



INTERVIEW/ Ellen Kullman

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## “In India, I See a Lot More Acceptance of Gender in the Workplace”

**D**uPont Chair & CEO **ELLEN KULLMAN** in conversation with **CHAITANYA KALBAG**. Edited excerpts:

**Do you think the India-US CEO Forum you are a member of has managed to get things moving a bit in terms of more positive attitude towards bilateral trade?**

It is very important to get things on the table to understand issues that exist on both sides, across all industries. I am active, for instance, in agriculture and biotechnology. We believe that an open framework in science in genetically-modified organisms should allow a country to make good decisions around their deployment. We have the brinjal situation in India. We need to understand where the issues are and bring infor-

mation forward and figure out how we work together.

**On genetically modified crops, there seems to be a very strong knee-jerk reaction in India...**

There is a lot of misinformation around there and that creates fear and resistance. It is up to us to work with the government and NGOs and bring facts and understanding. It is about the dialogue... I believe that the impact on creating higher levels of nutrition, higher food and lower utilisation of toxic chemicals with new chemicals... These will create more food for the future. People have to accept it, if it has to be successful.

**How much do you think India is going to be able to help DuPont in building research capabilities?**

We are trying to build a material science lab and our Kevlar ballistics is one of the capabilities we are going to be putting there. We have been very successful in recruiting talent. What we have found is that we need to localise our application development and work with local companies to create different applications... That is a big part of the investment we have put in place in Hyderabad.

**In India, the biggest challenge is getting solar electricity to be affordable enough and that is not something anyone seems to have cracked.**

You are right. We see a lot of work going on around reducing the cost of the solar cell itself, and we have seen those prices come down over the last few years but what has not changed is the cost of installation. It is important to get an understanding of what our customer is facing, and that is part of the opportunity that exists.

**In your experience, what do you think it takes to not have this categorisation or pigeonholing of how women do in senior structures?**

We all have our experiences and every time there is a successful woman, whether in an entrepreneurial role or in a company, it helps build a better history for the future. At the end of the day it is about bringing all the talent across our population; talent does not look at gender or race. I see a lot more acceptance of gender in the workplace. I see it in India. There is movement and there is momentum and your forum is going to be a great way to showcase the women doing very well. It is communication around success that makes people sit up and take notice and think “Gee, my manager is a woman and I should be in that group” as she is great. This is always good. ♦

Read the complete transcript at  
[www.businesstoday.in/kullman](http://www.businesstoday.in/kullman)