

**Opening Speech by Ambassador Danièle Smadja, Head of  
the Delegation of the European Commission  
on the occasion of the  
Open Science Seminar  
Future of Water Resources in India under a Changing  
Climate**

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India Habitat Centre, New Delhi**

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this open Science Seminar dedicated to the Future of Water Resources in India under a Changing Climate.

This seminar is taking place within the framework of the kick-off meeting of the HighNoon. Needless to say that I needed some explanation when I heard this “strange” denomination!!! I was interested to learn that it is in relation to the adaptation to changing water resources availability in Northern India because of Himalayan glacier retreat and changing monsoon pattern - a project funded under the Seventh Research Framework Programme of the European Union.

As the number suggests we have had several Framework Programmes up to now and they are the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. The current Programme, which began in 2007 and will run up to 2013, has a budget of about 54 billion Euros, which in Rupee terms corresponds to some 350,000 crores. The Framework Programme is completely open to international participation and is by far the largest international research cooperation programme in the world. The Framework Programme

represents about 5-6% of the European research and development budget.

Why should there be research at the European level, when each of the 27 Member States of the European Union has strong national research programmes?

Well, the idea is that the European research should be complementary and add value to national research programmes. The Framework Programme helps to reduce fragmentation and to achieve critical mass in European research. It pools resources to support and undertake major projects, infrastructures, etc. It provides a sound scientific basis for European policy challenges such as building a knowledge economy, achieving sustainable development, ensuring security. It promotes the development of a strong and flexible European Research Area which involves for example the free flow of knowledge, the free circulation of researchers; and it has significant impacts on science and technology development and on the economy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me use the opportunity of this opening statement to say a few words about what we at the EU level are doing with India.

The EU and India share a strategic partnership, which is both strong and vibrant. We have annual Summit meetings where the directions of the partnership are laid out. We also have a Joint Action Plan adopted by our respective leaders and recently reviewed by them on the occasion of their last Summit in September 2008 to buttress the strategic partnership. The Joint Action Plan envisages a wide-ranging programme of dialogues and consultations in the field of global and regional security, research, cooperation in energy, environment and development, and economic development. Progress is periodically assessed at successive Summits.

Both the European Union and India also clearly recognise the key role of science, technology and innovation for creating knowledge based economies while pursuing sustainable development. They also

recognise the essential contributions of science and technology in addressing global and regional challenges in relation to health, food, energy and environment – of course including climate change.

There are two kinds of co-operation between the European Union and India in research and development. As I mentioned earlier, the Framework Programme, although it is of course primarily a European programme, is completely open to participation by Indian research organisations, with the Indian partner getting funding from the European Union for the research it carries out. More than 550 research organisations have applied to the Framework Programme, with some 113 involved in 68 successful proposals. In addition some 22 high-level fellowships have been awarded to Indian scientists to carry out their research in Europe for 1 to 2 years.

Then there is the more strategic top-down cooperation, which is carried out through the EU-India Science and Technology Cooperation. Following the very successful India-EU Ministerial Science Conference, which took place in New Delhi in February 2007, some very specific initiatives have been taken. The principal one is the launch of the EU-India Coordinated Calls for Proposals, with the co-investment of resources from both the EU and India. Two such calls, on computational materials science and on food and nutrition research, have already taken place, with funding of 8 Million Euros being made available from each side for coordinated EU-India research projects.

Future coordinated Calls for Proposals are planned in the areas of renewable energy research, water and waste treatment, and health research.

Therefore, both forms of cooperation are now well established and can only get stronger in the future.

At the same time, many Member States of the EU are significantly upgrading their S&T cooperation with India. To give an example, four years ago, only four of the EU Member States had full time Science Counsellors in their Embassies in India. Today that number has more than doubled. I like to consider this as a proof of India being looked

upon as an equal and reliable partner as far as science and technology relations are concerned and attests to the strength of the Indian research community.

Coming to the HighNoon project, its principal aim is to assess the impact of Himalayan glaciers retreat and possible changes of the Indian summer monsoon on the spatial and temporal distribution of water resources in Northern India. It should also provide recommendations for appropriate and efficient response strategies for adapting to hydrological extreme events.

I understand that the launching of the HighNoon project is a direct result of previous contacts built up with the Indian research community at the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> EU-India Strategic Science and Technology Workshop on Climate Change Research Needs, which took place in New Delhi in February 2007. I am therefore delighted to see that this initiative concretises a new era of cooperation in the field of climate change research and glaciology.

The project formally started two weeks ago, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009. It brings together leading research institutions in Europe - from the Netherlands, UK, Switzerland and Germany and from India – namely the Energy and Resources Institute, and the Indian Institutes of Technology in New Delhi and in Kharagpur. There is also a Japanese partner in the project. Therefore this project is truly international in the partnerships that it has forged. I have also been informed that the proposal was ranked as the second best in that particular call for proposals. This attests to the quality of the partnership. The project will last for 3 years and the European Union will put in over three million Euros into the project.

Let me conclude by reminding you that this Seminar has also been organized to discuss the on-going developments of a related Project on Water and Global Change (WATCH), funded under the previous Framework Programme. WATCH aims to unite researchers to evaluate the global water cycle's response to current and future drivers of climate change. Bringing together the two projects is therefore a means to build synergies between two related projects and to join

forces to establish stronger links with the Indian research community in this field.

Both this Seminar and the Project are also topical as they deal with the subjects of two of the eight national missions - the Water Mission and the Himalayan Ecosystem Mission - drawn up to implement India's National Action Plan on Climate Change . I am happy to note that the subject matters of the EU-India cooperation and dialogue today and in the context of the Project are directly related to these two missions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me wish you a fruitful debate over the next two days. I hope that these initiatives will provide the seed of further EU-India cooperation in the field of the environment and on water resources.

Thank you for your attention.