

Address by Shri D. Gandhikumar, President FISME

during launch of KNN on 5th July 2013

- Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent charge) for MSME, Shri K.H. Muniyappa
- Secretary MSME Shri Madhav Lal
- CEO Prasar Bharti, Shri Jawhar Sircar
- Addl. Secretary and Development Commissioner MSME Shri Amarendra Sinha
- Director Private Sector Development, GIZ India Mr. Manfred Haebig
- My colleagues on the dias:
 - Shri V.K. Agarwal, Immediate Past President
 - Shri Mohan Suresh, Past President FISME
 - Shri Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General FISME
- Members of Board of Advisors of KNN
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen...

A warm welcome to all of you and a very good evening.

While welcoming you this evening, I feel a sense of great satisfaction as well as of a great expectation. It is a day of a dream coming true.

But before I turn to KNN, let me take this opportunity to say a few words about FISME.

FISME was established as National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) in 1967. It came into being in its new avatar as a Federation in 1995.

FISME's focus could be summarized in three letters: **M-R-P**.

The 'M' stands for Market Access. FISME works on issues concerning MSMEs' access in domestic markets e.g. competition policies, public procurement etc.

Similarly, we also work on market access issues concerning international markets such as with WTO, bilateral and regional trade agreements etc.

I am happy to announce that FISME would organize first SME exchange programme in decade between India and Pakistan. We shall mount to and receive a delegation from Pakistan in October this year.

Thereafter we shall organize 'SAARC SME Summit' towards the end of the year where chambers of all SAARC countries will participate. The initiatives are being supported by SAARC Trade Promotion Network based in Nepal and other international agencies.

We are also pushing for greater market access for Indian MSMEs in ASEAN especially Myanmar and are planning a range of new initiatives in this regard.

Second area of our work is signified by 'R'- FISME's unrelenting focus on Reforms. We commission studies, conduct research, discuss, debate and try to analyze the constraints to arrive at policy recommendations. Research based policy advocacy has been the most important area of our work profile.

We feel as a country we have to traverse a long path to create 'Ease for doing Business'. Our place at 132 place in World bank ranking on ease of doing business serves as a good reminder that after 1991 while we are connected with world with high-speed bandwidth, our internal operating system remains archaic.

We have been working for last few years on creation of a mechanism for rehabilitation and exit of sick or failed units and have submitted a legally vetted draft for amendment in the MSMED Act. **I would urge the Hon'ble Minister, the Secretary MSME and DC-MSME to kindly convene a meeting on the issue to take the matter to its logical end.**

The third vertical of our profile is 'P': which stands for Projects. With its three offices in New Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad and well-staffed Secretariat, FISME implements MSME development projects supported by government of India and host of bilateral and multilateral agencies such as UNCTAD, UNIDO, ILO, GIZ, DFID etc.

Just to give you a glimpse of last 12 months:

- FISME set-up three IPR centers with support of DC-MSME, Ministry of MSME.
- Launched India's first 'IPR Exchange' with support of DFID,UK.
- Intervened to strengthen leather and agri-food supply chains in South Asia and COMESA region in Africa in support of UNCTAD and Commonwealth Secretariat.
- As Member of UN-ESCAP Business Council participated in several trade promotion programmes in especially in ASEAN region
- And, KNN is already there before you which is supported by GIZ

So Market Access, Reforms and Projects form the trinity of work at FISME.

Let me now turn to KNN. It has been almost a decade that we have been discussing how to address the gaps in information and knowledge flows within and outside MSME sector.

The vastness of the sector, its geographical spread and its complexity always proved daunting.

We genuinely realized that No-One-Single-Body- whether public or private, can address the issue no matter how much resources are given to it. The solution has to be found by involving hundreds of associations which are active and are working on the ground. Thus the concept of network was born which we kept refining.

However it was an unprecedented opportunity which presented through GIZ last year and the ideation bore fruit in the form of Knowledge and News Network (KNN).

With the launch of KNN today, riding on Information and Communication Technologies of the era, we are embarking on a path which presents immense opportunities in its wake. It has the potential of being a great leveler for MSMEs.

In FISME, we had a dream that an MSME, no matter how small, must have an opportunity to have its say.

An opportunity to share its pain and its struggle. An opportunity to share its successes and victories.

An opportunity to collaborate, to learn and to contribute.

With KNN I feel we come closer to realizing that dream.

On behalf of FISME and the MSME community, I thank GIZ and the MSME umbrella programme of the Ministry of MSME and SIDBI for enabling us realizing the dream.

The fact that KNN is being inaugurated by the Minister of MSME Shri Muniyappa in presence of Secretary MSME and Development Commissioner MSME, highlights Ministry's commitment to empowering the sector and their belief in collective initiatives such as KNN.

I once again welcome you to the launch of KNN and thank you for your support by participating in the programme.

Thank you all.