

**CSEP Report Launch |**  
**Tracks to Transition: India's Global Climate Strategy**

Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)

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### **Ajay Mathur**

Director General, International Solar Alliance (ISA)

### **Shyam Saran**

Former Foreign Secretary of India

### **Navroz Dubash**

Professor, Centre for Policy Research

### **Dhanasree Jayaram**

Assistant Professor, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations,  
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### **Adriana Abdenur**

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## **Moderator**

### **Constantino Xavier**

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## **Know more details:**

<https://csep.org/event/tracks-to-transition-indias-global-climate-strategy/>

**Watch the video:** <https://youtu.be/dHtaM6AaGjA>

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**Laveesh Bhandari:**

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, it is great to be here today. Thank you for joining us for the launch of our report “Tracks to transition: India’s global climate strategy”. This is a report edited by our CSEP fellow Constantino Xavier and non-resident fellow Karthik Nachiappan from the National University of Singapore. As the catastrophic consequences of climate change loom large, the need for a holistic and collaborative approach to address this global crisis has never been clearer. At the center for social and economic progress, we have embarked on a journey to understand India’s climate transition and its global implications from multiple angles, methodologies, and disciplines. This report along with our broader work on global climate cooperation is a testament to our dedication to exploring diverse perspectives that can expedite India’s green transition and pave the way for achieving its 2030 commitments and 2070 net zero targets. This report underscores, that India is not merely a participant in the global climate discourse. It is an innovator, contributing groundbreaking solutions beyond the UNFCCC and COP negotiations. The seven case studies covered in the report serve as a testament to India’s adaptability in pushing the boundaries of climate action. This report is not just a map of India’s journey in the climate arena. It is also a contribution to critical and strategic debate on how to further accelerate our efforts. It offers both a reflection on what Indian diplomacy has already accomplished and a blueprint for where we need to go next. I want to extend my gratitude to all those who have contributed to this report from our dedicated team at CSEP to the esteemed experts and policymakers who have shared their invaluable insights. Your collective efforts have brought to us this moment and I hope that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will propel us towards a more sustainable and resilient future. Thank you for joining us today to mark the significant milestone and I look forward to the insightful discussions that are to follow. It now gives me great pleasure to welcome Dr Ajay Mathur, director general of International Solar Alliance, who has kindly agreed to give opening remarks. Many thanks, Dr Mathur, for being here today and making time to share your perspective on this report. As well as your experience as the leadership of the international solar alliance. We could not think of anyone else better than Dr Mathur to help us make sense of India’s evolving climate partnerships. His long career straddles the worlds of academia and policy and both the domestic and international dimensions of India’s climate policies. You are of course, quite well aware of his leadership at the ISA since 2021. And that Dr Mathur was previously the director general of the Energy and Resources Institute, a member of the Prime Minister’s council on climate change and he also headed the Indian bureau of energy efficiency. Dr Mathur has been a leading climate change negotiator and was the Indian spokesperson at the Paris climate negotiations. He served as the interim director of the ‘green climate fund’ during its foundational period and was a member of the international panel on climate change which awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. Dr. Mathur is also a man of many academic interests and specializations, having a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from the University of Roorkee and a Master’s and PhD degrees from the University of Illinois. Welcome, Dr Mathur, and over to you to enlighten us.

**Ajay Mathur:**

Thank you very much, Laveesh, and thanks a million for having me here today as we launch this report. It is also an honor that Ambassador Shyam Saran is here. He led the climate change delegations as the special envoy on climate change. And I am delighted that the report is calling for amongst other things a coordination role in the Prime Minister’s office where the

entire climate policy comes together and this is something you will hear me say again and again. I want to start with the thesis that we have seen the Indian climate negotiation approach evolve over time from one where we largely focused only on the availability of finance and of technology transfer. That made great sense because in a very real sense, the kind of technologies for example renewables etc were available, we could adopt them since the vast amount of electricity that we had to generate was still in the future. They were very expensive and it was a matter of money. If you had enough money, if you had enough technology, we could do it. That continued to be the mantra of the Indian negotiation strategy for a long time till India Brazil and South Africa became the so-called emerging economies. They were part of the BRICS, though I would say that Russia and China are in positions by themselves. But what it did was as a developing country became a developing country and an emerging economy, the focus on climate change also shifted. Ambassador Shyam Saran and I were just discussing, that what happened in real life was that this meant that we realized that there were things that we could do ourselves. Ambassador Shyam Saran was the person behind the creation of the national action plan on climate change which amongst other things had a national mission on enhanced energy efficiency. I was then with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and worked closely with the group on this. One of the key issues that happened in the international negotiations was that we also Suo motto gave a carbon intensity target. I would suggest that as we perceive ourselves to move from a developing country to a developing country plus an emerging economy, this change of only having the demand for technology and climate evolved into the pledge for a carbon intensity target as well. It is not as if the other things disappeared. It is not as if becoming an emerging economy meant we didn't need a developing economy. It is not as if having a carbon intensity target meant that the old demands for resources and technology transfer disappeared. No. but this became added on. In recent years what I have seen is that we have also emerged as a geopolitical power. Emerging as a geopolitical power one of the first things that happened was that there was a across the board realization that this meant that we would have to work, not just talk. We would have to work towards, moving towards, net zero. Now, the net zero by 2070 is certainly a doable goal. Rahul Tongia and I were just talking about the fact that you need goals... I was saying you need goals that are ambitious but yet achievable. The 2070 is a goal that is certainly achievable. Yes, it could be ambitious, you could bring it down to 2060, or you could bring it down to 2050, but my feeling is that the countries that have set targets as 2040 will move them to 2050, those that have put them to 2050 move them to 2060. We may well move ours from 2070 to 2060. But that is in the future. The point that I wanted to make is that as the position of India as a developing country and then an emerging economy and then a geopolitical block has occurred, so has our climate negotiations approach also become a little more nuanced. Now, the interesting point here is that as you look at these, you realize that that international negotiating strategy becomes more and more enmeshed with internal development goals and policies. So, the fact that for example, my organization, the International Solar Alliance, was announced at COP 21 in Paris was because India had put in a huge amount of effort into the development of renewables and especially the development of solar. The global price decline of solar helped. But what was also more important was a massive deployment program was also launched. The National Solar Mission was one of the eight missions that were part of the national action plan on climate change and created the institutions that were necessary and more importantly got stakeholders to start thinking about this. Ambassador Shyam Saran just was mentioning a moment ago how difficult it was to get for example, the Ministry of Power to agree that a certain amount of electricity would be

made available to be bundled with bundled with renewable energy and sold at a price that brought everything together and therefore was more affordable to states. I want to re stress that it is this interaction of internal policies with the global negotiation strategies that has made it successful. Now, this obviously implies that a whole of government approach is essential. In December 2020 the Ministry of environment and Forest created a whole government committee that had all these concerned ministries, obviously the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, including forests, finance, agriculture, science and technology, power, new and renewable energy, water, earth sciences, health, housing and urban affairs, rural development, commerce and industry and of course, external affairs and the NITI Aayog. They called it the Apex Committee for the implementation of the Paris Agreement. I will argue here and it is me who is speaking, that the apex committee could have been a lot more effective. The institutional structure was created, but we also need to do two things. One of what this report says, which is seeing what are the kinds of impacts which are happening in India and moving it globally. As far as the solar alliance is concerned, remember that say, 25 years ago or 20 years ago or even 15 years ago, we were where all other developing countries are today as far as solar energy is concerned. Very, very small percentages, we are still trying to meet the demands of our populations. However, in the last 15 to 20 years a revolution has occurred. And that revolution has occurred because of many reasons. Yes, it has happened because of technology, but primarily because public policy placed renewables in the center point of being able to provide electricity to people and most importantly that it becomes the baseline technology for providing access to everybody across the country. This therefore led India... I think the Indian achievement if I remember correctly as of yesterday, was something of the order of 100,000 megawatts of solar power with another 105 or 110 under construction. So, there is a story to be told, there is an experience that other developing countries see as being applicable to them because the starting points of India 15 or 20 years ago and their situation today are very similar. This has helped create the environment within which the International Solar Alliance has been able to develop and thrive. I would argue that this is the kind of move that needs to happen more and more. I want to re-stress the point that climate negotiators have evolved from a purely external agenda focused at that point of time anchored by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and by the Ministry of External Affairs to one which is all of government agenda, in which all stakeholder ministries are important and for international negotiations the ministry of environment and climate change and MEA continue to be of importance. This brings me to the document that we are releasing today. I think, Laveesh, you did say what it is called. The tracks to Indian global climate strategy transition or something of that sort. This report very, very ably brings together a strategy, for pulling together the outreach agenda. And it does so, not only on the basis of theory, not only on the basis of what has happened in other countries. But on the basis of India's own experience over the past few years. So, whether it is the international solar alliance or whether it is our common program within the quad which is obviously developing, or whether it is the bilateral relationships with the US or EU, all of these teach us what are the limits... not so much the limits... we don't know what the limits are... but they teach us what are the guide posts as we move along. So, in all of them, one of the things that we see is those areas which have been of success as far as internal policy is concerned, as far as development is concerned, have also been a success as far as the external world is concerned. We are not looking at expanding the quad relationship to also include renewables. Why? Because renewables have been successful within the country. And consequently, there is both policy learning as well as a huge number of manufacturers who

