

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF RAPPORTEURS'
SUMMARISATION OF ROUNDTABLE AT THE CONCLUDING
SESSION OF THE FESTIVAL OF INNOVATION AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, March 21, 2018

1. I am happy to be back among you for the concluding session of FINE 2018 – the **Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship**. This Festival reflects the desire of all of us in India, and particularly of Rashtrapati Bhavan, to create a supportive ecosystem for innovations to address un-met social needs as well as expand the frontiers of technology and curiosity. The past three days have seen a **manthan** of policy makers, grassroots innovators, students and other stakeholders. We have explored ways to get innovative ideas to those who can be helped most by such ideas – that is, ordinary and local communities.
2. The **Exhibition of Innovations**, organised by the President's Secretariat in partnership with the **National Innovation Foundation** and the **Department of Science and Technology**, has drawn large crowds. It has demonstrated to industry, government and civil society how innovators are collaborating for a creative and compassionate India. But showcasing innovations is not the sole purpose of this Festival. We must translate innovative ideas into accessible and affordable products and services for our people. Otherwise ideas will remain only ideas – nice thoughts on paper and computer screens.
3. I am glad that the Secretary to the President had a meeting with students who won the **Gandhian Young Technological Innovation Awards** to ascertain what support they needed. It is important to connect the bottom of the innovation pyramid with the other layers. And to clear the path for grassroots innovations to be

scaled up for mass adoption. The first Apple computer was built in a garage, but Steve Jobs only began to change lives when he took his innovation out of the garage. We can romanticise the garage. But it is much more important to find a route to bring innovation out of the garage – into the market-place of products and services.

4. How do we do this in our country, within our universe of frugal innovation? I am told many public-sector scientists do not charge anything to validate and value-add to grassroots innovations. Intellectual property firms also do the same. Let me compliment them. This will help harness R&D and IPR support for local communities and grassroots innovators.
5. The concept of a **Technology Commons**, as used by the National Innovation Foundation, is allowing members to freely use innovative ideas of others, for non-commercial purposes. Only commercial firms need to pay licence fees to use these innovations. These are positives that should be sustained. The President's Secretariat will have periodic follow-up meetings with diverse stakeholders to ensure that no link in the **value and knowledge chain** becomes an obstacle.
6. As part of FINE 2018, four roundtables, chaired by Secretaries of concerned Ministries, took place. The roundtables covered specific and relevant topics. We have just heard from the Secretaries who have reported back from these roundtables. I look forward to quick, sharp and result-oriented action.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7. An innovation culture is not limited to science and technology. It is a cross-cutting endeavour. Innovation Clubs in **Central Institutions of Higher Education** are expected to re-double efforts in discovering, spreading and celebrating innovation. And in mapping unmet needs of urban and rural communities. I am confident that with the support of the **Ministry of Human Resource Development**, such a mapping exercise will be completed over the coming year. Once we have a record of such

unmet needs, aligning R&D to finding the necessary solutions will be a logical step. The two processes will no longer exist in silos.

8. We have before us an example of how this can be done. Regions in our country that grow bamboo, aromatic and medicinal plants are, generally speaking, regions with developmental gaps and challenges. This year FINE has focused on pooling innovations in the management and processing of such resources. The goal is to push development in these regions, by better using the natural resources available there. This will have a direct impact on livelihoods.
9. To build similar platforms, **Start-Up Central**, an initiative of the **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**, has joined hands with **Invest India**, and with the Ministries of Agriculture; AYUSH; Science and Technology; Small and Medium Enterprises; Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; Urban Affairs; Rural Development; HRD; Women and Child Development and other wings of the government. I am hopeful that a virtuous cycle of identifying needs, encouraging on-location innovation, and scale-up will result. If we do this well, we will change our country before our eyes. In this context, the launch of the India Innovation Growth Programme 2.0, by the Department of Science and Technology, Lockheed Martin and Tata Trusts, can help us re-imagine industrial and social innovations in India.

Friends

10. For me, FINE 2018 has been an educative and heart-warming experience. I have been struck, as I so often am, by the vast talent pool, enthusiasm and determination, and selfless dedication to give back to society that marks our people. And of course our innovators.
11. I appreciate that the **Union Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan**, has spent so much time at FINE 2018. Both he and the officials here have listened with care to students and grassroots innovators, their mentors and other stakeholders. Such engagement of policy makers with

emerging as well as established innovators needs to be continued. I especially compliment the National Innovation Foundation, which has worked tirelessly with the President's Secretariat to make this Festival a reality.

12. And lastly, I congratulate all participants and innovators for giving us a glimpse of their extraordinary minds. Your stories are inspiring. It is now for all us to use that inspiration as a catalyst and convert your **innovations** into **enterprises**. You arrived as innovators. I trust you are leaving as entrepreneurs. I look forward to hearing of the leaps you have made next year – at FINE 2019.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!