

Interventions by INDIA on Agenda Item 3(d) - Environment and Development

E/ESCAP/69/3, Section IV	Sub-programme Overview : Issues and Challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific
E/ESCAP/69/INF/3	Report of the Coordinating Committee for Geosciences Programmes in East and Southeast Asia
E/ESCAP/69/INF/4	Report of the Mekong River Commission

Mr. Chairman,

At the Rio+20 Summit in June last year, the global community made a solemn promise to craft a future that would truly and really belong to all. It was a promise to the marginalised to deliver a life of dignity, a life of hope. It was a pledge to us to fight poverty as the greatest global challenge.

With just two years to go to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) finish line, where do we stand? The task at hand remains a daunting one.

Mr. Chairman,

In India, we have pursued the path of inclusive growth for achieving poverty eradication. We have brought down poverty numbers significantly as compared to the 1990 levels. But we continue to face considerable challenges on this front.

~~Thus~~ India's Twelfth Five Year Plan has more inclusive and sustainable growth as its core objective. Through planned economic development, India aims to attain economic growth and poverty alleviation, and ~~doing~~ so in a sustainable manner. This is all the more important since a significant segment of India's population, particularly the rural poor, depends on natural resources for their subsistence and earning their livelihood.

The poor need to be fully factored in when we deliberate the calculus of growth, which can be sustained only if natural resources are managed on a sustainable basis.

Keeping this in mind, and also because natural capital is an important component to planned investment in achieving development goals, India's Twelfth Five Year Plan has, for the first time, mainstreamed sustainability as its primary goal. The Plan document notes that economic development will be sustainable only if it is pursued in a manner which protects the environment, and that there is a need to pay greater attention to the management of water, forest and land resources.

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Government of India has taken several initiatives to inculcate the principle of sustainability. For example, we have set up a National Clean Energy Fund by imposing a cess on coal and have also created a Compensatory Afforestation Fund.

India's National Action Plan on Climate Change provides a clear strategy for addressing the challenges posed by climate change. India has also made a voluntary domestic commitment to reduce, by the year 2020, the emissions intensity of our GDP by 20-25 percent as compared to 2005 levels. Some State Governments are also proposing to experiment with Emissions Trading Schemes to reduce the level of ambient air pollution near major industrial clusters.

A new initiative that is worth mentioning is the programme of the Ministry of Rural Development for "greening" rural development. This comprises activities that regenerate and conserve the natural resource base and use clean materials, technologies and processes to create environment friendly products, livelihoods, enterprises and jobs. This can stimulate rural economies, help maintain critical ecosystem services and strengthen the climate resilience of the rural poor.

To give an example, a solar capacity of about 1,500 MW has already been installed in the country, and an additional 10,000 MW will be ^{completed} implemented by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan, ending in 2017.

As we sit down to fashion the SDGs, we must do so with a clear idea that they would form the crux of the Post-2015 development agenda. Dealing with challenges related to poverty, food, energy and livelihoods issues should be our priority. The MDG framework has given us valuable lessons as to what works and what does not. There is little value in trying to reinvent the wheel. The framework ~~of~~ ^{by} MDG goals should guide the new set of goals.

The Rio+20 outcome unequivocally reaffirmed the Rio principles, in particular the principles of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and equity. These principles must form the bedrock of the new development agenda.

Time is of essence and putting these building blocks in place in the months ahead must be our priority.

Thank you.