

**Intervention by Mr Laurent Fabius  
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**« Sustainable Growth in Response to Climate Change: Indo-French Perspectives »**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here with you, a few weeks after the swearing-in of the new Indian government. I have the honor of meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a few minutes, as well as, yesterday, my counterpart Mrs Sushma Swaraj and Mr Arun Jaitley, Minister of Defence and Finance. I also met Mr Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Environment, Forests and Climate Change a few hours ago and we had a very positive conversation.

India and France have engaged over the years in a friendly relationship which can be defined by two words: trust and partnership. Climate change and sustainable development are important aspects of this partnership. This panel discussion is a good opportunity to share views and ideas, as well as listen to each other's concerns.

(1) My visit coincides with the monsoons that is expected to reach Delhi in a few days. There were reports that this year's monsoons would be, once again, lesser than the previous years. This is probably another sign that **climate disruption is not a distant threat**. Its consequences are apparent every day: melting of glaciers and polar ice caps, rising water levels, desertification... The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change delivers a clear diagnosis: climate change is real, it is caused by us, and it is happening now. At the current growth rate of greenhouse gas emissions, you know that the temperature could increase by 5°C by 2100. Needless to say, it would be a very different world, definitely not the world we want to live in.

What do we risk by not reducing carbon emissions? I often use the words "climate disruption" instead of "climate change". It is, I think, a more accurate description of the risks we are facing: abrupt alterations in the Earth's climate, provoking too rapid shifts for ecosystems and societies to adapt. It could wipe out decades of development efforts.

But I don't want you to get me wrong: I am not talking about a distant future. Climate disruption is here already! **It's a problem for all of us, for now.**

(2) **Is this bleak future avoidable? Yes, according to scientists, it's not too late.** It's still possible to keep to the target of an increase below 2°C. We are just 500 days away from the COP21 to be held in Paris at the end of next year, or as we call it "Paris Climate 2015". The objective is crucial: to reach a global climate agreement, that will involve all countries in an effort to limit global warming under 2 degrees Celsius, and provide vulnerable countries with the means to adapt to ongoing climate disruptions.

We are not starting from scratch. Many countries, especially in Europe, are becoming low-carbon economies. Some are even moving towards carbon neutrality. Other which were once reluctant, such as China, the United States and Brazil, are also joining in. In total, almost 100 countries have committed to cut their emissions. India is obviously an integral part of this global effort: the development of renewable

energy has been remarkable and India is now the world's fifth largest wind energy producer. Nuclear energy could also take off.

These signals point to the direction that leading scientists such as Dr Rajendra Pachauri have been outlining: reach the peak of global greenhouse gases emissions by the end of this decade and phase out greenhouse gas emissions over the course of the 21st century. Are we going there? More and more signals are suggesting that we are. But are we going there quickly enough? Unfortunately, the answer is still "no".

**(3) So, what can we do together, India and France, to help the world cope with this challenge?** As Chief Minister of Gujarat, **Prime Minister Modi was actively involved in designing and promoting climate policies while working hard for its development.** As M. Modi put it in his 2010 book "Convenient Action", "*Climate Change is not only an environmental issue but also a developmental issue*".

With decades of economic growth ahead of it, India will determine in a sovereign manner a sustainable development pathway that creates growth and jobs, and improve energy security.

France welcomes India's new government's commitment to put sustainability at the core of its planning process, to bring down pollution and to meet the challenges posed by climate change. France also warmly welcomes Prime Minister Modi's announcement of what he calls a "saffron revolution" for India, based on solar energy, which will bring electricity to 400 million Indians. This bold plan embodies the "**solutions agenda**" that France is promoting in the run-up to Paris 2015: the notion that fighting climate disruption delivers many co-benefits, in terms of growth, health or quality of life. It is not an extra problem, it's an opportunity we must seize together. I see at least five areas of possible concrete cooperation between France and India:

