The inaugural session began with an introduction to the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit by Mr. Arcot Ramachandran, Chairman of the TERI Governing Council, as an important global event focusing on discussions for arriving at solutions to crucial challenges.

The Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, referred to the Rio+20 Summit as a poignant reminder that the ambitious goals set in 1972 remain unrealized due to lack of meaningful consensus. The world today must work towards global growth models—both inclusive and sustainable—by building a resource efficient and resilient economy. He emphasized that the priorities of developing nations cannot be sidelined and there is common, but differentiated responsibility towards emissions reduction. India is committed to low carbon growth and has targeted a reduction of 20–25 per cent in emissions by 2020, compared to 2005 levels. It is time for industrialized countries to show that they are committed to low carbon growth. He highlighted the achievements of the Lighting a Billion Lives campaign, which is not only benefitting 2,000 villages in India by using clean lighting solutions, but has also been extended to other parts of Asia and Africa. Inviting foreign partners to participate in developing the vast renewable energy potential in India, Dr. Singh emphasized on the importance of biological diversity as an important environmental resource and referred to the commitment made by India ($50 million) to strengthen institutional mechanisms for biodiversity conservation. He highlighted the importance of transparent and accountable regulatory regimes and focused on the need for green national accounting so that goods and services are produced with minimal environmental impacts.

Dr. R.K. Pachauri, in his concluding remarks, spoke about the challenges towards a resource efficient path of development, highlighted by the Prime Minister and announced that the 14th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit will take place from 6–8 February 2014 focusing on “Energy, Water, and Food Security For All”.

‘Climate change has become the face of challenges that can only be tackled by coordinated action at global and national levels.’

Hon’ble Prime Minister, Government of India

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Dr R K Pachauri set the theme of the panel and referred to “The Future We Want” outcome document of the Rio+20 where leaders of the world acknowledged that green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication would lead to environmental sustainability and better management of resources. He summarized findings of a study on material flows by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which found that material consumption is also correlated to increasing carbon emissions. TERI’s recent initiative on low carbon development with China’s National Center for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation (NCSC) was also highlighted.

HE Mr Donald Ramotar reaffirmed climate change as the most challenging issue of today that would play an instrumental role in defining the future we want. He also highlighted Guyana’s Low Carbon Development Strategy, which places strong emphasis on saving Guyana’s forests. The President highlighted the need to tackle social issues along with ecological issues. HE Anote Tong strongly argued that the only way to address global challenges is to resolve them together as a global community. Leaders of the world must not come to global debates only with individual and national priorities, said President Tong. He highlighted Kiribati’s initiative in ocean conservation where 400 sq km of the marine zone has been dedicated for conservation and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. HE President James Alex Michel, through a video message, highlighted that many delegations left the Rio+20 Summit disappointed. The President highlighted that Seychelles has increased their protected area by more than 50 per cent. He also acknowledged India’s proactive role in the recent Convention on Biological Diversity. Ambassador C Dasgupta summarized the panel and emphasized on the important role of international cooperation.

Dr Mariyam Shakeela highlighted the challenge of fast depleting resources and increasing dependence on fossil fuels aggravating environmental challenges faced by island countries like Maldives. She suggested inter-sectoral, international, and inter-cultural collaboration as imperatives for climate protection and energy security. Stressing on the need for international dialogue and cooperation, Mr Arvin Eikeland Gadgil also focused on the increasing inequality between nations and the need for bridging the gap between those who care about nature and those responsible for policy-making. While HE Mr Marcin Korolec discussed how indigenous knowledge and local wisdom need to be complimentary to technology and innovation, the Hon’ble Jean-François Lisée focused on the challenge of energy and climate change, particularly the various national and collaborative projects that have been initiated in Quebec. He also stressed on the difficulties faced by nations heavily dependent on fossil fuels, in reducing their GHG emissions. HE Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber stressed on the interrelated challenges of water, food, and energy, which have been underestimated and undermined until now. He emphasized on direct financial instruments and solutions driving investments in human capital, large-scale technologies, and public private partnerships.

