

## Speaking at National Conclave of Mines & Minerals and Launch of TAMRA app

February 15, 2017

Thank you Mr Balvinder Kumar, Secretary Mines, Mr R Sreedharan, Mr Arun Kumar, Secretary Designate in the Ministry of Mines, Mr Subhash Chandra, Mr Niranjana Sethi, Mr Dhal, all Joint Secretaries in the Ministry, Mr Sudhakar Shukla, the Economic Advisor, Mr RL Mohanty, Vice-President of FIMI, Mr RK Sharma, Secretary General of FIMI, distinguished participants of this very important Conclave on Mines and Minerals, ladies and gentlemen.

Some of you may be wondering why I was insisting that the awards be given by all my colleagues because really I don't think we deserve to be handing out the awards as much as they deserve to be handing out awards for all the excellent work that they have done. All through the last year ever since your first Conclave in Raipur until today, I believe this team working in the Ministry of Mines has shown the highest level of dedication and commitment to their job. And, the amount of work that I have seen happen since July when I came in and from what I hear from Mr Tomar even before that, this has been once Ministry which has transformed itself in the last 2.5-3 years. And I must compliment all the colleagues in this Ministry, Secretary down to the last man in the Ministry who has worked either in GSI, in IBM, the METP, all the organisations who have really contributed to make this sector so much more vibrant.

I must also compliment all the representatives of the state governments who have joined us today. I believe the 12 large mineral producing states are all represented here, possibly, some more states

beyond that. And to all of you from the private sector who have come in, a big thank you for all the support, all the active participation that all of you have given to this sector, to the growth of this sector, to the future of this sector. And I have no doubt in my mind, as Henry Ford once said, if everyone is moving forward together then success takes care of itself. And therefore, success is inevitable when we all work together as a team, work as partners, partners in progress would be the right thing to say but one must be partners in both the good and the bad. We may also face challenges at times. We may also face difficulties at times. But as long as this togetherness, this oneness amongst all of us is there and is there in a spirit of cooperation, in a spirit of partnership then I have no doubt in my mind that the ambition that we set out to do to double the contribution of the mineral sector to the GDP of this nation is possible, is very much doable and will happen.

In fact, in this last 2-3 months I saw the entire department focusing its energies to try and get as many cases cleared before the 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, in some ways to get more and more mining activity pushed faster. And I must thank you Balvinderji for your leadership and for the sincere efforts you put in in trying to make this happen, in trying to make the sector more vibrant, increase the production and the ability to produce in this sector. And clearly, to my friends from the private sector, very often sitting outside the government it's very easy to criticize; it's very easy to make adverse comments. I don't know if the media is also here, but it's very easy for media to make comments about the work of government but knowing full well that Secretary Balvinder Kumar is going to retire end of this month, the enthusiasm with which he has worked in the last few months, it's truly remarkable. Even as we were sitting there, he has on more than one issue taken

certain major policy decisions sitting right here, during the course of this conversation, this program and while I was enjoying my cheese sandwich. He has even right now urged me that we must take this offshore mineral policy forward in a fast-track basis. And I am happy to share with you that we shall instead of waiting for a new law to come in and we will certainly come up with a new enabling framework, a new law to come in and allow us to do the entire process the way ideally one would like it to happen. But at the same time, in order to encourage and move this industry faster we will make certain amendments to the rules in such a fashion that transparency can be brought in to the allocation of these exploration and mining licenses of offshore mineral blocks through amendment in the rule so that the process can start.

And, I believe there is a plan to do about, how many blocks did you tell me? 100? 100 offshore mineral blocks for exploration and mining we will try and push quickly. And as Secretary Balvinder Kumar said, he would like to atleast to kick-start the process before he retires. I think that's a great spirit to have. That's the kind of spirit I think all of us in this industry needs to have. And really it's ....., this to-do spirit, this willingness to do it and this willingness to act expeditiously is something which I think will be a legacy Mr Kumar will leave behind. Thank you very much Balvinderji and let's try and move this forward quickly also.

In fact, another exciting finding for me today as we were launching the TAMRA app was the meaning of TAMRA in different languages. When they first made the presentation I was asking my colleagues that which is the mineral, I remembered they had told me it's one of the minerals that is called TAMRA. So I was trying to juggle my memory what is

TAMRA and I thought it was copper. So I was corrected by my colleague Mr Shreedharan that while it is copper for the ordinary mind, but in Malayalam it is *Kamal*, the flower *Kamal*. Also in Kannada, with a little variation, it's *Tavarai*, but broadly referring back to TAMRA. And in Tamil, and as he was telling me I was recalling campaigning in Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, just about 6 or 9-8 months ago in May.

