

India Development Coalition of America

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IDCA Fourth International India Conference Report

Transforming Development to Alleviate Poverty and Climate Change

India Development Coalition of America (IDCA) organized its Fourth International Conference on the theme '*Transforming Development to Alleviate Poverty and Climate Change*' at Indian Medical Association Conference Center, New Delhi on January 10, 2008. The conference was organized to Promote Cooperation, Networking, Learning, Volunteering and Giving between the organizations and individuals to transform Development in India for alleviating poverty and climate change.

The day long Conference began with a welcome address by Dr. Mohan Jain, Trustee and Founder president of IDCA. He shared the Vision, Mission, Objectives, Activities and Achievements of IDCA. He also broadly spoke about the theme of the conference. This was followed by keynote speakers from various organizations. Mr. Popatrao Pawar, Sarpanch, Hivre Bazar (<http://www.cseindia.org/programme/nrml/infocus-september07.htm>) spoke about how he transformed his village of 1200 people over a period of 15 years from a poor to a prosperous, ideal village. Ms. Anjali Makhija, Group Leader of the Sehgal Foundation, Gurgaon, Haryana, spoke about their upcoming Institute of Rural Research and Development (www.smsfoundation.org). Dr. Narendra Kale, Advisor of SVJC Trust spoke about the Total Social Transformation project of SVJC Trust's Walawalakar Hospital (www.walawalakarhospital.com), by providing healthcare, education and community empowerment service to people in Dervan, in Konkan region of Maharashtra. Dr. Ashok Khosla, Founder of Development Alternatives (www.devalt.org) spoke on designing development to alleviate poverty and climate change. He said India is suffering from diseases of Affluenza and Poveritis. He said the fundamental choices are: Copy-cat? Piggy-back? Or Leap-frog? He concluded that we can alleviate poverty and climate change by effectively using the services of five kingdoms of Nature i.e. Animals, Plants, Algae, Fungi, and Bacteria. Dr. Nandita Pathak, Director of Deendayal Research Institute (www.chitrakoot.org) shared the approach, and achievements of her organization in creating sustainable livelihoods for the people in 200 villages.

In the afternoon, following a sumptuous lunch and a lively Q&A Session with the keynote speakers, the delegates then broke off for four parallel sessions on Water, Livelihoods, Education, and Health. Each session was chaired by experts from respective fields. The Healthcare Management Session was chaired by Dr. Akhil Sangal, Chairman of ICHA, New Delhi; It had four speakers: Dr. Siddarth Agarwal from Urban Health Resource Center (www.uhrc.in), New Delhi, spoke about their work with the urban poor living in Slums of Delhi and Indore; Dr. Archana Chowdhary from the Sehgal Foundation (www.smsfoundation.org) spoke about their work in rural haryan to improve the health of the people; Mr. K. K. Varma from the Smile Foundation (www.smilefoundation.org), New Delhi, and Dr. Akhil Sangal from Indian Confederation for Healthcare Accreditation (ICHA—www.indmedica.com/icha). All of them shared valuable experiences. The Sustainable Livelihoods Session was Chaired by Mr. Jiwan Prakash Sondhi of People to Support People Foundation, Detroit, Michigan, had 5 speakers from varied backgrounds. The prominent areas covered under livelihoods were: Gram IT by Mario Ordonez of the Byrraju Foundation (www.byrrajufoundation.org),

Hyderabad; Mr. Mangesh Hoskote from Rural YES Solar Energy Initiative; Mr. Manoj Dabas, Regional director of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE www.atree.org) spoke on preserving biodiversity and agricultural interventions affected at the grassroots team of CSOs. Mr. Satyan Mishra of Dhristee Foundation (www.dhristeefoundation.org) spoke about training rural youth for BPO work, and Mr. Pawan Kumar from the Sehgal Foundation (www.smsfoundation.org) spoke about various activities they are doing in rural Haryana to promote livelihood. The Education session was Chaired by Mr. Vivek Singhal, Co-Chair of IDCA Education Committee, had three speakers; Mr. Pawan Gupta Founder/president of Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas (SIDH, www.sidh.org), Mr. Krishan Khanna, Founder/ President, iWatch (www.wakeupcall.org), and Sadanand Bhagwat, Founder/president of Next Gen Foundation (www.nextgenfoundation.org). The outcome of the session was how to bring about a paradigm change in the state of education by stressing on the need for value based high quality education to meet society's needs.

