



INTERVENTION BY MR. S. BEHURA, SPECIAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & FORESTS, ON THEMATIC DISCUSSION: AIR POLLUTION / ATMOSPHERE, INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 15TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON FEBRUARY 28, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We agree that air pollution remains one of the major environment problems. Adverse impacts of increasing pace of urbanization and industrial growth are resulting in problems of air pollution. This problem is likely to aggravate further in developing countries such as India as we move on a high trajectory growth path in order to achieve our national development goals and the targets set by the MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

It is increasingly clear that an integrated approach to addressing air pollution and atmospheric problems, which looks at social, economic and technological issues, has many advantages. An integrated air quality management plan would need to consider a multitude of issues relating to environmental standards, clean technologies, clean fuels, energy and resource efficiency, environmental health, economic instrument, capacity building and environmental awareness amongst others. Control of various pollutants at various levels would have direct benefits in terms of reduced health impact as well as impacts on eco systems.

Mr. Chairman,

In India, the Government has taken a range of measures to prevent and mitigate the impacts of development on the atmosphere. Air pollution from 17 categories of highly polluting industries such as cement, iron and steel, copper, aluminum etc. are generally within the stipulated emission standards. Also as sulfur is very low in India, the SO₂ pollution from thermal plants is much less. Our major problem however, is the management and disposal of ash for which a major programme on ash management has been undertaken. We have also prepared the zoning atlas for setting up air polluting industries.

The Government has also undertaken steps to improve the quality of fuels used in the vehicles as the same has an important role in reducing emission levels.

Mr. Chairman,

A major health concern in India as in other developing countries is indoor air pollution primarily due to burning of solid bio mass. 90% of rural households and 72 % of total households in India still rely on bio-fuels for domestic cooking. The Government, besides promoting improved biomass stoves, has been undertaking measures to enhance access to cleaner fuels such as LPG.

Mr. Chairman,

Air pollution, which may be salient at household, local, national and sometimes, regional, but not the global, level, can be best addressed at the relevant spatial level, through various approaches, including the provision of information, technology, norms and regulations. There are numerous successful examples throughout the world of such arrangements. The international community needs to take a concerted and cooperative effort to addressing the problem through supporting efforts at the national level and through the fulfilment of committed obligations by the developed countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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