And I remember going on the road shows in Chennai, I don't recall the second word Shreedharanji, it was something *Tamrai*, something, what were we saying? Asking for votes for *Kamal*? Some word now, I am forgetting because I used to say that at the end of every speech also and I believe the, I never knew there was so much significance to this word. But clearly, the mineral wealth of this nation is waiting there, for years it was waiting in the dirt, in the mess of corruption, in the mess of scandals with huge amount of uncertainty. Now I think TAMRA will help us but the effort of all of these colleagues sitting here and all the colleagues, both from the government and the private sector sitting here, from this dirt is going to rise the *Kamal*, is going to rise wealth for this nation. And I am sure Mata Lakshmi is going to be benevolent in her giving to this nation, in her giving mineral wealth to the people of India as we move more and more towards transparency, towards an equal opportunity system where everybody gets a chance to participate in this great growth story that is India.

In fact, if you look at the Gross National Product of any country, what does it comprise of? It either comprises of human capital and in human capital; obviously, I would include research and development, the human labour that each one of us puts in, all the hard work that went into making this Conclave today a grand success. I just went to the control room before I came here and the amount of effort that has

gone into making this conference a success, when we finalized the dates we didn't know the elections will fall right in the middle of it and we will have elections in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, otherwise, we would have probably changed the dates. But this was planned much earlier, dates were fixed and, therefore, much as I would have liked to spend the whole day with all of you. I am unable to give more time today. But maybe on some other occasion we will spend more time. But clearly, when we look at the Gross National Product, it's human labour or R&D or innovation and all of that. It's the mineral wealth of the nation that comes from below the earth, sometimes at earth level and sometimes from the ocean as we have just discussed. And all of this mineral wealth, it could be of different minerals, it could be of petro products, it could even be year old... coal or whatever other minerals that we are referring to. That adds to the Gross National Product. Animal wealth adds to the Gross National Product and then, possibly, the trees and forests and all of it that grows on land or below the land or in the sea.

Now, each one has an important element in creating wellness and prosperity for the nation, for the people of the nation. But one cannot be at the cost of the other. It's not as if human exploitation can be allowed to continue just so that we can get mineral wealth. At the same time, the forests and environment cannot be allowed to suffer just so that we can create wealth for the people. But on the other hand, it may at times be necessary to allow a small piece of the forest or a small part of the forest for the larger interests of the nation so that that mineral wealth can come and add value to the lives of our people. At the same time, while all of this is very much valid we also need investments, we also need money to be able to both take care of human happiness,

exploit mineral wealth and wherever the forest has got damaged in this process to rejuvenate the forest cover, bring back the forests to life.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is this holistic and comprehensive approach that is needed as we take this industry forward, as we move to the next level of development, as we plan the future of this sector in a more vibrant, in a more comprehensive manner. And I have no doubt in my mind that each of the stakeholders sitting here will contribute to protecting human dignity, protecting human capital to ensure that investments don't go wasted, don't go down the wrong path, to make sure our forests and all the wealth that grows on land or in the water is not damaged when we allow the offshore mineral blocks. I am sure you will all take care that our marine wealth is not damaged in the process, our mangroves, all that huge wealth that is there, the living organisms that are there in the water are not put to risk. And that approach where we are sensitive to every aspect of being or of existence is what makes India great.

The very fact that in India for, I can't say decades or centuries, I think ever since mankind existed, we have respected nature. We have respected all forms of nature. We have even worshipped the sun. We have worshipped water. We have worshipped forests. We have worshipped trees. We have the highest level of respect for human beings, not necessarily only India, in India but across the world. We talk of *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*, the world is one and every person on earth deserves respect and a fair share for the future or out of the future. And, therefore, this effort to bring in 4-star, 5-star mining Balvinderji was saying in the next 2 years, we are going to make it mandatory that no mine will be allowed to operate unless it has a minimum 4-star rating. And that is the kind of sensitivity to each other or to different

sectors of society or nature which will get captured as each one of the companies or miners starts improving his process of manufacturing, his process of operations.

