



STATEMENT BY DR. PRODIPTO GHOSH, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & FORESTS, ON HIGH LEVEL SEGEMENT, 15TH SESION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMT ON MAY 10, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Group of 77.

Overview: Energy is a ubiquitous input in all processes of production and consumption. There can be no improvement in the human condition, without corresponding use of energy. At the same time, unless the manifold environmental and social issues associated with the entire energy cycle are addressed, the use of energy may, over time, pose large, unacceptable risks to sustainability.

For developing countries, a rapid, but sustainable increase in energy use per capita, is essential, if national development goals, and the Millennium Development Goals, are to be realized. For industrialized countries, it is imperative to ensure that further growth in prosperity is accompanied by rapidly declining environmental impacts of the energy cycle. Both challenges will require enhancement of the available technologies and energy sources, large investments in energy infrastructures, and significant policy, institutional, and regulatory changes. It will call for participation by the public, private, and voluntary sectors. It will call for political vision.

Mr. Chairman,

Need for multiplicity of energy sources: Concerns over energy security have heightened with recent sharp increase in energy prices. This has resulted in a renewed focus on energy diversification and efficiency. All significant energy sources – whether conventional or advanced fossil fuels based, or renewables, or hydropower, or nuclear power, must remain in policy reckoning to address energy needs for sustainable development. Legal and political barriers to the civilian use of nuclear energy, a clean and safe energy source, should be addressed to reduce the world's increasingly vulnerability to the multiple

environmental impacts of fossil fuels. However, it is nobody's case that the risks of each of these energy sources, whether economic, social, environmental, safety, or security related, should be swept under the carpet. They should be analyzed, discussed, and solutions found.

Mr. Chairman,

Technology R&D: In order for many of these newer energy sources to be deployed, several things are necessary. Among these, R&D in several technologies which rely on specific sustainable resource bases is essential. For example, the huge renewable resource of biomass from crop residues available in both developing and industrialized countries remain inefficiently utilized; the traditional technologies are insufficiently versatile, and have major health, gender, and environmental impacts. Modern renewable energy technologies remain, for the most part, expensive, except in niche applications. We believe that this is an important, promising but unutilized, area for collaborative R&D, with sharing of the resulting IPRs, between institutions in industrialized and developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

IPRs Regime: Critical technologies have been out of reach of developing countries because of prohibitive cost, due largely to the existing IPRs regime. We believe that a fairer balance between rewards to the innovator, and the global imperative of sustainable development, is essential, if large-scale deployment of advanced, clean technologies is to happen.

The IPRs issue was successfully addressed on a similar basis in respect of pharmaceuticals for addressing public health crises, such as HIV/AIDS, in developing countries. There is a similar need for revisiting the IPRs regime to ensure that technologies, which are necessary for implementation of the multilateral regime on sustainable development are placed in the limited public domain for access by developing countries. Costs would be reduced, through competitive procurement, and innovators would realize significant rewards, as a regulated monopoly like many others, from the fact of large-scale deployment.

Mr. Chairman,

Sustainable Production and Consumption: No efforts at sustainability would succeed, unless practices of sustainable production and consumption become the norm the world over. Buildings which seriously conserve energy for thermal comfort, water heating, and lighting, and recycle and reuse water; commuting by mass transport modes, walking, or cycling; reuse and recycling of various materials, in particular glass, plastic, metal, paper, wood; dietary

changes that correspond to current medical knowledge; management of food supply chains so that needs of processing and packaging are reduced; enforcement of speed limits on highways; automobiles that are lighter, more fuel efficient, and flexible in their fuel - none of these would threaten anybody's prosperity. Rather, they will enable everybody to lead healthier, longer, safer, and more fulfilling lives.

Mr. Chairman,

Climate Change: The IPCC FAR has enhanced scientific understanding of the impacts of climate change. The report gives ground for concern, but does not justify mass hysteria. The current level of scientific understanding should lead to deeper and longer-term commitments to reduce GHG emissions by industrialized countries. This will spur the carbon market, and enable developing countries to further participate in GHG mitigation efforts through a more efficient, broadened CDM. At the same time, it is clear that the resources needed to adapt to climate change are of the same order of magnitude as those required for GHG mitigation. To raise the necessary financial resources, all mechanisms of the carbon market, and not only the CDM, should be sourced. The option of diversion of ODA resources from accomplishment of MDGs to addressing climate change must not be pursued.

The best adaptive strategy is the elimination of poverty. Accordingly, the elimination of trade barriers, and realizing an open and supportive trading system is an essential pre-requisite for adapting to climate change.

Mr. Chairman,

Policy Options: Policy making is a complex, multidisciplinary exercise. It must respond to the specific context to which it is to apply. This includes taking account of a country's historical experience, institutional capacity, economic, social and political structure, and its culture.

It is certainly useful to study and absorb the lessons of policies implemented elsewhere. However, apart from some very general principles, it is not the case that detailed prescriptions can have universal application.

Mr. Chairman,

Developing countries face challenges far more complex than did the industrialized countries at the corresponding stages of their development. On the one hand, there are greater opportunities – by way of technologies, skills, and the knowledge pool and capacities of institutions. On the other, the expectations

of their polities for rapid transformation of their lives, and responding to a far more integrated global system, pose difficult choices.

Developing countries need policy space to manage these multiple challenges. It would be a great mistake to constrain their policy options through regimes based on a uniform view of the world.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)