

**Text of the remarks made by Director General, ICCR at the opening of  
“Maximum India” at Kennedy Center**

Senator Mark Warner, Ambassador Meera Shankar, Mr. David Rubenstein, ladies and gentlemen, most of all the Indian artistes who are present on this occasion, Ustad Zakir Husain, Madhavi Mudgal, Alarmel Valli, Jatin Das, Suketu Mehta and all others.

I bring with me warm greetings from the ICCR and its President, Dr. Karan Singh. I on behalf of ICCR would also like to compliment the Kennedy Center, one of the most prestigious venues in the USA for organizing this festival of Indian culture. The inauguration ceremony has been one of the most impressive events I have seen in the recent times.

A festival of this kind must necessarily project the cultural identity of the people of the nation to which they belong. This should reflect not just the visual and the ritual traditions but also give space to their creative thinking which together would form the soul and the corpus of their cultural ethos. A festival is a valuable instrument in promoting cultural dialogue which is such an essential element of the communication and understanding between two societies. ICCR's partnership with the Kennedy Center in organization of this festival was inspired by this thought. ICCR indeed stands for cultural communication and dialogue.

The essence of the almost natural synergy and friendship between the people of India and the USA lies in their innovative thinking and bold creativity. This is visible in the vast spectrum of the philosophy enshrined in our large body of works such as Upanishads and Vedas. The American nation was founded on the strength of innovation, courage and determined diligence over several centuries. Our common values constitute the fundamental strength of our relations in all areas. ICCR's vision of our cultural communication with the USA is very broad and encompasses several aspects of these cultural traditions. The community of Indians Americans has contributed greatly to furtherance of these relations by frequently hosting Indian artistes all over the USA. I applaud them for their contributions to the growing relations between our two great nations. Intellectual interactions in which the universities and the academic institutions play a unique role, contribute greatly to development of this cultural dialogue and people to people understanding. We will not be sparing in our attempts to forge all possible partnerships in that direction and I thank our friends in the USA for supporting our efforts in this direction.

I have mentioned earlier that ICCR represents cultural dialogue and conversations. Suketu Mehta has mentioned the need for an American Festival in India. When Alicia Adams was recently in New Delhi to launch the **“Maximum India”** I had said in my remarks then that it is perhaps time now for the USA to bring their Festival to India. **“Awesome America”** as suggested by Suketu is a good title.