



STATEMENT BY MR. P. CHIDAMBARAM, FINANCE MINISTER AND SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE PRIME MINISTER, DURING THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE CONVENED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL: 'THE FUTURE IN OUR HANDS: ADDRESSING THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE' AT THE THEMATIC PLENARY ON 'THE CHALLENGE OF ADAPTATION - FROM VULNERABILITY TO RESILIENCE' ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2007



Honourable Co-Chairs,

May I begin by expressing our appreciation for the initiative of the Secretary-General in convening this High-Level Event. I am confident that this event will assist in moving forward the process in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC]

Like many developing countries, India is an energy deficient country. In 2006-07, we produced 662 billion units of electricity from all sources for a population of over a billion people. Energy is the sine qua non of development.

We are obliged to explore every option available to us to produce or procure energy. However, we are profoundly concerned about environmental degradation and climate change.

Our per capita consumption of energy is 530 kgoe of primary energy compared to a world average of 1770 kgoe. Our per capita emission of CO₂ is among the lowest in the world: it is approximately 1 tonne per annum as against a world average of 4 tonnes per annum. Currently, developing countries bear an inordinate share of the burden of Climate Change, though this is due to the high-level of emissions of developed countries. Developing countries are, therefore, obliged to significantly augment their capacity to cope with and adapt to climate change.

We acknowledge the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

We uphold the view that adaptation is the key for developing countries and that it needs to be adequately resourced without diverting funds meant for development. In any case, development is the best form of adaptation.

Adaptation has been integral to India's development process. We are challenged constantly by climate variability. We spend every year over 2 percent of our GDP in development measures with strong adaptation content like cyclone warning and protection, coastal protection, flood control, drought relief, and food security.

In 2001, we passed the Energy Conservation Act. We have notified an Energy Efficiency Code for new commercial buildings.

A new Electricity Act was passed in 2003. The Act mandates the procurement of electricity from renewables and has given a major fillip to the wind energy sector.

In 2006, the Government of India adopted a National Environment Policy. This year, we set up a special committee to look into the impact of climate change. The committee will study the impact of anthropogenic climate change on India and identify the measures that we may have to take in the future. In addition, we have constituted a Council on Climate Change chaired by the Prime Minister to coordinate national action plans.

We have taken a number of measures that are inherently supportive of sustainability and clean development. We have insisted on the use of CNG for public transport; we have introduced the metro rail in many cities; and we have commenced a major bio-diesel program including mandatory blending of ethanol in petrol.

We have also launched the Green India project that will be the world's largest afforestation project covering six million hectares of degraded forest land.

We have managed the demand side through targeted interventions. As a result, we have raised energy efficiency in all the major energy intensive sectors - steel, aluminium, fertilizer, paper and cement. We propose to make available Compact Fluorescent Lamps at the price of normal incandescent bulbs.

Honourable Co-Chairs,

The earth's atmosphere is a common resource for all of humankind. The problem lies not in accessing this resource but in its excessive usage. India is committed to sustainable development, and that means sustainable patterns of production and consumption.

India is also fully sensitive to the concerns of small island developing states that arise out of climate change and will join efforts to assist the small states.

The Prime Minister of India has made the offer that India's per-capita GHG emissions would at no stage exceed the per capita GHG emissions of developed countries. This is the starting point to reach a just and fair agreement.

Adaptation can become a reality if we are able to put new and intelligent technologies to use. We urge the countries of the world - especially the developed countries - to seize the opportunity.

Thank you.

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