

Intervention by Ms. Saheli Ghosh Roy, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, during the Thematic Discussion on "Africa" during IPM to CSD-17, 26 February 2009

- We associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair of G-77.
- The themes of this implementation cycle are particularly to Africa – it is therefore fitting that Africa is also being considered as a thematic issue.
- Despite the severe constraints faced, African countries have been making special efforts to achieve their development goals. It is critical that the international community provide concrete assistance to these efforts through provision of greater financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building, particularly in the current global financial scenario.
- We would like to emphasize the importance institution building and capacity development, which lays the true foundation of sustained growth. There must be easier access of African countries to developed country markets. There must also be a focus on actions that add value to African exports.
- India has been privileged to have been able to contribute to African development efforts through South-South cooperation. While these have been highlighted during previous statements at the CSD, the establishment of the India-Africa Forum Summit last year deserves to be highlighted. Let me reiterate our Prime Minister's commitment that "it is our intention to become a close partner in Africa's resurgence".
- As part of this commitment, India will offer credit lines worth US\$ 5.4 billion dollars over the next five years to African countries, apart from grants worth US\$ 500 million. The number of scholarships to African students is also being doubled. Focus areas of cooperation include creating regional and pan-African institutions of higher education, particularly in science, IT and vocational education, infrastructure and industrial development, well as investing in R&D in renewable energy and agricultural development. In addition, India

announced a Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme for LDCs, which would also be applicable to the 34 African LDCs.

- However, efforts by fellow developing countries cannot replace the need for actions by the developed countries. We hope CSD 17 would spur greater efforts towards implementation of their commitments.

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