

**Speech  
of  
Mr. T.R. Baalu,  
Minister of Environment & Forests, India  
&  
President, COP-8**

**at the**

**Inauguration of  
High Level Segment of  
Eighth Conference of the Parties to  
the United Nations Framework  
Convention on Climate Change**

**New Delhi,  
30<sup>th</sup> October, 2002**

Respected Prime Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my proud privilege to extend a warm welcome to you to the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Also, it is my pleasure to greet the Ministers and other senior dignitaries who have arrived in New Delhi for the high-level segment of the Conference.

The gracious presence of the Prime Minister has just been heralded by the nadasvaram, the traditional instrument of South India. This is, indeed, a historic Conference, with 4950 delegates from 169 countries out of 186 parties participating. The Prime Minister's message will go far and wide. The lamp for enhancing understanding and achieving higher ideals has been lit, in full realization that we cannot be indifferent to the interests of the next generation.

The Government and the people of India under your towering leadership have held in the highest esteem the principle of being in harmony with the natural environment gifted to the people by the mother earth. On very many occasions, your political will has galvanized the Government and the people of this great country to pursue the cause of the environment with redeemed vigour and dedication.

The Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change being held in India is yet another demonstration not only of India's resolve to safeguard the earth's environment but also of your brilliant statesmanship which has propelled this nation to the fore-front of the global action for environmental protection.

This 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties is a momentous occasion. Close on the heels of the World Summit on Sustainable Development which concluded very recently in Johannesburg on a positive and firm note adopted by the world community to carry forward the march towards sustainable development, this Conference on climate change strives further to address the formidable challenges confronting the humanity in its struggle to provide food and water to the hundreds of thousands of its less blessed brethren.

The fight against climate change is in fact a fight against poverty. Sustainable development, will never be possible if we are not able to combat climate change victoriously. In the same way, without following the path of Sustainable Development we will not be able to fight global warming successfully. It is this inseparable link between climate change and sustainable development which is in sharp focus in this Conference.

The New Delhi Conference has raised fond hopes all across the globe that it will be breaking new paths to enable the world to forge ahead and achieve the ultimate objectives enshrined in the Convention on climate change.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Sir, as the President of this 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change, I am confident that your political will and vision, will shed a new light here today in this distinguished gathering and infuse strength to the process so that it will culminate in a spectacular outcome.

Delhi is a city of great historical importance. We hope that your words of wisdom and wishes will help this conference to create yet another history in this city.

In conclusion, may I thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his gracious presence, his support and encouragement, and for providing to us the depth of his insights and the strength of his stature for facing the challenge of global climate change and sustainable development.

Thank you very much.