STATEMENT BY DR. PRODIPTO GHOSH, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT – FOURTHEETH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON MAY 11, 2006

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77. We have read with interest the reports submitted by the Secretary-General. A difficult path lies ahead in terms of concerted actions for the implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI goals, including in the thematic cluster for the current implementation cycle, which are of particular importance for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Energy is an essential input in all processes of production and consumption that attest to a civilized, decent human existence.

For developing countries, a rapid increase in energy use per capita is imperative, if national development goals, and the Millennium Development Goals, are to be realized.

Our own policies for sustainable development, by way of promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy, changing the fuel mix to cleaner sources, energy pricing, pollution abatement, affoerstation, mass transport, besides differentially higher growth rates of less energy intensive services sectors as compared to manufacturing, have resulted in a modest level of energy intensity of the economy, as well as a relatively benign growth path of greenhouse gases.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General observes that pervasive and persistent poverty remains an important obstacle to greater access to modern and cleaner energy services, including electricity, in developing countries.

On the other hand, efforts at poverty alleviation, and redressing gender disparities, cannot succeed without secure availability of clean, sustainable energy, at low and stable prices. In its absence, a vicious circle ensues, with poverty, gender disparity, ill health, and unsustainable use of natural resources reinforcing each other.

It is essential that developing countries have the policy space to address their energy needs in the light of their individual circumstances. Concerns over energy security have heightened with recent sharp increase in energy prices. This has resulted in a renewed focus on energy diversification and efficiency. All significant energy sources – whether conventional or advanced fossil fuels based, or renewables, or civilian nuclear power, must remain in policy reckoning to address energy needs for sustainable development. In particular, there needs to be a fresh assessment of nuclear energy, as a clean and safe source of energy. Legal and political barriers to the civilian use of nuclear energy should be addressed to reduce the world's increasingly vulnerability to the multiple risks of fossil fuels.

Many developing countries, including India, still rely on traditional renewable energy for a significant part of their energy needs. The traditional technologies are, however, insufficiently versatile, have major health, gender, and environmental impacts, and are inefficient. Modern renewable energy technologies remain, for the most part, expensive, except in niche applications. Moreover, there has been insufficient R&D in key renewable energy technologies, although the relevant basic science is well-known. We believe that this is an important, promising but unutilized, area for partnerships for sustainable development through collaborative R&D, with sharing of the resulting IPRs, between institutions in industrialized and developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Even though the international community has made promises of living up to their commitments for technology transfer and additional financing since Rio, this has not happened. Critical technologies have been out of reach of developing countries because of prohibitive cost, due largely to the existing IPRs regime. In addition, the international community was to create an environment conducive to development. This highlights the need for a non-discriminatory, open, transparent and equitable multilateral financial, monetary and trading system, and full and effective participation of developing countries in the international norm-setting and rule-making processes.

A frequently stated reason for not honouring the commitments in respect of transfer of technologies is that, under the existing IPRs regime, the private

sector has legal rights over such technologies. We need, however, to bear in mind that all IPRs regimes are the realization of tradeoffs between providing incentives to the innovator, and imperatives of wider human society. The IPRs issue was successfully addressed on this basis in respect of pharmaceuticals for addressing public health crises, such as HIV/AIDS, in developing countries. There is a similar need for revisiting the IPRs regime to ensure that technologies, which are necessary for pursuing the global imperative of sustainable development, are placed in the limited public domain for access by developing countries, for implementation of their activities for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

The primary responsibility to take action to reduce the threat of climate change is with the industrialised countries, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, as enshrined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The UNFCCC has also provided for cooperation among countries. Several partnerships, including the Asia-Pacific Partnership on Clean Energy and Climate, the Gleneagles process, and others, including bilateral partnerships, show promise of addressing climate change concerns, while promoting clean energy and sustainable development.

The Kyoto Protocol has yielded the Clean Development Mechanism, whose outcomes are encouraging, but which requires strongly enhanced commitments for GHGs abatement by industrialized countries who seek to rely on this mechanism for sending long-term signals to the private sector in respect of innovation and investment.

On the other hand, air pollution, which may be salient at household, local, national, and sometimes, the regional, but not the global, level, can be best addressed at the relevant spatial level, through various approaches, including the provision of information, technology, norms, and regulations. There are numerous successful examples throughout the world of such arrangements. An integrated approach to addressing air pollution/atmosphere, and climate, arguing that addressing one would solve the other, and vice versa, would not help seriously address either problem. Unlike the former, Climate change, is a global problem, and the UNFCCC provides the global basis for addressing the issue.

Mr. Chairman,

The review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy amply demonstrates that long-term attention would need to be given to capacity building in and resource transfer to SIDS so as to enable them to address the challenges faced by them in managing compelling priorities for development.

India, in the spirit of South-South solidarity, has directed its engagement with SIDS to focus on areas such as natural disaster preparedness and mitigation, resilience and capacity building and adaptation to climate change. India's contribution is intended to supplement the efforts required from the international community. It is essential that the donor community fulfill their commitments for the provision of adequate assistance, including financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building, to the small island developing nations.

Mr. Chairman,

I have touched upon some issues that are relevant. What we achieve on the ground will determine the success of this process.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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