

Welcome Address by Dr V L Dutt, Past President FICCI and CMD of KCP Limited

at the
Conference on Climate Change Issues and Opportunities
On July 13, 2002 in Chennai

**Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment & Forests Thiru Baalu,
Shri P V Jayakrishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt of India,
Shri C Dasgupta, Distinguished Fellow, TERI,
Shri N Sivaramakrishnan, Member – FICCI Southern Region Council,
Distinguished speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I extend a hearty welcome to you all at this conference on climate change issues and opportunities being jointly hosted by FICCI, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt of India and TERI. This is the first in a series of several metro conferences that are scheduled this year. And it is a privilege for us to have the Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment and Forests at the first conference and in his hometown.

May I mention here that the Ministry of Environment and Forests is undertaking the exercise of creating a nation-wide awareness on climate change impacts, the ongoing global climate change negotiations, and the emerging issues and concerns for developing countries like India. The metro conferences like these would help raise industry's understanding of the impacts of climate change and the ways and means to adapt itself to these changes. Since industry is a contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, and has an important role to play in the mitigation and adaptation process, this awareness becomes a crucial factor for initiating further action by industry.

This is a significant year in the global climate change negotiations process with the possibility of the Kyoto Protocol coming into force. It is also an important year for India, since it is hosting the 8th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. India has played a crucial role in spearheading developing country concerns in the international negotiations. By making its voice heard at this stage, India can ensure that the final agreements serve India's interest.

Global warming will affect many aspects of our lives as it changes temperature and precipitation patterns, induces sea level rise, and alters the distribution of fresh water supplies. The impacts on our health from new outbreaks of infectious disease, losses in productivity of agriculture, and movement of large populations affected by land submergence would be very costly.

There is a need to enhance research, development and deployment of new environmentally sound and energy efficient technologies.

Many businesses are organising themselves to adopt energy efficiency targets and are advocating adoption of measures that save energy, lower costs, raise profits and increase global competitiveness.

We must have legislation in place to encourage our businesses to invest in carbon dioxide reduction activities. Climate policies must be cost effective in order to ensure benefits at lowest possible cost.

There is also a need to build local capacity within India to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities emerging in the global climate change arena. One major focus is to help prepare India and Indian industry to capture the benefits of the Clean Development Mechanism, in order to bring new technology, investment, and jobs to the country while simultaneously reducing environmental pollution.

India will be an important player in global climate change in the decades to come. India is already making impressive strides forward by making its thermal power sector more efficient, increasing the use of environmental management systems by energy-intensive industries, exploring alternative fuel vehicles, and expanding the use of renewable energy technologies nationwide – all of which are also reducing greenhouse gases at the same time. There is now a great opportunity to do much more in these areas in a way that benefits industry and the economy as a whole.

This conference will highlight both the challenges as well as the opportunities for Indian industry as it prepares itself for mitigating and adapting to the adverse impacts of global climate change.

There are expert presentations lined up later and I am sure the presentations as well as panel discussions will provide meaningful insight not only into climate change issues and the concerns for developing countries like India, but also the potential opportunities for Indian industry arising from greenhouse gas reductions, as well as what it might take to convert this potential to business reality.

FICCI has been initiating several activities to raise industry's awareness on climate change issues. FICCI is also taking a lead in COP 8 related activities that are lined up prior to as well as during COP8 and we look forward to strengthening and deepening our initiatives on climate change issues.

In closing, I welcome you again to this conference and encourage your active participation to identify actions for preparing India and the Indian industry for adapting to climate change. Thank you.