could supply equipment to other countries, as well as consultancy. I will argue along with this report that the internal development agenda, in so much as it is connected to the external negotiation agenda, the international action agenda, continues to be a major challenge. We have created the apex committee for implementation. We need to make it work. We need them to say what is needed. Right now, typically the API meets after a COP. So, therefore, what the COP decisions are they are told. The members are told and it becomes their responsibility to ensure that these are implemented through their ministries. However, to go back to the point that Laveesh was making if we have to be proactive, we need a mechanism through which the successes of these ministries come up and can be pulled into what is then decided to be done for international action. I will give you an example. As I was mentioning earlier, one of the big things that we did with renewables was, to help it to complement the universal energy access that grid extension provided. In the case of India, the grid was almost everywhere, we had to strengthen it and therefore it reached like 90 percent of the people. There were about 4 or 5% of people who were supplied through renewables. But in many other countries, the countries where universal energy access has not happened, grid extension is expensive. An analysis that we did which is now in the public domain, is available on our website, shows that if you have to pull the grid more than 10 km in most of Africa, then providing electricity through solar mini grids is cheaper. But is there a policy to help the rural mini-grids occur? Then for us in ISA that becomes one of the goals to see how this will occur. Not only for ISA, I believe this is the case for other multilateral agencies as well. Therefore, very soon I think... this has been happening for a long time... but I hope in a week or so several heads of agencies and I will be publishing a paper in natural energy, which gives our commitment to supporting universal energy access through solar mini-grids. We hope that this report enables and stimulates conversation. It enables us to create the kinds of institutions that are necessary. There is no doubt and I am sure that Ambassador Shyam Saran will agree with the statement that the time when we were most effective was when there was coordination happening between the external and internal stakeholders in the Prime Minister's office. Consequently, the report calls for the creation of a special envoy. I will call it climate \_\_\_. That is more neutral because it is more outside and inside. It is essential for us to move ahead on the climate debate so that the external kinds of actions that we do are built on our internal strengths. I thank you for your kind attention.

**Anindita Sinh:**

I would like to call the panelists on the stage to please launch the report and come for the panel discussion. So, Dr Constantino Xavier, Professor Navroz Dubash, ambassador Shyam Saran, and professor Danasree Jayaram. Thank you. Can we also have Dr Karthik Nachiappan, and Dr Pooja Ramamurthi join us on stage for the launch of the report and a small photo opp.

(Report launch and a photo shoot)

**Constantino Xavier:**

Thank you, sir, for your wonderful remarks. Exactly what we wanted. You went through the report, you understood really the heart of it and you will know when I met you in your office how difficult this was for us because we are really bridging two worlds. There is a world of technical know-how, and knowledge on energy, power, and climate. The program that I lead at CSEP is on foreign policies, strategy, global cooperation and conflict. We see more of conflicts these days. So, we try to bridge that externally but also as you said internally.

Internal coordination and then allowing bottom up, in developing its interests and using these tracks to then accelerate its action, its interests abroad, that is what we tried with this report. So, it gives me great pleasure to have here our panelists now. The idea is to have an engagement with the report and thank you all for being here in such large numbers today. Sorry about the mess up of the time. We wanted you to socialise over a tea and coffee at 4 and we started at 4:30, but it is wonderful have these panelists here with us. Allow me before I introduce to give a quick sense of what we try to do to the report. Number one, give you an idea of where this report is coming from. You must have heard often about India being a naysayer, an obstructionist force. I used to work for an American professor who used to say... he actually had a chapter in his book saying – India when it comes to multilateralism and negotiations abroad is an India that can't say yes. It is India that likes to say no on trade, you remember the Doha round etc. So, Indian diplomats were recognised, sometimes criticised for that approach. What started this project with my comrade in arms, Karthik who is sitting over there, in his own book that I have, 'Does India negotiate?'. If you are interested in these issues of multilateralism and how India pursues its interests abroad through these negotiations. His book is called – Does India Negotiate? You know Karthik, I dislike that title. Its India does negotiate. Or more better be how India negotiate. But the book gives various case studies which are phenomenal in terms of the depth of seeing how interviewing people and interviewing negotiators, how Indian civil society, how Indian foreign service officers and various other ministries shaped India's negotiation positions on the CTBT for example, on trade and on climate in particular. So, what we tried to do is understand a little bit, move on from and India moved very quickly from the India that can't say yes to what I think you will all agree today is an India that can't say no. India today has gone into the opposite of joining, initiating, new institutions, new frameworks, looking for opportunities to cooperate, collaborate and we see a proliferation of flurry of acronyms, initiatives, and partnerships across these four tracks in which we divided our seven case studies from our contributors. A multilateral track, so it is not India that is trying to erode or weaken the UNFCCC or the COP framework which is a global climate regime that developed in the 1990s. it is also engaging through that. But parallel to that first track the multilateral where its adapting and working through you also have a mini-lateral track. Today we heard from Dr Ajay Mathur on from the International Solar Alliance for example. As such a sector-oriented, technical treaty-based organization. But much more flexible, focused on a certain area with a certain group of countries. The coalition for disaster-resilient infrastructure would probably be another example. It is not included in our report. But again, our report is not comprehensive, it is looking only at certain case studies. But under mini-lateral, CDRI would be another example. A variety of other sort of... we have the QUAD in there also which is genuinely seen as a geostrategic, geopolitical tool for four countries. Where you have now working group on climate and active discussions on green shipping, on energy, and renewable energies as Dr Mathur mentioned. Third track of trilateral or triangular cooperation that is being revived. It is not something that is old. It's been around since the 1950s and 60s. triangular cooperation under the UN framework in particular. But India now is very keen, proactive and enthusiastic about this, India plus north and the south. 1-1-1 trilateral. Working with Japan, working with European partners, working with the US, generally industrialised countries from the global north to develop technologies, finance, to deploy scalable measures across other low- and middle-income countries in the global south to pursue climate action. And that is something that Pooja Ramamurthi my colleague from CSEP explores in one of her case studies in this report. That is very interesting because it gives India also a lot of political and diplomatic

bargaining power when it approaches the COP or other frameworks. That is therefore not just the voice of the global south but it is also one of the actors that is shaping a broader agenda of fellow, like minded, likewise developing countries. The fourth track that we identify in which we have another set of cases studies is the bilateral one. You have now the two case studies in our report on the US-India clean energy partnership and on the EU-India climate partnership of 2016. We could have chosen many others. Japan and India now have a green partnership that is growing. You have also within Europe, the UK, Germany, France, Sweden, and Denmark, all developing new partnership commitments to work with India on climate cooperation. That is very interesting because these bilateral partnerships are growing, they are expanding, but the point that we end with the report, both our introduction if you care to read and how... what we caution about towards the end is of course, as there has been a proliferation and enthusiasm of India that can't say no, that is joining, participating enthusiastically and in many ways innovating institutionally. Right? Because its CDRI... there is institutional innovations of India that countries look up to for solutions. As you do that, this is may be a good time to step back and think a little bit, at what speed do you want to pursue these four tracks which has shown to be more effective or maybe less effective. What are the resources you have across the government, not only the Ministry of External Affairs that we make of course, specific recommendations on including for example a green or climate centre division in the MEA? But across government, what the capacity to also run down those tracks and pursue them and be present because if you are doing everything often you do, nothing. And also, if you fragment sometimes the various parts don't add up to the whole that was under the previous regime let's say till the 2014 or 15 etc. So, that is in a gist what we are doing the report which brings us today. I am very happy to have with us Ambassador Shyam Saran here. There are many hats Ambassador Saran has worn in his career. We engage and benefit from his work. And many other hats on connectivity, on south Asia, he is the ambassador to Nepal and, foreign secretary of course, he is one of the most prominent voices on China in the country, he has known China and worked on China over decades. But he is here today I think to tell us a little bit more on climate diplomacy. Ambassador Saran was the first and so far, the only Prime Minister special envoy on climate between 2007 and 10, sir if I am not mistaken. Which was in the words of... Navroz I will come to you. But let me pre-empt in one of his articles. At a time of institutional ferment, institutional innovation in India, when it was developing its first sort of strategic climate policy, and that is something we will discuss a little bit more today. Thank you, sir, for being here. Next, I don't know how to introduce Professor Navroz Dubash frankly. I will tell you why. Because at the centre for policy research, he's built up an initiative for the last 15 years, that is just phenomenal on climate. First thing I did when I had to write this is I read... I told you, everything you wrote. Not everything I am sure, there is stuff I couldn't. but since 2008 onwards, 07 or 08 which we were to look at. So, you have been an institution builder. Thank you Navroz for being here on climate diplomacy. This is very much informed where your pieces are I remember 2009, 10 and 11 were already arguing right? That we need institutional capacity, all of the government approach, coordination and capacity in the government to pursue our interests abroad. So, thank you for being here Navroz. Again, you have all the bios, I don't want to go into the litany of reading the bios. But that is the gist. I think, if I may, also, 2009 book that you published that was co-edited under Oxford University Press 'India and a warming world' is also an excellent introduction for those of you who want to understand India's climate policies. Finally, Dhanasree Jayaram. You have written also a phenomenal book on the BASIC countries. And what happened to BASIC or what didn't



