

# INDIA FACTS



## India at Rio+20: Putting Commitments into Action

Over 135 heads of state and thousands of representatives from governments, business, and civil society will meet in Rio de Janeiro on the twentieth anniversary of the first Earth Summit to discuss sustainable development and the green economy. A rapidly growing economy that is tackling the pressing challenges of development, India can lead in commitments during the Summit and in their implementation afterward. In India, as in other places in the world, increases in national income over the past two decades have not translated into socio-economic and infrastructure progress for the many who live in poverty. India can demonstrate how strong economic opportunity can be coupled with environmental leadership.

India's National Action Plan on Climate Change and the 12th Five Year Plan move India toward a sustainable economy and the Earth Summit is the occasion to make further progress. Working with partners in India, NRDC recommends practical actions to integrate sustainability objectives with economic growth, aligning with India's priorities to address climate change, energy, food, water, and managing urbanization.<sup>1</sup> India's leadership in translating its commitments into actions is critical to helping the world meet the challenges of building a green economy.

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLEAN ENERGY

To power its rapidly growing economy and reduce energy poverty, India continues to increase fossil fuel use and related greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, India is committed to reducing its energy intensity by 20-25 percent by 2030 from 2005 levels and adopting clean energy policies. To advance its objectives, India's Rio+20 clean energy action-items should be:

- Accelerate adoption of energy efficiency standards for buildings across all states
- Improve the penetration rate of energy-efficient appliances
- Implement government and business policies to ensure India achieves its 20-gigawatts-by-2022 target under the National Solar Mission
- Redirect fossil fuel subsidies to clean energy solutions, including rural electrification through renewable power, and deploy the National Clean Energy Fund

- Significantly increase public transit, electric and hybrid car production and fuel efficiency standards
- Charge groundwater withdrawal for irrigation by usage since agricultural pumping totals a fifth of national electricity use<sup>2</sup>

### WATER MANAGEMENT & POLLUTION

India's growing population faces severe water shortages. Freshwater withdrawals increased by 52 percent since 1990 while the flow of renewable water resources remained constant at 1,446 billion cubic meters since 2007.<sup>3</sup> Water scarcity is compounded by fertilizer run-off and poorly treated waste. To address these problems, India's Rio+20 action items should be:

- Establish a Bureau of Water Efficiency modeled on the Bureau of Energy Efficiency



For more information, please contact:

**Susan Casey-Lefkowitz**  
sclefkowitz@nrdc.org  
(202) 289-6868  
**Anjali Jaiswal**  
ajaiswal@nrdc.org  
(415) 875-6100

**Dr. Arunabha Ghosh**  
arunabha.ghosh@ceew.in  
Tel: +91 11 4169 9270  
www.ceew.in

[www.nrdc.org/policy](http://www.nrdc.org/policy)  
[www.facebook.com/nrdc.org](https://www.facebook.com/nrdc.org)  
[www.twitter.com/nrdc](https://www.twitter.com/nrdc)

- Adjust water rate structures for industry and agriculture on the basis of water-use levels and create incentives to scale up drip irrigation facilities
- Improve water stocks to buffer vulnerable communities from climate-related uncertainties via scaled up water recycling and re-use, rainwater harvesting, and adopting appropriate watershed management
- Improve water data collection and dissemination and oversight of wastewater treatment and discharge

## ENHANCING AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS

About half of India's population works in agriculture<sup>4</sup> and 33.8 percent live below the rural poverty line.<sup>5</sup> To build resilience India's Rio+20 action-items should be:

- Implement the Green India Mission, which aims to double forested land by 2020<sup>6</sup>
- Engage with land users and community leaders to disseminate data on unsustainable land use practices and preserve traditional conservation knowledge
- Enhance long-term agricultural productivity and sustainability with chemical-free and water efficient cultivation; support Water User Associations with skills, training, and resources
- Minimize post-harvest food-grain losses by improving storage and farm-to-market supply chains
- Increase green job opportunities in villages through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and other programs

### About the Council on Energy, Environment and Water and the Natural Resources Defense Council

The Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) are partnering to accelerate clean energy solutions in India. CEEW is an independent, not-for-profit policy research institution that works to promote dialogue and common understanding on energy, environment, and water issues in India and elsewhere. [www.ceew.in](http://www.ceew.in). NRDC, a leading U.S.-based environmental organization, is working with partners in India on efforts to solve our shared challenges of climate change and clean energy. [www.nrdc.org/international/india](http://www.nrdc.org/international/india).

## MANAGING URBANIZATION

Nearly 369 million Indians live in cities, a 65 percent increase from 1990. Urban infrastructure cannot keep pace with rapid growth, leading to congestion, poor air quality, and inadequate housing. To create more liveable communities, India's Rio+20 action items should be:

- Encourage power utilities to increase their renewable energy mix and manage demand
- Promote energy and water efficient buildings, smart meters, roof-top solar panels, and rainwater harvesting
- Incentivize low-cost community water and sanitation systems in low-income areas
- Improve solid waste management by integrating rag-pickers into the system; prevent contamination of land by toxic chemicals and landfill leachate
- Strengthen local capacity in disaster preparedness such as heat waves and floods
- Green cities with expanded parks, public spaces, and green walls and roofs

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES AT RIO+20 FROM INDIA

India is signatory to all major treaties and covenants since the landmark Stockholm Declaration of 1972. At Rio+20, NRDC expects India to show further leadership on:

- An online registry of commitments to promote accountability and track progress on Rio+20 undertakings at national and regional levels
- Green jobs creation for the estimated 63.5 million new members of the labor force between 2011–2016
- New and scaled-up government, private sector, and civil society programs that deliver local sustainability solutions

Twenty years after the initial Earth Summit at Rio, the India Initiative at NRDC looks forward to partnering with India to create the future we not only want but also need. For more information, please see <http://futurewewant.org/>.

1 UNCSO, India Rio+20, 2011, <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=6&nr=25&menu=32> National Action Plan on Climate Change, 2008, <http://www.india.gov.in/allimpfrms/alldocs/15651.doc>; MOEF, "State of the Environment Report 2009," 2009, <http://moef.nic.in/downloads/home/home-SoE-Report-2009.pdf>

2 Rao, 2009, "An Overview of Indian Energy Trends: Low Carbon Growth and Development Challenges." <http://www.climateworks.org/download/?id=f21a4576-0cec-4ee3-bd3f-86d2acd578ce&download=1>

3 World Bank, "Annual freshwater withdrawals, total," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.H2O.FWTL.K3/countries?page=4>, (last accessed May 24, 2012); World Bank, "Renewable internal freshwater resources," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ER.H2O.INTR.K3>, (last accessed May 24, 2012).

4 World Bank, "Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.ZS/countries>, (last accessed May 25, 2012).

5 World Bank, "Poverty headcount ratio at rural poverty line (% of rural population)," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.RUHC>, (last accessed May 25, 2012).

6 TERI, "Sustainable Development in India: Stocktaking in the run up to Rio+20," 2011, [http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/Sust\\_Dev\\_Stocktaking.pdf](http://moef.nic.in/downloads/public-information/Sust_Dev_Stocktaking.pdf).