

## UN Security Council Open Debate

**“Maintenance of international peace and security: Addressing climate-related risks to international peace and security.”**

### INDIA STATEMENT

Prime Minister of the UK The Right Honourable Boris Johnson,  
Excellencies, I would like to begin my statement with a short hymn  
from the *Sukla Yajurveda*.

द्यौः शान्तिरन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः,  
पृथ्वी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः।

वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्म शान्तिः,  
सर्वं शान्तिः, शान्तिरेव शान्तिः, सा मा शान्तिरेधि।

Meaning,

Let there be balance in the space, the sky, the earth! Let there be growth in the plants, in the trees! Let there be grace in God and bliss in the soul. Let there be balance in everything and let such peace be with every one of us! From this vedic message it is clear that environment belongs to all living beings, **so it needs protection by all, and for the welfare of all.**

Climate change is a defining issue of our time. Without drastic actions by us collectively, adapting to its impacts in the future may well not be impossible but definitely more difficult and costlier.

The global community has addressed the issue of climate change through various mechanisms, central to which are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement negotiated under the Framework. Together they represent a delicately balanced global democratic effort to take climate action in a nationally determined manner based on certain fundamental agreed principles, the foremost amongst which is “Common but Differentiated Responsibility and Respective Capabilities” and which must underlie all future discussions on climate change. Therefore, before we start discussing the issue of securitization of climate, we need to ensure that we are not building a parallel climate track where these mechanisms and principles are brushed aside or not duly considered.

**Mr. President,**

The 2019 IPCC Special Report “Climate Change and Land” says that extreme weather and climate or slow-onset events may lead to increased displacement, disrupted food chains, threatened livelihoods, and could contribute to exacerbated stresses for conflict. Even the best science available claims that Climate Change only

exacerbates conflict **and is not a reason for conflict and does not threaten peace and security.**

There is no common, widely accepted methodology for assessing the links between climate change, conflict and fragility. Fragility and climate impact are highly context specific. In addition, both peace and conflict assessments, as well as vulnerability assessments, face significant challenges when it comes to data availability and impact measurement.

**Mr. President,**

In a number of fragile contexts, where governments are struggling to provide basic services due to capacity and legitimacy issues, instances of chronic emergency conditions and famine risks are largely driven by continued political violence disrupting harvests and aid supplies rather than by climate factors alone. This underscores the idea that a complete picture of climate vulnerability only emerges with an assessment of the state's capacity to be the primary responder to interrelated environmental, social, economic, and security dynamics.

The Nationally Determined Contributions are largely about mitigation commitments and adaptation requirements that, collectively, determine whether countries will achieve the Paris goal

of limiting the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C. Parties are nowhere required to communicate on climate related security risks in their NDCs. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the NDCs submitted in the first round has shown that member states see climate change as a risk to the wellbeing of their citizens and to some degree their economies, but never as a risk to social stability, national sovereignty or the functioning of the state. Of the 16 countries that had submitted their updated NDCs to the UNFCCC Secretariat by October 2020, none have framed climate change as a risk to peace and stability.

The idea of climate action should not be to move the climate ambition goal post to 2050. **It is important for countries to fulfill their pre-2020 commitments.** Climate Action needs to go hand-in-hand with the framework for financial, technical and capacity building support to countries that need it.

While climate change does not directly or inherently cause violent conflict, its interaction with other social, political and economic factors can, nonetheless, exacerbate drivers of conflict and fragility and have negative impacts on peace, stability and security. It is for precisely this reason that developing country NDCs included information on adaptation activities, and the need for finance, technology development and transfer, capacity building, and transparency. However, while the commitment by developed countries to jointly mobilize \$100 billion per year by 2020 in support

of climate action in developing countries has been central to the climate accords since 2009, the delivery on this commitment has been elusive.

**Mr. President,**

The impacts of climate change and its associated security risks have important gender dimensions. Women and girls experience the interplay between climate change and peace and security in direct and profound ways. Since women are often the providers of food, water and energy for their families they are likely to face increased challenges in accessing resources due to climate change.

As the primary caregivers, women are often living on the frontlines of climate change and have distinct knowledge and experience to contribute to building effective adaptation strategies. There is an urgent need to promote and support the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in national-level climate change policy and planning processes.

**Mr. President,**

India has taken significant steps to fight climate change and we have delivered on our commitments. Our mitigation strategies have emphasized on clean and efficient energy systems; safe, smart and sustainable green mass urban transportation network; planned

afforestation; and integrating green thinking across all production and consumption sectors.

**India is the only country on track among the G20 nations to meet its climate change mitigation commitments.** We are not only meeting our Paris Agreement targets but will also exceed them. India currently has the fastest-growing solar energy programme in the world. We have expanded access to clean cooking fuel to over 80 million households. This is among the largest clean energy drives globally. Our recent commitments of installing 450 GW of Renewable energy, elimination of single use plastic, 100% railway electrification, and creation of an additional carbon sink by restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land among other measures have only added to our climate ambitions.

India strongly believes that the only way to generate persistent, long-term and positive action in the climate change domain is through partnerships by undertaking collective action to make a lasting and sustainable impact. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure (CDRI) are two such initiatives by India that have been launched to addressing challenges of climate change and adaptation.

**Mr. President,**

**There is a significant opportunity for countries to integrate low-carbon development in their COVID-19 rescue and recovery measures and long-term mitigation strategies that are scheduled to be announced for the reconvened 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in 2021.**

To better integrate climate change adaptation and peacebuilding we would suggest the building of robust governance structures at the local, national and regional levels to address climate and fragility-related risks. This not only improves public perception of government legitimacy but also shores up capacity of states to address climate risks before they become fragile. Donor countries should provide greater financial, technological, and capacity building assistance to help fragile states to put in place necessary adaptation and mitigation strategies to combat the impact of climate change.

Mahatma Gandhi once said that “there is enough for everybody's need and not for everybody's greed”. Let us then make the transition to a more climate-friendly lifestyle by adapting to a low carbon-development pathway, based on our needs and not on our greed. Let us view climate change as a wakeup call and an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and seek equitable and inclusive solutions to leave a greener, cleaner and a sustainable world for our future generations.

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद्दुःखभागभवेत्।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः॥

*May all sentient beings be at peace,  
may no one suffer from illness,  
May all see what is auspicious, may no one suffer.  
Peace, peace, peace.*

**I thank you, Mr. President.**

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