The Water management session was Chaired by Dr. Praksam Tata, Co-Chair IDCA Water committee, and had four speakers. Mr. Manoj Mishra, of Yamuna Jiye Andolan (www.peaceinst.org), New Delhi, stressed on the importance of rivers for mankind and what he is doing for protection of Yamuna river in the Delhi area. Mr. Ram Krishnan of Akash Ganga Trust (www.akash-ganga.com), Minnesota, shared his rich experiences on the subject of rainwater harvesting project he is currently doing in a Tamilnadu village. Professor Prasant Kalita of University of Illinois Urbana spoke about a water Bio-filtration system they installed at Pantnagar Agriculture University to remove 60-100% nitrate at a cost of \$0.13/lb. Dr. Prakasam Tata presented on the process of creating synergies to implement a Water Sanitation Project for a community of 400 untouchable families with the support of the IDCA and the Rotary Clubs in US and India, in his home district of Vizianagram in Andhra Pradesh.

After a short tea-break the concluding plenary session followed. All the moderators summed up the proceeding of their sessions in front of the delegates and a lively discussion followed. We also gave 2-3 minutes to all others who were not scheduled speakers to share what they were doing in various areas of their interests. This included, Mr. K. C. Agarwal, author of Crusade India (www.shapingindia.org), Noida, UP. He talked about improving governance with professional manpower replacing the current beaurocrats, to address various critical issues facing India; Mr. S. K. Agarwal, SNAE Stevia, Raipur, Chhatishgarh. He spoke about use of Stevia leaves as a natural sweetener for diabetes patient and how to grow it for generating rural livelihoods. He said it has also been found to reduce blood pressure and tooth decay due to cavities. He later distributed packages of dry leaves and several plant saplings for people to grow in their place; Mr. Anup S. Jubbal, Canadian Eyesight Global (www.canadianeyesight.org) spoke about their work in restoring eyesights of people in rural Punjab.

Following this Dr. Mohan Jain of IDCA then made a presentation on Global Warming on behalf of Professor Jagdish Shukla, a Member of IPCC, from George Mason University, MD, and director of Institute for Global Climate and Society (www.iges.org), and founder of Gandhi College in his native village in Uttar Pradesh. Some of the facts shared in this presentation include:

The Knowns:

- CO2 emissions have grown by 80% between 1970 and 2004.
(2005: 379 ppm; All GHG: 455 ppm (CO2 equivalent));

Primary reason: fossil fuel use and land-use change)

- Rate of increase of CO₂, CH₄, N₂O was the largest in 10,000 years.
- Aerosols have partly offset the warming by CO₂.
- Global mean surface temp. increase (linear trend) 0.76oC in 100 years (1906-2005).
- Eleven of the past twelve years are the warmest on record.
- In the past 500 years, the warmest 50 years were 1951-2000.
- Sea level has risen 1.8 mm/yr since 1961; 3.1 mm/yr since 1993.
- Arctic sea ice extent reduced by 2.7% per decade since 1978.
- (The summer minimum on record; 2007)
- Enhanced run-off and earlier spring peak discharge in many glaciers and snow-fed rivers.
- Extreme hot nights have increased ; frost days have decreased.
- Earlier timing of spring events (blooms) on land.
- Poleward and upward shifts in plant and animal ranges.
- Changes in algal, plankton, and fish abundances (~Temp.).
- Increase in the acidity of oceans.
- Limits of deterministic prediction
- (attribution of an event (Katrina) is not possible)
- No model can explain the past 50 year observed global warming without increase in the green house gases (GHG).
- Sun and volcanoes would have produced cooling.
- There is no mechanism known to scientists that can explain the global structure of warming in the A, O, L without GHG.
- Warming and sea level rise would continue for centuries, even if GHG were stabilized.
- Increase in the frequency of heat waves and heavy precipitation.
- Entire disappearance of arctic late summer sea ice (~ 2100).