happen to BASIC in some ways. Dhanasree is at Manipal University, co-directs the climate initiative there. Is a professor there in the international relations and geopolitics department and again I invite you to also read her book on India's policy in comparison with the other basic countries. So, with that lets jump right into discussion. I will move in here. I am going to do something a bit unorthodox. But you know, our center for social economic progress is a P for progress. And we believe progress comes from criticism, diverse voices and intellectual engagement. So, I don't want to hear in the first round what is good about the report. But since it is the emerging research program at CSEP, we are fishing for ideas and inspiration what to do. If each of you could very briefly tell us what you think was missing in the report and what would you have done differently and what we should do more of maybe in the next year or two. Ambassador Saran, over to you.

**Shyam Saran:**

Thank you very much, Constantino, and also, I would like to thank my friend Ajay Mathur for in a sense setting the stage for this discussion. What is missing in this report, hardly anything is missing in this report. You have traced the trajectory of India's not only its climate change negotiating stance but also what it has been doing in terms of very innovative work on climate-friendly technologies, on trying to chart its own path in terms of the energy transition which is necessary. And what maybe the kind of gaps that we need to fill. One is institution which you have very clearly spelt out. There is also the aspect of data. Because without reliable data, without comprehensive data, the kind of trajectory or the kind of transition that we wish to make and the kind of stance we take in the international fora, without that kind of very sound data system, that would not be possible. So, I am very glad that you have also mentioned that. The fact that India's climate engagement is no longer just multilateral, but trilateral, as well as bilateral. Well, I would say it's not that we are not doing this before. Although it may seem as if we were uni-focally just engaged with the multilateral aspect. That is not true because as a climate envoy, I was involved in several bilateral relationships to be started with the European Union, with the United States of America. But also, importantly amongst the emerging countries themselves. You know the BASIC group for example, although that promise was perhaps not fully realised but, it would not be fair to say that you know we were not really engaged in those kinds of relationships. I just wanted to make the point not to criticise this, but to say that some of those aspects were maybe in some incipient form, but they were there. But I would like to make a very important point. I think it is an important point. You mentioned that India has moved from a country that was regarded as always saying no to a country that is somewhat more engaging, and somewhat more ready to do positive things. That I contest. I contest very strongly because, this is the kind of an image of India, a kind of profile of India which has been very deliberately and with very good reason has been sold unfortunately to even our own people. What was India doing? When I was chief negotiator on climate change and Ajay, I think will bear me out. Essentially what we were saying was you have signed on to a legal document called the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. I didn't force you to do that. I didn't ask you to make those commitments. You freely made those commitments. All that we were asking was, deliver on the commitments that you have made. That was the single point that we were trying to make. We were not being obstructive. We were not saying we will not do this. But if you are saying that we will eviscerate the UNFCCC, which they have done... if I said no, I will not allow you to do this, am I wrong? So, I think this is something which needs to be understood by people that that kind of image which has been sold about India, is a completely unfair image. I remember

one of the first seminars that I did at which Navroz was present. I think Lavanya was present. She got up and said, 'Heck, India's image. Here is a country no, no, no, heck no. That is the image of India. Now, I wanted to know has any attention has been paid to the number of proposals that India had made to the UNFCCC on virtually every aspect of the issues we were dealing with or several papers that we presented as BASIC. I think she must be aware of that. I say, are you aware of these? This is not the behavior of a country that says, no, no, heck no. Because nobody wants to see what we have done. So, while I appreciate and I welcome the fact that today perhaps our image is somewhat different and that image to me as a diplomat it seems because our in a sense location in the geopolitical landscape is somewhat different from what it was at the time that I was special envoy. But even though I welcome that, I think it is important that we don't forget that background. And I don't want you to go away with the impression that this particular transition is a positive transition because we were a country that was a naysayer. We were not a naysayer. Now, what is very important is and I think that is something that has been mentioned here. And I particularly welcome the fact that in the recommendations that you have given you have made some very important recommendations for the ministry of external affairs itself. Each one of those I can relate to without any reservation. We certainly need to have in the Ministry of External Affairs a very strong focus on climate change. And I say this because even though I was a special envoy for climate change for about 3 years, I never sort of detached myself from the external affairs side of my job. Why do I say that? Because at the end of the day, these negotiations are intensely political negotiations. That is something that we have to understand. That at the end of the day what is being done on the negotiating floor is an intensely political kind of game being played. Therefore, while your technology aspect, your data aspect, the mining ministry, the kind of concerns they have, those are absolutely important. But how they are then brought to the negotiating table. And how do you play that game is something which really the Ministry of External Affairs has to be very, very closely involved. Then I would like to also welcome the point that you have made about the need, particularly today when we are facing a much more complex geopolitical situation, but we are also facing a very complex situation with regard to the climate transition itself. Whether we are talking about the domestic aspect or we are talking about the external aspects. That connection is very important. And I think what Ajay is doing today is really testimony to that because I think it would be fair to say that we spent a lot of time on getting the national solar mission through, the whole design of the national solar mission, what is the way in which we could launch it. We started with very modest kind of targets that within 3 years maybe if we can get about 1000 megawatts or so, we should be very happy. And yet we found that the transition because of the technological developments, the economics changed. Once we launched, it actually went very, very far. Much further than I had certainly expected. But how that has been now linked to what he is saying. The kind of interplay between what you do domestically and what you do externally, I think this is something that we have to pay closer attention to. In that context what I derive from my experience during the time that I was doing climate change work as a special envoy was much of the challenges that we faced are all multi-stakeholder challenges. These are not single ministry kind of issues. You have to have all the stakeholders working together. I think what really I found as an official in the Prime Minister's office was, that in India it is extremely important to have convening power. If it is a mining ministry which is really responsible for say climate change, its ability to convene other ministries at a sufficiently high level, at the decision-making level is very limited. Always whether you like it or not, tough battles coming. If the Ministry of External Affairs or the Ministry of Environment and Climate is

asking for the secretaries of five other ministries or six other ministries to come together to deal with a particular issue, you know, maybe he will send a deputy secretary or an undersecretary. Not much emerges out of this. What made a difference during those two years was that as the Prime Minister's special envoy, the office of the special envoy had tremendous convening power. You could get people at decision-making levels to come and sit with you and try and resolve the issues. That is what you need. I thought perhaps that NITI Aayog when it was set up might be able to perform that role. But I don't think it has been able to perform that role. So, I do still think that we should draw lessons from that particular period. It is a period worth looking at, not because I was the special envoy, but because even if you look at the domestic part... I know a lot of people dismiss NAPCC, the national action plan on climate change, that this was just a means of India trying to deflect attention from the external side. Nothing could be further from the truth. Look at what we have been actually able to do with the national solar mission. Was it only to impress the foreigners? I don't think so. Or what was done with respect to energy efficiency? By the way latest figures show that the most of the gains that have been made in dealing with the challenge of climate change has not only been with renewable energy, but with energy efficiency. In really mitigating emissions, energy efficiency has been far more powerful instrument than perhaps other instruments. So, this was a very important national mission. And made a huge difference. So, I think we should not belittle ourselves in terms of what we were trying to do with the national action plan on climate change. Again, that whole narrative that this was just merely a means of deflecting external pressure, this is not true. I can testify to the fact that it is not true. I will stop here. I think again this particular report is very welcome and I compliment all those who have contributed through this report. Because I think not only in terms of giving us a sense of the trajectory which we have traversed, but also looking at what are the kinds of things which are necessary today in order to take this transition forward. The great successes that we have achieved in certain fields, how do we make certain that this is sustained. This report has recommendations which I hope the powers that be will pay attention to. Thank you.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Thank you, Mr. Saran, point taken on the India can't say yes. Actually, India would say contribute, and the narrative that we had to hear was probably because India now as you say is much more interesting and therefore the positions maybe are being listened to by the global north maybe. Its economically more important exactly. We unfortunately have to say in academia we had believed that for a long time. That is why I mentioned Karthik's book. Excavating the history and we do a lot of historical work at CSEP to understand what India's positions were. It tells us there were a lot of positions, policies, strategies. It was not just ideological or just because India liked to say no, etc. So, pointing very, very important... Navroz, over to you. I have given up on telling what is bad only, tell us whatever you want about the report.

