

Press Release

“The need of the hour is to make Renewable Energy accessible and affordable to public, at large,” said Rao Rajendra Singh

Jaipur, 2nd May, 2016

“The State Government is undertaking various measures to promote development of renewable energy in the state including provision of land at subsidised rates to project developers. The need of the hour is to make renewable energy accessible and affordable to public, at large,” said **Rao Rajendra Singh**, Hon’ble Deputy Speaker of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, at a Round Table discussion held on ‘Green Growth and Energy Transformation’ on the 30th April, 2016. “Availability and access to investment funds play a key role in making the clean energy projects commercially viable,” Rao Rajendra Singh said.

The discussion was organised as part of the project titled ‘*Green Growth and Energy Transformation*’ being jointly undertaken by CUTS International and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) India. The project aims to create a platform for continued deliberation and engagement amongst various stakeholders comprising policy makers, government officials, project developers, subject experts, industry representatives, financial institutions, academia and consumers, on various issues faced by the Renewable Energy (RE) sector in Rajasthan. The ultimate aim is to come up with a commonly agreed to, win-win solutions, by all stakeholders in order to ensure a speedy and a smooth transformation towards a higher share of clean energy sources in the energy mix of the state.

Opening the round table discussion, **Bipul Chatterjee**, Executive Director, CUTS International, pointed out the need to ensure environment-friendly and sustainable economic growth of the nation. He set the context of the discussion by talking about gradually replacing coal with clean energy sources in the national energy mix and the role of RE in increasing access to energy in rural areas.

Marc Saxer, Resident Representative, FES, while explaining the basis of the project, said, “In order to reach a technically feasible, commercially viable, and socially and politically acceptable solution to the existing problems faced by Rajasthan in making clean energy transformations, all stakeholders will have to come together to move on a common trajectory, which is beneficial for the society at large.”

He also mentioned that India will remain in the sweet spot for around ten years created by the low oil prices, mushrooming industries and presence of cheap labour. However, the same may not be true after ten years, when automation all over the world would erode the cheap labour advantage of developing countries like India. Hence, there is an urgent need for India to encash this window of opportunity and ensure speedy progress in all its key sectors. In the energy sector, progress can be achieved if India bridges the gap between what it has—accessibility to international finance and high RE potential—and what it needs—technically feasible solutions, efficiently functioning market and political will to

ensure a cleaner energy mix. This will be made possible if all stakeholders agree on a common solution through frequent deliberations on the same.

The round table discussion on the subject was attended by representatives from the state energy department, regulatory commission, state administration, former government officials, industry associations, RE experts, academia, research think tanks and others. Various issues including pricing of biomass for energy production, replacement of diesel pumps used for irrigation in the agriculture sector with solar pumps, disbursement of subsidies for RE development, use of RE for rural electrification, additional employment benefits from green growth, among others were deliberated on, by the discussants.

As a consequence of the constructive discussion, two pressing themes emerged as a common concern for all stakeholders—role of RE in rural electrification and increasing deployment of solar rooftops. Going forward, the project may choose these two thematic areas to undertake detailed research work.

For further information, please contact:

Abhishek Kumar (+918447398733), Associate Director, CUTS International (abk@cuts.org)

Surbhi Singhvi (+919971701278), Assistant Policy Analyst, CUTS International (sbs@cuts.org)