

Text of the Vice-President's speech - World Sustainable Development Summit 2024, TERI

- My Namaskar and warmest greetings to all!
- Greatly enthused to be standing before you today at the 23rd Edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit, organized by The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI.
- I Extend my gratitude to TERI for hosting this crucial gathering, bringing together global leaders, experts, and stakeholders committed to the pursuit of sustainable development, a contemporaneous global need.
- For the past five decades, TERI has contributed by providing transformational solutions through policy research, technological innovation, and advocacy.
- अथर्व वेद का पृथ्वी सूक्त कहता है- 'माताभूमि': पुत्रोअहंपृथिव्या'
"पृथ्वीहमारीमाताहै, हमइसकेपुत्रहैं"... with that kind of thinking and emotion, one cannot think of exploitation of mother nature.
- Our world is facing unprecedented challenges that demand collaborative and innovative solutions. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and the depletion of natural resources are threatening the very foundations of our existence. The urgency of these challenges requires bold and decisive action, and forums like this provide a vital platform for collective dialogue and commitment.
- In a world interconnected like never before, we must recognize that the challenges we face – know no borders. The impact of our actions reverberates across nations, affecting the most vulnerable communities and ecosystems. There can be no alternative to the formulation and adoption of people and nature-centric approaches.
- Global Leadership must drive the mainstreaming of environmental protection and climate justice at all levels, embedding these principles in the very fabric of our societies.
- It is heartening to see India's leadership at the forefront of this global effort. The Indian government has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.
- From ambitious renewable energy targets to pioneering initiatives that balance economic growth with ecological preservation, India serves as a beacon of inspiration for nations around the world.

- One of the cornerstones of sustainable development is the transition to clean and renewable energy sources. Our commitment to renewable energy not only mitigates the impacts of climate change but also opens avenues for economic growth, job creation, and technological innovation.
- India's commitment is evident not only in words but in action, with the implementation of policies that reflect a dedication to the principles we advocate.
- Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi along with the leaders of Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, the USA, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius and the UAE, launched the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) on 9 September 2023 during G20 Summit in New Delhi. This marks a significant step towards a more sustainable energy future.
- With India targeting to become carbon neutral by 2070 and expanding use of biofuel in its transport sector, this is a right initiative in the same direction.
- Electric vehicles are receiving a boost like never before. Circular economy is being increasingly stressed on, in the true spirit of sustainability.
- The integration of sustainability into national planning, the allocation of budgets for green initiatives, and the launch of flagship schemes that prioritize environmental protection showcase India's leadership in embracing a holistic and inclusive approach to development.
- We find ourselves at a unique juncture. Our Amrit Kaal, is revealing itself to be the Gaurav Kaal for all Indians. As we take pride in our epochal achievements, it is essential to reflect upon the remarkable transformation that Bharat has undergone in just a decade. From being labelled as one of the "Fragile five" economies, we have emerged as the fifth-largest global economy, with projections indicating that India is poised to become the third-largest economy by 2030.
- This meteoric rise is a testament to the indomitable spirit of the Indian people, the visionary leadership, and the collaborative efforts that have propelled us forward.
- The exponential growth we have experienced brings with it challenges, particularly in the realm of sustainability and environmental conservation. Our economic progress must be harmonized with a commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that we leave a legacy that our future generations can inherit with pride. Today, as we take rightful pride in our achievements, we must also acknowledge the looming threat of climate change and its draconian consequences for the global community at large.

- India, with its rich tradition of sustainable practices, can be a guiding light for the world in adopting eco-friendly and inclusive development models. Our cultural ethos of living in harmony with nature provides a foundation upon which we can build a sustainable future for all.
- True to this spirit, our focus has not only been on mainstreaming sustainability into governance at home but also in steering global commitments.
- Last year, the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) was launched by the Prime Minister for conserving global big cats including tiger.
- Earlier, India had spearheaded the launch of the International Solar Alliance. A Green Credit Initiative was launched by Prime Minister on the side-lines of 28th Session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 28) in Dubai last year, to encourage voluntary environmental positive actions. India is home to 75 of the world's wetlands of international importance, with the second largest network of Ramsar Sites in Asia.
- India's G20 Presidency has given out strong signal with its motto – *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which translates to considering the world in the spirit of 'One Earth One Family One Future'. The New Delhi Declaration adopted at the G20 Summit, impactfully recognised the importance of collective action in tackling environmental challenges and climate change.
- India's G20 Presidency even furthered cross-cutting themes of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), which is visualised to be a lifestyle and behaviour stimulating mass movement. LiFE envisions mobilizing change at the individual level, that holds the potential to trigger shifts at a wider scale with positive spill over effects.
- Our international friends would also agree that climate change has disproportionate impacts on those who are most vulnerable and hence 'Climate Justice' needs to be the North Star. Leadership at all levels and spheres of society is a key factor for enabling that we work in a collective spirit towards integrating sustainable development and climate justice.
- The optimum utilisation of natural resources should be a norm, ingrained not only at a wider policy level but also within the conscience and consciousness of each individual. One's fiscal power should not determine the usage of such resources as water, petroleum, electricity. We must remember the words of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi ji: "The earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed".
- The challenges we face are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. By joining forces, embracing innovation, and fostering international cooperation, we can pave the way for a sustainable and secure future for all. Let this summit be a catalyst for action, inspiring us

to redouble our efforts and work towards a world where the principles of sustainable development guide our every decision.

- I congratulate TERI on yet another edition of this Summit which continues to remain an important global platform to debate, discuss, and pave the way for just, equitable, and path-breaking solutions to protect Planet Earth. We need to collectively act for Mother Earth- not in the near future, not tomorrow, but today- and now!
- Thank you, and may our collective commitment to sustainability light the path towards a better and more secure future for generations to come.
- Thank you! Jai Hind, Jai Bharat.

MS/JK/RC