

STATEMENT BY MS. MEENA GUPTA, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND FORESTS OF INDIA, DURING THE HIGH LEVEL SEGEMENT AT THE
SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
ON MAY 15, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to convey our sincere condolences to the people of Myanmar and China for the recent natural disasters that they have suffered.

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G-77, and share the concerns raised by various delegations on increasing food insecurity, rising energy prices, declining ODA and continuing land degradation. These severely hamper the efforts of developing countries in eradicating poverty, which remains an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development goals, including those contained in Agenda 21, the JPOI, the MDGs and the broader Internationally Agreed Developmental Goals.

The challenge to poverty eradication is likely to be further aggravated by the adverse impacts of the projected climate change. The impact would be particularly severe in the tropical areas and has serious implications on food production, water supply, forest ecosystems, soil health, energy cycles, etc., including through enhanced drought, desertification and land degradation. The adaptive capacity of people in such areas is already low.

Mr. Chairman,

The developed countries must honour their legally binding obligations under the UNFCCC. Adaptation efforts of developing countries, particularly in the inter-linked areas of agriculture, drought and desertification, and land, must receive

adequate attention and financial support from the developed countries. We must also ensure that these additional financial flows do not divert existing development assistance.

Technology transfer needs to be promoted and financed through collaborative R&D between developed and developing countries with sharing of resulting IPRs, transfer of technology at preferential and concessional terms and review of IPR regimes to ensure a fair balance between rewards for the innovator and the common good of humankind.

Mr. Chairman,

Countries in Africa, SIDS and LDCs, among others, face special challenges in their pursuit of sustainable development. We greatly welcome the special sessions of CSD-16 devoted to Africa and the SIDS and would like to reaffirm India's long-standing support to these countries. I would like to recall the recent India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi, where India has pledged credit lines worth US\$ 5.4 billion and grants in excess to US\$ 500 million to Africa over the next five years. Similarly, India has committed US\$ 350 million in concessional loans and credit lines to the SIDS, in addition to project aid of US\$ 70 million.

Sustainable development requires the active participation of local communities and major groups. In this vein, India is promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues as central to policy planning and programme implementation, with special emphasis on empowerment of women and inclusion of hitherto disadvantaged groups.

Mr. Chairman,

Most of the developing country delegations have expressed deep concern in this session that the past commitments of the international community to assist the developing countries in their sustainable development efforts have not materialized. On the contrary, ODA flows have declined, trade regimes are still unfavorable, critical technologies continue to be out of reach of the developing countries, and they continue to be excluded from international decision-making and norm-setting processes.

This, Mr. Chairman, needs to change now.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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