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India-French Technology Can Lead to Inclusive Growth

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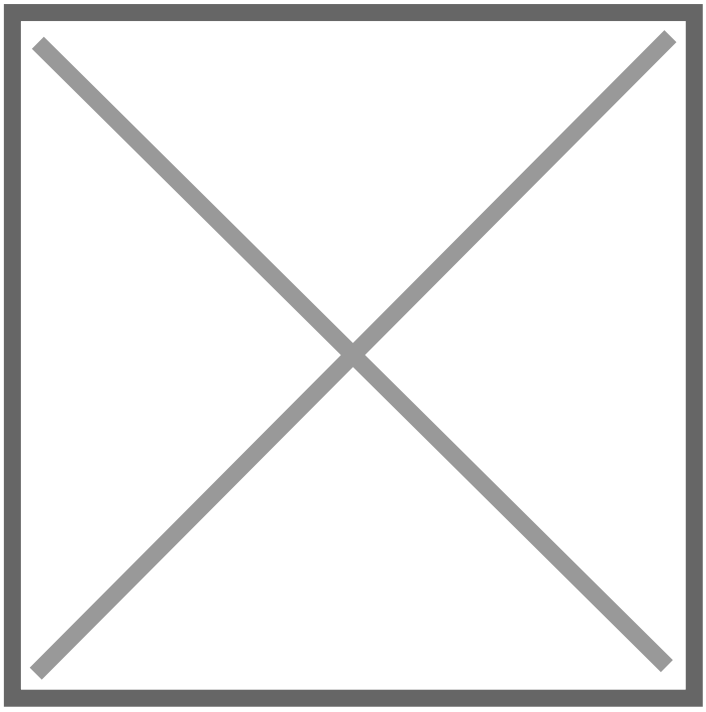

S Jaipal Reddy, Union Minister for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences has said that the new initiatives in the India-France technology cooperation would provide new opportunities for both countries to commercially exploit the research and development and to increase its application for inclusive growth.

Inaugurating the two day long 19th session of India-France Technology Summit, organized by Department of Science and Technology, CII and French Embassy here in New Delhi today, Shri Reddy said that the leadership of France in technology could combine with entrepreneurial innovations of India to create newer products and concepts that could be put to use in both the countries for each other's advantage. In this regard, he referred to the unprecedented focus on innovation and R&D in the 12th Five Year Plan of India, which have to be implemented through public private partnership. He invited French companies to take advantage of the new eco-system in India that focuses on R&D and innovation.

Referring to the Indo-French Agreement for Promotion of Technology signed in 1966 and reviewed in 1978, the Minister said that this would be a major institutional framework for promoting bilateral research and innovation. This cooperation, he said, has led to a few path - breaking innovations and said that more could be done within the framework of the agreement.

Mr. Reddy said that the difficulties in the euro zone and global slowdown did not affect the Indo-French trade. India's exports to France have increased by 12 per cent whereas French exports to India have gone up by 8 per cent. Automobiles, aerospace, electronic, pharmaceuticals , energy etc are the major areas of cooperation between the two countries. India has declared a decade of innovation primarily to achieve the targets of inclusive growth. For reaching this milestone set by India, a more proactive and need based technological collaborations between the two countries are important.

The Minister underscored the initiatives between Department of Science and Technology and CII primarily to promote investment in R&D in the Indian industry and also to create an eco system for research and development through the PPP model. There is also similar arrangement between Department of Bio-technology and CII to promote innovations in biotechnology. In this regard, he said that expertise of France could combine with India's entrepreneurial talents to convert R&D efforts into commercially viable projects. The Technology Development Board of India also has initiated a number of programs for linking clusters in the embedded software as also auto components clusters.

In his message to Technology Summit, Mr Francois Hollande, President of French Republic, which was read out by French Ambassador to India Mr. Francois Richier, said that "French companies have heavily invested in India over the past few years; they have brought with them know-how and technology; they are developing research centres in India, in certain cases, with an international outlook. Numerous cooperation agreements have been signed between public and private research organizations". He further added "Our cooperation is an asset for both our countries. The future is no longer made up of

countries that invent, on the one hand, and countries that manufacture, on the other. Similarly, there will no longer be researchers and laboratories on one side and entrepreneurs on the other. The reality is far more complex in both France and India. This is what the India-France Technology Summit in Delhi illustrates. I, therefore, think that the time has come to inaugurate a new chapter in our scientific and technological relations. This requires the establishment of pathways between universities, research institutes, competitive clusters and companies - including SMEs and SMBs," he added.

Mr Roget Genet, Director General, Head of DGRI, Ministry of Higher Education and Research, Government of the French Republic, said that the French industrial policy would be strengthened by 34 initiatives aiming at gathering researchers, engineers, designers and entrepreneurs to increase public private partnerships towards tomorrow's products and inventions. Among those initiatives, more than 10 are in the field of energy efficiency and about 5 in biotechnology and health. He also mentioned that 26 of those new initiatives are in the scope of India-France technology Summit. A large majority of the listed French groups participating at the summit have also opened R&D laboratories in India.

Dr T Ramasami, Union Secretary, Department of Science and Technology said that 23 round tables to be held during the summit would cover a wide sector of areas that are relevant to both India and France. "The joy of collaboration is in converting research findings into tangible results. This is where the industry, academia and research organizations from both countries to work together," he added.

Mr. Dhruv Sawhney, Co-Chairman, Indo-French CEO Forum and Past President , CII underscored the need for reverse innovation, which would mean that the French could look at marketing goods in India at affordable rates. He mentioned about ECG machines that were produced in India at one-tenth of the price of the prices available abroad. He also wanted India and France cooperate in producing goods that could be marketed in third countries and to focus more on security and defense products.

T Mr. Venkatesh Valluri, Chairman-CII National Committee on Technology & Chairman & president, Ingersoll Rand India, stressed the need for Indo-French collaboration in promoting food technology in India especially in the light of Food Security Bill. He identified water, healthcare, energy and agriculture as the focused areas for Indo French cooperation.

Mr. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, flag marked innovation programs which CII is implementing with the help of Department of Science and Technology particularly in the field of water. Around 100 post doctoral scholarships are given by CII under GITA, he informed.