



Experts, Minister Reiterate Primacy of Equity for a Climate Change Solution

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New Delhi**

Ensuring that climate change deliberations are based on the principles of equity and fairness is of prime importance to India, stated the Minister for Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh. He was inaugurating a conference on “Global Carbon Budgets and Equity in Climate Change” at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. The conference was held on 28th and 29th June and was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Centre for Science, Technology and Society (School of Habitat Studies) at TISS.

Academicians, negotiators and policy makers from around India, including participants from Brazil, England, Germany and Malaysia, attended the workshop.

In his opening remarks, the Minister set the tone for the workshop when he called for “an intensive scientific debate on defining and measuring equity principles of climate change as well as approaches on how to practically implement the suggestions that arise from this workshop”.

Dr. T. Jayaraman, professor at TISS, along with his colleagues authored the background paper for this workshop. This paper introduced a carbon-budget approach to defining equity, which takes into account the historical responsibility of developed countries towards climate change by quantifying the accumulated stock of their carbon emissions in the atmosphere. **When benchmarked against an equitable distribution of the atmospheric carbon space, the developed countries are occupying far more than their fair share of this carbon space.** Dr. Martin Khor, in his keynote address, said, “between 1850 and today, developed countries owe a carbon debt of 600 billion tonnes”. The paper also introduced an emissions model to study various mitigation proposals from the viewpoint of equity, which was introduced by Ms. Tejal Kanitkar, Program Officer at TISS.

The importance of equity was reiterated by the Minister in his statement to the Major Economies Forum in Rome, Italy, where he said, “if only lip service continues to get paid to equity, and if we pay obeisance to it only in words and think we have addressed the issue, I am afraid that no international agreement will be possible”.

On the second day of the meeting at the valedictory session, Mr. J. M. Mauskar, Addnl. Secy., MoEF, asked the organisers to convene an Implementation Task Force to further study how the carbon budget perspective could be taken forward. In the closing session of

the first day, Mr. R. R. Rashmi, Joint Secy., MoEF, referred to the linkages between MRV and the carbon budget perspective.

The participants of the conference in Mumbai included Abhijit Sen, Benito Muller, D. Raghunandan, Daniel Klungenfeld, Girish Sant, J. M. Mauskar, Jairam Ramesh (Minister), Kirit Parikh, Martin Khor, Meena Raman, Mukul Sanwal, Navroz Dubash, Prabir Purkayastha, Praful Bidwai, Pranay Verma, Prodipto Ghosh, R. R. Rashmi, R. Ramachandran, Raman Mehta, S. Parasuraman, Sanjay Vashisht, Shirish Sinha, Surya Sethi, Suzana Ribeiro, T. Jayaraman, Tejal Kanitkar, Varad Pande and others.