

**Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
of the United Nations Environment Programme
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**High Level Country Statement of India
By Mr. Rahul Chhabra, High Commissioner
& Permanent Representative of India to the UNEP
[15 March 2019]**

**“Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and
Sustainable Consumption and Production”**

Excellences, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is my proud privilege to be here in Nairobi and to present the keenness, thoughts and efforts of the people of India on urgency towards sustainable progress. I would first like to thank the Government of Kenya, H.E. Mr. Siim Kiisler, Minister of Environment Estonia and UNEP for the warm welcome given to the Indian delegation and collaborative efforts on the theme of this UNEA - “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”
2. I come from the subcontinent of India, land of great ambitions with large environmental concerns. As a country we are striving towards triumphing sustainable goals to ensure dignified life for every citizen of the country while ensuring environmental well-being. For any country sustainable development is not a destination, but a dynamic process of adaptation, learning and action with greater synergies between the economy, society and the natural environment. Since last decade, progress has been made, but it has been neither fast nor deep enough,

and the need for further-reaching action is growing ever more urgent. The world is not yet on this path. India shares this global concern.

3. Friends, scientific studies by experts from all around the world have clearly indicated that better resource management, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production could be game changer for any economy. It is evident that if we grow the same way as we have done in past, or copy the pattern of some of the developed economies, the future will be no longer sustainable. There is need to bring innovation and to develop new pathways to mark climate change and other environment solutions as a new opportunity to economic prosperity. We have to undo the damage done so far while also achieving the levels of well-being for the whole world.
4. It is a great privilege that my country is blessed with traditional sustainable practices which are now coming as a great boon to us. What is now being promoted as in circular, green and low-carbon economy have been routine practice in India. We have to further advance these practices in the new areas of consumption and production.
5. Friends, we re-endorsed the exemplary journey of sustainability at UNEA-3 in December 2017 when our Honorable Minister of Environment Shri Harsh Vardhan announced India as global host for World Environment Day, 2018. The theme of this event last year was 'Beat Plastic Pollution'. India launched a host of pan-India activities including massive citizen-led beach and national park cleaning & awareness programmes, announcing deadline for doing away with most single use plastic uses among others. Our Prime Minister gave a call for eliminating single use plastic by 2022 for which we will soon come out with elaborate details.

6. Resource efficiency, secondary resource management & green economy are the new initiatives of Government of India. We have recently worked on material flow studies in 4 sectors: mobility, construction, Photovoltaic and Extended Producer Responsibility – e waste & plastics and conducted resource efficiency strategies study in sectors like steel, aluminum, e-waste and construction & demolition. India is the first country to set up Indian Resource Panel, counter part of International resource panel. We have also launched a vehicle scrapping policy, which will help replace old vehicles with cleaner and energy efficient vehicles. A national policy statement on material recycling, resource recovery and waste reduction is in the offing.
7. At consumer level, we are trying to shift consumer demand and consumption to sustainable pattern. Initiative like energy efficient star labelling products, trading in energy efficiency savings, renewable energy, and organic products are well in place and Sustainable Public Procurement is at development phase. While at production level too, we are sensitive towards environmental hazards. Initiatives like sustainable irrigation, ZED Flagship programmes are flourishing.
8. In our experience, sustainable production & consumption significantly promotes overall sustainability as both are major contributors to global greenhouse emissions. The decrease in emission intensity of India's GDP by 21% over the period 2005-2014 has been made possible through consistent efforts by the government towards establishing commensurate policies, institutions and capacities for the adoption of energy conservation and efficiency improvement practices across all sectors.

9. It is important to highlight here that making such credible progress while addressing issues related to paradigm shift in poverty, accessibility to food, growing urbanization and unemployment, the path was not very smooth. Our focus has been on remaining focused on our legacy issues while ensuring environmental protection and improvement.
10. At the national level, India has taken strong policy decisions on various environmental issues, in the form of National Clean Air Programme, E-vehicle policy, National Action Plan on Climate Change, National Cooling Action Plan, Waste management rules, waste to energy, extended producer responsibility etc. India has also showed strong leadership and joined hand with like-minded countries on technology, capacity building, shared best practices and enhancing financial resources to work towards environmental solutions.
11. Innovation and collaboration are key for the dissemination and scale-up of efforts. One such initiative is International Solar Alliance, which is to address obstacles that stand in the way of rapid and massive scale-up of solar energy; and to undertake innovative and concerted efforts for reducing the cost of finance and technology for immediate deployment of solar generation in alliance with 121 solar resource rich countries.
12. At the end, I reiterate - India on its part would continue to lead by example - never flinch on its part to live up to its environmental responsibilities, because we strongly believe that India has to be an integral part of the global thought process. We have done well- a greater cohesive togetherness can help us do better.

Thank You!!
