

Keynote address
by
Nitin Desai
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Minister Trittin,
Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Eid,
Deputy Major Pia Heckes,
Minister Mutagamba,
my Colleague Dr. Töpfer,
Distinguished Ministers and Friends,

As the first visitor to speak in Bonn, let me begin first by expressing my deep and profound thanks to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the City of Bonn for organising this major event. I believe, this event is particularly significant in the context of the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg for several reasons:

First of course, it is significant for the reasons that have been mentioned in the Opening Addresses, which is the critical importance of water for sustainable development. There is no way, in which we can get sustainable development in any conceivable sense of the term operational, if we do not address the issue of sustainable water use. In fact, water is a strategic resource. If you manage water use sensibly, at the community level, at the regional level, at the global level, this will inevitably have consequences on land use, forest use and use of other biotic resources as well. In that sense, this conference has an important strategic role: it is dealing with water, but in many ways the improvement of water use is, at the same time, central for all of the other dimensions of sustainable development.

But that is not the only reason why I wish to thank the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the City of Bonn for this conference. I wish to thank them for the conference because of the way in which it is structured and the process which has been reflected in its work. Look at the work that has been done in the preparation for this conference, the papers, which are lying in front of us, papers which have been prepared by the Conference Secretariat as well as the papers prepared by the Stakeholders. If you see them, what you see is that they reflect three things, which are very important:

- They reflect the inclusion in our discussions of the best scientific and professional opinion.
- They integrate discussions of the social, the economic and the environmental dimension of water.
- They focus very clearly on practical steps – and one example of this is that they contain many success stories of sustainable water use, and many reviews of lessons learned from different experiments.

This is one important reason, why this process is of such great value to us: the way in which it has been prepared. But it is not just the substance of the papers; it is the process of

preparation itself. The big achievement was to bring together scientific and professional opinion, political decision-makers, and stakeholders in a very open and transparent process. In this meeting as also in the preparatory work we see a rich variety of side events that have been organised by many of the partners, who are present here.

So what will come out of this conference can be said to reflect not just the consensus amongst governments but the consensus amongst what I would describe as a community of concern, a community of Stakeholders, who have the capacity to make a substantial difference to the way water use is managed at every level. This is important; and I have mentioned some aspects of the process, structure and content of this conference, because I believe that it is a very good example of what we need to do in Johannesburg. Johannesburg must also make the same effort at bringing together the entire community of concern for sustainable development in this type of open, participatory process.

Let me then turn more specifically to the Johannesburg process itself: but in order to do so, I really want you to look at Johannesburg as part of a broader process of strengthening multilateralism which has become even more urgent taking into account the recent events in September.

Many people are linking three conferences together.

- Doha, the Conference on Trade, which has just been completed,
- Monterey, the International Conference on Finance for Development, which will be held in March and of course,
- The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002.

Many people are connecting these three conferences; they see the sequence of Doha, Monterey, Johannesburg. It is not that the other events that will take place during this year at the global level are not important; we will of course share the World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, the postponed Children Summit +10, the postponed World Food Summit +5. But the reason, why people focus on these three - Doha, Monterey and Johannesburg - is because these three are the real test for multilateralism, the real test for how effectively we run a political process to secure the willing co-operation of countries with diverse interests. All three of them require a deal to be struck, between rich and poor countries, between large and small countries, between resource-rich and resource-poor countries, when we are talking of trade, talking of financing, talking of sustainable development. It is in this sense that these three are connected. In some ways, what we sought to do in Doha was to put sustainable development into the world trade agenda. Of course, whether we succeed or not is going to depend on how the negotiations shape up, but certainly the general assessment is that to a substantial extent in terms of the agenda for the negotiations, this has been achieved. One of the things, you have certainly seen referred to much in the press lately, is how effective developing countries were in Doha – good for them. In Monterey, we are trying to put development into the agenda of the world financial system. It is a system which has been run essentially from the point of stability etc. - in the way world finances work. What we are trying to do in Monterey is to say that development finance is not just something that you do on the side. It is something that must be integrated into the way the world financial system operates. And I believe that there are very good chances that we will succeed in this; I have just come from the Ottawa Meeting of the Finance Ministers and I am very hopeful that in Monterey we will succeed in doing - in the world of finance - what we did in the world of trade in Doha: put development into the agenda of Finance Ministries and of the financial system.

What then is the Agenda of Johannesburg?

The Agenda of Johannesburg is to put sustainable development into action.

Taking into consideration the gains that we have made in Doha and in Monterey, our challenge in Johannesburg is to move from this to putting sustainable development into

action. I will not go into the details of this, you will have the opportunity to discuss this in the course of your work during the next four days and it would be unnecessary for me to dwell on this at great length here.

But clearly, when we look at Johannesburg now, we have to recognise that – whichever way you look at it – our performance in implementing of what came out of Rio Conference is inadequate, whether we think of it in terms of our success in meeting needs - surely we have not done that - if we look at the persistence of poverty, hunger, disease and malnutrition in terms of our capacity and ability to meet such needs in future, which we surely have not done if you look at what is happening to the environment at every level. But what we have to do there is not just to get up there and say, “Look we must implement what we have agreed on”, we must ask ourselves what more we need to do in order to do this. But we also need to take on board some of the changes, that have taken place since Rio: globalisation and the new technologies, that have become far more prominent now than they were in 1992. We need to take that on board, take that into account to see what implications it has for the processes of implementation of Agenda 21.