The Unknowns:

- Predictability of climate models for small regions and extreme events.
- Change in the frequency and intensity of tropical cyclones.
- Timing for complete elimination of the Greenland ice sheet.

(sea level will rise by 7 meters)

- Antarctic ice sheet : too cold?, gain mass due to more snowfall?
- The probability of large abrupt climate change.
- Level of warming for extinction of species

(1.5 - 2.5oC: 20 - 30% ; > 4oC: > 40%)

- Carbon uptake by the oceans.

The STERN REVIEW: The Economics of Climate Change

1. Ignoring climate change will damage economic growth. The damages accelerate as the world gets warmer.
(The poorest countries and people will suffer earliest and most)
2. The damage will be on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the twentieth century.
3. It will be difficult or impossible to reverse changes.
4. The earlier effective action is taken, the less costly it will be.

5. Expected annual cost of emissions reductions for stabilization at 550 ppm CO₂-eq. is likely to be around 1% of GDP by 2050. The cost of mitigation is modest relative to no action (risk ~ 5% loss of GDP per year).

Adaptation, Mitigation, and Sustainable Development

1. Adaptation can reduce vulnerability to climate change.
2. Adaptive capacity is uneven across society and is connected to social and economic development
3. Substantial adaptation and mitigation can be achieved with existing technology.
4. Carbon pricing, either through taxes or cap-and-trade systems, is an essential incentive for implementing mitigation options.
5. There is a large low-cost mitigation potential between now and 2030 (energy infrastructure investment ~ 20 trillion dollars).

What Should "we" do?

- Immediate action on conservation and energy efficiency
- Educate the public and help elect enlightened leaders and policymakers
- International dialogues and negotiations
- Social, economic, scientific, technological research to suggest options for adaptation and mitigation
- Develop next generation models (climate, social, economic) for improved projections of climate change and consequences

Dr. Jain finally shared some of the things NGOs can do to reduce their own impact on Climate Change, and create awareness in the communities they work about how to reduce, reuse, recycle, all materials and direct energy they use in their daily lives. He also suggested four reference books to learn more on this subject. These included: Rethinking Progress by Dr. Hari Lamba, Chicago; Ecology of Commerce, by Paul Hawken, Manifesto for Global Economic Transition, Edited by Jerry Mander for The International Forum on Globalization and the Institute for Policy Studies, and Plan B 2.0 Rescuing a Planet under Stress, by Dr. Lester Brown of Earth Policy Institute.

A group of 20 students from St. Catherine College, Minnesota who are part of a two week learning journey to India under the direction of by Prof. Deepshikha Gupta attended the conference very attentively and were very enthusiastic to learn about issues facing poor in India. Some of them shared their thoughts on the conference and the learning drawn from the same in the concluding session. Dr. Prakasam Tata, Vice President, IDCA delivered a vote of thanks to Mrs. Pooja Murada (Convener), Jagdish Prasad (Food and Facility), Ms. Arti Manchanda (Publicity/Registration), from the Sehgal Foundation, speakers, moderators, event manager, caterer, the delegates and all others who made this lively conference possible. The meeting was attended by more than 100 people that included a NRI s /PI Os from US and Canada and delegates from different parts of India.

Following the conclusion of the meeting a delicious dinner was served that also provided additional opportunity to network and build relationships to work together to alleviate poverty and climate change. Conference Photos are at: http://picasaweb.google.com/mjain1142/IDCA_Conf_India_2008?authkey=xJHHUJmkLR4.