

## **Ambassador's Address at the India – Kuwait Solar Energy Forum on August 24, 2021**

Good Morning Everybody in Kuwait and Good Afternoon in India, Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance; Dr. Mohammad Alramadhan, Deputy Director General, Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences KFAS, Shri Parag Sharma, Vice Chairman of CII's National Committee on Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all here for today's special program on solar energy.

I begin my remarks today by thanking His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait and also for the support extended to Indian community here during the devastating Covid 19 pandemic and to India through supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic in India.

While each of the countries in the world fight their battle against COVID 19, both nationally and internationally, India also continues with its economic engagement for the benefit of all. Despite the many challenges, India is fighting the COVID-19 battle with fortitude and a spirit of self-reliance. To overcome these testing times, Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi ji came up with Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-reliant India) that promotes local economy, while closely working with our international partners. Let me quote Hon'ble Prime Minister who said, "1.3 billion Indians have embarked on one mission - to make an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' or self-reliant India. 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' merges the local with the global. It ensures India's strengths act as a global force multiplier. .... A self-reliant and peaceful India ensures a better world. 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' is about transforming India from being just a passive market to an active manufacturing hub at the heart of global value chains." Unquote.

Dear Friends,

We always consider Kuwait and other countries in the Gulf region as partners in our economic transformation. Kuwait is a very important country in our extended neighborhood. Kuwait is part of India's energy

security efforts and India is part of Kuwait's food security efforts. Both countries are having an excellent relationship, stretching back to several decades. The leadership of the two countries are in regular contact giving clear guidance and roadmap to strengthen our partnership at all levels. Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Kuwait was in India in March this year and India's External Affairs Minister was in Kuwait in June this year. This is part of our increased exchanges in this year when we celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. We have now set up a Joint Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers with a forward looking roadmap to take our longstanding dynamic relationship to a new higher level of partnership.

India – Kuwait Solar Energy forum is important as not only because we are celebrating India - Kuwait partnership in the energy sector today, which is the mainstay of our long standing dynamic partnership, but also because we are looking at a future that awaits us. As Mahatma Gandhi said “We have not inherited the world from our forefathers - we have borrowed it from our children. The world that we have borrowed from our children must be returned to them as it should be.” For a few years now, scientists, forecasters, strategic thinkers and now most prominently our children are reminding us strongly that when it comes to our planet, we cannot let business as usual to continue.

Today we are delighted to have amongst us Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance; Dr. Mohammad Alramadhan, Deputy Director General, Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences KFAS, Shri Parag Sharma, Vice Chairman of CII's National Committee on Aatmanirbhar Bharat, and some of the most eminent subject matter experts from the field of research, government, industry and investment in the field of renewable energy and from India and Kuwait.

I look forward to their remarks and presentations. To me, as the representative of India in Kuwait, a horizon of possibilities and opportunities is clearly visible for India and Kuwait to work towards a better future in this sector. Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji spoke of harnessing power of the sun much earlier than many other world leaders. It was with his vision and leadership that the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was conceptualized and launched

during the CoP-21 in Paris. Hon'ble Prime Minister led India's resolve to ensure a greener tomorrow by committing to an ambitious plan of reducing of Carbon dioxide emissions and increasing the share of renewable energy in India's energy basket.

Today we know that it was India's constructive engagement, which ensured the Paris Agreement, and 6 years later, in 2021 India is the only major economy, not just on track, but surpassing its commitment made towards Paris Agreement. Last week, India surpassed 100,000 MegaWatt i.e. 100 GigaWatt of installed capacity in renewable energy, excluding the large hydropower project. This is a phenomenal achievement by any standards and it makes India only the fourth country in the world to do so. Today solar energy is not an esoteric, futuristic technological concept, but a reality for thousands of remote households in the most difficult geographic locations of India. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy Resources, the Government of India has successfully electrified all of India's villages including by use of solar energy.

India also is home to the world's only fully solar powered international airport in Kochi in my home state of Kerala, a 12 megawatt solar plant which has more than 46,000 solar panels running the airport. A fully solar powered railway station is in India, in Guwahati, Assam. The world's largest floating solar energy park is coming up in Gujarat. The industry in India has enthusiastically championed the cause of solar energy and increasingly we see them in solar manufacturing and storage sectors. We will hear more about this from our eminent speakers during the program.

Having stayed in this energy rich country of Kuwait for over a year, I can say for sure that Kuwait has no dearth of solar energy. With most months of the year receiving ample sunlight and the landscape that makes solar parks more accessible, Kuwait has a great potential for harnessing development of solar energy for the world.

Today, I see a huge opportunity to diversify our energy security partnership with Kuwait. The Indian experience, expertise, manpower in the field of solar and renewable energy is available to take further bilateral cooperation in this sector. We have also invited Kuwait to join the International Solar Alliance.

India is committed to increased use of clean energy sources and is already undertaking various large-scale sustainable power projects and promoting green energy heavily. Renewable energy has the potential to create many employment opportunities at all levels, especially in rural areas. Government of India has set an ambitious target to set up renewable energy capacities to the tune of 227 GW by 2022, of which about 114 GW is planned for solar, 67 GW for wind and other for hydro and bio among other. India's renewable energy sector is expected to attract investment worth US\$ 80 billion in the next few years.

It is expected that by 2040, around 49% of the total electricity in India will be generated by renewable energy as more efficient batteries will be used to store electricity, which will further cut the solar energy cost by 66% as compared to the current cost. Renewable energy will account for 55% of the total installed power capacity by 2030. The Government of India is on the way to develop a 'green city' in every state of the country, powered by renewable energy. The 'green city' will mainstream environment-friendly power through solar rooftop systems on all its houses, solar parks on the city's outskirts, waste to energy plants and electric mobility-enabled public transport systems.

It is interesting to recall that even the UN Headquarters in New York has, on its roof, 193 solar panels donated by the Government of India symbolizing 193 member countries of the United Nations in 2019, which ensure that the UN has a greener carbon footprint.

I look forward to listening from our scientists, entrepreneurs, researchers and leaders from both public and private sectors about their ideas for unlocking the full potential of India-Kuwait Solar Energy cooperation.

Once again, I thank you all for joining today.

Thank you.