

Statement of Ambassador Guðni Bragason at the XXVI. National Conference of Orthotics and Prosthetics Association of India (OPAI) on 28 March, Panjim Convention Centre in Goa, India.

Ladies and Gentlemen, President Madhouraj.

I like to thank the Organising Committee for the invitation to address this conference and say few words in support the important work of the Association, and the good relationship between our countries in many fields.

We are proud of the successful company Össur, operating world wide, also in India with headquarters in Delhi and partnerships in several large cities. Few weeks ago the Embassy organized, with participation of the Indo-Icelandic Business Association (IIBA), a Seminar on Innovation in the Icelandic Health Care Sector. One of the speakers was the Mr Marco Scarsi, Director of Össur India who introduced its new technology and innovative products.

Össur India and all the firms participating have done a tremendous job in improving the lives of thousands of people and enabled them to have success in many fields.

The theme of this conference, “Invite Invention Expertise Elevation”, is very much in line with the ideas and policies of the new Icelandic Government. Understandably there is now a strong focus on health care. We are promoting a healthy society in a broad context and universal access to healthcare is the hallmark of a just society.

These policies correspond well with the policies of the Government of India. Our two countries are ideal partners, despite the difference in size and population. We welcome the emphasis of the Indian Government on sustainability and renewable energy and the aims to promote green energy and better quality of life for future generations.

Allow me to mention that our Ministry for Foreign Affairs has set up funding mechanisms to support projects of small companies that are within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

An example is an innovative company pioneering in the use of fish skin and fatty acids in cellular therapy and to regenerate body tissues.

Innovation needs to be supported by promoting public-private partnerships to develop new solutions and get private investment capital aboard. There is a need to begin at the beginning and strengthen the education system to promote innovative thinking, foster the young generation and to provide a robust support for research and technological development and provide green investment incentives.

Opportunities lie in healthcare and life sciences, software development, green technology, digital solutions, telemedicine and the creative sector. We want to foster an environment where creativity can flourish and people can grow, prosper and develop in an open and free environment of international cooperation and competition.

Both our countries, Iceland and India, are innovative countries, despite the difference in size, with a strong technical infrastructure, education system, research and development institutions and first and foremost people with new ideas.

Thank you.