

CUTS INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

Creating political constituency for the (green) transformation would require lot of public awareness around relationship between people and environment”, said, Mr Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways

New Delhi, 05th October, 2015

In his inaugural address during a CUTS Conference on Green Growth and Energy Security, Mr Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu, Minister of Railways claimed that “growth must be sustainable”. He claimed that adding GDP numbers at the cost of environmental damages is not sensible, as it increased the cost for adaptation. Responding to Mr Ramesh’s 3 Ms, he said we also need a 4th M, i.e. money, in addition to these extremely important 3Ms. He claimed that it is important to integrate environmental concerns early at the stage of economic planning. Responding to questions, he explained the various initiatives taken by his Ministry to promote energy transformations, including solarisation of feasible railway systems and savings on energy consumption and procurement. In response to another question, he claimed that the new economy (green economy) will create far more jobs than it will reduce.

Kick-starting the high-level workshop on ‘Energy Security and Green Growth in India: Are we on the right path?, Mr Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUT International pointed out the environmental risks involved in the growth pathways. He set the context on why India needs to shift away from fossil fuels, while pursuing its growth aspirations. He stressed that “India needs to pursue a green growth strategy to meet its basic needs, while protecting the environment”. Similarly, Indian energy is in need of a transformation to achieve universal energy access and energy security, while being sensitive to environmental concerns.

Welcoming the gathering, Mr Marc Saxer, Resident Representative, FES argued that “the global debate over energy transformation is over. And renewable energy has won.” The debate has now shifted from ‘if’ we should pursue renewable energy to ‘how’ it should be pursued. Criticising the political cartelisation for fossil fuel subsidy, Mr Saxer stressed the need for energy transformations to meet India’s energy security. He also cautioned that the transformation will not be smooth; there will be resistances. Therefore, the transformation is not just about technical change, but also equally about political struggles.

In his key note address, Mr Jairam Ramesh, Member of Parliament pointed that the word ‘Green growth’ has been a taboo in India, which is changing more recently. He claimed that India needs “high growth that is sustainable, and rooted in green economy.” Such a growth strategy is important for India for four reasons: a) demographic concerns, b) climate change concerns, c) public health concerns, and d) sustainable livelihood concerns. Talking on if India is on the right path, he suggested that India needs 3Ms to ensure a right transition. First, there is a need for analytical framework of measurement that can consider the environmental costs and ensure green accounting. Second, a proper modelling framework that accounts for the co-benefits of green growth strategy is critical for transition in the right direction. Finally, better strategy manage the

growth trajectories are equally important. For this, he stressed, India need to mobilise and concentrate its intellectual energy.

Mr Ramesh also stressed that India should not repeat the mistakes done by industrialised countries. It should factor in environmental considerations and costs early in the developmental planning. On this path of transformation, there cannot be a single solution, neither can it be imposed. The solution need to evolve through democratic process. Concluding his speech, he claimed that India has the most progressive legislations around environment. Unfortunately, the implementation is far from desired level.

Both Mr Prabhu & Mr Ramesh agreed that Germany is a right partner for India in this transformation and thanked CUTS & FES taking up this issue of sensitising public and policy makers on green growth.

For Further Information, please contact : Udai S Mehta, Director, CUTS International (usm@cuts.org, +91.9829285926) and Ashwini K Swain, Director, CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (aks@circ.in, +91.8800334848)