**Navroz Dubash:**

Great. Thank you so much, Constantino. Very had to follow Ambassador Saran and Ajay Mathur. I am just going to take the liberty of hopping back to the episode that Ambassador Saran referred to. It was this I think this workshop back in 2009. It was just before I joined CPR. Lavanya Rajamani was at CPR, Ambassador Saran was then with the government and all three of us were on the panel and there was this exchange as Ambassador Saran mentioned. And of course, fast forward a few years, we were all at CPR. And we all wrote

pieces on the Paris Agreement that had quite divergent interpretations. I like to think that I had the Goldilocks interpretation. I was a little bit in the middle. But it was actually a testament to the vibrancy of the discussion and debate that we could actually have all these different views. All well argued, certainly Lavanya's and Ambassador Saran's were well argued. And it was a very vibrant time. We were trying to understand what was going on and I think I remember it all quite fondly. To get to the question that you asked us, Constantino, I think that notwithstanding the fact that India was doing quite a lot all the way through, what struck me in the book and I have sort of taken my eye off the ball a little bit in the last few years. Covid and what not, what we are doing internationally. But when you see the list of formal somewhat institutionalised conversations and collaborations mini-lateral and as well as these triangular and bilateral and so on and so forth, you get the sense that the MEA is devoting more resources to it than when I was following this more closely and I think that it's partly just a reflection of where climate change is as an issue. I just want to take a second to reflect on why this perception of naysayers and so on and so forth. I think that actually in a sense what has changed between 2010 or 12 or 9 and 10, when Ambassador Sir was in the special envoy position and now, is the articulation of India's interests has changed. So, back then it was very important to make the case that the lack of progress on climate mitigation made by the north should not be displaced to the south. And the UN framework convention and its principle of common but differentiated responsibility and the consequent obligations should be in fact met by the global north. Since 2012, 13, 14, 15, as we have seen the renewable energy prices going down, India's interests have shifted. It's always been a story about risk versus opportunity. And the balance is slowly shifting towards opportunity whereas I think because of the decline and costs of renewable energy and the success that we have had with the national solar mission on the back of the work that Ambassador Saran and Ajay Mathur and others led all the way back more than a decade ago. We now see much more of an opportunity story. And that ends up being more convergent with the interests of some of our Western interlocutors. So, I think that what's changed is that our interests have changed. It's not that India was a naysayer at one point and then a yes-sayer later. It was that our interests have changed and our position has changed correspondingly. So, I think that seems to be a one way of looking at it. What do I find... I was very much struck and I thought it was very useful to have these four categorizations and the papers that sort of analyse all of these. It is not where I disagree, but where I would have loved to see more. I am going to pick up... its something Ajay Mathur and I have talked about a lot. The report risks falling into the trap a little bit of seeing climate change and its negotiation process as an intergovernmental problem. It is the language of international relations as opposed to the language of global governance. And what do I mean by that? The international relations language is nation-states interacting through certain rules, UNFCCC rules and norms and so on and so forth. Global governance says the international process is shaped by and shapes the domestic and the interaction between those is as much an object of study as what happens between nation-states. And so, to come back what Ajay Mathur said, which I very much agree with and we talked about this. This is probably a shared view developed over the years and you were nice enough to mention the paper that Aditya and I had done. It's that the way we should be thinking about this problem in India is, what is the articulation of our interests. And then how do we structure our diplomacy to reflect those interests in the most sensible way and have a two-way process where our interests are also shaped by the diplomat's understanding of what is possible in terms of cooperation and so on and so forth. And so, when you are talking about an institutional structure you can't just build a layer for the international process.

In fact, I would argue that it is more important to build a layer for the domestic process. Back when in simpler times when ambassador Saran was put in the position of having to do both and I might add with very few capacities with basically no resources or analytical capacity at his disposal, other than those that he was through his own sort of ability to convene and draw in research that he needed. Nothing formally provided, right? So, we need to start by building up the capacity. We heard about the Apex committee and Dr Mathur was diplomatic. They have really barely met. And before that the Prime Minister's council barely met. So, the paper that you talk about, we filed RTIs and we looked at how often they met and so on. And it's because the mandate is not so clear and the institutional capacity is not clear, so I think the foundational piece that we need is to think about what exactly are India's interests for which we need a knowledge institution that looks at synergies and trade-offs between low carbon futures and development. There are lot of synergies, urban transports so on and there are some trade-offs potentially in the cooking area at least in the short run. So, we need to analyse those, we need to deliberate on those and we need institutions capable of doing both those things. So, coming to the Prime Minister's office, the Prime Minister's office and a special envoy there is very helpful to convene, to bang heads and this is a quote from you, Ambassador Saran when we talked to you for this paper, but only after you have a clear sense of what India's interests are. And I think we do too much shooting from the hip in terms of what we think our interests are. We haven't looked at it carefully enough. What is going to get us jobs? What is going to deal with regional issues when it comes to decadal futures for coal? What does the adaptation story mean for coastal development patterns? How do urban areas start thinking about locking in infrastructure that is both energy-efficient and climate-resilient? These are all questions that need to be kind of bubbled up through the policy and the academic process at the domestic level and then sort of engaged with at the diplomatic level. But the driver has to be a clear understanding of what happens at home. So, that is really the main point that I wanted to make. So, just to quickly end, I think we need knowledge institutions, we need analysis institutions, we have written where we call for low carbon development commission that would be a non-executive body doing this. But we also need a deliberative body that can look at and understand who the winners and losers are and think about mechanisms so that the losers of a transition don't feel obliged to throw sand in the wheels. So, we need a robust domestic structure. We can talk about it later. But that would be the starting point in my view.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Thank you Navroz. In fact, you will be happy to hear that his may be very valuable for the work we are planning to do on Global South and civil society and climate cooperation that my colleague Pooja is planning. And the work Karthik and me were sort of toying around with and we are starting technically tomorrow with a round table on the private sector. Also, as a non-state very important actor needs to be involved in this for this non-government approach, right? Beyond just of course, research and all that. Thank you, Navroz. So, Dhanasree, over to you. Tell us how this fits a little bit in the comparative sense with other countries that have, to use Dr Mathur's words, being both developing countries but also emerging economies. And how they have strategized, articulated, policy, set policy interests both at home and abroad and vice versa, abroad and brought them home.

**Dhanasree Jayaram:**

Thank you so much. Again, it's very difficult to follow after Ambassador Saran and Professor Dubash. A lot of ground has been covered. But just to also appreciate the efforts made by

publishing this book which covers again a lot of ground. So, great effort. I don't have much to say in terms of the gaps in the report. But the questions that you asked about comparison with emerging economies. I also agree with the comments made before this about how diplomacy... I would add maybe another layer to the diplomacy which is like transnational diplomacy which is beyond the state, beyond governments. Because what you see today is that you have lot of subnational actors including cities and many others who are also as much involved. States in India for instance are actually doing a lot more with the state action plans on climate change. They are revising it. Of course, not all states, but some states are coming forward with their own efforts. So, I think this is one of the issues that I would definitely say is something that we have seen especially in the post-Paris Agreement era there is a lot more activities that are happening at the subnational level which is again reflective of the diplomatic practices. I wouldn't say these are two separate realms anymore. The other point with respect to your question. Again, something that I saw in the report was about a geopolitically fraught world. And I am not sure when was the world not geopolitically fraught. There have been always these fault lines especially when you look at the climate negotiation space, there have been these fault lines for a long time. Of course, with the Ukraine conflict and many other conflicts that we have seen in the recent past there is of course, more discussion on this and there is of course, more focus on this global north, global south rivalry. But as was already pointed out for a long time including when... I have researched on the BASIC and you look at the coordination that was done by the BASIC prior to the Copenhagen summit and was carried on for a couple of years. But then it sorts of died and then now of course, we have the like-minded developing countries as we have seen which is coordinating positions on the same issue. Now if you look at emerging economies which is coming to your question again, it's always a question mark about where are these emerging economies today. If you look at China, do we put China at the level of the emerging economy or do we actually de-hyphenate China from India, Brazil, and South Africa which have very different interests? That is the number one question which is being asked a lot. Even when you talk about the loss and damage fund which was finally established last year. But then who is going to fund it, who can be the recipients of this fund? And the question is should China be eligible to take money from this loss and damage fund? This is a big question that is going to create a lot of controversy in how the loss and damage fund would be operationalised and how these discussions are going to go forward. But it is also a question of what are the lessons that we should unlearn and not learn from other emerging economies. It is not just about what is happening in the other economies. This is something I noticed that for instance, one of the important points is about regional coordination. I think this is where most of the emerging economies have rather failed at mobilising other countries within the same region. If you look at Brazil, it has always stood out. Hasn't really cooperated as much with the ALBA countries, the Bolivarian alliance or the ILAC countries. India is the same situation if you look at South Asia or the broader Indo or the Indian Ocean region. Again, there has not been much of a common position. You look at South Africa, again when South Africa decided to put its foot down and maybe align its position with the BASIC, again there was a lot of opposition from the rest of the African group countries against why this is so. After which South Africa obviously changed its position a little bit. So, these lessons are important as to how regional sort of coordination sometimes is very important when it comes to climate diplomacy as well. Because I think this is where India is still lagging behind as compared to... I mean, I wouldn't say this is something just for India as I said, most of the emerging economies have struggle with this. So, I think that's one of the lessons. The other part is also, if you look at again, I

