



**STATEMENT BY MR. SAMIK LAHIRI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND
MEMBER OF INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 85:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 59TH
SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 19, 2004.**

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary-General for the reports under agenda item 85 on Sustainable Development. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Qatar on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Chairman,

The key environmental challenges that developing countries face today relate to the nexus of environmental degradation with poverty in its many dimensions and its impact on economic growth. Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Earth summit in 1992 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of 2002 reflect the international consensus on sustainable development, fundamental to which are poverty eradication and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. At Rio, the global partnership on environment and development was launched. The Johannesburg Summit, while reaffirming the Rio principle and continued relevance of Agenda 21, laid down a road-map with concrete goals and targets. The Johannesburg Summit reaffirmed that poverty eradication was crucial in the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development. Without the provision of new and additional financial resources and the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies on preferential, concessional and non-commercial terms, the developing countries will not be in a position to achieve sustainable development and their Millennium Development Goals.

The Commission on Sustainable Development is the high-level inter-governmental body within the UN system charged with reviewing and promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan. We welcome the adoption of the new plans for organisation and methods of work of the Commission. The upcoming 13th session of the Commission would be a test of value addition in terms of promoting the implementation of the goals and targets. In this context, we call for specific focus on concrete steps at the international level that would result in making available the means of implementation to developing countries.

We recognise that UN agencies and programmes have an important role to play in the implementation of the goals and targets, and welcome the steps taken to strengthen the inter-agency collaborative arrangements. We would like to reiterate the importance of having inter-agency work on sustainable development derive from and closely follow the priorities set by the intergovernmental processes.

We welcome the preparations under way for a comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius in January 2005. We hope that this meeting would result in increased support and assistance for the implementation of the Barbados Programme.

Mr. Chairman,

Another major set of challenges arises from emerging global environmental concerns such as climate change, stratospheric Ozone depletion and biodiversity loss. The key is to operationalise the principle of common but differentiated responsibility of countries in relation to these problems. Multilateral regimes and programmes responding to these global environmental issues must not adversely impact the development opportunities of developing countries.

India recognises the importance of conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources. For developing countries, an international regime to protect and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilisation of the genetic resources is particularly significant. In this context, we welcome the decision of the Johannesburg Summit to negotiate, within the Convention on Biodiversity, such an international regime. India supports the formulation and adoption of an internationally recognised system of legally enforceable sui-generis intellectual property rights for the country's genetic resources to enable the country to derive economic benefits from grant of access to these resources. A similar international regime is also required for traditional knowledge, to enable the holders of such knowledge to realise significant benefits from permitting the use of such knowledge. We welcome the decision taken at the seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity to mandate the Ad hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing to negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing. We welcome the offer of Brazil to host the 8th meeting of the Conference of Parties. We hope that the inter-sessional meetings of the Working Group would facilitate progress towards the implementation of the decision of the Johannesburg Summit on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of UN Convention to Combat Desertification, we welcome the inclusion of land-degradation, desertification and deforestation as a focal area for financing by the Global Environment Facility. This, in our view, is a significant development. Its contribution to the implementation of commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development would, however, depend largely on allocation of additional resources to this focal area for financing the needs of affected countries.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has provided us with a framework for global cooperation to address the problems associated with climate change. India has consistently argued that strengthening of global cooperation and giving practical effect to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in respect of both mitigation of greenhouse gases and adaptation measures are central to addressing climate change. In this

context, we call on countries that have not done so to accede to the Kyoto Protocol. We welcome the recent announcement made by the Russian Federation in this regard.

We welcome the outcome of the ninth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention, which concluded that further action was needed by industrialised countries to implement policies and measures that would contribute to modifying longer-term trends in anthropogenic emissions, and strongly urged them to intensify their efforts to that end.

Mr. Chairman,

International Environmental Governance issues need to be examined in the broader context of sustainable development. While doing so, we must recognise the existence and goals of several institutions which contribute to the process of sustainable development. Any governance structure that ignores this primary consideration would be out of tune with realities and may adversely impact on developing countries, particularly in their pursuit to achieve sustainable development. In the context of the implementation of decisions taken at Cartagena on the subject, we welcome the ongoing process to develop an inter-governmental strategy plan for Technology support and Capacity-building and look forward to enhanced commitment by developed countries, which would be crucial for its success.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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