

Following is the full text of the speech –

“Sisters and brothers,

I am pleased to inaugurate CII’s Green Building Congress 2020.

I am sure the deliberations in this Conference will provide fresh insights and facilitate the Indian Construction Industry in building a greener India.

I am happy to note that this year, 2020, marks 125 years of CII’s contribution to the industry and the nation.

I must compliment CII for spearheading the Green Building Movement through its ‘Indian Green Building Council’ since 2001. This is a step in the right direction.

We not only need a stronger India but also a greener India.

The challenge before us today is how you marry both development and environment. They are not contradictory. If we take care of nature, the nature in turn will take care of the mankind. Our focus should be more on being friendly with nature.

Buildings are one of the major contributors of greenhouse gases. We need to make all efforts to promote green buildings. I urge government bodies, Finance Commissions and the local bodies to encourage green buildings by way of tax incentives and other measures.

We are a huge country and there are many challenges before us. All of these challenges can not be met by the government alone. All stakeholders in private sector and public sector should join hands in this endeavor. At CII, you have domain knowledge in this regard, you have expertise and the people who are involved in this task.

I am also delighted to know that India with over 7.61 Billion Sq.ft of green building footprint is amongst the top 5 countries in the world. This is truly laudable and an important milestone in India’s mission to build a greener and healthier India. I appreciate you all for taking Green Building Movement in India to newer heights.

The good work should continue and the Government and Industry should work together in achieving the country’s mission. I would also like to compliment CII for developing ‘Guidelines for Combating COVID-19 in Green Buildings’.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we all are aware, the Government of India is making a determined effort to transform India into a holistically sustainable nation with the involvement of all the stakeholders.

Over the past few decades, humankind has been experiencing extreme climate events at regular intervals. From droughts to floods to wildfires, the extreme events have wreaked havoc in the affected regions and caused economic damages. It is now clear that climate change is as real as daylight and countries all over the world must adopt drastic and revolutionary measures to mitigate the problem of global warming.

According to the World Green Building Council, buildings and construction account for 39% of energy related CO2 emissions in the world. This is a matter of concern and needs to be addressed on a war-footing. The need of the hour is accelerate the process of total de-carbonization of the built environment.

Perhaps, the time has come to seriously consider if we have to make it mandatory for every new building to go green—be it for office, hospital, education, entertainment, hotel or home. Not only new buildings, the existing buildings too have to be retrofitted to make them environment-friendly by adopting green practices that promote energy efficiency and water conservation. Sustainable buildings are an important component in building resilient communities.

As a matter-of-fact, there is a need to create awareness on the urgency of promoting green buildings concept among the people.

Apart from energy efficiency, the concept seeks to ensure water efficiency, use of renewable energy, promote waste reduction and encourage the use of environment-friendly local materials. In other words, sustainability has to be the watchword.

Because buildings are one of the major contributors of Greenhouse gas emissions, there is a need for concerted and coordinated efforts from all stakeholders to ensure the use of construction material that is environment-friendly and mitigates the effects of climate change. The construction material we use today should be sustainable—it should not in any way jeopardize the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Low carbon technologies have to be extensively promoted and used. Basically, a green building must use less energy, water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions drastically.

I would like to suggest to the India Green Building Council to launch a campaign for promoting ‘Net Zero Carbon Buildings’. Urban planners and bodies like Builders Association of India, CREDAI should be involved in the campaign. As you all are aware, a net zero carbon building is highly energy efficient and fully powered by on-site and/ or off-site renewable energy sources.

Dear sisters and brothers,

It should be realized that it cannot be business as usual in regard to combating global warming. At the current rate of growth, the urban population in India is estimated to reach a staggering 57 crores by 2030 and 87 crores by 2050. In this context, sustainable development becomes a critical part of our nation building.

Today, urban India contributes about 65% of India’s GDP, which is estimated to increase to 70% by 2030-- an unprecedented expansion that will change the economic, social and environmental landscape of India.

The development of Smart Cities Mission is thus to promote cities that provide core urban infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment.

The main motto of Government of India is to make cities livable centers of growth.

With a growing demand for shelter and related urban infrastructure especially for economically weaker sections and lower income groups, the Government of India is making resolute efforts in ensuring Affordable housing-for-all through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

I am glad to learn that CII has been working with State Governments and developers for the implementation of green concepts in affordable housing projects

Mahatma Gandhi had famously said that India lives in its villages. With more than 50% of our population still dependent on agriculture, boosting rural economy is of vital importance. If India has to grow, our villages have to be prosperous and should have access to all basic amenities like the urban areas.

Going green in villages would mean access to hygiene, health, sanitation, energy, water and education. It is good to know that CII has taken up initiatives for implementation of green measures in 24 villages in 11 states across the country. I would like the CII to expand its foot print to more number of villages and states.

Dear sisters and brothers,

India has the potential to lead the Global Green Building Movement and there is a need for a concerted push on this front by both the private players and the government. I urge the construction sector to work with the Government of India and the State Governments in building a greener, healthier and prosperous India.

I once again convey my appreciation to all of you for your contribution in building a sustainable India.

I am happy to note that a coffee table book and Rating systems on Healthcare, Logistics and Net Zero Water are being launched today.

I wish Green Building Congress 2020 a grand success!

Thank you!”
