Opening Message: From Global Trustee, Dr. Sujata S. Govada on the 2013 ULI Fall Meeting in Chicago

The ULI Fall meeting in Chicago was a great event bringing together a diverse range of over 5,000 people with a multitude of council meetings, panel sessions etc. There were many insightful plenary sessions from key real estate figures in the US and some informative panel discussion sessions. Building Healthy Places is a ULI major institutional wide initiative spread across the various district and product councils. Publications such as 10 principles and connections were released as part of the initiative to educate, create awareness among all members and bring participants on board.

The session with Sam Zell was particularly interesting with an in depth conversation that engaged the participants to learn more about his life starting. From when he was a child and how he became up as a developer at a very young age. He also shared his views regarding investment and his recommendations for future development. The closing plenary with key innovators from various sectors was particularly fascinating bringing together a presentation on what conditions are required and how innovation actually happens from gardening along highways in Los Angeles, to urban green ways in Chicago to improve walkability and crowd sourcing in Jacksonville Florida. The panel session with Ron Finley the “guerilla gardener” organized as an interactive session to encourage more participation was very inspiring encouraging people to get back to nature through gardening.

The program of the Global Exchange Council was engaging showcasing challenges and opportunities in mature and emerging markets. Some sessions also highlighted the life journey of successful design, development and investment professionals. Various networking lunch and coffee break sessions and special events such as the Trustee’s dinner, offered opportunities to meet new people.

The Mayors leadership sessions were equally engaging with some insights into the challenges and issues faced by elected officials in their respective cities. The ULI Open Space Awards and the ULI Global awards were announced including some Asia Pacific.

All in all it was worth attending and encourage members to mark your calendars for future events.