Ajai Malhotra (India)

Education

Ajai Malhotra holds an M.A. in Economics from Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.

Professional experience

He joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1977.

From 1979–1982, he handled India’s ties with Kenya and Seychelles at the High Commission of India, Nairobi, also serving as the Focal Point for India to UNEP and UN-HABITAT. From 1982–1985, he was Second/First Secretary (Political) at the Embassy of India, Moscow. From 1985–1989, he was First Secretary (Political) at the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, Geneva, handling ILO, WHO, WIPO, and other United Nations agencies, representing India on the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, as Director of the ILO Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training, Turin, Italy, and participating in annual meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

From 1989–1993, he was initially Deputy Secretary (United Nations) at the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, handling human rights and international environmental issues and later Director (United Nations), supervising all multilateral work of the Ministry of External Affairs, except disarmament. This included guiding processes leading to the ratification by India of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992 and United Nations CEDAW in 1993, and the establishment of India’s National Human Rights Commission in 1993.

He was Counsellor at Embassy of India, Moscow, from 1993–1996, returning to the Ministry of External Affairs as Director/OSD in 1996. As Joint Secretary in that Ministry from 1997–1999, he guided India’s relations with the Russian Federation and all Central and East European countries. From 1999–2003, he was Minister, Embassy of India, Washington DC, also serving from 2002–2003 as Chairman of the International Cotton Advisory Committee, Washington DC. From 2003–2005, he was India’s Ambassador to Romania, concurrently accredited to Albania and Moldova.

From 2005–2009, he was Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York. He participated in the negotiations leading to the setting up the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations Human Rights Council. He was India’s Ambassador to Kuwait from 2009–2011 and the Russian Federation from 2011–2013, prior to retiring on November 30, 2013, after 37 years of distinguished service.

Ambassador Malhotra has been on the Indian team negotiating issues such as biological diversity, climate change, desertification, education, energy, forestry, health, human rights, human settlements, intellectual property rights, international law, labour rights, ozone depletion, sustainable development, international trade, etc. He has participated in meetings ranging from the 1st United Nations Conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy (Nairobi; 1981) and UNEP Session of a Special Character: Ten Years after Stockholm (Nairobi; 1982) to the Diplomatic Conference on the Intellectual Property of Integrated Circuits (Washington DC; 1989) and United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro; 1992); from the WTO Summit (Seattle; 1999) to numerous meetings of the World Health Assembly, WIPO Assembly, International Labour Conference, and United Nations Human Rights Commission/Council; from United Nations General Assembly and ECOSOC sessions (2005–2009) to NAM, G77 and Commonwealth Summits (1989–1993 and 2005–2009); from UNEP Governing Council sessions to UNESCO and United Nations Democracy Fund meetings.

He has contributed to the evolution of the concept of ‘common concern of humankind’ and written on issues such as the rights of future generations. In 2004, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Western University of Arad, Romania, in recognition of his work in support of environmental causes and human development.

Post retirement, he served from 2015–2019 as Independent Director of India’s public sector oil and gas company, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC) as also of ONGC Videsh Ltd (2017–2019). Ambassador Malhotra’s ongoing responsibilities include:

(a) Since 2014, Chairman and Managing Trustee of “Chikitsa”, a grassroots, humanitarian NGO that provides free primary health care (consultations and medicines) to the poor and underprivileged in Delhi-National Capital Region.

(b) Since 2014, Chairman and Managing Trustee of “Shiksha”, a grassroots, humanitarian NGO that provides free education to underprivileged children in Haryana, India, and vocational training to underprivileged youth in the Delhi-National Capital Region.

(c) Since 2014, Distinguished Fellow and Senior Adviser (Climate Change) at The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, a premier developing country NGO with a multi-dimensional focus on energy, environment, climate change and sustainability issues.

(d) Since 2015, Chairman of the Management Committee, NAB India Centre for Blind Women & Disability Studies, New Delhi, an organization that seeks to empower, skill and rehabilitate visually challenged women.

(e) Since 2015, Chairman, Nehru Trust for the Indian Collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, an organization that encourages the study, preservation and display of India’s art and cultural heritage.

(f) Since 2017, Member, Advisory Committee, United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva.

(g) Since 2019, Secretary General, Kiwanis Club of New Delhi, a voluntary organization making and providing free artificial limbs to the needy.