

**“Climate Change is impacting us in our daily lives
what govt., institutions, companies and individuals can do and should do.”**

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Chief Secretary, Govt. of Karnataka



Ladies & Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be here with you all for this opening session of 21st Congress of Environment Management and Climate Change being held in this Garden City of Bengaluru, Capital of Karnataka State. We have all heard from the distinguished speakers before about how Climate Change is impacting us in our daily lives and what govt., institutions, companies and individuals can do and should do. The population has increased tremendously. India had 30 crore population when we got independence. Now it is close to 130 crore. In addition, to the low per capita income when we got independence, we had huge poverty, illiteracy in our country. Now, we are developing, people have expectations of better lives, they want clean water, clean energy. They want energy, they want housing, they want education, they want health and they want jobs. So, we have on the one hand increasing population and increasing legitimate demand for a good life.

We have heard about what is India's per capita contribution to global carbon emission. It is much lower than the global average. So, at the global level, there is inequality. There are some countries which contribute much more to climate/carbon emission and India is contributing much less. But, even within the country, we have great

inequalities. Some of us individually, contribute much more to carbon emission. Some of us in the country have very high contribution to carbon emission. So, these inequalities in carbon emission that each of us are responsible for in our country as individuals, as companies, as institutions is what we should try to redress. Each one of us at the Global level, the National Govt level, the State Govt, Local Govt level and at individual level, should address these issues and seek our own remedies. As Gandhi Ji said-“We all should be the change that we want to see rather than pointing fingers at others”, to say that this is now people who should change. We should change ourselves.

I am very happy that Mr. Rajasekhara has mentioned the steps that BEML has taken for addressing carbon emission by reducing energy intensity, and emission intensity. Each company that is represented here should do the same. We have a very good example in Bengaluru, in Toyota Kirloskar that has got a very good plan and they are implementing it. Infosys is another company that has a good plan for greening its activities.

Each company that is represented here should look at how they can become water neutral considering the demand for clean water.

Govt has made harvesting of rainwater compulsory in Bengaluru for all buildings, which are more than 30 by 40 feet in area. All of us have to build storage structures within our own companies, apartments and houses so that the rainwater that falls on the rooftops is completely harvested and we can use it. As was pointed out, we can't always depend on water that is pumped from 100 km away. There will be competing demands and we have to be as self reliant as possible within our houses, within our apartments.

I am very happy to tell you that Karnataka has already reached the target of 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuels that has been set by the United Nations. As of now, Karnataka has more than 40% of its installed electric capacity from renewable energy, solar energy and wind energy. In fact, I am also happy to inform you that Karnataka is the State which has the highest installed solar capacity among all states in the country.

We are also very conscious of the need for preserving our forests and wildlife. The success of our efforts to preserve our forests is seen from the fact that every year our forest coverage in Karnataka is increasing as reported by Forest Research Institute of India based on satellite imagery. We have schemes to encourage farmers to grow trees, Agro-Forestry & Silvi-horticulture. We give incentives to them for every tree that is planted. Rs. 100 is given to the farmer by the Govt of Karnataka, if a tree survives beyond 3 years, for every tree planted by him. Karnataka has taken the lead in Organic Farming. We are the first State in the country to come out with Organic Farming Policy in 2004 and we host the leading producers of organic foods in the country. In the recent Budget, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has announced zero based natural farming as one of the programmes of the State Govt. We have engaged Agricultural Universities to do research on zero based natural farming so that inputs for agriculture can be reduced and farmers can get higher income and lead better lives.

Air pollution in Bengaluru is though a matter of concern. We need to take steps to bring down emission. In fact, the KSRTC which is represented here by its MD, Mr. Kalasad, is the best Road Transport Corporation in the country. Over the years, it got many awards. BMTC is also one of the best run city transport corporations in the country. We need to increase the number of buses so that people move away from private transport to road transport buses or public transport. On Metro also we are investing a lot of money and many Metro works are going on in Bengaluru. The funds required for Metro lines are tremendous and we are tapping different sources including corporates. Corporates are coming forward to donate funds for naming rights for stations. Infosys Foundation has donated Rs. 150 crore to name a metro station near their campus on Hosur Road. We are similarly encouraging other corporates, business parks to come forward and contribute to metro funding and reduce carbon emission in the city.

At the individual level, Karnataka State, has banned the use of all types of plastic. Enforcement has to be improved and one of the things we would like, the five star hotels is to move away from plastic bottles. Mr. Rajasekhar also said that BEML had moved away from plastic bottles for drinking water to paper cups or reusable glass. I am happy to inform you that in Karnataka, the State Govt Secretariat also, we have the same policy, but we want all corporates and hotels like this to also avoid using plastic bottles so that they contribute their

mite and move towards the goals of mitigating climate change.

This congress aims to incorporate these goals into corporate goals just as ethics is now a part of corporate culture. About 30-40 years ago, the concept of ethics in corporate governance would have been laughed at. Now there are investors who want ethical governance and are willing to put their money in ethically governed corporates. Similarly, now we have investors who are putting their money in green corporates that adopt environmentally safe carbon neutral policy.

This conference is an opportunity to discuss about how a corporation may best handle all these environmental concerns. I hope the rich deliberations by all of you will throw up many fresh insights, good practices for replication and better solutions for management of the environment.

I wish you all, all the best. Thank you very much. ■

Excerpts from the Speech
(Inaugural Address) delivered by
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