

26 September 2007

**Pew Centre Climate Change Event:  
Forum on International Climate Action**

**Statement by Representatives of India**

Madam Chairwoman, Distinguished Participants:

The Indian delegation to the Major Economies Conference on Climate Change and Energy Security is thankful to the Pew Centre for their kind invitation to this important event.

India is no stranger to the ravages of climate variability. We are among the most vulnerable of countries to floods and droughts, heat and cold waves, cyclones, and epidemic diseases such as malaria, dengue, and gastroenteritis. Each year, several hundred thousands of precious lives are lost to these events, with accompanying losses of billions of dollars in property, crop and output damage. Annually, the Government incurs and expenditure exceeding 2% of the GDP to address this climate variability. We can, therefore, in light of our historical and continuing experience, hardly fail but to take seriously the prospects of anthropogenic climate change, on top of natural variability.

At the same time, notwithstanding recent GDP growth of 8-9%, fully one-third of our population lives below the internationally accepted poverty line of \$1 a day. Nearly two-thirds of our population lives on less than \$2 a day. These are the poor who are most vulnerable to climate variability, and have the least capacity to adapt to climate change.

Madam Chairwoman, the relationship between poverty (as reflected in the Human Development Index, HDI), and per-capita energy consumption is categorical, unambiguous, and global. Energy is a necessary input to all aspects of consumption, and the associated production which attest to a life of human dignity. To deny our people the necessary increase in per-capita energy consumption to enable them to lead a decent life is to deny them their very worth as human beings.

Madam Chairwoman, essential consumption of energy is one thing; profligacy in its use is another. Personal lifestyle choices strongly determine whether or not a society is sustainable. For example, the techniques of food production, distribution, and packaging; the reuse and recycle of materials and generation of wastes; transportation modes; patterns of human settlement, and many other aspects of societal choice, have immense influence on energy use. India is among the most sustainable of contemporary human societies as reckoned by a broad array of sustainability indicators, and not because it is poor. In India, the poor and the rich, all eschew lifestyle choices which do violence to nature. For example, every Indian, rich or poor, recycles everything that can be recycled, and for the most part, they are vegetarian by choice.

Madam Chairwoman, anthropogenic climate change represents, perhaps definitively, the realization of the centuries old spectre of geometric increase in human consumption running against the finite limits of the planets resources. What are the key elements of a global Compact to ensure that human civilization as we know it survives and thrives?

We believe that the following elements are key. First, a clear recognition that no Compact can survive if the world is sought to be permanently divided into rich and poor nations. Second, that the aspirations for a better life of two-thirds of humankind cannot wait. No multilateral regime is acceptable if it requires developing countries to slow down their growth rates or poverty alleviation efforts. Third, that the world is already committed to significant climate change, that the impacts will be most severe for the world's poor who have not contributed to the problem, and that both technology and financing for adaptation must be at the core of the Compact. Fourth,

that rapid increase in R&D for both GHG mitigation and adaptation is essential to yield the transformational technologies that are necessary to respond to climate change, and that transfer of the fruits of such R&D on affordable and concessional terms to, as well as involvement in the R&D effort by, developing countries is essential. The elimination of technology denial regimes in respect of clean energy technologies is imperative. Fifth, that while markets indeed represent a powerful instrument to address climate change, the design of the regime itself cannot be driven by the promotion of markets for clean technologies.

Madam Chairwoman, we believe that a clear recognition of these contours by all will enable invigoration of the Climate Change regime under UNFCCC to address climate change. India has for long urged the adoption of the principle of equal per-capita entitlements of atmospheric resources, whose intellectual and moral force is indisputable, as the basis of a long-term regime. In August, in Heilengdam, the Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh affirmed that even as India pursues sustainable development, it would at all times ensure that its per-capita emissions did not at any time exceed that of the industrialized countries. We are encouraged by the recent statement of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who is also current G-8 President, endorsing the principle of convergence of emissions in industrialized and developing countries to equal per-capita. The next steps, in our view, must involve the formulation of specific approaches to operationalizing this principle.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.