

**Opening Remarks by Amb. Asoke Kumar Mukerji,
Permanent Representative, at the India side event on "The 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development: Southern Perspectives", co-organized by
RIS on September 21, 2015**

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

It gives me distinct pleasure to be present for today's consultation.

Our warmest congratulations to RIS and other co-organizers for putting this event together and greetings to the several distinguished panelists who have travelled all the way from India to be with us today.

Let me also extend a warm welcome to Prof. Arvind Panagariya, who is of course no stranger to New York, being one of the renowned and noted economists and having spent several years in the Columbia University.

He is now the Vice Chairman of this institution which is very aptly titled the 'National Institution for Transforming India' or NITI Aayog as we call it.

The very name of the institution he heads speaks to the importance of the work he is doing. What many of you may not know that is that it is this institution which will have a central role to play in following-up and keeping track of the implementation of the new agenda in India.

Mr. Panagariya's presence therefore is most relevant and we are grateful that he has been able to take time off from his busy schedule to join us.

Let me also acknowledge the presence of Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator. We are delighted that she has joined us. UN Development System will undoubtedly have a key role in translating this agenda into action and we look forward to hearing from her as to how UNDP and the UN Development System is gearing up for this challenge.

We are grateful that the co-facilitators of the process that negotiated Agenda 2030, Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya and Ambassador David Donoghue of Ireland, are with us. We look forward to listening to their remarks today. Going by the list of Speakers, this promises to be an enriching and useful discussion.

I will therefore restrict my remarks in order to give you the opportunity to listen to our distinguished speakers.

Distinguished Delegates,

From our perspective, the Permanent Mission of India of course was a very active participant in the negotiations, first on the SDGs and then on the wider 2030 Agenda over the past more than two years.

For us, the overarching objective of our efforts was quite straightforward – to ensure that the development agenda remains sensitive to and supportive of the development policies and initiatives of developing countries including India. In this, we are broadly quite satisfied that the final outcome, which will be adopted by our Leaders in just a few days, does indeed provide a supportive and useful template for common efforts by the international community and in particular for developing countries.

We are indeed fortunate that in Prime Minister Modi, we have a visionary Leader for whom ‘development’ is the core of his political philosophy. Even before he was elected, he had spoken of development becoming a mass movement. Ever since he has taken over the reigns of the new Government, he has pursued his dream of a developed India with a zeal and passion that is quite inspirational.

We are therefore happy that the SDGs, which are the actionable core of the new agenda, closely mirror and complement the development initiatives announced by Prime Minister Modi. In fact almost all the SDGs can be directly related to one or more of the development initiatives announced by Prime Minister Modi. This of course is not merely a coincidence and is in fact quite significant. Because such a synergy means a ready template for the implementation of the new agenda in India. In fact, I would even say that in this sense, the SDGs are already been implemented in India!

Thank you.