We have to address many of the deficiencies that we have spotted at the institutional level and see how to address them. We have to strengthen the institutions which are vital for the implementation of sustainable development at every level - the community level, the national level, the regional and the global level. And in some ways this institutional agenda is crucial, because perhaps one of our greatest weaknesses has been the inability to integrate the three dimensions - the social, the environmental and the economic - because they are necessarily cut across mandates of many different line ministries, line departments and many different organisations at every level. We have to address the disappointments with regard to the means of implementation in financing and technology transfer.

But in order to really get a certain amount of commitment regarding implementation, I would suggest – and that is what we really have to do in Johannesburg - to connect what we did in Rio with the great goals and targets that have emerged in the course of the past decade in the world system.

Let me take the Millennium Declaration: Several people have referred to the explicit references in the Millennium Declaration to the dimensions that we are talking about here. When our Presidents and Prime Ministers met last year in the Millennium Summit, they committed themselves to say that we have to spend more effort to free all of humanity, and above all, our children and grand-children, from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities and with resources, which will no longer be sufficient for their needs. And they went on to talk about the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption that must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendents. More specifically in the case of water, there have been several references to the commitment

- To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote equitable access and adequate supply - and
- To halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.

These are the commitments which are specifically related to the Agenda, that we are discussing. But that is not what I want you to connect it with; what I really want you to connect the Agenda with is the broader goal:

- To halving of poverty by the year 2015.
- To reduce infant mortality by 2/3 by the year 2015.

Take the first goal: 70% of the world's poor live in the rural areas of the third world. Their poverty is not going to be eradicated simply by handouts, subsidies or target-oriented schemes which simply address the disabilities of poor households. Their poverty cannot be addressed unless we also address the quality and the productivity of the resource base on which they depend, which is water, land, biotic resources. There is no way we can meet food security concerns in these parts of the world and the poverty concerns in the rural areas of the Third World without addressing issues of sustainable agriculture and rural development. We need to integrate this dimension and recognize in this context that the issue of water is crucial. A substantial proportion of these 70% of the poor, who live in the rural areas of the Third World, live in water stressed areas. And therefore the agenda of addressing the productivity of the resource base becomes very much an agenda for water management. In that sense, what we need to do is to connect our sustainable development agenda for water with this goal of halving poverty. It is not a matter of co-ordination, it is not a matter of saying that the Water Resource Program, the Land Program and the Anti-Poverty Program have to be co-ordinated. It is a matter of **integration**. Making sure that the poverty reduction strategy papers, which have been prepared now, include the resource dimension and making sure that the area development schemes, which are being implemented by different people, include the anti-poverty component.

Or take for instance the goal of reducing the infant mortality by 2/3: that goal cannot simply be achieved by immunisations etc. These are important, but if you want to address that goal, you will have to address water, sanitation and urban air quality, because we know that a significant proportion of the morbidity amongst children is because of these factors. And that is the connection that we need to make.

There are other connections, that I could speak of: I remember for instance a nutritionist telling me, that in her assessment, if you look at the nutritious status of children, the greatest single benefit to that is not supplemental nutrition programmes but improved water supply, which simply increases the uptake of nutrients from their normal diet. Or I remember Gertrud Mongela from Tanzania, who was the Secretary General of the Women's Conference in Beijing, telling me that in her area, in Tanzania, the biggest impact on girls' education came from the improvements of water supply, which allowed girls to reduce the amount of time they were required to go out and collect water, and instead they could attend school. So there are many other connections, that we can make; and I believe this is our challenge in Johannesburg, to connect areas which have been looked at separately by different groups and mobilising around goals and targets, which have a strong political resonance, similar to what we read in the Millennium Declaration and elsewhere. And that is what we have to work towards, and what we have to achieve in Johannesburg is what I sometimes call the three Ps:

- Political will:

A political will which is expressed not only when we meet there, but which will sustain beyond that meeting. And that is where particularly the involvement of the stakeholders and civil society is so important, because it is a crucial instrument in maintaining this commitment beyond this conference.

- Practical steps:

Practical steps are needed at a programmatic level, because that is what the world is waiting for. Possibly built around certain key goals and targets with a clear sense of where the resources are going to come from.

- Partnership:

It is increasingly clear that the implementation of sustainable development requires everybody, all stakeholders to act together.

These are the 3Ps, we are aiming at: Political will, Practical steps, Partnerships. And in many ways the process, you have here, reflects this. And that is why I have described it right at the beginning as something which in some ways is a trailer for what ought to be reached in Johannesburg on the broader spectrum of issues.

Let me conclude, Mr Chairman, with the question of what should be the spirit of Johannesburg? We speak of the spirit of Rio, and at Rio one could say that the spirit of Rio was that humanity recognised it stands at a defining moment in its history, which in fact is the very first sentence of Agenda 21.

What is the message, we must go home with in Johannesburg? I believe that the message we must go home with in Johannesburg is, that humanity has taken the decisive steps towards global co-operation for Sustainable Development, linking together not just governments, but all people across national boundaries.

I look forward to your involvement and participation in this and I am sure you are able to make a great contribution to this great process.

Thank you very much.