

Today's chief guest, Mr. Kiran Karnik, this year's Dronacharya Award Winner, Mr. N. Ramanathan, members of the Governing Council of the ISQ, Mr. Pisipaty, and other speakers of the conference, case study presenters, past award winners, , delegates, ladies and gentlemen: a very good morning to you!

It is my honor and pleasure to welcome you to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Indian Society for Quality.

The theme of this Conference is:

### **Quality 4.0: Preparing for the Digital Age.**

Two years ago, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, in my opening remarks at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the ISQ in Mumbai, I had presented a global perspective in quality. I had shown how the world around us was changing, posing new challenges and offering new opportunities. I had talked about the new revolution taking shape in the industrial world, about the biggest challenges facing us as a result of that revolution, and about how we might convert those challenges into opportunities for the future.

Two years later, we are in the midst of that very revolution. Industry 4.0—or for the quality professionals, Quality 4.0, both terms being somewhat synonymous—is no more a buzzword. It is not anymore something that has not hit the Indian shores. It is very much here; already a severe need that industries must consider implementing. Not because it is a fad, but because of the immense benefits it can provide. Not because our competitors

are applying it, but because without it we can be uncompetitive in the days to come.

Like the earlier three revolutions, which were driven by the development of new technologies—steam power, electricity, and mechatronics—this revolution is also technology-driven. Recent developments in sensing devices, connectivity, and computing power have opened up new possibilities of human-machine interaction, machine-to-machine communication, and predictive analytics. Thanks to this revolution, we can make data-based decisions on the fly, will be able to trust machines to make their own decisions, and improve our performance like never before.

As the new technology offers speed, transparency, and accuracy of information transfer, its application will automate both manual and knowledge work. The entire organization will be connected, so the transfer of information and knowledge will take place quickly and comprehensively. These changes will have their implications in the operations of an organization. It will result in new definitions of job roles and the need for new skill sets, leading a significant disruption at the operation level. Some people may feel threatened by the loss of the power of information that they held before. Implementing this revolution will be indeed an organizational transformation. How will we do it?

This Conference offers an opportunity to dwell upon this question and seek answers to it from veterans and experts from the Industry and the Academia. We have lined up an array of great individuals who will share their thoughts and their experiences which

should help us understand how we can leverage the new technology for the benefit of our organizations and ourselves. I am confident that tomorrow, at the end of the Conference, we will have a better perspective on the challenges and opportunities presented to us by this new revolution.

On such an occasion, we could not have asked for a chief guest better suited than Mr. Kiran Karnik. Hailed as the man behind the Indian IT revolution, he was instrumental in placing the Indian IT industry on the global map. In his six years at the apex body NASSCOM as its head, the Indian IT-ITeS industry grew from nearly \$6 billion to about \$40 billion at an astonishing annual growth of over 25%.

His achievements at NASSCOM are so overwhelming that few people know that Mr. Karnik was the Managing Director and CEO of Discovery Networks in India where in the 1990s he spearheaded the launch of the Discovery Channel and the Animal Planet Channel in South Asia. Even fewer people will know that Mr. Karnik has worked for over 20 years at the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), where he held various positions including that of Founder-Director of ISRO's Development and Educational Communicational Unit. His work in ISRO involved conceptualizing and managing applications of space technology. I am sure that everyone present here is eager to listen to the words of wisdom from him. Thank you very much, Mr. Karnik, for sparing your valuable time and for being with us this morning in

spite of your busy schedule. I am personally indebted to you for your this gesture.

In today's Conference, we are going to confer the prestigious Dronacharya Award to Mr. N. Ramanathan. This Award is given to recognize people who have made a significant contribution to Indian society through their work of teaching and counseling in the field of quality management. Mr. Ramanathan surely deserves to be in the company of stalwarts, great gurus, and past recipients of this award, like Prof. Tsuda, Prof. Kume, Prof. Kano, and Prof. Shiba. The Governing Council of the ISQ is extremely pleased to honor Mr. Ramnanathan with this coveted award. He is an accomplished professional and a discerning communicator. We are all looking forward to your acceptance speech, which I am sure will inspire many in the audience to tread the path you have taken.

Over the next two days, several experts and practitioners are going to share their thoughts, experiences, and success stories with us. I hope that you will all find these deliberations insightful, thought-provoking, and beneficial as you attempt to try your hands with the new emerging technology, and help your organization in this new journey of transformation.

Thank you, very much!