

Intervention by Ambassador Navtej Sarna, Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, India at the High level Event on Sustainable Energy for All, at the United Nations Headquarters on September 24, 2012



Mr. Chairman,

I thank the Secretary General for organizing this High Level Meeting.

I wish to also thank the Co-chairs of the High Level Group for their insights and recommendations on the way forward on sustainable energy for all.

We are happy that our Minister for New and Renewable Energy H.E. Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Mr. Bunker Roy from India served on the Group.

It, therefore, gives me immense satisfaction that 2012, the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, has provided an effective platform for raising global awareness on the importance of energy and its role in alleviating poverty, reducing inequality and promoting sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Rio+20 has taken a definitive stand on the three initiatives proposed by the Secretary General and has given clear primacy to one of them i.e. universal access to energy. It is essential that the consensus of Rio+20 will be respected by all and no artificial deadlines, which were rejected in the final outcome document, are brought back in for the other two. We should not re-negotiate Rio+20 here.

Access to energy remains the key to eradicating poverty, which has been reiterated by the Rio conference to be the greatest global challenge. There is a direct correlation between incidence of poverty and energy access and use. It is a key enabler for development.

The world faces urgent challenges related to modern energy services. More than 1.4 billion people, with 400 million in India alone, remain without access to electricity. And nearly 3 billion use biomass to meet their basic daily needs. With such daunting challenges, we cannot but make universal access to energy our primary development goal.

The achievement of the MDGs and implementation of the RIO outcome including on health, education, gender, drinking water, sanitation and environment are critically dependent on energy.

The Rio+20 template provides the consensus around which I would encourage all of us to coalesce. We hope that this template would be given primacy in the Post - 2015 Development agenda discussions, and we would be able to come out with a well defined strategy to provide affordable modern energy services for all.

The challenge is, of course, affordability. When countries are heavily dependent on imported energy, then to talk about sustainability on the one hand and affordability on the other can be a contradiction in terms without impacting directly on subsidy. Further, renewable energy options at this point in time are cost prohibitive. We need an energy paradigm we can all live with, with poverty eradication at its centre.

I hope that the recommendations and policy options proposed by the High Level Group would be helpful in this regard, since Government policies cannot be done by ignoring ground realities.

Mr. Chairman,

India has huge development imperatives and this demands that we harness all forms of energy.

As a country, we are making all efforts to broaden our energy mix and have a huge program for development of renewable energy, especially solar energy. We are probably the only country having a separate Ministry dedicated to New and Renewable Energy.

We are working on clean technologies for better and more efficient use of fossil fuels and would like to collaborate on R&D for developing such technologies and then making them available at affordable prices in developing countries.

We have also adopted a National Mission on Energy Efficiency to leverage technology and innovation to conserve energy.

We look forward to working with the global community to achieve universal access to energy.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)