

## Speech of Sunita Narain for the ESCAP, Roundtable

Your Excellencies,

Thank you for asking me to participate in the high-level thematic roundtable on realizing climate action in Asia and Pacific. I'm honored to be with you and to speak to you today.

I speak to you from the city of Delhi, which as you may have read, is going through intense and scorching heat wave. The temperatures in Delhi have remained so abnormally high over the last two months. Scientists are now very clear that the abnormally long duration of high temperatures in Delhi and the intensity of the heat wave are linked to climate change.

The variations that we can see in weather today, the extreme weather events that we can see in the world today, are a grim reminder of the reality that confronts us. The worst is that we know that the poor in our world are the worst impacted by the impacts of climate change. The poor in the world, who have not contributed to the stock of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, are the victims of climate change. As we see in my city of Delhi and in India today with the intense heat wave it is the poor people, who are working in construction, in the fields who are the worst impacted. We need to remind ourselves about this and put a human face to the tragic events that are unfolding in front of us.

I say this to you because this reality is what we need to amplify as we move towards decisive action to combat climate change. The role of civil society in this existential threat that confronts us is to help us to understand the changes on the ground, to help us to understand what are the events and the developments that are playing out in our world, so that, we, as people, as policy makers, as practitioners can understand the urgency of the threat and are moved to take further action. The role of civil society is also I believe to help to build the momentum for action and also to recommend what is the way ahead.

It is very clear that climate change is not the inconvenient truth. The inconvenient truth is that we have to share the common atmospheric space between nations and between people. The imperative of equity is crucial when it comes to climate change. We know that. We know that countries need development space and so ecological space to be able to grow. And as they grow they will further contribute to the greenhouse gas emissions which will increase temperatures and will threaten our very survival. And this really is where we need to be able to work together and find that pathway so that we can move towards low carbon growth.

But we can do that in countries like India, which like many in the emerging world but for this we make equity the foundation of future action. We need to leapfrog to cleaner technologies, we need to leapfrog to ways in which we can grow without pollution, and we can do so because we have not yet built all our cities, built all our power plants. We can do things differently, but this will cost. The fact is that, any effective and ambitious agreement to cut emissions needs climate justice to be the basis. The role of civil society is to help us understand, the nature of the crisis, the impact on the poor but also the way ahead.

Thank you Your Excellencies for your time.

