

**Address by Prof. Sreemati Chakrabarti, Hon. Director, Institute of Chinese Studies at the
Seminar on “India and China: Public Diplomacy, Building Understanding”**

**co-hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs and
the Institute of Chinese Studies
at Sapru House on 1 April 2010**

On behalf of the Institute of Chinese Studies may I first welcome all of you to this Seminar which is being organized jointly by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS). I express gratitude to Shri Shivshankar Menon, National Security Adviser, for agreeing to deliver the keynote speech, and also to H.E. Zhang Yan, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China for being present. A special word of thanks is due to our paper presenters particularly those who have traveled many miles to attend this event: Prof. Naren Chitty, Prof. Han Hua and Dr. Liu Zhaohua. A very special welcome to Prof. Tan Chung who has come to India along with Mrs. Tan, to receive the *Padma Bhushan* recently awarded to him for readily agreeing to attend this Seminar.

When we in the ICS first thought of holding this event we immediately considered the ICWA as our partners in this endeavour. This is so because of the supportive attitude of the Director-General Ambassador Sudhir T. Devare: whenever we have approached him for co-hosting any event his response has always been positive. Since we do not have a formal vote of thanks at the end, I take this opportunity to thank Director-General Devare and his staff for all the effort that has gone behind organizing this Seminar.

Today we commemorate sixty years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China. It is no doubt a major event, a happy event and must be celebrated. But there is also need for introspection both in India as well as in China. In a ‘welcome speech’ one is supposed to say all positive things and be politically-correct and diplomatic. Please forgive me if I am not following that norm. Two ancient civilizations, India and China, have become or are striving to become modern nation-states and with that transition they have inherited unwittingly the nation-state mindset which westernization and colonialism have brought about. As civilizations there was never any clash but in the modern era as nation states we see the clash of mindsets, which has caused unpleasantness in our relations. It is this factor that has defined much of our relationship in the present era.

In the sixty-years of our relations, after an initial phase of cordiality we have had a very bad phase for 30 years i.e. 1959 to 1989. After 1989 the relationship has been improving in many fields but is still not anywhere close to the ideal ties that should exist among peace-loving countries who are also neighbours, and nowadays described as rising or emerging powers, expected to play meaningful roles in the global politics of the future.

Today at this seminar we will discuss and debate a very important element in our ties viz. public diplomacy. We have foreign policy experts from Sri Lanka, China and India whose presentations, I believe, will bring out many critical issues and problems which India and China need to address. We will also learn about positives that have emerged from public diplomacy. I hope this interaction will provide the stimulation for further research and understanding of each other. More importantly we want a new era in our relationship. On this occasion when we commemorate sixty years of our relations we need to think out of the box in order to make a new beginning.

Thank you.