come back to China. If you look at China has already promised that it would give 3.1 billion dollars for instance as part of this South... global south cooperation climate cooperation fund instead of contributing to the green climate fund which is again as part of the CBDR and \_\_\_ various other principles that are already there on the UNFCCC. But if you look at the reality, what has China really provided, its hardly anything. It is less than 10% that it has contributed to this fund so far. Even if you look at the BRI projects again, its less than 10% of its actually related to climate. So, I feel if you look at what India has done over the past decade or so, I think it is more pragmatic in terms of having these mini-lateral initiatives like the International Solar Alliance or the coalition for disaster resilient infrastructure which I think can provide more solutions by mobilising various actors and stakeholders and that is critical to this. I would say that that is also one of the major lessons that we have learnt over a period of time that these kinds of more pragmatic and more goal-based, outcome-based kind of solutions can get more support on your side when it comes to the negotiations or other kind of climate diplomacy initiatives as well. Last but not the least, I don't want to go on and on. But one of that that also something that I wanted to say on geopolitics. I think geopolitics is not something that obstructs action on climate change. We are seeing a lot of cooperation. Even there is coordination continuing between even India and China on some of the issues. It doesn't stop because of certain kind of rivalry which is of course, it's something that has obviously obstructed a more cooperation. But some coordination will still continue. At the same time as I said geopolitics is something that is embedded in climate. I don't think it's something that is separate. I think these are not two different realms once again. Because from what I see, if you look at regions like southeast Asia or South Pacific, if you talk to these experts or others from these countries, sometimes they see these geopolitics or this kind of rivalry as a positive as well. Because they can possibly get funding from different sources. Because they can try to woo China, US, or whoever is willing to cooperate with them. So, I feel these geopolitical questions we need to look at it in a more nuanced way and not really see it as always obstructionist to the kind of climate cooperation we need of course, at the level of urgency that we have. Thank you.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Ambassador Saran. I know that you have to leave a bit earlier. But if we can play the quick video of Adriana Abdenur. It will bring us the Brazilian perspective. And then we can start with you and then on a comment. We are showing a little video by Adriana Abdenur who is our one panellist. It will take around eight to nine minutes. So, then we will open up the discussion a bit to bring in Brazil in. I think there's a good segue after.

**Adriana Abdenur:**

Good afternoon. This is Adriana Abdenur. I am speaking from Brazil. I am a special advisor in the presidency of Brazil. But today I will be speaking on a personal capacity. So, I wanted to start by saying that I was very lucky last month to have met with Constantino Xavier and with Pooja Ramamurthi from CSEP when I was in New Delhi for the presidential summit that India organised and we were able to have some really useful exchanges on the geopolitical scene and on the situations in our respective regions. And I was very impressed with the work of CSEP. I was very pleased to find out that this report on cooperation will be launched. It is a very timely topic and I wanted to congratulate CSEP and the authors for putting out such a timely and useful document. The introduction to the report that you are putting out makes it very clear the regime suffers from a number of problems. One of them is weakening by

fragmentation. And the grouping that I am referring to here is the BASIC arrangement. So, Brazil, South Africa, India and China in the past have come together to coordinate positions within the climate regime. And this constitutes a very important force that must be revitalised because geopolitically speaking, these are the countries that if we join forces, we can help to kickstart or restart this regime that has fallen into disrepair, to great danger not only to our societies but to the entire planet. And the BASIC arrangement... I have been to a couple of recent meetings and it's been wonderful to watch coordination take place towards the strengthening of the climate regime, can also be thought of as a space for cooperation. All our countries already have a number of bilateral initiatives. They all engage in some capacity in trilateral relationships. We all have our alliances with or collaborative arrangements with international organizations. We are all acting within the scope, not only of the Paris Climate Agreement but also of the Convention for Climate and indeed all three conventions that emerged out of the Rio 92 summit which are not only the UNFCCC but also the Convention on Biological Diversity and the convention against desertification. So, this is a very strategic space that we should not underestimate. I wanted to point out, I don't think it is a major difference in the positions of Brazil and India but, from what I read in the report there is the different emphasis and India has embarked on this broader dynamic of acting outside the scope of the UNFCCC and the Paris agreement even as it continues to participate. And I think there is a bit of difference of vision which is not irreconcilable. But it would be useful to have more discussion about this. In the perspective of Brazil, it's very important that we uphold not only the Paris Agreement but the UNFCCC. One of the primary reasons we do this and here there is convergence with India is that we have to maintain the principle of common but different responsibilities under the climate regime. And this is really a necessity and as a necessity it is more than a question of justice between countries and the fact that the developed countries or rich countries however you want to call them, they have historically contributed more. Its also an issue of effectiveness. Because we have had such backsliding in 2030. There again there is convergence but it's interesting to note that India has maybe diversified its cooperation beyond those two arrangements, the agreements, the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement more than Brazil does. And Brazil places perhaps greater emphasis on the need to if you like...not rescue but revitalise intergovernmental negotiations. Brazil and India are democratic countries. And that makes it very important for us to recognise and to foster the participation of non-state actors like the private sector and NGOs and think tanks. But there is another problem that I think countries like Brazil and India can help to ensure the implementation of what has already been agreed. Here I am speaking not only about the official kind of track negotiations and the positions that we take to the climate regime. But more broadly. The problem that the rich countries are not fulfilling their part of the bargain. The one that is referenced most often is the commitment of delivering or making available 100 billion dollars annually in climate finance. And this was agreed of course, in Copenhagen. It has never been met. And it must be met every year. But the fact that this has not occurred has contributed very much to the problem so much so that the world is not on track to maintain global temperatures within the goal established by the Paris Agreement of 1.5 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels. And so, we need help to ensure that this is met. There is a series of ongoing attempts to transfer responsibility especially but not exclusively in terms of mitigation from the rich countries to developing countries. Especially large ones like Brazil and India. One of the consequences of the non-compliance of the developed countries when it comes to these promises or these items that have been formally agreed upon is of course, that future promises will not have the adequate level of credibility,



right? Because if we make new promises but old ones are not kept, the new ones are not going to have different fronts including investments in new technologies. So, again, this should send out a strong signal to rich countries that they are also expected to revitalise their own commitments already made rather than press poorer countries to become more and more ambitious even as the means of implementation whether financial resources or technology is denied. I wanted to finish on a positive note. The concept of just transition is now being recast in the global south light. Sometimes the messaging that comes from the rich countries on just transition is very one note. It's just about the cooperation for the development of just transition vision and for its implementation in the global south is a very promising area of cooperation whether you are talking about bilateral initiatives on renewable energies, whether you are talking about trilateral initiatives with rich countries or with international organisations. I think this is also an area where Brazil and India can not only be compared, but indeed can join forces. Because I have been talking too long, I wanted to end by repeating, Brazil and India along with South Africa and Indonesia, since we have this sequence of presidencies of the G20 I think this will continue to be a very important place for us to raise these issues, for us to showcase initiatives but also to press for structural changes within global governance that will accommodate global south visions of just transition and of a global climate regime that is not just just, but also effective. So, once again, congratulations on the report. I have read a good part of it. I look forward to reading the rest I think this will be fuel for thought and fuel for action for many actors inside and outside of our countries.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Ambassador Saran, the point about BASIC. Is there hope still on this India-China angle and geopolitics? Adriana, Dr Navroz seems quite hopeful. But wonder what your thoughts are.

