

Welcome address by Bharti Patel CEO – Svaraj

Clean Technology for Growth and Sustainability: The Emerging Opportunities

A joint Initiative – Svaraj and CII

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In welcoming you all to today's seminar here, **Clean Technology for Growth and Sustainability: The Emerging Opportunities**, let me say first of all what a privilege it is for Svaraj to have this opportunity to work with the Confederation of Indian Industries, corporate leaders and Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB)

Let me also say how pleased I am to see so many people from the private, public and voluntary sectors here today, and praise the role of Mr. Vishwanath under whose chairmanship CSR Networking Forum - CSR agenda is shaping in Bangalore; and of the KPCB under the Chairmanship of Dr. H C Sharatchand who has the challenging role of negotiating between the need for business to flourish and the right for communities to live in safe environment.

I welcome our special guests here today – from Swedish Environment Research Agency who have agreed to work with us in understanding the need for effective and efficient clean technology that can be adopted by industries and public sector to ensure a much greener production. They will share their experience from their work in other countries.

In Svaraj we believe social, environment and development responsibility starts from the view that each of us has responsibilities we owe to each other, which when executed will result in the well being of the country.

The Indian constitution Article 51 (a) (g) entitled fundamental duties – imposes responsibility on every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forest, rivers, lakes tanks etc.

In today's theme - Clean technology **for Growth and Sustainability** we look forward to hearing from eminent speakers, of their experience and draw on latest technology available to ensure not just social, but economic as well as environmental responsibility to development of business in India, as we all come to the modern view that corporate responsibility goes beyond the success of its core business- production and services.

Business excellence now should include corporate responsibility not as an add- on, a side show, but at the heart of what you do where companies can make a difference in environment, employment and community life, as well as in success of their own business and how working together we can do more. What has been referred to as the smart solution for business today: a recognition that in the modern world, the good economy, the good society and the good environment go together.

This can happen through investing in local communities; its environment and its own plant for a greener production. And in an environment of adequate regulatory framework.

The Indian constitution is among the few in the world that contains provision for environment protection, being explicitly stated in the 76th amendment stipulating the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment.

The importance of regulations here cannot be underemphasized – When you fail to have adequate regulations or weakly enforced regulations - in a free and competitive market, what you get is the good employer being undercut by the bad and the bad employer by the worst. And what you have is not business regeneration but business degeneration - a downward spiral where competition is based on who can undercut whom - from good to bad to worse practices.

The result of which is a loose - loose situation – where everyone suffers – industries close down, workers loose their jobs. The case file gets closed or stuck in Supreme Court and no improvement is made until next case. And the story repeats itself. I am sure you are all aware of this cycle.

There is no doubt one of the roles of Svaraj as a watchdog on environment and development along with our community based partners is to monitor and highlight bad and illegal practices as a way of illustrating all our concerns over degenerating local environment and its impact on vulnerable communities – particularly on their health and livelihood - for which we all pay a heavy price in some form or another.

But in this practice of ours we would like to be seen as **critical friend** rather than a destructive bully. And we would like us all to work together to jointly lead to recommendations to government for effective and efficient solutions supported by all stakeholder groups.

Regulations should not be seen as a stick to beat with but a necessary tool to ensure fairness in a competitive market and to stop a bad industry practice from taking an unfair advantage by competing on cost cutting rather than on quality and wider responsibility.

In **2000** the minister of environment and Forest drew up plans to convert 7 major cities including Hyderabad and Bangalore into Eco –cities – clean pollution free surrounding and conservation of natural resources for a high quality of living. *The aim is to create economically vibrant, socially equitable and environmentally supportive cities*

At end of 2006 we may have some vibrancy in the economy but what we also have is dirty water, polluted air and degraded local land. Where vulnerable communities are forced to live on margins of this land

Are strong economy and healthy environment incompatible goals?

I am sure none of us here believe that. But how do we ensure that this belief is scaled up.

So for Svaraj this first conference should be seen as one of many in the future for a positive global flow of technology, ideas and information together with growing international understanding and co-operation with the goal of protecting the environment and rebuilding local, national and global economies

Here the emphasis is not on competition but co-operation for the best. Cooperation

- that mobilises the knowledge and the power of science and innovation in new technologies;
- that uses market mechanisms as well as social and cultural mechanisms to give incentives change in the way businesses operate;

- that promotes greater personal and social responsibility in our every day lives;

And all this can be supported by sustained public and private investment in environmental change. I understand from my reading that the global environmental market is estimated to be worth almost \$700 billion by 2010 - a sector as big as the successful aerospace or pharmaceuticals sectors of today. Industries and companies in India too have the opportunity to compete for these markets. To build partnership that brings together our engineering firms, and scientists. Ngo's and government to look at the development of clean technology and market, social and cultural solutions for the Indian environment and Indian economy

So let me conclude as we start this joint initiative today, by saying I am optimistic about our future.

- Optimistic because of your presence here today - and I look forward to studying in detail our joint deliberation over the next 4 hours.
- Optimistic because there is a beginning of change in our society which can lead to greater responsibility
- And optimistic because we in Svaraj believe that each of us - individuals, businesses, and government and the NGO- are ready to take more responsibility together to help ensure India's future prosperity and success not just in its economy, but in its social programmes, environment sustainability and its culture.

Once again I welcome you all here today and look forward to working more closely with you all on the protection of our natural resources on which our very lives are dependent upon.

Thank you

Bharti patel