



Pawan Chamling
Chief Minister of Sikkim

03592-202575 (O)
03592-202304 (R)
03592-202245 (Fax)

Chief Minister's Office
Gangtok-737103
Sikkim

MESSAGE

On this auspicious event, the 'World Sustainable Development Summit' 2019, being organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), it gives me immense pleasure to share my very sincere message amongst the galaxy of dignitaries and experts. I am sending you this message both as an individual and in capacity of the Chief Minister of Sikkim, who has been one of the strong advocates of sustainable development and promoter of green and organic environment. If I may be allowed to recall, I was privileged to have been a recipient of the prestigious Sustainable Development Leadership Award conferred by this esteemed institute in 2016. I express my deep appreciation of the very-high significance of WSDS, acknowledging the efforts different states and countries have made attaining the 2030 Agenda. It is gratifying, the summit theme is very close to our efforts and achievements in Sikkim.

I personally thank Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General of TERI, for cordially inviting me to deliver a Key Note Address. I truly appreciate the noble initiatives of TERI, a prestigious international organisation. I would have loved to come in person to deliver my address. However, in view of forthcoming major events in Sikkim and a series of prior commitments, this time it is difficult for me to participate personally in WSDS 2019, but I am sharing with you my views and appreciations through this message.

I am extremely concerned that the impacts of global warming are more pronounced than we had earlier imagined. We have been frequently experiencing some of the catastrophes like hurricanes, cyclones, unpredicted weather, forest-fires, habitat and crop-loss, floods and droughts, etc., resulting resource scarcity and societal

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vulnerability. The October 2018 IPCC special report on the impacts of Global warming of 1.5⁰C above pre-industrial levels and global greenhouse gas emission pathways stressed on strengthening the global response to climate change threats, for sustainable development and eradicating poverty aspiring an equitable society. Global forums should provide motivational incentives to the states and/or countries who have shown directional success, as the summit will discuss climate financing.

I freshly recall my participation in WSDS 2018 and intensive interactions upon our common efforts for creating a resilient planet by developing partnerships and pursuing suitable initiatives. Following, there have been several efforts we jointly made and achieved addressing desired sustainable goals. I am sure this summit will come out with many feasible solutions to mitigate them.

The COP 24 in Poland concluded with an agreement on putting 2015 Paris agreement in to action; however, decision on international Carbon Markets postponed until 2019, offered greater opportunity for WSDS 2019 to discuss the viable lines of actions and identifying potential states and/or countries on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, by linking forests and organic agro-landscapes as carbon sinks.

I wish to introduce Sikkim as one of the remotely located north-eastern Himalayan states of India, spread along 284 m to 8586 m asl, having third highest peak of the world, Mt Khangchendzonga. Its unique physiography and landscape diversity provides suitable ecological niches to rich floral and faunal components, making Sikkim part of one of the global biodiversity hotspots. Together, over 32 ethnic communities, 17 languages and 9 religions make Sikkim a bio-cultural hotspot, and most peaceful state. About 75% human population lives in rural areas. Since my party came into power in 1994, Sikkim Government has been proactive, introducing and

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effectively implementing various policies offering opportunities for the sustainable development, green environment and organic farming providing better livelihoods and withstanding climate change. Over 24 years, we made significant progress while addressing most of the SDGs within 2030 agenda.

We made a series of policy interventions, manifesting timely and innovative, Sikkim specific initiatives like, *Green Revolution Decade, Green Mission, 10 minutes to earth-a people's plantation program, Smriti Van, Mit Tree (Ceremonial friendship with tree), Tree Adoption, complete Ban on Grazing, Green felling, One use Plastics, Chemical fertilizers and Pesticides, Burning of Agricultural Waste, and becoming first Cleanest state of India, etc.* We introduced *1997 Sikkim Prohibition of Smoking and Non-Smokers Health Protection Act, Ecotourism Policy 2011, Sikkim Biodiversity Action Plan 2012, Heritage Tree Rules 2016, and Tourism Policy 2018, etc.* and promoted Community Institutions, empowering poor and women. We established '*Commission on Glaciers and Climate Change*' in 2007, as first state. We expanded Protected Area Network to 30.7% area of Sikkim. UNESCO acknowledged our conservation efforts by inscribing the '*Khangchendzonga National Park*' as '*World Heritage Site*' in 2016 and included '*Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve*' in '*World Network of Biosphere Reserves*' in July 2018. Through Green Mission we achieved over 48% forest cover of the entire state.

Sustainable Agriculture has been given top priority. Organic Policy 2003 and Organic Mission 2010 made significant difference; political willingness taking participatory approaches achieved 100% organic status for Sikkim as first state declared by the India's Prime Minister in 2016. In October 2018 in Rome, United Nation's FAO,

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jointly with IFOAM -- Organics International, conferred the *Future Policy Gold Award* to Sikkim by declaring it the first fully organic state of the world. Some recent scientific assessments indicated the effectiveness of Sikkim Green and Organic policies have helped coping up the bigger impacts of global warming.

Renewable energy is one of the important environmental sustainability practices, meeting climate change targets. My government supported building hydropower projects, commanding over 8000 MW potential, by maintaining sustainable practices, and attended thermal and solar energy use in recent years.

I hope this year may bring us with the impacts of revolutionary initiatives contributing coping climate change and offering exemplary ways for a sustainable development. I am well convinced that both at national and international level, strategic collaborations, scientific and socio-political cooperation and exchanges of ideas will be essential for our joint progress, especially dealing with unexpected catastrophes and providing better livelihoods to millions of millions of underprivileged people in the world.

With this brief note, I wish you all very best and hope to meet you in near future.

JAI HIND !

(PAWAN CHAMLING)