**Shyam Saran:**

One can always hope. I don't think that these things are written in stone. But I do not think that the BASIC grouping is as coherent and as influential as it was at one time. But that really changed even before the problems between India and China because if you see on the eve of the Paris COP actually China in fact abandoned the BASIC in a sense. Because it is the deal that they made together with the US on the eve of the Paris Agreement which actually became the template which was adopted at the Paris conference. So, they did not consult the other BASIC group members. And on a very fundamental principle which has been mentioned by the Brazilian colleague on the CBDR principle that is common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities. China added according to national circumstances which completely diluted the entire principle. They did not ask India or ask South Africa or Brazil whether this amendment was in fact appropriate. It was not. So, it very much undermined the negotiating position of the major emerging economies. Essentially what has happened since Copenhagen is that there has been an attrition process where systematically the kind of commitments which were made by the Western countries including these hundred billion dollars, you have not seen a penny out of it. I think the dangers that which we were pointing to in not just accepting these kinds of commitments. Essentially Kyoto Protocol was knocked out, the kind of compliance procedure, very strict compliance procedure which was part and parcel of the Kyoto Protocol, that if you did not achieve the goals that you were supposed to then there was a penalty to be paid. That entire compliance procedure was knocked out. So, it is basically like in the WTO negotiations you have to pledge and review. Essentially that is what you have ended up with. Now with a pledge and review system, how

do you really deliver the kind of urgent and to scale outcomes. That we all say today, the urgency that we are facing today with climate change, how do we meet that extraordinary challenge? So, I think it is important to go back a little. If you see the Bali road map and Bali action plan, what did it begin with. That, because of the IPCC report that had come out just before that, it was said that we need to have enhanced implementation of the principles and provisions of the UNFCCC. That was the headline. And you have to act enhanced mitigation, enhanced adaptation, enhanced technology transfer, enhanced financial transfers. That was the Bali road map because it recognised the urgency of the challenge that we were facing. Since then, actually can one say that we have ended up with enhanced implementation of any of those principles? No. So, in this kind of a situation I think what position India in a sense has adopted is precisely what it was already saying at that time. That, our position is not that we have the right to spew as much carbon into the atmosphere as we want. That was not India's position. What India's position was, we will do what we can within the limitation of our own resources. That, whatever action we take on climate change must not be at the cost of our developmental process. That is important. Even today I think that principle is important. That, whatever we are able to do on climate change must be in a sense positively put, must be something which enhances our developmental prospects. So, I think in that sense perhaps we have made more progress in this respect. But I would say that today let us work on what can do as India because we have the capability today to do much more than we could do say 10 years ago or 13 years ago when I was there. Certainly, we have more resources, we have greater capabilities, so, let us leverage that. And hope that whatever we are doing domestically then gives us the leverage to be able to also... in a sense promote some international multilateral action. But I do not see today frankly speaking, much stomach amongst particularly the developed countries to do very much on climate change which would be of importance to us. There is an economic and financial crisis, there is the Ukraine war, now you have the Middle East war. We must realize that the transition that we are looking for, this transition is not costless. The transition means that there must be resources. Where are those resources going to come from? Now, those who have those resources, today, even if they had the intention to make available those resources, those resources are simply not available. So, I think, going forward, the international part, if you are looking at how we can perhaps think in terms of a more benign climate regime, I think that outlook is a little more depressing. But I think the domestic outlook is perhaps much more promising. I am afraid I have to leave now.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Thank you very much Ambassador Saran for making time and being here today with us. So, we will do a quick round with Dhanasree and with both of you. Then we will open up for questions. Please start waving your hands if you want to come in. Navroz, on this point, if you can pull it forward a little bit and tell us. Hopeless? No? Where is it going to come from?

**Navroz Dubash:**

I actually think and this goes back to the three op-eds we wrote after Paris. I actually thought that the turn to kind of a bottom-up structure was a necessary one. In that context, the way I see it we have kind of in a sense fritted away what Paris promised, right? We said it is nationally determined, but we didn't really buy it. Before, the Paris story was, give us some pledges, we understand we are going to milk those pledges, go back home and hopefully you will find its cheaper than you thought and easier than you thought and then you will feel

happier about coming to us with an enhanced pledge, right? That was the logic of Paris. But we started immediately saying well, but listen, what you have given us is not enough. Two degrees let alone, 1.5. let us enhance the pledges, before countries had a chance to work it through national politics. So, I wrote something recently where I have argued that the driver of change is not in the Paris agreement, is not naming and shaming across countries. The driver of change is the procedural hurdles having to do an NDC, having to do an LTS, having to do the update reports. And those things shift national politics. Because they create spaces. I have been in rooms with a ministry where they say we have to do an NDC. Our model says this. This model says this. That model says the other. And you suddenly have to engage all those models and try and understand why they say different things. It spurs the conversation. So, in a sense the Paris led process created institutional spaces in governments including in India which then also created spaces for renewable energy companies to come in, energy efficiencies to come in. They got voice in those political spaces, their interests started getting a hearing and so that's really the dynamic, right? That doesn't negate what Ambassador Saran said about capital. What it does do is, it basically makes it more likely that those in a position to raise capital will see climate-low carbon futures as an opportunity. We are not going to get the US Congress appropriating funds to India. The US Congress is having trouble sitting for a few days in a row and conducting business these days. That's unlikely to happen. But there are going to be all these other conversations, bridge-down agendas, reform of the MDBs, efforts the G fans that came out of Glasgow, none of them have really stuck, but I think that is where we have to keep trying to raise the money. But the pull is there.

**Constantino Xavier:**

And that is again the importance of domestic goal post setting.

**Navroz Dubash:**

That is right. That needs to happen before you... the international level is the enabler, but it may not be the motor.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Quickly on Adriana's point on global south and south-south cooperation, we have a brief on enhanced transparency, framework and data. I remember a piece of yours in 2010, you were also saying the importance of information is power, right? India is now trying to disclose, create its systems, its capacities to monitor, to verify, to report. Is that something you can transfer to the global south, to other countries that are of importance that something could be concrete you could sell or pitch?

**Navroz Dubash:**

I am going to sound like a stuck record again. But pre-Paris, when we talked about CBDR, Lavanya and I would argue with folks in the MEA and they bought the argument partially that CBDR is a really important principle, but it need not apply with equal force across all the pillars. And there was not much reason why it should apply to transparency, right? And the reason transparency is important is again not to enable naming and shaming. It is to enable domestic actors to get the information to work the levers of power at home. So, there's a paper I always cite by \_\_\_ in a volume that Lavanya and I edited where she said that, what it does is, it enables beneficiaries of compliance and victims of non-compliance. This information allows those groups who stand to gain from climate action to use that information to actually

work domestic processes in a democratic way. So, just on the south-south, one quick thing, which is actually a question to Dhanasree. Ambassador Saran said that BASIC may not have... has partially lost its mojo. Maybe. But I have often wondered, all countries have multiple alliances, right? So, we have BASIC, we are having conversations with the US, we used to have conversations with China, EU and so on. And then you have the LMDC which is a very curious configuration because it has the term 'like-minded' in its... it doesn't actually tell you why they are like-minded. But its just a proclamation of being like-minded. And I am very curious to actually get your sense on whether this is sensible strategic use of different alliances or sometimes you play your cards on this side, sometimes you play your cards on that side. Maybe it's worked very well. But I always wondered about that.

**Constantino Xavier:**

If I may add to that the QUAD. One of our chapters, right? Was mentioned even by Dr Ajay Mathur today. Two authors for example actually concluded the QUAD has failed at establishing a climate narrative. It has a climate working group. It has tech. So, to what extent the fit... I mean, if you are not doing it there, you are not doing it there, you are doing it everywhere, does it make sense. Or what will be your prioritisation?

**Dhanasree Jayaram:**

About LMDC, like you said, if you have to put like-minded in the title of the group itself, there is a problem there. I mean, what is the like-mindedness and on what issues because from what I saw at Sharm el-Sheikh, it was more of a G 77 effort that finally brought the loss and damage fund and not really LMDCs alone bringing it. But LMDCs have a common position on mitigation-related commitments. Especially with the mitigation work program, definitely they seem to have common positions. But I don't know if it is strategic enough to stick to the LMDC considering the diversity in the group and with many countries who have very different set of interests and agendas. This includes India, China, of course, Indonesia and also you have some of the Middle East fossil fuel producing countries like Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. So, it is always a question of how do you put all these countries in one room and decide an agenda on climate change. So, yes, maybe there is some coordination that could be helpful for India, but I don't see this as a very strategic kind of grouping that will go on for a long time. I think it would be just like another BASIC where differences are just going to come up more and more and there are already differences which were there. I would say that is one of the other things that maybe the book could go deeper into whether this G77 as a grouping it is not a uniform homogenous kind of grouping. There are so many divisions within each of these groupings. And you have countries who are part of different groupings. So, India is part of multiple groupings, but also you have the most vulnerable countries who are part of the climate vulnerable forum. You have V20. You also have AOSIS. Now on many issues they tend to go with these groupings rather than actually siding with the G77 grouping. So, LMDC is stuck somewhere in that whole negotiation... it helped maybe in the Paris Agreement, but as I said, over a period of time its value has also diminished.

