

Hon. Dr. Shashi Tharoor, MP, India

Board Member

AirQualityAsia

An author, politician, and former international civil servant, Shashi Tharoor straddles several worlds of experience. Currently a second-term Lok Sabha MP representing the Thiruvananthapuram constituency and Chair of the Committee on Information Technology, he has previously served as Minister of State for Human Resource Development and Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India. During his long career at the United Nations, he served as a peacekeeper, refugee worker, and administrator at the highest levels, serving as Under-Secretary General during Kofi Annan's leadership of the organisation. Dr. Tharoor is also an award-winning author of works of both fiction as well as non-fiction, with his sixteenth book due for release in November 2016.

Dr. Tharoor was educated in India and the United States, completing a PhD in 1978 at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. While there, he received the Robert B. Stewart Prize for Best Student and also helped found and served as the first Editor of the *Fletcher Forum of International Affairs*, a journal now in its 39th year. Dr. Tharoor was also awarded an honorary D.Litt by the University of Puget Sound and a Doctorate *Honoris Causa* in History by the University of Bucharest. In 1998 the World Economic Forum in Davos named him a Global Leader of Tomorrow. He is also a recipient of several awards that include a Commonwealth Writers Prize and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, India's highest honor for overseas nationals. In 2012 the King of Spain awarded him the Encomienda de la Real Order Espanola de Carlos III. Among numerous other awards are one for "New Age Politician of the Year" from NDTV, the Hakim Khan Sur Award for National Integration, and the Priyadarshini Award for Excellence in Diplomacy.

Following his long career at the United Nations, Dr. Tharoor returned to India and was elected to Parliament in 2009. He also served as Member-Convenor of the Parliamentary Forum on Disaster Management, and as a member of the Standing Committee on External Affairs; the Consultative Committee on Defense, the Public Accounts Committee; and the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Telecoms. He has participated prominently in many of the most important debates of the 15th Lok Sabha in India, and in his current second term sits in the Opposition benches, also serving as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and a member of the Standing Committee on Rules.

Dr. Tharoor is also a recognized authority on India, especially regarding its recent economic transformation and future prospects, globalization, freedom of the press, human rights, literacy, culture, foreign affairs, cricket and more. He is the author of hundreds of articles, op-eds, and book reviews in a wide range of publications. He is celebrated author of several fiction and non-fiction books. His first non-fiction book, *Reasons of State* (1981) is a study of Indian foreign policy making, while his *India: From Midnight to the Millennium* (1997) is an acclaimed analysis of contemporary India, cited by President Clinton in his address to the Indian Parliament. His novel, *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), is required reading in several courses on post-colonial literature.

Shashi Tharoor also served on the Board of Overseers of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, the Board of Trustees of the Aspen Institute, and the Advisory Boards of the Indo-American Arts Council, the American India Foundation, the World Policy Journal, the Virtue Foundation and the human rights organization Breakthrough. A prominent human rights advocate, Dr. Tharoor was appointed an International Adviser to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva for the period 2008-2011. He was also a Fellow of the New York Institute of the Humanities and the Patron of the Dubai Modern School, and serves on the Advisory Council of the Hague Institute for International Justice.

Dr. Tharoor's most recent book was published in 2016 and it is called *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in Indian*.