

**Statement by Dr. Saroj, Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests,
Government of India at the Plenary of Commission on Sustainable
Development (CSD-18), 3 May 2010**

Mr. Chairperson:

Please accept my delegation's congratulations on your election as the Chairperson of CSD-18. We wish to associate with the Statement made by the Representative of Yemen on behalf of the G-77.

Sustainable development concerns have been mainstreamed across various sectors of Indian economy through the implementation of the National Environment Policy and sectoral policies in areas like mining, biofuels, urban transport, agriculture and relief and rehabilitation. However, we recognize that the rapid economic growth of the country in the last decade has given rise to new environmental challenges requiring innovative solutions.

Mr. Chairperson,

While pursuing economic growth India remains committed to ensuring that the principles of sustainable development guide our growth strategy. We are therefore putting in place a mechanism to account for environmental impacts in our national accounts statistics. An expert group is being set up to develop a roadmap. We aim to be able to estimate and report India's "Green GDP" starting from the year 2015. This will ensure that sustainable development remains at the forefront of our planning process and growth strategy.

Mr. Chairperson:

India is still on its way to the goal of poverty eradication. Human resource development, connectivity and energy security are some of our major concerns. Our per capita energy consumption is barely one-third of the world average and we are expanding our thermal power capacities. Simultaneously, India has launched its National Solar Mission which targets 25000 MW of grid solar power by the year 2022. The Government has recently announced the setting up of the National Clean Energy Fund for funding research and innovative projects in clean technologies. There is a need for a significant increase in flow of financial resources to developing countries to give further impetus to such initiatives.

Mr. Chairperson:

The National Ambient Air Quality Standards of India, which have been revised in 2009, represent one of the most progressive regimes in the world. Euro-IV equivalent norms have been rolled out in select cities from April, 2010 in line with the roadmap of providing cleaner auto fuels and upgraded engine technology.

The replacement of the polluting mercury cell process by the membrane cell technology in the chlor alkali industry of India is a testimony to the successful implementation of the Charter on Corporate Responsibility for Environmental Protection. However, the challenge of development and adoption of appropriate technologies in the small-scale sector still continues. Management of waste is posing a challenge in emerging economies because of rapid urbanization and

changing consumption patterns, which require transfer of technical knowhow and flow of resources to the developing world. Many of these critical technologies have been out of reach of the developing countries because of prohibitory cost, due largely to the existing IPR regime which needs to be revisited so as to facilitate sustainability at the global level.

Mr. Chairperson,

India has announced its readiness to cut carbon emission intensity of GDP by 20-25% by 2020 from 2005 levels. A National Action Plan on Climate Change incorporating eight thematic Missions is in place.

We are also working on institutional innovation. The establishment of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) which has adopted a holistic approach to river conservation and the introduction of the National Green Tribunal Bill in the Parliament to set up an independent specialized tribunal to fast-track environmental justice are two major steps in this direction.

India recognizes that the achievement of Millennium Development Goals is just not possible without public participation and transparency in governance. The Right to Information Act of 2005 has been instrumental in enhancing transparency in Government functioning. The Indian Constitution itself provides for creation and empowerment of the panchayati raj institutions for effective decentralized governance.

Mr. Chairperson:

India reaffirms its commitment to the Rio Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We hope that the deliberations in the coming days under your enlightened leadership will further accelerate our pursuit of sustainable development.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson.

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