

Gujarat National Law University

Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India

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Distinguished Lecture Series: Address by His Excellency Mr. Ashok Sajjanhar

Dear Sir/Madam,

GNLU having hosted Ambassadors and Consul Generals of several nations posted in India and benefitting from their interactions with the students and the GNLU community at large on various issues of bilateral relations, organized another lecture as part of the Ambassador Lecture Series on 3rd October 2016 which was graced by His Excellency, Mr. Ashok Sajjanhar, Former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia. The Lecture Series was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

The lecture commenced with the Welcome Address by Prof. (Dr.) Bimal N. Patel, Director, GNLU who expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India for collaborating with GNLU for organizing this Ambassador Lecture Series.

H.E. Mr. Ashok Sajjanhar addressed the gathering on the WTO and Multilateral Negotiations calling on his breadth of experience as the former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan, Sweden and Latvia. In his speech, he discussed about the history of the WTO and the several negotiation rounds that have taken place since the Bretton Woods Conference, he spoke about the stance that India has taken in the past across all these rounds culminating into what is known as WTO. He also spoke about the barriers India initially put in place to prevent foreign intervention and regulation in the market and described in great detail the factors and forces that led India opening of the market.

He also emphasised on the manner that international organisation function where developed countries imposes the result on the developing countries. It was expected that the developed countries would extend support to developing countries, but the economic crisis in the west witnessed the west adopting protectionist measures too. However, despite the difference, India needs to participate in these rounds and negotiations not only to safeguard its interest but also to receive global attention as an expanding economy. He highlighted that a stronger stance must be

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decided upon and stuck to at multilateral negotiations – which was previously done for textiles and the Multi-Fibre Agreement, as well as the Pharmaceutical and Process Patents. India like its stand on NPT should evolve its foreign policy in terms, having clear position on issues of self-interest by defining what we need to safeguard, decide our interest area and where it lies and follow it up. The core strategic interest must be taken care of.

In the interactive question-answer session, Mr. Sajjanhar engaged with the students about the Trans-Pacific Partnership and its impact on the Asian economies, as well as the efficacy of anti-dumping policies that India has used against China.

For any further queries, please contact Dr. William Nunes (wnunes@gnlu.ac.in) contact number - (8128650855)