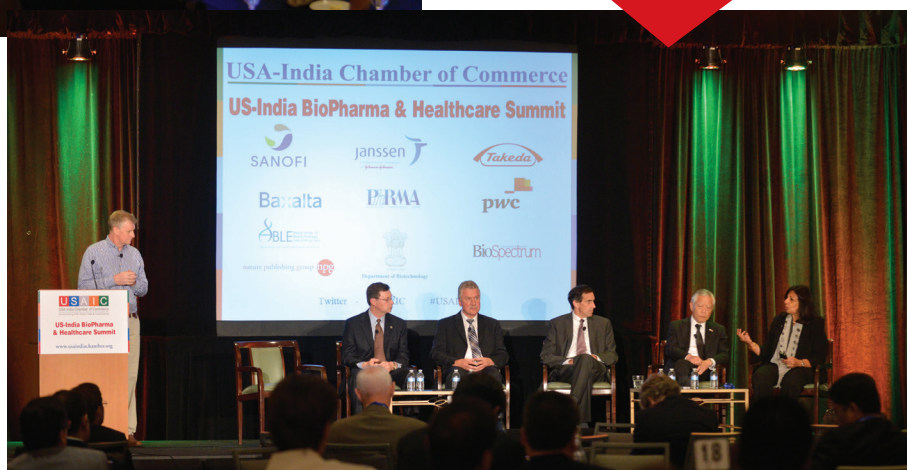
*A session in progress
at the annual Pharma
Summit organized by
USAIC*

and rigor, the Advinus team beat Takeda's internal group and that is the spirit of India that attracts me, Dr Yamada added.

During the event, a superb report, titled, "New Ways to Play: Building a capability-driven strategy for India," prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the global consultancy, was released. The report was commissioned by USAIC. Giving highlights of the study, PWC's Mr Patrick Figgis and Mr Sujay Shetty, called for an enabling and not restrictive pharma regulatory environment in India.

The PWC study also suggested to the Indian government to explore programs and incentives to encourage non-traditional organizations such as IT and telecom companies to partner with pharma industry and government to enable and accelerate drug development in the country. PWC urged Indian pharma companies to invest more risk capital to develop breakthrough products and more novel therapeutics.

Dr Christopher Viehbacher of Puretech Ventures and an industry veteran, said India's pharma landscape has changed dramatically in the last 10 years from VC-funded, small molecule industry, to one that



has a large number of small companies funded by a variety of sources. The emphasis on incremental innovation has given way to looking at innovation differently and the top 10 company list keeps changing in the country.

Dr Viehbacher pointed out that more than 20 per cent of global generics medicine supply comes from India with some world class vaccine manufacturing facilities. He advised India's entrepreneurs to focus on high quality innovation and education in the near future.

Experts referred to high growth rate of medical care facilities coming up in India. Some studies indicate on an average some 400 new hospitals are being built in India every year.

This is a sign of the failure of the public healthcare network to cater to the growing needs of Indians. At the same time, many experts said, doctors are too busy treating patients that their inputs are not reaching pharma researchers during the product development stage.

Leading Indian pharma leaders like Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw of Biocon, Dr Vijay Chandru of Strand Life Sciences, Dr K V Subramaniam of Reliance Life Sciences and Dr Jagdish Prasad, director-general of health services (DGHS) provided the Indian perspective to the discussions dominated by US pharma leaders during the day-long event. **BS**

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