

STATEMENT OF MS. ARTI MEHRA,
MAYOR OF DELHI (INDIA)
AT THE GLOBAL LAUNCH EVENT OF THE
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PLANET EARTH (IYPE) IN PARIS
ON 12TH FEBRUARY, 2008

Respected Chairperson,

Distinguished guests, sisters and brothers :

We are in the midst of a massive, transformation, a comprehensive reframing, in how the global community engages with the future of the world. Humans are climate changers - directly or indirectly the main cause of climate change. Had efforts been made to stabilise human numbers in 1975, when the planet was inhabited by 4 billion climate changers and modern contraception had arrived, there would be fewer than 6.7 billion climate changers now. Although world population is still growing by some 80 million a year and looks set to **grow by another 2.5 billion by 2050**, it's not too late to slow it down by peaceful means. According to the UN population projections revised in 2006, the world population will be 7.8 billion by mid-century.

Global warming's projected impact on human beings is serious. Rising sea levels increase coastal flooding and erosion and pollute groundwater supplies. Higher average temperature reduces coastal cropland and living space. More destructive and more frequent hazardous weather is likely. A warming climate also threatens public health. It produces longer, more intense heat waves. Changing rain and snow patterns significantly increase the populations of regions under extreme water stress. Warming and population growth together can produce shortages that lead to the exploitation of sensitive areas like hillsides, flood plains, coastal areas, and wetlands. These conditions may also produce large numbers of international environmental refugees. Their migration in turn challenges existing social, economic, and political structures.

Contd...2...

Delhi, the capital city of India is at a threshold. Population has been growing very rapidly. The Second Master Plan of Delhi had estimated the population in 2001 at 12.81 million; it has already crossed 16 million mark and may reach 23 million by 2021. The spurt in population is not due to natural causes alone. About 0.5-0.6 million people migrate to Delhi, every year from rural areas in search of jobs, and hence a better standard of living. These people lack financial resources and, therefore, start living as squatters on public as well as private land, doing all kind of menial jobs. Over a number of years, the number of such persons living in unauthorised and Squatter Colonies has swelled to as many as 3.5 to 4 million. With this spurt comes the challenges of providing adequate and affordable civic amenities, particularly, potable water, sanitation, solid waste disposal, transportation, health care, education and electricity and to control the levels of air and water pollution so that a high quality of urban life, can be attained that too within a reasonable time period. The urban challenge is to attain this goal, particularly with respect to the urban poor and other disadvantaged segments of our people.

Indeed, much has changed globally since we held the 8th meeting of the Conference of Parties in Delhi in 2002. Evidence of significant impacts surround us-including in my own city of Delhi, where unusual weather patterns are creating challenges for future planning. It is abundantly clear to us that adaptation to changing climate will involve major commitment of resources to address reduced water supply, increased morbidity and mortality from extreme summer temperatures and the spread of vector borne disease, increased demand for power, and several others.

And, as I have the honour of speaking for local authorities, I can honestly say that we have addressed at many global meetings around the world-from the conference of Parties, the Commission of Sustainable Development, the Sundance Summit and so on. And, addressed with the knowledge that our sector has taken consistent and large-scale action to both reduce existing and future emissions, while addressing present and immediate concerns of urban management.

Contd...3...

We have taken several steps to promote energy efficiency, sustainable transport, and renewable energy in Delhi, with concomitant benefits for reduction of air pollution, electricity demand, water availability, and employment. For example, we have the world's largest bus fleet run on clean fuel and rapidly expanding the metro network, use of renewable energy for large buildings and township, and in particular, for the new facilities to be created for the 2010 Commonwealth Games. I would like to remind delegates that this link to the broad aims of sustainable development was a key focus in our Delhi meeting in 2002.

Recently, our Union Government has implemented a Master Plan for Delhi which will be in force upto 2021. It envisages to make Delhi a global metropolis and a world-class city, where all the people would be engaged in productive work with a better quality of life, living in a sustainable environment. This will, amongst other things, necessitate planning and action to meet the challenge of population growth and immigration into Delhi; provision of adequate housing, particularly for the weaker sections of the society; addressing the problems of small enterprises, particularly in the unorganized informal sector; dealing with the issue of slums, up-gradation of old and dilapidated areas of the city; provision of adequate infrastructure services; conservation of the environment; preservation of Delhi's heritage and blending it with the new and complex modern patterns of development; and doing all this within a framework of sustainable development, public-private and community participation and a spirit of ownership and a sense of belonging among its citizens.

The Master Plan incorporates several innovations for the development of the National Capital. A critical reform has been envisaged in the prevailing land policy and facilitating public - private partnerships. Together with planned development of new areas, a major focus has been on incentivising the recycling of old, dilapidated areas for their rejuvenation. The Plan contemplates a mechanism for the restructuring

Contd...4...

of the city based on mass transport. The Perspective Plans of physical infrastructure prepared by the concerned service agencies should help in better coordination and augmentation of the services.