In his concluding remarks, Dr Robert D Hormats highlighted three key messages—high environmental standards in key sectors like transport and infrastructure in developing countries; simultaneous emphasis on reducing GHG emissions and efficient utilization of water and energy resources; and holistic assessment of the water-food-energy nexus.
The session focused on the document titled “The Future we Want”, which was agreed upon at the Rio+20 Summit. The Chair, Ambassador C Dasgupta, urged the discussants to share opinions on how the international community should approach sustainable development goals (SDGs). SDGs are objectives that have been set out, including and in addition to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. Achieving these objectives requires committed and urgent action to be undertaken by the global community. The first speaker, HE Ms Tarja Halonen, emphasized the critical role that women’s empowerment can play in meeting the SDGs. She highlighted the role of the large population of poor people and young citizens as potential human capital resources that are currently under-utilized and can be major drivers of development.

HE Mr Bharrat Jagdeo said that better organizational frameworks are important for improving resource efficiency and knowledge dissemination, especially for poorer countries like Guyana. The Hon’ble Jean Charest highlighted the increasing importance of local, regional, and sub-national governments in driving action on climate change mitigation and adaptation towards meeting the SDGs.

Delivering an impassioned speech, Lord John Prescott stressed that while the international community knows what needs to be done, the lack of political will must be overcome if any real action is to be taken. He stressed the criticality of common, but differentiated responsibilities and good governance parameters, which give developing countries the scope to grow in a sustainable manner.

Rounding up the discussion, Hon’ble Charles Crist talked about his radical initiative in prioritizing climate change mitigation research and action. However, he also warned that politicians are often more comfortable with incremental change and cannot deal with big steps required to address a global problem like climate change.

The plenary session “Corporate perspectives on resource-efficient growth and development” emphasized the importance of businesses adopting resource-efficient practices, both for improving their bottom line impact and for consumer demand. The speakers in the session emphasized on setting limits on growth by subscribing to the Gandhian principle—“Earth has enough for everyone’s need, but not for a single man’s greed”. The categorical changes required to achieve sustainable growth can be brought about by circular transition involving reduction in emissions, developing new systems at microeconomic levels, and sharing of knowledge and technology. In the absence of strong political will, there is a need for business houses to lead by example and strive for green growth. The corporates must leave the race of indiscriminate selling and that too at quick intervals.

For sustainability, recycling is an economical and desirable option. The middle class, being the major consumer of goods, should be educated about the importance of recycling and reusing instead of throwing the goods away. The speakers spoke about several instances where with right determination and support a positive impact was seen. The incentive to make a transition to greener lifestyles is to show the companies as well as consumers the economic benefit that accrues over time by adopting energy-efficient measures. Further on, it was emphasized that renewable energy is a business opportunity in this country as 400 million people live in energy poverty.

For transition towards green growth, the golden triangle comprising governments with clear goals, corporates with ethical wisdom, and consumers with human way of living life, needs to be synergized. The business houses should be evaluated on the basis of not only their financial performance, but also on their natural capital and social returns.
PLenary Session 2

Accelerating the Transition to a Sustainable Economy

Chair: Mr Roland Lance Ignon, Co-Director, New York Office, Sitrick and Company, USA
Keynote speakers: Mr Haruhiko Kuroda, President, Asian Development Bank, Philippines; Mr Donald Kaberuka, President, Africa Development Bank, Tanzania
Panellists: Mr Rémi Genevey, Executive Director, Agence Francoise de Development (AFD), France; Mr Dipak Dasgupta, Principal Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance, Government of India; Mr Seethapathy Chander, Direct General, Regional and Sustainable Development Department concurrently Chief Compliance Officer, Asian Development Bank, Philippines; Mr Mary Barton-Dock, Director, Climate Policy and Finance, The World Bank, USA; Dr François Mancebo, Head, International Research Center on Sustainability, Rheims University.

