

## NCAER receives a Rs. 50 crore gift from Nandan and Rohini Nilekani

NCAER received a historic *Rs 50 crore (about US\$ 8.1 million)* gift from **Nandan M. Nilekani**, the President of NCAER's Governing Body, and **Rohini Nilekani** on Wednesday, 18 December 2013. The announcement for one of the largest ever private gifts to an independent research organisation in India was made in the presence of members from NCAER's governing body and staff. The gift will fund additions to NCAER's endowment, the establishment of a world-class new *NCAER India Centre* on NCAER's campus in the heart of New Delhi, and new social research and knowledge capabilities in areas that are of rapidly growing importance for India.

Nandan Nilekani is the President of NCAER's Governing Body and currently the Chairman of the Unique Identity Authority of India and a co-founder of Infosys, where he was earlier the CEO. Rohini Nilekani is the Founder-Chairperson of Arghyam, a foundation that supports initiatives around the country for safe and sustainable water and sanitation. The support for NCAER reflects Nandan and Rohini Nilekani's deep and long-standing commitment to supporting evidence-based policymaking in India.

The Nilekanis' gift comes in the wake of the July 2013 visit to NCAER by Prime Minister **Dr Manmohan Singh** to lay the foundation stone for the new *NCAER India Centre*. During his visit, Dr Singh noted that *"This institution is a great national asset ... I must say that with the passage of time, the need for creative, purposeful, applied economic research has not diminished, it has only gone up."* Dr Singh was a member of NCAER's Governing Body during 1976-1982.

In making the announcement, **Nandan Nilekani** said, *"NCAER is India's oldest and largest economic research institution—a part of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's vision for the independent institutions that a newly independent India needed. I have been privileged to serve as the President of NCAER's Governing Body since 2008. From its early days in the 1950s, NCAER's empirical research and data collection have contributed immensely to economic policy thinking in India. Rohini and I are excited about contributing to a national institution of NCAER's stature, helping it build further on its durable legacy of almost six decades of service to the nation, and supporting its rejuvenation in ways that will make it even more vibrant."*

The NCAER Governing Body and its Director-General, Dr Shekhar Shah, expressed their deep appreciation for this gift, applauding the underlying spirit of renewing national institutions that are independent, influential, and use timely data and analysis to generate practical insights and guidance for policymakers, citizens, and the media. Drawing on the Prime Minister's recent remarks at NCAER, **Shekhar Shah** noted that *"India needs institutions like NCAER more than ever before; if this was true in 1956, it is truer today. India is grappling with hard policy choices, challenges of implementation, regulation and governance, an uncertain macroeconomic environment, and global transformation at a pace that is unprecedented. Mapping a sound course through this can make the difference between floundering and flourishing, between attaining India's vast potential and letting it slip away."*

Commenting further on today's announcement, Shekhar Shah said, *"This gift from the Nilekanis marks a true turning point in India. India's growing tradition of global philanthropy has recently funded places like Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Oxford, and Brookings, which is wonderful. It is now heartening to see this tradition come home; supporting the renewal of independent, Indian national institutions whose policy research can have multiplier effects for the common good. Over nearly sixty years the promise of NCAER has endured—the promise to ask the right questions, gather good evidence, analyse it, and share the results in influential ways with policymakers and people. Nandan and Rohini's generous gift to NCAER today, and the high standard it sets, will help renew this promise and fulfil it in new ways."*

The gift is a first step in **NCAER's 2020 Capital Campaign**, under development since mid-2012. The Campaign is raising funds for NCAER's endowment, the *NCAER India Centre*, and short and longer-term initiatives to grow NCAER's human, social, systems, and financial capital. NCAER will build new research, data collection, and evaluation capabilities that seek to better understand the massive economic and social transformation underway in India, India's changing role in the global economy, and their implications for policy.



