

**Interactive Session with H.E Mr. Andrew T. Simkin, Consul General along with Ms. Aileen C. Nandi, Principal Commercial Officer, US Consulate, Chennai - Wednesday, September 16, 2009**



From L to R: Mr. Andrew T. Simkin, Consul General, US Consulate; Mr. K R Girish, President, BCIC; Ms. Aileen C. Nandi, Principal Commercial Officer, US Consulate, Chennai; Mr. Leonard B Roberts, Director, US Commercial Service, Bangalore.

The Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) in association with Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) organized an Interactive Session with H.E Mr. Andrew T. Simkin, Consul General along with Ms. Aileen C. Nandi, Principal Commercial Officer, United States of America, Chennai on Wednesday, September 16, 2009.

In his welcome address, Mr. K R Girish, President said that in the last couple of years there has been a paradigm shift in the India-US relationship especially after the Nuclear Trade Agreement. He said that there exists a strong relationship between the two countries in the field of Economics, Science, Technology, Business, Social, Defence, Information Technology, and Bio-Technology.

The bilateral trade between India and US is expected to touch \$ 320 bn by 2018 i.e. an 8 time increase as against to \$ 42 bn in 2007-08, Mr. Girish added.

Mr. Andrew T. Simkin, Consul General, US Consulate said that this is his 5<sup>th</sup> visit to Bangalore and this time the visit is historic as the Consulate has launched the Virtual Consulate in Bangalore wherein the residents of Bangalore can directly apply for Visa through the following new Website which has been linked to US Consulate. <http://www.bangalore.usvpp.gov> OR <http://www.buyusa.gov/india/en>

With regard to the opening of the Consulate in Bangalore, the Consul General mentioned that at present visa issued from Andhra Pradesh is much higher than any other part in the Southern region and hence the need to open another Consulate in Hyderabad was essential.

However, decision to open US Consulate in Bangalore will be taken at appropriate time, he said.

On the issue of visa applications, the Consul General said that the Consulate is following a new method where by there is no need for a Technical Interview for people who would like to renew their visas and that the same could be done with the finger prints which is already available with the Consulate. Bangalore will be the first place to adopt this method.

Ms. Aileen C. Nandi, Principal Commercial Officer, US Consulate briefly mentioned about the Bilateral Trade between India & US that has increased exponentially over the last few years. She said that the Bilateral Trade which was 18.36 \$b in 2003 has increased to 40\$b in 2008. She outlined the following focus areas for further enhancement of Bilateral Trade.

- a) Franchising – Food and Services
- b) Renewable Energy
- c) Education, Automobile Sector, Textiles

Ms. Nandi particularly mentioned about the visit of US Aerospace delegation to India during November 2009 and sought the support of the Chamber for organizing one-to-one Business Meetings with the visiting delegates.

Mr. J Crasta, President, FKCCI also spoke on the occasion. Mr. Srinivas Murthy, Senior Vice President, FKCCI proposed a hearty vote of Thanks to the Chair and the delegates.