

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB  
MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF THE  
WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT ORGANIZED  
BY THE ENERGY AND RESOURCES INSTITUTE**

Vigyan Bhavan: Oct 6, 2016

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1. At the very outset, I would like to congratulate Shri Pawan Kumar Chamling, Chief Minister of Sikkim on receiving the Sustainable Development Leadership Award. I am indeed happy to have the opportunity to take part in the deliberations at the first edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit. To begin with, let me congratulate TERI - The Energy and Resources Institute - for initiating this conclave of great relevance. This global forum has evolved from the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS) that was launched by TERI in 2001. The DSDS had been at the forefront of creating environmental consciousness and promoting leadership to tackle the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. I fondly recall having the opportunity of inaugurating another edition of the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit couple of years back, when I was External Affairs Minister. I am pleased to see it grow into a larger and more inclusive platform now. I take this opportunity to welcome the delegates who have come from abroad.
  
2. TERI has been consistent in its endeavour to find solutions and create new knowledge on issues relating to environment, climate, resources and sustainable development. Through this World Sustainable Development Summit, TERI is seeking to provide a unique platform to experts, administrators, policy-makers and others from round the globe, determined to protect our planet, to promote international exchange of knowledge and ideas. I urge TERI to continue its efforts for many more years.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

3. The threat of climate change is real and immediate. It concerns the whole world as its ill-effects are all-pervasive. Developing economies are more vulnerable to climate change as these

economies are closely tied to climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture and forestry. As a developing country with shared concerns on climate vulnerability, India has a vital stake in an equitable and multi-lateral approach towards climate change.

4. India is home to almost 18 percent of the world's population. However, we possess only four percent of the world's renewable water resources. Our energy consumption constitutes six percent of the global energy consumption. Resource constraints notwithstanding, we have worked hard to become the fastest growing economy amongst the major economies of the world. We have the capacity to clock sustained high growth. But growth is dependent on resource availability, especially energy. Factors such as demography, development and urbanization exert tremendous pressure on availability of resources. Large-scale utilization of resources leads to their depletion and also impacts adversely on the environment. This results in reduced availability of resources for future growth putting a question mark on the sustainable development of an economy.
5. We need to follow a twin-tracked approach of limiting the rise of climate change while ensuring the existence of sufficient resources to meet our future developmental requirements. This objective mandates the efficient use of earth's natural resource. We should aim at creating a society that is prosperous but not wasteful. We should make use of our abundant renewable sources to create a society that is self-sustaining and mindful of its responsibilities towards the present and future generations. Our society must learn to exercise restraint in consumption while continuing to use resources in moderation. In this regard, I am reminded of these words of Mahatma Gandhi who once observed and I quote: "*The earth provides enough for everyone's needs but not for everyman's greed*" (unquote).

Ladies and Gentlemen:

6. Promising initiatives have been taken both at the national and international levels aimed at addressing the challenge of climate change. The adoption of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 are but two crucial steps in this effort.

They speak of the global acceptance of the view that all the people and countries of the world need to work together for our common future.

7. India ratified the landmark Paris Agreement that was reached at the twenty-first Conference of Parties four days ago on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. I am glad that our ratification has occurred prior to the next Conference of Parties and I hope that it will encourage other countries to follow suit. If the legally required ratification by countries who together account for 55 percent of the global emissions is achieved, it will enable the coming into-force of the Paris Agreement before the next Conference. This will be a major boost to our fight against climate change. I take this opportunity to compliment France for its effective leadership at the Paris Conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

8. Prior to the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in December 2015, all countries under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were asked to publish their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Our NDCs are ambitious but if we can accelerate steps on several fronts, it will be possible to achieve our targets. The NDCs are complemented by the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which India had adopted in 2008. The NAPCC sets out a comprehensive response to the challenges of climate change through eight missions. It includes both adaptation and mitigation goals in addition to scientific research. The tasks have been set while recognizing the need to increase the standard of living of a vast majority of people and reducing their vulnerability to adverse impacts of climate change.
9. Merely setting up of policies and missions, to my mind, is not adequate. It is the effective implementation and enforcement of these policies that is most critical. I would like to make a special mention of India's achievements in both renewable energy and energy efficiency. While our progress in this direction is globally significant, we have to continue pursuing more ambitious goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

10. The world is facing challenges in all the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. On the one hand, over a billion-and-a-quarter people are still living in poverty. On the other, patterns of unsustainable production and consumption are endangering our planet's eco-systems. This threat presents us with an opportunity to work together. Global action built on partnerships is required to achieve sustainable economic and social progress, inclusive growth and protection of the earth's eco-systems. Both the Nationally Determined Contributions and the Sustainable Development Goals impel us to look beyond national boundaries and act in solidarity rather than in silos. Collective action, indeed, is necessary to address the shared concerns of our world.
11. I am happy that through the World Sustainable Development Summit, TERI is taking a lead in providing a platform for sharing of experiences and for collaborating on strategies for result-oriented action. This collaboration between governments, private sector, academia and civil society will be a vital source of knowledge, innovation, expertise and solutions in tackling the twin and inter-linked challenges of development and environment. The theme of this Summit 'Beyond 2015: People, Planet and Progress' will motivate us to transform the way we think about progress. The barometer of prosperity is not merely economic growth but the well-being and availability of opportunities for all. Prosperity can be secured only when our planet remains healthy. We must work towards effective governance of our planet's natural resources to ensure clean air and water. We must also work towards adequate food and nutrition for all people. Reducing socio-economic inequalities is a universal agenda that requires urgent action by all nations.
12. I hope this World Sustainable Development Summit will deliberate on policy discourse and conceptualize new solutions to find innovative pathways of development. I am confident this conclave will witness the formation of multi-stakeholder partnerships that will

benefit all while safeguarding mother earth's eco-systems. I  
conclude by wishing you all success in your deliberations.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

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