The session on accelerating the transition to a sustainable economy emphasized the need for economic growth coupled with inclusive development. The keynote speakers spoke about their regions’ perspective on sustainable development and highlighted some of the key challenges facing their respective regions.

Mr Haruhiko Kuroda highlighted the need for a transition to a more resource-efficient economy, which would not only improve the environment, but also lead to spillover effects in terms of job creation. He also highlighted the need to build institutional capacity. Mr Donald Kaberuka, while lamenting over the fact that nothing has changed in the last 21 years (since the Earth Summit in Rio, 1992), highlighted that Africa with the lowest carbon emission as well as the lowest adaptive capacity, is the most vulnerable continent especially to issues relating to agriculture, land, and biodiversity. He proposed a structure, which focused on inclusion and resilience building to address some of Africa’s challenges. Ms Mary Barton-Dock highlighted the need to create incentives and disincentives that lead to a change in the behaviour of both consumers and private companies to be able to transition towards a greener economy. Mr Dipak Dasgupta spoke about the need to have a cross-purpose conversation between the concerns that environmental and social objectives cannot be dealt through the invisible hands of markets and would require more polycentric approaches including informal institutions. Mr S Chander highlighted the need for translating words into specific actions for addressing global challenges by channelizing resources towards renewable assets.

PLenary Session 3

Creating a Sustainable Asia through Disaster Resilience and Green Growth

Panelists: Mr Haruhiko Kuroda, President, Asian Development Bank, Philippines; Dr Bindu N Lohani, Vice President, Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank, Philippines.

The session highlighted that the prospects for emerging Asia’s carbon emission growth remains strong, but the opportunity to shift to low-carbon growth must be sought sooner than later or else the mitigation costs could be as much as 2-5 times more. Mr Haruhiko Kuroda discussed the importance of a multi-govern-mental, multi-sectoral, and multi-disciplinary collaboration for attaining a disaster-resistant state. He said that while many developing economies are adopting development models based on competitive green industries and green technologies, these experiences can be scaled up, replicated, and adapted further.

Dr Bindu N Lohani raised the question that whether actions that we know are required to strengthen disaster resilience are actually being taken? Highlighting the magnitude of the problem, he said that between 1970 and 2010, 1.7 million hazard-related deaths occurred in Asia. Disaster losses are rising more rapidly than the region is expanding economically. A number of man-made factors like the demographic pressures of urbanization, informal settlements, and climate change are also significant in this regard. He said that pricing carbon alone is not sufficient to generate the needed flows of technology and finance across the border and nations of Asia should work together to make low-carbon products and services even more cost effective.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) and TERI collectively launched the Asia Leadership Program on Sustainable Development and Climate Change on the first day of the 13th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). Mr Haruhiko Kuroda, President of Asian Development Bank, Philippines said that the programme aims to inspire leadership and look for practical and realistic options for sustainable growth. Dr Pachauri emphasized that the opportunity for sustainable development is here in Asia with its growth rate and the potential it holds. He commended ADB for its initiative and commitment. In conclusion, Dr Bindu N Lohani emphasized on integrating sustainable development into the growth story. The programme aims to bring in experts across Asia to work together to further this objective.

The Dinner of Hope provided a glimpse into the ambitious programme of LIGHTING A BILLION LIVES (LaBL), which aims to bring light into the lives of millions across the country. Dr R K Pachauri narrated the growth story of the LaBL campaign. The students of Delhi Private School, Sharjah presented a cheque of Rs 3.07 lakh collected by them to Dr Pachauri in support of LaBL. Ms Chandresh Kumari Katoch, Minister of Culture, Government of India and Mr Digvijaya Singh, Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and General Secretary, Congress (I), focused on the importance of electricity in people’s lives.