And I must compliment all the award winners today who have been recognized for the good work that they did but I hope will be encouraged to do better in the future and will give encouragement to the others who are not yet there to quickly aspire to also become a good performing mine, a very well-managed mine, a mine which is sensitive to all of these various aspects which are sought to be captured through these various initiatives that were announced and launched and explained today.

The mining surveillance system that we heard and saw will help us bring the entire process of mining under one single window, help us make it much easier to attract private explorers, to attract private investment. A lot of effort has gone into creating that. I believe the new portal that is being created, portal and app that is being created by Wipro for mining tenement system. That's another and, I really think that that will be something which will be a game changer in this industry. The mining tenement system was first, the concept was first started in 2007. Sometimes some political opponents say, oh, but you are only doing what we started. I don't mind that, I mean it's good that you started but you could not take it forward for 7 years. And it's really very painful when you see projects which have been on file, on paper for years and years with hardly any movement, hardly any action to make it happen. I mean end of the day, ultimately, for all the work that is done by all the officers in the past I got to launch the TAMRA app, right? So if by that time I was not the Minister, somebody else was, he would launch the TAMRA app.

Now it's up to me whether I want to start a work and conclude it and do it well, do it efficiently, do it effectively. Or I just want to keep visualizing things, starting a file and leaving it for the next ministers to keep completing, that's a choice each one has to make. And I often tell all my colleagues, and in fact, when he spoke about changing the rules of offshore marine mineral blocks. I was telling Subhash Chandra that we must try and do it before Secretary Balvinder Kumar retires so that that also goes down as a legacy of Mr Balvinder Kumar.

And each one of us sitting in this room has to reflect, has to think, what is the legacy that we are going to leave behind in our lives? After all, when we travel in a metro as I often do, I don't know about many of you may be used to Mercedes Benzes and BMWs, whether you get a chance to travel in metros. But every time anybody travels in a metro what's the one name that comes to your mind immediately? And I think if we take a poll here, maybe 90% of the people will be able to figure out that name. Can somebody tell me? It's a no-brainer. It's a legacy he has left behind. Each one of us has a choice. We can live a life and maybe leave everything half done, start it in 2007 and leave it undone. Or we can run a mundane existence where we are pushing files in the normal course. Or we can just bear satisfaction from the fact that I did my job well and I am sure all of you are doing your job well very honourably, very honestly, all hard-working, decent people.

But legacy is created by those who are willing to be transformative in their work, who are willing to innovate, who are willing to go beyond the call of duty, who want to be remembered – and please don't be remembered for creating coal gate and stuff like that, please. Please be remembered for good things; please be remembered for game changing ideas. Come with new thoughts, come up with fresh ideas,

look beyond the normal course of duty because the call of duty will always be a restraint on your work. But your ability to fly high, your ability to think far beyond is what will create legacies. And for each one of us here, our choice is that are we going to do something.

I, for example, let me share a small thought that has always pained me with due respect, I see some representatives of Cairn Energy also over here, or that group. I think he's left, I saw somebody here. Tom Albanese was here, I think maybe he's left. He's left. Now, I remember when that company was disinvested, it was BALCO if I am not mistaken? Now when BALCO was disinvested, what was the general expectation? The general expectation and the records seem to suggest that it had a nominal amount of mineral wealth in it. That is Hindustan Zinc. Sorry, Hindustan Zinc. Now, Hindustan Zinc was expected that in five years it will run out of zinc or zinc deposits. It's now 10 or 12 or 15 years and I don't see them closing down in a hurry. I see them continuing to mint money for the next I don't know how many years. But that zinc didn't come from out of thin air, it was always there. But somebody didn't do his job when he explored that mine, maybe 20-30-40 years ago. He didn't do his job honourably, he didn't do his job well because of which we never knew how much zinc was there in that mine or below the ground.

Possibly also, as a government company, we didn't have the ability to put in some extra effort, bring in new technology and see how else we can exploit and get more mineral wealth out of that mine. And I think the same thing got repeated in the Cairn oil wells. ONGC had, after all, just left them that there is no oil in those wells or was doing some small bit, I don't recall exactly. Now do we need to have these type of examples teach us the way forward? Or shall we not all of us become

far more responsive to our jobs, become far more responsible for the outcomes of our jobs. Now I can understand some mistakes. I can understand some genuine possible shortcomings. But today, every time I am looking at exploration data or I am looking at data of the mineral reserves, I straightaway in my mind think that, oh, the actual reserve must be double of this. It comes to my mind naturally because of these examples.