The Master Plan envisages vision and policy guidelines for the perspective period upto 2021. It is proposed that the Plan be reviewed at five yearly intervals to keep pace with the fast changing requirements of the society. The critical areas which have been focal points of the plan include land policy; public participation and plan implementation; redevelopment; shelter; housing for poor; environment and ecological balance; development works in unauthorized colonies; mixed land use; trade and commerce; industry; conservation of heritage; transportation; health infrastructure; educational facilities; disaster management; provision of sports facilities; focus on infrastructure development; involvement of informal sector etc.

A National Capital Region Planning Board was established by the Union Ministry of Urban Development in the year 1985. The main task of the National Capital Region Planning Board was to coordinate the development of the NCR region with various neighbouring State Governments. Total NCR area is now 30, 242 Sq. Kms.

It was proposed that the Central NCR should be maximized to enable it to compete effectively with the NCT of Delhi, offering comparable employment, economic activities, comprehensive transport system, housing, social infrastructure and quality of life and environment. Together with this larger industries should be located in the urbanizable areas in this zone.

The NCR has proposed promotion of planned and regulated development along the National Highways. However, while planning for these Zones, due care has to be taken to ensure that the activities being permitted are segregated from highway traffic through proper green belts, and regulated and controlled access to the Highways. The identified Highway Corridor Zones will also have to be notified by the respective State Governments with appropriate regulations for their development.

Contd...5...

The basic policy of the Regional Plan – 2021 is aimed at accelerated development of the urban and rural areas. For this, infrastructure has to be substantially upgraded at local and regional level (both by the State and Central Government) in order to induce growth in these areas, specifically in identified settlements/Metro Centres. It is felt that this will make them more attractive for locating economic and allied activities and for attracting private sector investment.

The NCR region has developed into an NCR e-commerce industry hub. It has Noida and Gurgaon as their base cities with the maximum number of IT companies having their NCR headquarters and NCR head office in these areas. The area also witnesses huge immigration for the sheer incentive of NCR jobs.

Disposal of solid waste is now becoming acute problem in major cities especially metropolis like Delhi. Delhi the capital city of India is one of the most populated city in the world and is generating over 6000 metric tonnes of solid waste daily. If this pace of increase in population and commercialization will continue, then generation of garbage will go up to 14,300 metric tons per day by the year 2024. For the better standard of living and healthy tomorrow, we must focus our attention on disposal of the garbage we generate.

The local governance authority i.e. Municipal Corporation of Delhi has recently formulated a comprehensive Master Plan for Management of Solid Waste in Delhi to work out a holistic approach to make Delhi a worthy, liveable, clean, eco-friendly world-class city.

The salient features envisaged in the Plan are :-

- Segregation at source.
- Door to door collection of garbage.
- Decentralized local level composting at individual/community level to avoid transportation.

Contd...6...

- Introduction of sweeping of main roads by mechanical sweeper.

- Processing of waste through cost-effective/innovative technologies to suit the local waste quality.
- Processing of construction and demolition waste.
- Proper management of horticulture waste.
- Procurement and upgradation of various machines.
- Massive awareness programme related to handling and disposal of solid waste and its concern with environment.

The treatment of waste to convert it into energy is also more advantageous in term of environment. As per Master Plan study, a plant using refuse-derived fuel of 250 tons will generate 60,000 mega watts of electricity. It is estimated that such plant will cost Rs.37.5 crores. For implementation of these kinds of initiatives, MCD would require huge investments. The need for private sector participation is absolutely essential to finance setting-up of such plants.

Plasma technology is being introduced by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to convert waste into elemental form resulting in vitrification of waste residue at a temperature around 12,000°C.

In the end, I appeal that effective climate protection will require developing countries to study all these factors as the basis for their required participation in agreements to limit emissions.

Scientists across the globe agree that the influence of humans and their activities on the earth's atmosphere and climate is an established fact. If population growth and climate change are closely linked, then they should be integrated into policy and challenges together. Long-term strategies to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions in an equitable manner will need to account for the current broad differences among nations in per capita emissions. Effective, voluntary family planning plus improved educational and economic opportunities for girls and women are a central part of good population policy as well as a key to greenhouse gas reduction.

Contd...7...

I sincerely hope that actions taken now will bring closer the day when population and atmospheric changes are neither rapid nor

threatening. With sound population policies and new technologies of energy production and consumption, governments can make the reversal of world population and emissions growth by the middle of the next century more likely.

I would like to conclude with a citation from HOLY VEDAS :

" SARVA ASHA MUM MITHRAM BHAVANTU "

Meaning :

Live as if you are one with the trees, the rivers, the mountains and the whole Universe withll embrace you like a friend.

INDEED THE FUTURE IS IN OUR HANDS

Thank You,

(ARTI MEHRA)