

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's statement at the Plenary of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
(21 June 2012, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

**Mr President
Excellencies,
Ladies & Gentlemen,**

Let me begin by congratulating President Dilma Rousseff for hosting this conference and for her outstanding stewardship of the negotiations. We thank the people of Brazil for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this conference. Brazil, like India, is a confluence of cultures and peoples. I feel honoured to be among you.



Mr President,

We meet at a time of serious economic crisis and political ferment in the world. The Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development is timely because it focuses our minds on "the future we want" and how to realize it. Difficult though it may seem, we have to summon the imagination to balance the costs that we will incur in the present with the benefits that will accrue to future generations.

Economic Development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability are all equally critical as components of sustainable development. The task before us is

to give practical shape and content to this architecture in a manner that allows each country to develop according to its own national priorities and circumstances.

For developing countries, inclusive growth and a rapid increase in per capita income levels are development imperatives. The 1992 Rio Summit correctly acknowledged that poverty eradication must remain the over-riding priority for developing countries. Those living at the subsistence level cannot bear the costs of adjustment and their livelihood considerations are important in determining how scarce natural resources such as land, water and forests are used. The severe deterioration of land and water resources is already affecting the well-being of millions of people living on the edges of subsistence, particularly women and children.

Sustainable development also mandates the efficient use of available natural resources. We have to be much more frugal in the way we use natural resources. A key area of focus is energy. We have to promote, universal access to energy, while, at the same time, promoting energy efficiency and a shift to cleaner energy sources by addressing various technological, financial and institutional constraints. In India, we are implementing an ambitious National Solar Mission as a critical option for our energy security.

Moreover, current consumption patterns in the industrialized world are unsustainable. We need to find new pathways for sustainable living.

Environmental sustainability is the third leg of the sustainable development architecture. Economic activity invariably results in negative spinoffs, either by way of local pollution, or by way of global effects such as Greenhouse Gas emissions. We need to tackle both.

Local pollution can be regulated and such regulation may impose costs on various economic actors. To ensure equity, there may be a case for targeted assistance to small producers to meet part of these costs and this should be built into policy.

At the global level, our approach to the problem should be guided by equitable burden sharing. It is for this reason that the first Rio Summit enshrined the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. I am happy we have reaffirmed this principle as well as the principle of equity during this Summit

This does not, however, mean that countries should not take proactive actions to promote sustainable development. In India, our efforts over the last two decades have yielded positive results. Over the period 1994-2007, our emissions-GDP

intensity, excluding agriculture, has declined nearly 25%. Looking ahead, we have set a target to further reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 20-25% between 2005 and 2020.

Many countries could do more if additional finance and technology were available. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of support from the industrialised countries in these areas. The ongoing economic crisis has made matters worse.

One of the key challenges that demands urgent global action is the worrying depletion of bio-diversity across our planet. The Eleventh Conference of Parties on Convention on Biodiversity is being hosted by India in October this year at Hyderabad. We look forward to working with the global community to make it a success.

Mr President,

The future we want should be a future in which there is ecological and economic space for sustainable growth for all.

Let us work together to attain the future that we all desire. With these words I once again thank you Mr President.

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