

## FIRST IRELAND-INDIA SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY FORUM



The Ireland-India Council (IIC) took an initiative first of its kind to organise the 1st Ireland-India Science & Technology Forum in 2010. Forum was jointly hosted with Dublin City University (DCU) on Thursday 25 February, at the Helix, DCU, Collins Avenue, Glasnevin, Dublin, Ireland.

The purpose of the forum was to promote and catalyse Irish-Indian collaborations in the field of science & technology and joint doctoral research. A Programme of Cooperation in Science & Technology was concluded by the governments of Ireland and India in May 2009, which provides the framework for researchers in both countries to develop joint research projects in various disciplines of Science & Technology with the support of both governments. First S&T Forum informed historical and present educational connections between the Ireland and India.

A common element of the deliberations was has been a determination to be useful to stake holders, policy makers, government and non-government institutions. The Forum also focused on issues of real importance to scientific community and policy makers. It reflected on systematic development of S&T cooperation between Ireland and India.

The Forum organisers timely realised the need for such initiative and stakeholder's desirability of facilitating deliberations and outcomes from such Forum to address academic, industrial and policy benefits. There was consensus among the participants about the importance of science and technology to the development of knowledge based smart economy. It was also reflected significance of such cooperation in advancing the common interests of both countries. Speakers spoke that bilateral science and technology relationship is important to the overall Irish-Indian relationship. Speakers pointed out about the non-availability of matching funding from Irish side.

Speaking in advance of the Forum, Indian Ambassador P. S. Raghavan said, “There is a strong partnership in Science & Technology between India and the European Union. Ireland has positioned itself as a European hub for innovation and India has the world’s third largest pool of scientific and technical manpower. There are obvious synergies. I believe the Forum will provide the opportunity for Irish researchers to exchange experiences of research links with India and to draw attention to new possibilities”.

The diversity of participation was extraordinary. Key speakers in the Forum was: H E Mr P. S. Raghavan, Ambassador of India to Ireland, Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, President of Dublin City University, Dr Ruth Freeman, Director Enterprise and International Affairs, Science Foundation Ireland, Professor Eamonn Cashell, Cork Institute of Technology Dr. Conor O’ Carroll, Research Director, Irish Universities Association (IUA) and Irish Representative for 7 EU Framework Programme, Professor Richard O’ Kennedy, Dublin City University, Dr. Satish Kumar, Queen's University Belfast, Professor Michael Coey, Trinity College Dublin, Mr. Aidan Hodson, Principal Officer, Office of the Science, Technology & Innovation, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Professor Brian Norton, President, Dublin Institute of Technology.

Forum participants and speakers lauded historical connections between the two countries emphasised that opportunities for S&T cooperation have not been exploited. The Irish and Indian leaderships need more consistency in their support to further develop it as a strategic partnership.