

**Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2010**

**February 5, 2010**

**Speech by**

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Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh; Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Shri S.M. Krishna; Hon'ble Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah; Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forests, Shri Jairam Ramesh; Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, members of the media, colleagues and friends! It is a privilege for us to have with us the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India and the distinguished assemblage of other world leaders who are with us today. Your presence, Sir, is a clear indication of the importance you attach to the overall pursuit of sustainable development and to solutions for meeting the growing challenge of climate change. In addition to so many of your initiatives we are proud of the visionary National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which under your leadership has been put together with the involvement of many and participation drawn from every section of society in India. As the document of the NAPCC clearly states, this is a plan that would usher in sustainable development in this country. But ~~climate change is what we need to act on immediately, the gap between science and ambition~~. dictated by politics remains large, and

Copenhagen did not succeed in bridging this distance. The design of this Summit focuses on elements that hopefully will impart momentum to the negotiations leading upto Mexico and put in place those elements that can help the world meet the challenge of climate change effectively. The very first session, therefore, deals with the imperatives of visionary leadership followed by important subjects like mainstreaming climate policies with development, the urgency of sustainability in business, mobilizing local government action for climate change and many other issues including the mobilization of knowledge and knowledge institutions. The momentum we need to develop must recapture the spirit that was strongly in evidence during the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties held in Bali. This major event incidentally was held in the wake of the completion of the Synthesis Report (SYR) which was the final part of the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Many influential voices across the globe, including headlines in the New York Times described that as the strongest report of the IPCC ever. The findings of the report were the collective effort of over four thousand scientists drawn from around 130 countries across the globe. The procedures and practices followed by the IPCC harnessed the best scientific talent that the world had to offer. It represents a human effort of gigantic proportion and a daunting process of scholarship and scientific endeavour performed with meticulous coordination.

The Copenhagen Accord laid down a limit of 2°C increase in temperature as the goal to be set for stabilizing the earth's climate. The IPCC has developed scenarios to highlight the fact that if temperature increase is to be limited to between 2.0-2.4°C, then global emissions must peak no later than 2015. If they do not, clearly the costs of taking action would turn out to be extremely high and we may be embarking on what is referred to as an "overshoot" scenario. This means that temperatures may well exceed 2°C, thereby requiring much greater efforts and much larger costs to bring them down subsequently below 2°C. That would not only be costly in terms of mitigation actions, but also impose impacts on certain sections of society which could far exceed their ability to adapt to them. Science, ~~When I had the privilege of speaking at the~~ ~~meeting of heads of~~ ~~government and world leaders convened by the UN Secretary General~~ ~~in New York on September 22, 2009, I highlighted the possibility of~~ ~~climate change leading to conditions that could create several failed~~ ~~states across the world. Science can only give us an assessment of the~~ ~~impacts of climate change in terms of biophysical effects but in~~ ~~respect of impacts on society, it is for world leaders and those who~~ ~~can draw the link between a scientific assessment of climate change~~ ~~and the implications for society at large to really highlight the~~ ~~disruptions that society may have to suffer. Projections of likely~~ ~~impacts in different parts of the world have serious implications for~~ ~~communities and entire populations in some locations.~~

For quite some time now I have commented on the lack of scientific research on climate change in this country. I am delighted that the Hon'ble Minister Shri Jairam Ramesh has taken deep interest in the subject and has lost no time in initiating a network of research institutions and researchers to fill up the gap. India has too much at stake on account of the projected impacts of climate change to leave this area unresearched. May I offer my compliments and thanks to Shri Jairam Ramesh for the steps he is taking.

This Summit represents a unique opportunity, because it is the first such gathering of world leaders where we would be assessing what was achieved and what was left out in Copenhagen. On the basis of discussions that take place here, leaders of thought and action who are gathered here can decide what steps are now required to give us a solid and firm outcome in Mexico.

Mahatma Gandhi always advised people to "Be the change you want to see in the world". What we need today is the acceptance and faithful interpretation of that advice. While nation states dither and hesitate to come up with strong actions by which we can reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and provide assistance to the most vulnerable societies on earth enabling them to adapt to the impacts of climate change, we need action at the grassroots level. I think DSDS 2010 must represent a turning point which brings about a commitment and resolve on the part of governments at every level, corporate organizations, civil society and the public at large to deal effectively

with the challenge of climate change. Our knowledge is adequate for us to take action. What we need is adequate political will.

In all areas of new knowledge historically some have not aligned themselves with the imperatives that such knowledge provides. The comfort and convenience of status quo often holds up the progress of humanity for significant periods of times. Perhaps we are witnessing similar forces of status quo working at cross purposes with society's welfare and as a barrier to progress. Perhaps in this Summit and ensuing discussions this issue should also receive attention.

The path ahead is steep and the challenges daunting, but I am sure the truth will prevail and in the end knowledge provided by the scientific community of the world will triumph.

Thank you!