**Constantino Xavier:**

So, playing on different chess boards is fine. Both of you? What is your assessment? You seem a bit more skeptical Navroz. Can you play Multi chess on 10 boards at the same time?

**Navroz Dubash:**

No, I think it's less that. I am not sure that is quite the metaphor. I think what Dhanasree said is right. The LMDC is very handy when it comes to mitigation negotiations. G77 is very handy when it comes to loss and damage negotiations. And you have these multiple positions that you're on, that you are part of, that you kind of front at different times. And in some ways its strategic. So, even as India... it comes back a little bit to the institutional question because I have been confused at times from the outside even as India is pushing hydrogen alliance, biofuel alliance, etc. etc., we are very much aligned with the low carbon as opportunity story. They are simultaneously with the LMDC essentially pushing for language in various fora including the IPCC and other places that essentially try and say this... call into question whether some of the language urgency is warranted, right? So, if you actually think it is an opportunity why would you... maybe it suits India's interests to push for a low carbon future. Prepare for it, while holding your cards close to be able to use fossil fuels for as long as you want. That is probably sensible when it comes to realist view. Except if you take climate impact seriously. If by holding your interests, holding all options open for your narrow interest when it comes to mitigation, you are actually decreasing the chances of global cooperation and enhanced action and exposing your population to more impacts. Then it calls... in other words the more seriously you take impacts, the more questionable becomes the LMDC

**Constantino Xavier:**

Dhanasree on the QUAD quickly?

**Dhanasree Jayaram:**

On the QUAD again, it's too early to say anything about QUAD to be honest. Yes, it has set up a working group on climate change, but again there are differing positions even among the four countries. You have four, three developed industrialised countries and then you have India. So, obviously this does put India at loggerheads with the other three players on many fronts. But there are some issues for instance, there is a lot of talk about de-risking, and de-coupling, especially on the critical raw material supply chains and value chains. This is definitely an issue on which India and the other three countries do have similar positions and with respect to China specifically. Because China does dominate this particular sector as of now. So, yes, on some issues there could be some movement. But as the chapter itself says, to create that climate narrative with these differences over climate finance, over even like something like just energy transition partnerships, which was I think Adriana mentioned. How just energy transition partnerships are also so lopsided in many ways. Like the way it was signed with South Africa or with Indonesia. So, I think in the long run again I am not saying QUAD doesn't have any potential in again forge climate partnerships in the region. But it has to take a very wider approach. Like for instance, look into ASEAN centrality. Because ASEAN has also an interest in what QUAD does in the region at a very geopolitical and geostrategic sense. And it is also cooperating with other countries like including the EU for instance which is part of this. So, I think quad because it is seen as a largely security partnership and geostrategic sort of partnership, I think that this is where the climate narrative gets lost. Because there is more focus on it. But in actually if you look at the working groups, its not talking much about security, its more about climate, health and those kinds of issues where there seems to be more consensus. So based on that understanding that this is an issue on which we can have consensus at least on some parts if not all, let's go ahead with it. So, I

don't see it as something that will spur climate partnerships in a big way. But it would continue to play the climate card in order to show that it is still alive and kicking in many ways.

**Constantino Xavier:**

With the cards metaphor for the chess one. And also, on the international energy agency that we have a brief on. It tells you also that India is keen to join the clubs. Navroz was saying it, right, with certain interests. So glad to hear that it is from both of your perspectives also you think that it's worth mapping and exploring a little these various avenues and they are not necessarily useless, inefficient clubs, and India being part of them is important. So, we are running out of time. But in the interest of participation if anyone like to come in we will do a quick-fire round. Please be very brief in your questions. In between Navroz with your permission and Dhanasree, we can take a few if have a few more minutes. We will distribute them among you and engage the audience a little. Please raise your hand. I see a few hands over there. Just be very brief, please. Ask a question ideally direct it to one of the speakers. Thank you.

**Audience:**

My question is to Dubash, sir. (Unclear audio). It is the implication of the just transition. And two or three more different implications by then. Has the appropriate time come for India to make (audio not clear)

**Audience:**

Hello, Professor Dubash. Hi, this is Saurav here. Question for you. What are your expectations from the upcoming COP 28? Thanks.

**Audience:**

At the outset, thank you. And congratulations on the report. I really look forward to reading it. My question to you is about the carbon tax earlier than the loss and damage fund, how do we see COP 28 and the talks on loss and damage fund? Especially with LMDC and G77 countries. Thank you.

**Audience:**

My question is to Dhanasree. The developed countries have two types of \_\_\_. They want to be part of climate \_\_\_. But when it comes, they send their products, technology or any energy equipment, they are very high cost. Take the nuclear plant, and energy technology. Why do they follow two types of parameters?

**Audience:**

Thank you for the panel as well as congratulations on the report. This is Ganesh from the council of energy, environment, and water. My question is open to the panel. I am just curious as somebody working in just transitions, where is this conversation on just transitions and loss and damage coming from really? The panelists talked about there being gaps in the existing system. Whether that is the lack of a convening agency, whether that is the lack of domestic capacity, whether that is the limited role those sub-nationals have. There are a lot of factors that prevent the percolation of the interests of India's most vulnerable coming to the negotiation table. Similarly for other countries. So, where really is this conversation coming

from? Is this a top-down approach from a good Samaritan international community or the vested interest of a few players?

**Audience:**

The way the Indian government has been compelled to zero carbon submission by 2070, don't you think this is trying to curb the economic growth and development of India?

**Constantino Xavier:**

Maybe the last question over there. Are there any women who would like to come in?

**Audience:**

First of all, I haven't read your report. If the panel discussion is any indication, I am sure it is great. Excellent panel. It is not a question but a comment on what Dubash said. Maybe it is a new report. And that is ultimately global climate change has beneficiaries and losers. What we often don't recognize that the two are not similar. The benefits include a large number of people, costs are borne by few (unclear audio). I think the global institutions have to start thinking of having a mechanism, the loss and damage fund is one of them. (Unclear audio) so, we need to think about how we compensate the losers in a very responsible way. It is not as much a question as something that I have struggled with a lot and one of the reasons we always stumble on global (Unclear audio) is because everybody understands the global benefits. People recognise the incidence of costs are severe. And there is no mechanism really, a practical mechanism for making this compensation (Audio unclear). Thank you.

**Audience:**

Hello. This is Shagufta here. A doctoral researcher from JNU. First, I would like to make two comments. One, I think discrediting BASIC or LMDCs in this position where we are talking about India's transition, I think LMDC was the right term if you think of India and China. Because as you say India has been pointed out as a naysayer. China has been pointed out as a spoiler at Copenhagen and other summits, there were times when China was openly said that this is the spoiler, this is the country that comes and it spoils the entire negotiations going on. So, China and India have had so much in common. And one thing I personally when I look at China's climate change diplomacy I feel as Dhanasree you pointed out, is China have its foot in a position where it can get funding as part of the loss and damage. For me I believe China has strategically used its position by saying the per capita income or the per capita emissions as the pretext of getting the funds and putting itself in the developing country club. So, I don't think in future also China would be ready. And for India, it is important for us to think of we have to bring these things into the negotiation table. Its very good that... one short comment please. One more thing that I wanted to know that how do you see the vulnerability. I think we really have to think of vulnerability because when we are talking about transition... how do you see the vulnerable groups being accommodated in the policy-making? Thank you so much.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Dhanasree we will start with you now. And then we will go over to Navroz and close it down.

