

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3884
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.04.2023

Steps to reduce carbon emissions

3884. DR. SANTANU SEN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, according to the UN's Emissions Gap Report (EGR), India was the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide by volume in 2020, although its per capita emissions were lower than the world average, if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether it is a fact that India's target date to reach net zero emissions remains 2070 – much later than the date set by many other countries and not in line with the Paris agreement, which proposed 2050 as the target date, if so, the reasons for the delay; and
- (c) the details of the action taken by Government to reduce carbon emissions?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) The portrayal of India as one of the largest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters globally is mainly based on current annual emissions. However, other metrics of country-wise emissions provide a more holistic and unbiased view. These metrics include share in historical cumulative emissions and per capita emissions. The ranking per se by any metric is of minor value unless also placed alongside the actual quantities. India's annual emissions are well below the three leading emitters - China, United States of America and the European Union. In per capita terms, India's annual emissions are even lower, and India ranks well below the world average among countries for their per capita emissions. In terms of cumulative emissions, India has contributed less than 4 per cent of the global cumulative emissions from 1850 until 2019, despite being home to more than a sixth of humanity. So, the appellation of India as the third largest emitter in the world is highlighted to disguise the high contribution of the developed countries, in particular to both cumulative and per capita emissions.

The national emissions must be judged both by the equity in mitigation and in the light of climate actions being undertaken. On both grounds, India, relative to its responsibility and relative to what equity demands, is doing far more than its fair share. With more than 80% of the global carbon budget, for keeping global temperature increase below 1.5°C by 2100, having already been consumed mostly by developed countries (since 1850), countries like India are left with very little carbon space for the future. The continuing high emissions of developed countries eats into even this reduced entitlement for India. Despite this, in the post-Paris scenario, India, in contrast to the large emitters from the developed world, has chosen to walk its climate talk, conscious of the need to pioneer a sustainable development

pathway for the entire globe, while attending to the needs and aspirations of its people, economy and society.

(b) The Paris Agreement has not set any target date for country-specific net zero emissions, but aims for holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above preindustrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels. It also calls for the balance of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions by sources and removal by sinks in the second half of the century. This is a global goal and the Paris Agreement further adds that this balance should be achieved on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty. In this context India, keeping in view the need for equity, has called on the developed countries to undertake rapid reductions in emissions during the current decade, to reach net-zero much earlier than their announced dates, as they have used more than their fair share of the global carbon budget.

Never the less, in the National Statement delivered at 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) held in Glasgow, United Kingdom, India declared its goal to achieve net zero by 2070. This goal is to be achieved through periodic enhancement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and corresponding domestic climate actions towards low carbon transition, supported by climate finance and technology transfer under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement.

(c) As per the extant provisions under the UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement, India, as a developing country Party, is not obliged to immediately reduce carbon emissions or to set any target to reduce emissions. Under the Paris Agreement, Parties are required to communicate their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to combat climate change. These NDCs involve, inter-alia, activities for reduction of the greenhouse gases or the reduction in emissions intensity of the economy, and also for building resilience to impacts of climate change. India has communicated its updated NDCs in 2022. These include, inter-alia, quantified targets to reduce the emissions intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 45 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels, to achieve about 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030, and to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂eq through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

The Government of India stands committed to combating climate change through its several programmes and schemes including the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) which comprises missions in specific areas of solar energy, energy efficiency, water, sustainable agriculture, Himalayan ecosystem, sustainable habitat, human health, green India, and strategic knowledge for climate change. The NAPCC provides an overarching framework for all climate actions. Thirty-four States /Union Territories (UTs) have prepared their State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) in line with NAPCC taking into account the State-specific issues. These SAPCCs outline sector-specific and cross-sectoral priority actions, including adaptation.