- Cooperation on **carbon-free energy**, with a stress on new technologies. For instance, in Normandy, France is developing off-shore wind energy. We are also working on the conversion of ocean thermal energy, a technology we are ready to experiment with India.
- Developing our partnership on **civilian nuclear energy**. Nuclear energy provides a carbon-free electricity to meet the growing Indian demand. France, with its cutting-edge technology, is committed to deepening its partnership with India in this field, with the highest standards of safety.
- **Water**: I praise Prime Minister Modi's commitment to clean up the Ganges and other rivers of India. The Indo-French Water Network established last year could facilitate exchanges. The conservation of Himalayan ecology is another example of our shared agenda.
- **Urban development**. We are ready to share technology and know-how to make Indian existing or new cities, greener and more energy efficient.
- **Space**: the Indo-French satellites launched in 2011 and 2013 help us gain a better understanding of climate change and its consequences on ocean, coastal areas and monsoons. We stand ready to expand this cooperation.

Private companies have a central role to play here, by providing capital and technologies. Indian and French companies already have a substantial cooperation in key sectors like energy, water and transport.

In order to boost our cooperation, I am happy to announce that **France has decided to propose a credit line of up to 1 billion euros over the next 3 years for sustainable infrastructure and urban development in India** through the French Development Agency.

(4) Beyond that, I have come to Delhi to **deepen our dialogue regarding the climate change global debate**. We have to be an impartial facilitator, France is reaching out to all countries. I am here to understand India's challenges, glean your ideas and learn of your initiatives, not to teach lessons. India has stressed its concern to see its development hampered by a climate treaty. Its contribution will ensure that the agreement paves the way for fair access to sustainable development.

A number of **principles** can guide us as we build this agreement:

⊖ **Ambition:** We should aim at setting gas emission reduction targets that will bring the planet back on track with the 2°C limit.

⊖ **Fair participation:** All countries must contribute, based on their respective capabilities and international responsibilities.

⊖ **Equity:** this is a key point. As Prime Minister Modi once more put it, "*ethics and equity are at the core of the debate on Climate Change*". The agreement must take into account each country's constraints and capacities, building an action agenda that would ensure access to sustainable development.

⊖ **Trust and transparency:** This is the very basis of an agreement.

⊖ **Cooperation:** We should aim at strengthening international cooperation, via access to finance and technology, to meet the needs of all countries. Your Minister insisted particularly on this point : if you don't have this technology, you can do brilliant things but nothing concrete.

⊖ **Flexibility:** The agreement will be strengthened over the years, as trust builds up. Paris Conference will not be the "miracle" where all issues are solved with one stroke of the pen. We have to give birth to a universal framework which will provide incentives for all countries to join the global "race to the top" for sustainable development.

**Several steps will build up momentum before Paris:** the UN climate summit in September, to which key leaders of the world are invited; the COP 20 in Lima in December, where, hopefully, the foundations of the future agreement will be laid; and the first quarter of 2015, when countries should present their proposals.

The European Union will make its own objective for 2030 known in the fall of 2014. France has already committed on its own to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% at least by 2030. Another step will be the capitalization of the Green Climate Fund, which will have to occur by the end of 2014.

Dear friends,

As we reflect on this challenge, we must look into our heritage for inspiration. The world, I think, can learn from India's millenary culture. Hinduism emphasizes the importance of preserving nature. I understand that one of the precepts of the Vedas, the ancient knowledge at the very root of Hinduism, says, "*We all are reared in the lap of Mother Earth. We may enjoy a long life provided we are watchful and alert and sacrifice our all for Her*".

So let us be true to this ancient precept. This is the time to act. As Dr Pachauri said, the climate fight is at "five minutes to midnight". We cannot afford to spend these five minutes arguing over technical details or playing the political divides of the past. Let us make the most of these five minutes by showing that **fighting against climate disruption is fully compatible with keeping a high level of growth,**

**strengthening energy security and reducing poverty.** Let us bring sustainable development to every household in the country, and light a billion lives.

Thank you.