Now can we not, now exploration is being done in a big way, right? We are doing some 100 mines which are being explored and we hope to put them up for auction. I hope all those who are engaged in exploration will look at these jobs with great sincerity because, really, what you are doing is determining the value that will finally go to serve a poor person, will probably finally go to bring education to a poor person's life, a poor child's life who didn't get education for so many years, it will probably go to upgrade a hospital in some remote tribal forest area which doesn't have good doctors or doesn't have enough medicines or an operation theatre.

Now if we can keep that at the back of our mind when we are doing our job, I promise you we will do our job far better, far more sincerely, far more sensitively. And that's the kind of effort that each one of us is expected to do. That's the kind of outcomes that this nation has entrusted on all of us as a team so that we can give back. After all, all of us sitting in this Ashoka hotel, I don't know, is it Darbar Hall, what's it called? It's a privilege that all of us are sitting here. We are better off than most people in this country. Now is that privilege going to be ours to enjoy or is that going to be a privilege for ours to share? That's the choice. That's the decision each one of us has to take.

I think I am going beyond the brief of today's Conclave. But when I found that when you remove coal and fuel, petroleum products, India's mineral production is still only 0.76% of our GDP, it really disturbs me. I feel sorry about the state of affairs. If India has to progress, if India has to go to becoming a superpower that '*Sone ki chidiya*' that it was once upon a time I think all of us have no choice but to add value to this industry, this share of India and the world exploration market of 0.4% just is unacceptable to any of us. India will have to start investing much larger amounts in exploration.

I was seeing the statistics. Australia's known reserves of Iron Ore increased about 100-fold in 40 years, from 400 million tonnes in 1966 to 40 billion tonnes in 2005. While India's Iron Ore reserves increased only 5 times from 5 billion tonnes to 25 billion tonnes from 1995 to 2005. In 50 years, we were able to explore new iron ore reserves of only 400% as against what Australia was able to do – 100 times. Can India afford to be lagging behind so much? Can we all afford to give excuses or afford to fail? To my mind, we cannot.

And, therefore, I would urge all of you as Dr Abdul Kalam said, 'be more dedicated to making solid achievements rather than running after swift but synthetic happiness.' Don't just look at the short term. Let's plan for the long term. Let's plan in a really efficient manner how this industry is going to really serve the people of India, how we are going to be able to add wealth to our nation, bring new jobs, bring new opportunities for health and wellness for our people and the initial successes of auctions, be it the coal auctions, then the coal linkage auctions, the mineral block auctions that have already fetched a value of about estimated revenue to state governments of about Rs 73,000 crores. Or be it the auction of our mineral licenses that will shortly be

happening – you mentioned 280 licenses, if we can quickly resolve the court cases possibly 80 more. It's a huge opportunity and I would urge all of you to work on a mission mode on this. If state governments desire and if you have some difficulties, there is nothing to feel bad about it, the centre and states can work as partners. Centre can do any handholding and the revenue in any case going to go to the states, even the coal block revenue 100% is going to the states. We have not charged even a holding fee on that. A 100% revenue goes to the states. But I am happy to handhold the states' efforts so that the activities can be done much faster.

The TAMRA – Transparency, Auction Monitoring and Resource Augmentation – app will help all of you to both monitor my performance and my colleague's performance and also remain abreast with whatever is happening in this sector. It will help you to track statutory clearances. The IBM has also promised that even all approval processes will happen in 45 days for mining leases, all electronic. If there is any query it will also be put on your webpage and you can reply to it on the website itself and I would gradually be moving more and more towards transparency so that none of my officials can also ask silly questions. We will have to think twice before we ask you a question because we will be open to the world's scrutiny whether our questions are genuine or are meant to harass. So I am open to every level of transparency to help this interface between the industry and the Ministry become absolutely open to the world, become true, fair and honest. And this mining surveillance system and this sort of increased use of technology will also help us implement our project much faster, also help us ensure there is no illegal mining, more and more records will come in. Hopefully, we will have CCTV camera's,

video recordings of what's happening in mining like we have done in the coal sector, something like the 'eyes watching from the sky,' you know, they say the CII of FBI is always watching, FBI or own CBI is also watching from the sky, somewhat like that. Let's have mining also transparently open.

They have given me a small quote which I should read out to you because it probably reflects the kind of thinking I want to bring into my working and I will end with that.

Steve Jobs had once said, 'people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.'

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.