

INTERVENTION BY MR. S BEHURA, SPECIAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, ON THEMATIC DISCUSSION: CLIMATE CHANGE, INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE 15TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON FEBRUARY 28, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Climate Change issues loom large in today's context on the global environment agenda. We believe that the on-going discussions in the UNFCCC COP and Kyoto Protocol MoP provide the appropriate opportunity for serious forward looking action. The Convention and Protocol carefully balance obligations of developed and developing countries on the principle of common and differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The political need of the hour is for developed countries to really exercise their accepted leadership and take truly significant commitments at an early date for GHG reductions and not try and renegotiate the compact. This would also give a long term and strong signal to the private sector and spur the Carbon market. A surge in the use of the Clean Development Mechanism, which is one successful example for developed and developing countries joint endeavors using market based mechanisms, would furthermore contribute significantly to sustainable development.

In this context it is important that in this forum we remain cognizant of the imperative of poverty alleviation as the primary and overriding objective for developing countries. For this to be addressed, there needs to be greater flow of resources and technology to developing countries, both for realization of their development goals, including MDGs, and addressing environmental concerns. Redirection of resources from the development agenda to the environment is not the way forward. Resources must be categorically increased.

We need sustained R & D in new technologies, which would respond to concerns of global environmental sustainability, and economic growth, and are also relevant to the natural resource endowments of developing countries. Cooperation between R & D institutions in developed and developing countries should be encouraged and we should be willing to consider a new global compact that balances rewards the innovator with the need to ensure dissemination of technologies for sustainable development in a

manner which does not impede growth and poverty alleviation in developing countries. Many such technologies should, in fact, be brought into the domain of public goods and services.

Mr. Chairman,

Another critical area is that of norm setting. We must eschew the temptation to accomplish through environmental norms and standards setting, goals that we are unable to realize in the WTO negotiations. In any case, standard setting should be based on scientific evidence transparency of the process and adequate stakeholder consultation, including with trading partners in developing countries who may be adversely affected. The Rio Declaration sets out very clearly that adoption of environmental standards set in one society may have adverse social and economic impacts when applied in countries at very different levels of development. Accordingly, calls for uniformity in such standards, are misplaced.

We must, furthermore, ensure that the application of the precautionary approach may not be invoked in the absence of significant scientific evidence of risk. To do so raises legitimate fears that environmental concerns are being used to justify new barriers of trade. We say this while placing on record our appreciation for the work that the IPCC has been doing in the area of Climate Change and noting that scientific consensus is an inescapable requirement in the area of the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

The polluter pays principle is enshrined in various MEAs. However, we need to be clear that the polluter is one who exceeds his legitimate environmental space. In the global context, such legitimate environmental space can only derive from the principle of equal per capita entitlements to global environmental resources. Proposals for payment for environmental services have also been heard in many quarters. These are but the obverse of the polluter pays principle and would provide positive incentives for conservation, and disincentives for environmental profligacy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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