**Dhanasree Jayaram:**

Ok. A lot of questions, but just to start with, I think maybe the last question. I think Shagufta, what you mentioned about vulnerability and how do we account for vulnerable nations. That's

already happening in a big way. If you look at the loss and damage fund, the G77... oh, you mean in India? Ok. So, again what Professor Dubash mentioned, this is one narrative that seems to be missing from India's negotiating positions. That how vulnerable India is. It's more and more being acknowledged. But especially before Paris and before in fact Copenhagen, this was not something that was discussed very openly. But what I see with the loss and damage fund is that India has started talking about India's own vulnerabilities and also making sure that loss and damage fund in the establishment and operationalisation of this fund, India would have a big stake. So, then in that sense, vulnerability is becoming a bigger point in the discussions for India. But it is still as I said the major point is not about vulnerability, its always usually sort of caters to the demands of mitigation, emissions reductions and climate finance and technology. These are the usual sort of demands that continue to dominate. But, yes, it has shifted to some extent I would say. I think one of the questions about just transitions, loss and damage, where are these conversations coming from? Its from different corners. From what I see, the loss and damage conversations is not new. It's something that started in the 90s, of course, it took a long time for it to become more formalised and finally, the Warsaw loss and damage mechanism was established and it took another decade or so for the fund to be established. So, yes, it's come a long way. But most of these discussions actually started among the island nations and I also see G77 particularly led by countries like Bangladesh and others have stepped up their effort in trying to ensure that this fund was established. Of course, they needed like support from some of the major emitters including India, China and many others as well. So, yes, I would say this is something that hasn't just started in the air. It has a long history. The same with just transition. Its very interesting to see how just energy transition partnerships especially if you look at JTPs they are largely sort of dictated right now by the global north and I think this is why there is also a gap in terms of understanding what are the requirements of developing countries. The South African case has clearly showed that it could lead to massive failures as well. A country so dependent on coal, it has faced severe energy crisis, it is also kind of treating this as a debt trap because a lot of this money is coming in the form of loans and not grants. So, that is why the Bridgetown initiative that what he mentioned also is critical. At least in the debate it came from Barbados. It didn't come from... I think there are multiple narratives coming on these issues. I don't see that the just energy transitions just being coming from some corner. It's also important to mention, like now we have the just transitions work program as well and what I saw was there was massive differences between the countries over even the definition of just transition. Every country had its own definition. Like what should be included, should coal phase out be included, should it be just focusing on renewable energy development, should it include all stakeholders, should it be at the subnational level. So, there are multiple like narratives. I don't think it's happening in just silos. Its happening across scale which is why diplomacy today as Professor Dubash also mentioned, its across different levels of governance. It's not just one level and I think this is where the conversations are coming from so many different positions. Maybe I will just stop there.

**Navroz Dubash:**

I know we are running out of time. I may not get to all the questions. Let me just actually start at the end, even though she has done a very good job responding. But this question of BASIC, LMDC, I want to make it clear. This wasn't really about discrediting or crediting those entities. It was about asking with a clear head in what way do they represent India's interest and under what conditions. And under one view they are very good at representing India's



interest, at another where you prioritize future impacts maybe it becomes more of a question. But how do vulnerable groups get involved. I think it is an excellent question. One of the things that is interesting is that even though India's historic approach internationally has been to focus much more on staving off pressures for mitigation and now seeking opportunities for green transition. At home there's quite a lot going on on adaptation. So, my colleague just did a study of \_ action plans across India for example. There is definitely a work in progress. But it is interesting that we have these plans. We also have quite a lot of research being done on the agriculture side, looking at climate-resilient crops. So, scientific research and so on. Actually, domestically there is an adaptation conversation that has started. Of course, it is inadequate. In every country its inadequate. But I think its worth noting. On just transition, there were two questions about the strategic importance and where its coming from. I think it was basically the just transition story was tied to the story that said we need to start by phasing out coal. Because it's the most polluting fossil fuel. Well, it turns out that coal is more important to the developing world. Liquid fuels are more important to the developed world and so the pushback was maybe we should be talking about fossil fuel phase-down. Rather than coal phase down. And if I can get in a point about the COP this will be a big argument at the COP. I don't think they'll switch the language, but it will be an argument. At the COP in India is actually quite instrumental in pushing the fossil fuel language. So, if you are going to then phase out coal, that calls the question, well, why would you do it when you still have energy needs? Why would you shut down prematurely coal-fired power plants? The answer is well, maybe we can pay you to do that. And think about justice and soft landing for affected communities. So, that is a very narrow construct of just transition. I think India has actually been in the lead here of saying – this doesn't make sense to us. A just transition can't be restricted to one sector. It has to be about larger economic restructuring including getting into the opportunities of moving down the clean energy supply chain and so on and so forth. I think as our Brazilian colleague said, there is a narrative battle over what we mean by just transition and how it reflects our interest that I think is going on. Partly because in a sense those pushing the narrower view blew it a little bit with South Africa. Because they came up with very little money and it was like we went through all this for what exactly? So, its not a great example. The question about climate has beneficiaries and losers, I wouldn't embrace that formulation entirely. The beneficiaries of climate action are future generations in particular who will avoid climate harm. The core collective action problem here is that the beneficiaries will accrue more in the future and the costs was seen as accruing more in the present. So, who will bear those costs? The Ji-Jitsu of Paris Agreement is to say, even in the present there maybe some benefits. And those benefits are job creation, competitiveness if you get your economy to the forefront of a clean energy future. So, that's the trick to find a way of telling a story about potential opportunities in the present as well. Not just avoiding harm in the future. That's why I think we have started seeing solar prices going down, battery prices going down and so on and so forth. The last point is about net zero in India's development. Really this is why we need these institutional structures. Nobody really knows and I personally feel like the net zero formulation has gotten in the way, of you buy what I'm arguing, which is we should be focused on domestic politics today in country after country. Let me ask you, is India's domestic politics, our decisions on investment, how we going to meet our needs, how we are going to build our cities, is that going to be determined by some picture of reaching net zero by 2070? Do we even know what that looks like? 2070 is as far as in the future as 1970 is in the past. Those of us who are around in 1970 from the room think about trying to project the technology. Could we have envisioned the kinds of technologies

that we take for granted? I mean, its impossible. So, the net zero stuff is just to my mind it's not what's going to drive what happens. We have a decade to try and pivot economies and those decisions are going to be made on the back of job creation number one, local air quality, various other political interests, and competitiveness, those are the things that are going to drive the change in country after country. And again, the international process can either enable that or get in the way of that. But the driver is going to be how this plays out in country after country based on different stories that suit each country.

**Constantino Xavier:**

Thank you Navroz. It's an excellent note to end on especially this 10-year framework you are mentioning, the window that India has. Let me just give myself two minutes to close this down. You're all seeing this report here today. There are a few copies around. But its online on the website. You can download each of the PDFs, everything together. And do attend our events because you will have more of copies if you come to CSEP to our events. But there is a lot of work that goes behind into this report. So, first of all, this is a report that Karthik and I put together, frankly and put in an introduction that connects the various briefs. But the heart of it are the seven policy briefs. And our thanks go to the excellent experts that put in their time to write short 3000-word briefs into these various Indian tracks and engagements. Let me quickly read them out. Jhalak Aggarwal and Sumit Prasad, Lydia Jayakumar, Hana Chambers, and Siddharth Singh on the IEA. On the ISA Vyoma Jha, who is here with us today. On the quad, Aparna Roy and Charmi Mehta, on the triangular cooperation Pooja Ramamurthi from CSEP and then we have Shayak Sen Gupta, Medha Prasanna, and Peter Jarka-Sellers on India-US. And then Axel Nordenstam who I think is here too on the India-EU partnerships too. So, thanks to all of you for contributing to the report and making this happen. Why not? A big applause to all the contributors. And idea is also that its easy to write a report, not so easy, but alone at home, two people, but to create these networks of scholars and researchers that are doing very good work is really what we wanted to do. And in that sense the beginning of a longer research journey. Let me also thank several other people that are really important in making all this happen. Today of course, I need to thank Ambassador Saran, Navroz, and Dhanasree for being here with us, for making time. You have been around the world, Navroz. You came from Bangalore. That's not easy, not as close as we think. So, thank you for being here and of course, to Dr Ajay Mathur who made time to be here to give the opening remarks. But at the institution also Laveesh Bhandari who is here our president, who's been really supportive of... thinking out of the box and saying climate, let's look at it from a different angle. Right? Let's get the foreign policy team to work on climate. And that's always a great encouragement at CSEP that we have from Laveesh and the leadership. Of course, also Shiv Shankar Menon, and Rakesh Mohan, who reviewed a lot of these papers, helped us to put this together. Our thanks to them. And then to again the hard work, I do minutes of it compared to the hours that my colleagues do in the communications team, Aruna, Mukesh, Trishna and Malvika for designing, editing and putting all this together. The events team here today Preethy, Gurmeet and Manmeet, and the amazing foreign policy team that I am really lucky to have. I didn't choose them. I think they chose CSEP as the place where they want to grow and that's what we are about. Scholars they are going to take this forward. So, particular thanks to Anindita who has done a lot of this work. Please give her a special applause. And Pooja, Anahad, and Arya too from the team. And Ria who is also here with us today. Thank you all. Have a good evening and hope to see you again at future CSEP events.