

India's Country Statement

Online Leadership Dialogue of
United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)
23 February 2021

(Delivered by Dr. Virander Paul, Ambassador / Permanent Representative of India to UNEP)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

2021 is a momentous year. It marks the start of the UN decade for action, for accelerating efforts to find solutions to the world's most pressing problems and facilitate the attainment of SDGs. 2021 also marks a turning point as the world gradually emerges from the ravages of the pandemic.

India stands in solidarity with the world to support quick recovery of our societies and economies and bring relief to impacted populations. We are putting our enormous vaccine manufacturing capacity to support other developing countries, so that no one is left behind.

For India, the immediate priorities in the aftermath of the pandemic are to allocate resources towards poverty alleviation, job creation, strengthening public health services and building strong and resilient infrastructure. The world must focus on the most vulnerable and ensure that no one is left behind. We need to build strong and resilient societies to absorb such external shocks in future, so that there is no further hindrance to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

India is mindful of its responsibilities towards environment sustainability and combating climate change. We have embedded environment and climate concerns in our development policies. Our successes have also been significant.

India has successfully achieved its pre 2020 voluntary goal to cut GHG emissions; and it is well on track to not only meet its Paris commitments, but exceed them. Emissions intensity of our GDP has declined by 24% over 2005 levels, between 2005-2016. India's climate actions have been rated highly in several independent assessments. Our policies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change cover many sectors of the economy. We are shifting towards deployment of renewables in a big way. Our RE installed capacity stands at 136 GW already. We have taken a further aspirational goal of 450 GW by 2030. We are working on sustainable mobility through deploying alternative fuels, an ambitious policy for electric vehicles, stringent fuel emission standards and expansion of public transportation networks including metro rail. We are

building sustainable habitats and have developed a National Cooling Action Plan for ensuring thermal comfort. A National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change has been set up, for funding adaptation projects in diverse climate vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and water. We are successfully expanding our area under forests and in conserving our wildlife and biodiversity. ISA and CDRI are India's global initiatives for supporting a clean energy transition and for building disaster resilient infrastructure.

Going forward, India is launching a National Mission on hydrogen with domestic budgetary support, and also scaling up domestic manufacturing of solar cells and capital infusion in the renewable energy sector. These reflect that the agenda of sustainable development – we may call it green recovery- is well entrenched in our domestic policies.

A shift towards sustainable lifestyles and steering the globe along a sustainable consumption pathway is the need of the hour.

As the world races to develop low carbon technologies to combat climate change, let us ensure that such technologies support sustainable consumption and lifestyles.

In UNEA 4, India and like-minded countries had piloted a resolution on Addressing single-use plastic products pollution. The adoption of this resolution was a significant step. Responding to the resolution, UNEP brought out a report on “Addressing Single-use Plastic Products Pollution” for consideration of UNEA.

To renew the focus on this issue, India co-hosted a side event along with European Union and UNEP on 19th February 2021 on the sidelines on UNEA. In line with the clarion call of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, the Government of India, is committed to phase out identified single use plastic items and work towards addressing the problem of single use plastic product pollution.

Together, we can ensure that the UN decade of action delivers results overall, and particularly in the environmental dimensions of SDGs.

Thank you
