

13th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit

January 31 – February 2, 2013

Inaugural Address

By Dr R K Pachauri, Director General, TERI

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh;
H.E. Mr. Donald Ramotar, President of Guyana; H.E. Mr.
Anote Tong, President of Kiribati; Hon'ble Minister for
New and Renewable Energy, Govt. of India, Dr. Farooq
Abdullah; Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Environment
and Forests, Govt. of India, Mrs. Jayanthi Natarajan,
Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my proud privilege to say a few words on the theme of
this year's Summit, which is "The Global Challenge of
Resource Efficient Growth and Development". It needs

hardly any mention that the world is on a path of resource intensive growth and development, which may go against the objectives of sustainable development. It was in the early 1970s that the Club of Rome brought out its publication 'Limits to Growth', which was subjected to considerable dispute, but served the purpose of stirring global concerns about the finiteness of key resources and fact that their depletion could act as a constraint on future growth. The dominant view that went against warnings of the Club of Rome was that technology and price changes would bring about a transition to resources in a manner that would ensure smooth and seamless change without compromising growth.

The first oil price shock of 1973-74 did jolt human society to trigger substantial changes, which are in fact continuing even today. Countries like Japan and a good part of Europe brought about a rapid transition in their infrastructure and industrial processes by which they adjusted quite quickly to the quadrupling of oil prices which occurred during that period. As a result of both demand side initiatives and increases in supply, these prices crashed in the mid 1980s, a trend that continued for well over a decade. But they have remained generally high in recent years. However, energy resources are only one factor of production where depletion and finiteness are a source of concern.

In a recent study commissioned by UNIDO looking at the extraction of natural resources in 19 Asian countries, some prominent trends and results were assessed. The natural resources included in this study covered biomass, minerals, fossil fuels and metal ores. It was found that extraction of natural resources in these countries had doubled over the past 25 years. Resource extraction increased from 9 billion tonnes of resources in 1985 to 13 billion tonnes in 1995 and reached almost 18 billion tonnes in 2005. Growth in extraction in Asia has been much faster than the global average, as a result of which the share of the 19 Asian countries in global resources extraction increased from 22% in 1985 to 31% in 2005. Resources used for construction, in particular, grew most rapidly. The question needs to be asked whether Asia, and indeed the rest of the world, should not carry out a

detailed analysis of how growing scarcity of key resources could prove to be a source of stress and even perhaps a challenge for peace in the world. Most importantly, the extraction and use of these resources leads to major environmental damage at both the global as well as the local level. In several extraction activities and further processing, energy use grows significantly, and thus results in high levels of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Additionally, the extraction of these resources, whether biomass, minerals or metal ores, particularly in ecologically fragile areas, leads to negative impacts on ecosystem services. A decline or degradation in these services has adverse impacts on the lives and livelihoods of the poor. It is for these reasons that we have chosen this year's theme which represents a major global challenge.

We are fortunate to have leaders from every section of society and every corner of the globe to help us in focusing on this aggregate challenge and come up with specific directions and solutions by which we can reduce resource use intensity. In particular, we value the presence of leaders from the small island developing states and the African continent. Their views and concerns hold great value for us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to state with all humility that we at TERI always strive to live up to the expectations of society in creating models and implementing solutions that would ensure resource use efficiency in this country and other parts of the world.

In the limited time available to me I shall mention just a few very brief examples of some of the things that we have succeeded in doing, because I cannot possibly list all the activities that the staff of TERI, which now numbers over 1250 dedicated persons, have been engaged in. We have developed renewable energy based solutions, particularly for rural applications. These include the development of a highly efficient light weight, LED based solar lantern, which has been disseminated on a large scale in around 2000 villages in this country and a substantial number in other countries as well. We have developed a two stage biomass gasifier for decentralized electricity generation. We are currently in the process of developing a renewable energy based solar cooling system, which I believe can transform the rural landscape in developing countries,

with the possibility of cold storage facilities being installed for the benefit of farmers. Our biotechnology program has developed Mycorrhiza based solutions, which essentially provide a bio-fertilizer to substitute chemical fertilizers. Similarly, we have developed a bio-pesticide, called Bollcure which is an effective substitute for chemical pesticides. In the building sector every structure that TERI constructs for its own use sets a benchmark in the efficiency of use of water, energy and building materials. Our rating system GRIHA has been developed in partnership with MNRE under the patronage of Dr. Farooq Abdullah. We hope sometime soon the Hon'ble Prime Minister will visit our RETREAT complex in District Gurgaon, which is an off-grid renewable energy based complex, or the TERI University in Vasant Kunj, another model of resource use efficiency we are proud of. We in

India must not lock ourselves into inefficient use of energy, water and other resources in the building sector. Given the fact that most of the buildings that will be standing in 2030 have yet to be constructed, we need to ensure efficient use of resources in these with appropriate policy interventions. We believe that through our actions we can provide a direction to society across the globe and we would have much more to report to this distinguished audience on each successive Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.

Finally, I have the pleasure of announcing that the next Delhi Sustainable Development Summit will be held on February 6, 7 and 8, 2014 with the theme “Attaining Energy, Water & Food Security for All”. We have also

decided that the Summit next year would be much larger and organized over expanded facilities, given the growing demand for participation that we have from all over the world and the increasing importance of this annual event.

May I, in conclusion, thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his presence and the inspiration that his words provide us?

My deepest thanks to the leaders present on the stage, to you excellencies and distinguished ladies and gentlemen for encouraging us with your presence at this inaugural session.

Thank you.