

Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2015

Thematic Track on

How to Shape India's Sustainable Development Pathways under Climate Change

India is at the crossroads of challenges and opportunities in its pursuit of sustainable development. As the largest democracy and one of the largest growing economies of the world, India is also the home of largest number of people without access to basic facilities of modern life. Therefore, maintaining and further accelerating high and inclusive growth is the prime political, social and economic imperative for sustainable development of India.

High growth trajectory cannot be achieved without higher use of energy, which would conflict with global imperatives of reducing emission of greenhouse gases for mitigating the effects of climate change. At 1.4 tCO₂ per person in 2010, India's emissions were less than one third of world average of 4.5 tCO₂ per person - less than one fourth that of China and one twelfth that of the US; yet India is already the third largest GHG emitter. Therefore, while India can surely insist on its differential responsibility for mitigation, in the long run, there cannot be no better alternatives than rapid increase in share of renewable energy and higher efficiency in energy use. This will reduce import dependency, promote new technology and spur further growth.

At the other end of the spectrum, India is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change which would pose serious challenges to the sustainability of its agriculture and livestock production, food and water security, coastal and urban settlements, human health and disaster risk management. Adapting to the impacts of climate change would require multi-pronged approaches and strategies, much beyond the national missions on climate change that are yet to achieve much headway towards implementation.

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Key questions:

- What are the challenges of balancing rapid economic growth with sustainable development?
- How can the goals of 'access to energy for all' be achieved with reduction of carbon intensity?
- What are India's innovative solutions for high economic growth in low carbon economy?
- Why sustainable development pathway does not figure much in India's public policy space?
- Is there any clear roadmap for implementation of India's sustainable development strategy?
- How to finance this sustainable development pathway?