



Special Session on ‘Energy Transitions: Reconciling Competing Imperatives of Development and Environmental Sustainability’

Tuesday, September 25, 2018 | 2.30 – 4.30 p.m.

Venue: The Hub, Convene, 237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

AGENDA

Opening Session	2.30 – 2.50 p.m.	Setting the Context by the Session Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, TERI & Co-Chair, Energy Transitions Commission (ETC)
Statements by the Panellists	2.50 – 3.45 p.m.	Panellists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr Mohit Bhargava, Head, Corporate Planning, NTPC Limited & Director, EESL and Meja Urja Nigam Limited ▪ Mr Remy Rioux, CEO, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Chairperson for International Development Finance Club (IDFC) ▪ Mr Sumant Sinha, Chairman & CEO, ReNew Power ▪ Prof Woochong Um, Director General, Sustainable Development & Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank
Keynote Address	3:45 – 3.55 p.m.	Ms Rachel Kyte , CEO of Sustainable Energy for All and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All
Q&A with the audience	3.55 – 4.20 p.m.	
Closing Session	4.20 – 4.30 p.m.	Summary & Concluding Remarks by the Chair

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Background Note

Economic development and energy security remain at the top of most countries' priorities. Global urban transitions are underway, and countries are gearing up to the energy systems and infrastructure that will be required in the near future to accommodate this shift. The speed and the scale of change are unprecedented, driven by population growth, urbanization and economic development.

At the same time it is an established fact that the current model of development as we know it causes damage to our environment. Adverse effects include air and water pollution, land degradation and loss of biodiversity. At the global level, human influence on the climate system is clear, and anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems, such as floods and drought, sea level rise, forest loss and ocean acidification. Climate change already impacts millions of people; particularly the world's poorest.

India is currently among the world's fastest growing emerging economies, and the world's second most populous country. Its current level of per capita energy consumption is very low, at just 35% of the global average, and 29% of China's. Thus, rapid growth in energy consumption will occur to fuel industrialization, urbanization, infrastructure development, and rising incomes. Such energy demand growth is essential for development and to the goal of bringing modern energy services to the 244 million Indians lacking access to modern sources of energy. At the same time, rapid growth of fossil fuel energy will have significant consequences in terms of local air pollution and environmental degradation; energy dependence, energy security and the trade balance; and rising GHGs.

There is an urgent need to make the right decisions about our energy systems, because developmental and environmental needs cannot be achieved at the expense of each other. In fact, India is ranked among the most-affected countries of the world in terms of air pollution, with impacts estimated at 3% of GDP according to the World Bank. India is also a very vulnerable country to climate change, with over 7000 kilometres of coastline, and dependency on its monsoon rains and Himalayan glaciers for the livelihood and wellbeing of its people. At the same time, India is blessed with significant renewable energy resources. It will be crucial for energy transitions globally and in India to reconcile conflicting imperatives and priorities, by giving greater consideration to co-benefits, in order to enable climate resilience and sustainable development.

The good news is that the global transition to renewable and clean sources of energy is in full swing. More than 1 trillion USD have been invested in the renewable energy sector globally, in the past 3 years alone. These annual investments surpass investments in the fossil energy sector and more than 50% of these are happening in the developing world. Stretching these transitions further will require ensuring that socio-economic opportunities embedded in them such as jobs, energy access, rural development and local environmental problems are taken into consideration.

In India, transitions are also underway especially in the power sector, where the objectives are to balance energy security, energy access and GHG emission reduction. There is potential for accelerating climate-friendly transitions of India's energy sector by mainstreaming co-benefits such as cleaner air and related health benefits into the narrative, in-line with objectives of sustainability and climate resilience. Aware of these facts, the Government of India has launched one of the world's most ambitious renewable energy programs, with the goal of achieving 175 GW of renewable capacity by 2022. Achieving this goal would mean that India would reach a globally unprecedented level of penetration of modern renewables in electricity, for a country with a low per capita income but large economic size. India is thus a key country for the global energy transitions, and can act as a test case for leap-frogging to a new paradigm of industrialization and development.

To enable these energy transitions, the Energy Transitions Commission International and India are providing assessment studies to help identify pathways for change in our energy systems to ensure both better growth and a better climate. This event will look at *Energy Transitions for Climate Resilience: How to Reconcile Competing Imperatives of Development and Environmental Sustainability?*