

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE ON OCCASION OF INAUGURATION OF NATIONAL
ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY-2012**

Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi: 14-12-2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be here on the occasion of the presentation of the National Energy Conservation Awards 2012. These awards go a long way in spreading the message of energy conservation in society. There must be increased understanding of the fact that the path to a more sustainable future will require our society to make a better balance between its energy consumption vis- a-vis cost and availability. I congratulate the award winners from various industries for working together with the Government in its endeavour to promote sustainable development.

2. I am equally pleased to see the participation by little children in the painting competition organised to spread the message of energy conservation through their simple and colourful paintings. I extend my heartiest congratulations to these children.

3. Environmental concerns today occupy the centrestage of global discourse. Yet, our journey towards pursuing a truly sustainable path towards development has just begun. Energy consumption in India is expected to double over the next two decades, in line with the growth requirements of the economy.

4. India occupies the fourth position in the world in energy consumption, after USA, China and Russia. But the country is not endowed with abundant energy resources required for sustaining such levels of consumption. Energy Intensity, which is a measure of the energy efficiency of a nation's economy and indicates the cost of converting energy into GDP, is higher for India than developed nations such as the UK, Germany, Japan and the USA. Thus, achieving a high GDP growth for the country while simultaneously meeting the energy needs of the population will pose a big challenge for us.

5. The cumulative installed capacity of power as of March-end 2012 is close to 2 lakh MW, comprising renewable energy capacity of 24,503 MW. The capacity addition during the Eleventh Plan period was close to 55,000 MW, which is more than 2.5 times that of any of the earlier Plan periods. The domestic production of energy resources is projected to increase at an annual average rate of 6.84% over the Twelfth Plan period. It is, however, unlikely that we can restrict our high dependence on imports. The net import of energy is, in fact, projected to increase by 8 per cent per year over the Twelfth Plan period. While the compulsions of achieving a high growth rate exist, such reliance on imports would have implications on the fiscal balance of our economy. Sustainable development mandates the use of available natural resources in a more efficient way. We have to, accordingly, promote universal access to energy, while, at the same time, promoting energy efficiency. A shift to cleaner energy sources is, thus, imperative.

6. Climate change is a threat but also a unique opportunity to work together. As a developing country on the frontlines of climate vulnerability, India has a vital stake in the evolution of a successful, rule-based, equitable and multilateral response to climate change. A promising start has been made at the domestic level with the launch of the 'National Action Plan on Climate Change' (NAPCC). The Action Plan sets out a comprehensive response to climate change in the overall context of development, identifying measures that promote our development objectives while also yielding co-benefits for addressing climate change effectively. The eight missions under the Action Plan cover both adaptation and mitigation, in addition to scientific research.

7. It is worthwhile to note that policies to promote energy efficiency, along with high energy prices and structural changes in the Indian economy have resulted in a sharp and declining energy intensity of the Indian economy. The direct contribution of policies to reduce energy use during the five years of the Eleventh Five Year Plan period has resulted in savings equivalent to 10,836 MW of avoided power generation. In monetary terms, this has resulted in annual savings of Rs.3000 crore. I applaud the efforts of all those who have worked towards making this possible.

8. It is evident that demand side management measures have a key role in eliminating power shortages and bridging the gap between demand and supply to a considerable extent. I am happy to note that energy efficiency and demand side

management imperatives have also been factored into our economic development during the last five years. The National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency, one of the important initiatives of the present Government, which is being implemented by the Ministry of Power, aims to strengthen the market for energy efficiency through creation of a conducive regulatory and policy regime. This is critical for our energy security. I must, however, reiterate that merely setting up of regulatory and policy regimes is not enough- it is the implementation and enforcement of these policies that is critical.

9. Today's children are the citizens and nation-builders of tomorrow. The National Painting Competition organized every year by the Ministry of Power has seen the involvement of school children in spreading the message of energy conservation in the country. The vibrant, yet simple, ideas presented by our children through their colourful paintings on this year's themes of "Bijli Bachao Unnati Lao", "Do the Nation a Favour, be an Energy Saver" & "Wind, Water and Sun: Energy for the long run" reflect their clear understanding of the subject and what requires to be done to achieve environmentally sustainable growth. I congratulate these children for carrying forward the message of energy conservation in the country.

10. With these words, I would once again like to compliment the efforts of the Ministry of Power in recognizing the efforts of the industry towards energy conservation. I also congratulate the awardees and hope that they would continue their efforts to promote energy conservation.

Jai Hind.