

Intervention by Mr. Sudhir Mital, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests of India during the Thematic Discussion on "Interlinkages, Synergy and Means of Implementation" during CSD-16 on May 09, 2008

Madam Chair,

We wish to associate with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G-77. Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for the developing countries. Poverty is also inextricably linked to the interdependent systems of natural resource endowments and their uses. Sub-optimal agro-ecosystems, for example, lay more claims on land, water and energy, reduce resilience to drought, hasten desertification, and lead to unsustainable forms of rural development and persistence of poverty and exclusion.

Madam Chair,

Poverty has multi-dimensional impacts. A large number of rural people in many developing countries do not have access to basic social services, such as health, education, water, sanitation, clean energy, developed markets, physical infrastructure, and natural resources.

Gender inequality and exclusion of other disadvantaged sections of the community, exacerbates poverty and vice versa. Overcoming such challenges needs an integrated planning for enhanced human, social, natural, physical and financial capital, particularly in rural areas, and the building up of sound institutions to implement these plans.

In this regard, the experience of India's decentralized local governance for integrated planning and implementation of programmes may be of interest. A case in point is the new multi-sectoral National Rainfed Area Authority, through which the dimensions of sustainable water and land use, watershed management, optimal farming and livestock systems and rural livelihoods are being synergized. In this vein, Madam Chair, we welcome synergies between the Rio Conventions at the national level.

Madam Chair,

While each country is primarily responsible for its sustainable development and poverty eradication goals, and the role of national policies and developmental strategies cannot be overemphasized, concerted and concrete measures are required of the international community to enable the developing countries to achieve their sustainable development goals, including those contained in Agenda 21, the JPOI, the MDGs and the broader IADGs.

Madam Chair,

The decline in ODA both in real terms and in proportion to the net capital inflow is a matter of deep concern, and needs to be immediately reversed. Further, new and additional financial resources should be made available to supplement the efforts of the developing countries, particularly in the social sector, where it can be difficult to attract private financial flows.

Moreover, Madam Chair, transfer of technologies to developing countries at preferential and concessional terms, especially in the fields of agricultural productivity, drought and desertification, is a critical requirement. Collaborative R&D between developed and developing countries needs to be promoted and financed, with sharing of the resulting IPRs. There is a need to revisit the IPR regime to ensure a balance between rewards for innovators with the common good of humankind.

Improved market access, particularly for value-added products, and enhanced trade capacity of developing countries is also essential for sustainable development.

Madam Chair,

The early fulfillment of these international commitments has become urgent in view of the additional burden on developing countries on account of projected climate change. We welcome the decision taken in the UNFCCC COP at Bali regarding transfer of technologies and the early operationalization of the Adaptation fund.

In conclusion Madam Chair, the international community in the past has made many promises of living up to its commitments. However, this has not materialized. CSD-16 should aim to ensure that the 'Means of Implementation' for poverty eradication and sustainable development are adequately secured. We must make sure that CSD-16 does not remain as 'business as usual', and we come out with specific outcomes.

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