

STATEMENT BY DR. T. CHATTERJEE, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE 65<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON MAY 11, 2011

Mr. Chairperson, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to address this august assembly of luminaries from various Nation States and organizations on the occasion of the Policy Session of CSD-19. During the last few days, we have been able to make substantial progress towards arriving at a commonly agreed approach to the different thematic areas.

Mr. Chairperson,

India recognizes that transportation is a central component of economic growth and poverty eradication. In particular, rural connectivity holds the key to achievement of Millennium Development Goals. Improved all-weather road penetration coupled with safe, affordable and sustainable transport options are essential to ensuring access to services on one hand and markets on the other. In India, under the flagship Prime Minister's Rural Road Programme, close to 180, 000 rural habitations have been connected with all-weather roads in the last ten years. In this effort, carbon emission control and wild life preservation have not been given the go by. In forest areas, safeguards to black top roads using cold mix process and under- passes for animal movements, etc, are followed. Only up to 10 metres wide roads are built in eco-sensitive zones. In rapidly expanding urban areas of developing countries, mass transportation systems need to be fast tracked in order to address the mobility crisis as well as the problem of rising air pollution. Such public transportation systems also have the advantage of promoting the cause of equity while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions.

A related issue is that of cleaner fuel technologies. Delhi today has the world's largest fleet of CNG operated buses, which is a successful example of low carbon sustainable transport. This by itself has brought down SPM levels in the capital's ambient air. However, switching over to Euro-IV and Euro-V equivalent fuels requires considerable resources and upgradation of refining capacities towards which international financial

assistance is needed by the developing countries in order to supplement their national efforts.

Mr. Chairperson,

You are aware that India has announced a voluntary reduction of carbon emission intensity of its GDP by 20-25% by 2020 from 2005 levels. Our National Action Plan on Climate Change, through its 8 missions focuses on promoting understanding of climate threats, adaptation and mitigation through measures like energy efficiency and natural resource conservation. The debate on green economy has to address not only the issue of energy but also the twin threats of global food crisis and water crisis. In this context, a holistic approach to sustainable consumption and production framework becomes paramount.

Mr. Chairperson,

The current Session of CSD is extremely important from the point of view of establishment of a 10 year framework of Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production. India believes that such a framework is vital to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. We hope that the developed countries will be taking a lead, in tandem with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is essential that the key programme areas as well as the coordination mechanism are well negotiated and conform to the basic principle of avoiding imposition of new constraints on the developing countries.

Institutional innovation has to be unleashed at all levels – local, national, regional and global - so as to devise new mechanisms of enhanced resource use efficiency, holistic planning and effective low cost regulation. India has set up a National Green Tribunal in 2010 as an independent specialized forum to fast track environmental justice and ensure sustainable development. Another initiative has been the establishment of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) which has adopted a holistic approach to river conservation. A new environmental Monitoring and Assessment Authority is also on the anvil.

Mr. Chairperson,

Another sector of vital importance is mining. Mining activities have the potential to transform lives and economies but they also have severe and often irreversible impact on not only environment and forests but national level internal security as well. Policy on mining should be guided by the Rio principles which enshrine that the States have the sovereign right to exploit their resources in accordance with national policies and legislations. Transparency in mining activities, upfront environmental impact assessment of such projects and a comprehensive strategy to check the adverse environmental and social impacts of mining activities are essential. India has a fairly robust system of environmental clearance as well as clearance for diversion of forest

land. We have also adopted a National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy to address the issues related to displacement of local people. We urge that environmental consultations should take place even before allotment of mining areas for prospecting.

Mr. Chairperson,

India will be hosting a Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi in October 2011 on Green Economy and Sustainable Development as a small contribution from our side in the run up to Rio+20. We will also be hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP 11) to the Convention of Biodiversity and the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (CoP/MoP 6) to the Cartagena Protocol on Bio-safety in October, 2012.

Finally, I hope, CSD-19 will come up with a clear roadmap and a workable strategy to achieve the imperatives of sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)