

**Statement by Sundeep Waslekar, while accepting Doctor of Literature  
at the Convocation of the Symbiosis International University  
Pune, India, 3 December 2011**

---

**Your Excellency President of India,**

Dr Devisingh Shekhawat,

Minister Gavit,

Chancellor Dr S B Mujumdar,

Vice Chancellor Dr Bhushan Patwardhan,

Distinguished Guests and Friends,

With immense gratitude, I accept Doctor of Literature of Symbiosis International University. I have very high respect for the founder of Symbiosis, Dr S B Mujumdar. He has demonstrated that knowledge can be developed to harness core human values through the confluence of identities, cultures and nationalities. I feel particularly honoured by the gracious presence of President of India. She represents a civilization that is constantly evolving through encounter with other civilizations, at times absorbing conquest but never inflicting it on others. The continuum of the Indian civilization over five thousand years, its growing plurality, and its unity in diversity is a testament to the endurance of the concept of symbiosis.

Post modern scientific enquiry has demonstrated that symbiosis, much more than competition, underpins evolution. Life became possible two billion years ago because cells learnt to live together in eukaryotic structures. Civilization became possible 10,000 years ago because human beings learnt to live together in communities. The journey towards realisation of the *Vasudaiva Kutumbakam* is possible because nations have been coming together since 1945 in universal forums.

Nevertheless, we as humanity have to go very far in bringing about real inclusion and real symbiosis. On the one hand, human endeavour in the form of Voyager I and II is expected to cross the limits of our solar system within three years. Human competence has succeeded in penetrating cells and atoms. Only recently, human ingenuity has made it possible to detect a particle that overcomes the speed limit of light. On the other hand, more than one billion people in the world do not have clean water, electricity, nutrition and healthcare.

There is only one way to unify the world of infinite human capacity and the world of limitations. There is only way to change the context of despair into the context of hope. There is only way to move from darkness to light, from death to life and from impossible to possible.

This is the way of knowledge underpinned by eternal values. Knowledge without values can cause destruction. Values without knowledge can cause stagnation. Humanity can only advance through the symbiosis of knowledge and eternal values.

The real challenge facing humanity is how to drive our destiny with enlightenment instead of ego, generosity instead of greed, compassion instead of callousness, and principles instead of power. This is precisely what knowledge can make possible. If knowledge in confluence with eternal values shapes our future, humanity will endure. And humanity you must endure for millions of years to come.

When I realise the enormity of the challenge that we all face, I feel overwhelmed. I feel humbled. I feel yearning for learning. I feel I am only beginning. Today is a day when I make another beginning. I know the journey is far and difficult. But I know I have my conviction and I have your blessings. And I am touched by your gracious decision to confer Doctor of Literature on me. I am very happy and honoured to accept it.