



# TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DELHI

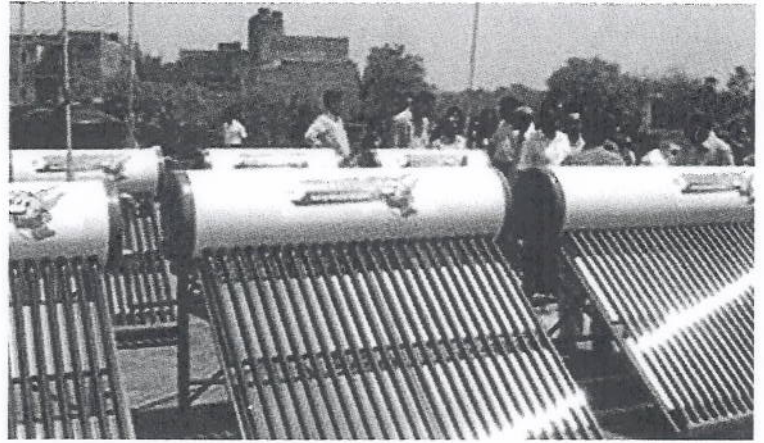
A presentation by  
**SHEILA DIKSHIT**  
Chief Minister of Delhi

Round-table Conference  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY -  
A MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL**

Convened by  
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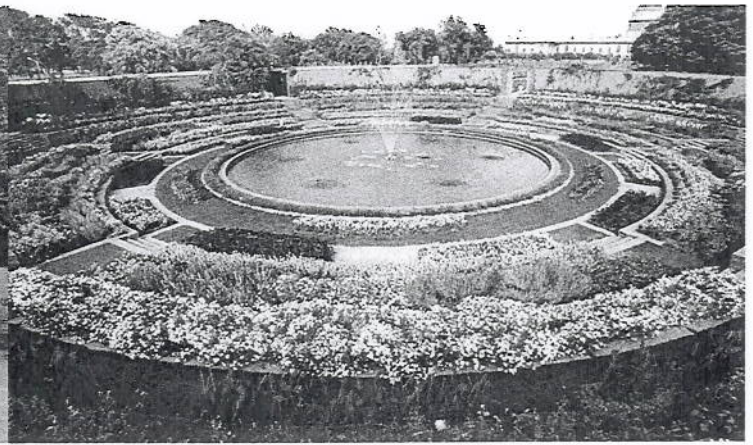


Thank you for inviting me to this august gathering of World Leaders, for the Round Table Conference on Environmental Sustainability.

In the short time available, I have ventured to outline all the efforts that Delhi has adopted and made in the past decade, to retain natural harmony with development and Nature. It has not been an easy task to match sustainability with development, and the growing needs and aspirations of a population, which aspires for the best and the most modern.

We are fully aware that all the Millennium Development Goals are development challenges for humanity, and have to be achieved by 2015. They require close international cooperation between all nations to improve the lives of the disadvantaged sections of societies, in an environment which is growth oriented, yet sustainable.

In our endeavours we have tried to ensure that the principles of sustainable development are integrated in our policies, and there is a conscious & consistent control over the quality of air, water and noise pollution, alongwith adoption of efficient waste management practices. It is also essential to focus on regeneration of biodiversity and a very substantial increase in the green cover, of our cities and towns, which have become jungles of concrete & mortar. We also need to provide safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities, to our population, and improve the lives of a large number of disadvantaged dwellers, in our cities and towns.



In the Capital of Delhi, we are striving hard to achieve all the Millennium Development Goals. We have recently launched a Mission Convergence Programme, covering a large number of welfare schemes, which are based on the principle of “social entitlements”. Growth, without development of our human resource equitably, is no development. Responsive and humane governments, have to be sensitive to the specific needs of all of its social groups, and we have endeavoured to be one.

I would like to focus on environmental sustainability and highlight some basic points.

- Substitution of the entire public transport fleet of 1,30,000 from diesel to CNG. This I may add is the largest fleet of public transport run on CNG in the world. This has significantly improved the ambient air quality of Delhi, as is evident from the consistent fall between 2000 and 2008 in the 5 air pollutants, which determine air quality. The introduction of a fast moving and growing Metro rail system has not just added to public convenience but also reduced air pollution, through saving of fossil fuel substantially.

- Significant regeneration of bio-diversity through creation of 2 large biodiversity parks, covering nearly 1000 hectares of land, and development of 32 city forests within the city, has added to our green canopy. Over 1 million saplings have been planted in the last few years, with the result that the green cover of Delhi has increased from 3% in 1998

to nearly 20% or about 300 sq. kms. in 2008. The increase in Delhi’s flora has led to the return of many of its birds & fauna, which had all but disappeared, in the ceaseless race for construction, at the cost of destruction of natural habitat. Many birds, which had been lost, have come back. I believe the number is at least around 68 species of birds. We have a Tree Preservation Act, which ensures that for every tree that is cut for developmental purposes, atleast 10 saplings are planted in its place. Delhi today is one of the greenest Capital cities in the World.

- Through privatization of power distribution and many other power sector reforms, the availability of power has significantly improved the living conditions of the people. Energy audit and energy efficient appliances are becoming the order of the day. Stable and affordable power supply has led to massive curtailment of polluting diesel generators. It has also provided sustained access to safe drinking water, due to effective running of all pumping stations and water treatment plants. We are also restoring about 200 water bodies in Delhi to provide additional availability of water and thereby reinvent our indigenous natural resources.

- A massive Environment Awareness Campaign has been launched with people’s involvement or Bhagidari as we call it, through 2000 Resident Welfare Associations, and 2000 school Eco-clubs. They constitute the “Green Brigade”. This Brigade passionately propagates issues like abandoning



plastic bags in favour of jute, paper or cloth bags, recycling of paper and water, adoption of solar water heating systems, conversion of incandescent lamps into CFLs and energy efficient appliances, setting up rain water harvesting systems and replacing diesel vehicles by battery operated vehicles.

◦ Nearly 60 flyovers are being constructed, and the metro rail is being extended to 200 km. in the city, so as to ease traffic congestion and reduce idling time. Introduction of 6000 low floor fuel efficient CNG buses, of which 33% would be air-conditioned, by the commencement of Commonwealth Games – 2010, will provide an efficient and effective public transport to enable shift from use of private transport. We have introduced a diesel fee, and created an Air Ambience Fund on the “polluter pay” principle, so as to subsidize conversion of diesel transport vehicles, into CNG and battery operated vehicles.

◦ We are adopting the concept of Green Buildings in all our major construction so as to achieve maximum harmony with nature and to reduce negative environmental effects. Our aim is to make the Commonwealth Games in 2010, the Green Games. Use of eco-friendly material like fly ash bricks is being widely used. A new energy efficiency code for all buildings has now been made mandatory. Water and energy efficient systems are being installed to conserve these 2 vital resources, and rainwater harvesting is being adopted to replenish the ground water table.

Though we have achieved and can certainly claim to have halted the rot of pollution that was choking Delhi, we have many miles to traverse before we can finally say that our city is truly the best.