



**KONRAD  
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**FICCI** *Forum of  
Parliamentarians*

FICCI- KAS Reimagine India Series

**'India's Climate Diplomacy'**

**Shri Jairam Ramesh**  
Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 | 1600-1700 hrs on Zoom

JOINED BY CO-CHAIRS, FICCI FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

  
Dr. Jyotsna Suri  
Past President, FICCI

  
Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia  
Past President, FICCI

  
Mr. Peter Rimmele  
Resident Representative to India  
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

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**FICCI- KAS REIMAGINE INDIA SERIES**

**India's Climate Diplomacy**

*Special Address and Conversation with*

**Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)**

August 24, 2021 | 1600- 1700 hrs | Hybrid

## Programme Overview

The world is faced with an unprecedented crisis which has had an effect on political, social, economic aspects of life. The Reimagine India Series is an endeavour to understand the varied aspects of the political and societal living, with respect to the New Normal, through engaging discussions with Members of Parliament.

The global carbon system is an interlocked system with a spill over effect. Climate change is a pressing issue and India, being one of the rapidly growing economies, needs to assume a greater role in the climate talks ahead of the COP26. India has delineated its clean energy goals and its commitment towards creating low carbon systems. India has a goal of reducing its carbon emissions to about 40 per cent by 2030 and becoming a renewable energy dependent country. As the founding member of the International Solar Alliance, India seeks to develop solar power energy and clean renewable energy. In order to give a greater impetus to the foreign policy agenda on climate change, the role of private sector in supporting the government for meeting the NDCs, is equally important.

To understand India's stance on Climate Diplomacy, measures for reactivating climate change consciousness and its implications on the international system, FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians in partnership with the India Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation organised a **Special Address by and Conversation with Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) on 'India's Climate Diplomacy'** on **August 24, 2021** from **1600-1700 hrs** in a hybrid format.

The interaction witnessed the presence of eminent guests including representatives from the industry, academia, diplomats and policy think tanks.

Secretary General FICCI **Mr. Dilip Chenoy**, **Dr. Jyotsna Suri** and **Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia**, Past Presidents, FICCI and Co-Chairs of FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians Council and **Mr. Peter Rimmele**, Resident Representative to India, KAS were also present at the discussion.

## Key Takeaways

- With growing concerns over climate change, investing in sustainable methods for ensuring green recovery and committing to climate ambition, is the need of the hour.
- India, being one of the rapidly growing economies, needs to catch up on its target of achieving clean energy goals and act on its commitment towards creating low carbon ecosystems.
- In December 2019, the European Council endorsed the goal of achieving a climate neutral EU by 2050. The green deal is a massive paradigm shift on EU's climate policy and its inclusion in the recovery plan in the post covid 19 world.
- The EU requires a broader understanding of climate geopolitics and improve its policy initiatives by shifting from climate security approach to environmental security.
- Climate change is one of the environmental challenges but there are multiple planetary boundaries that the world needs to overcome including ozone layer depletion, acidification of oceans, deforestation, loss of biodiversity.
- Climate security policies should not just focus on adaption to turbulence, resource clarity but also promote changes needed to restore ecological stability at the global level.
- A strategy is required which goes beyond the one- dimensional approach of decarbonisation. The countries need to focus on low carbon growth trajectory and focus on net zero goal for 2050 like Europe.
- India is most vulnerable to climate change and it has become more conscious of its vulnerability. The frequency of floods, tsunami and other natural disasters have increased in the recent years.
- There is a need for changing the domestic approach to bring about a change in the international Climate Diplomacy.
- The first manifestation of changing India's Climate Diplomacy was reflected at COP15 conference in Copenhagen in 2009 and United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun in 2010. These transformative international forums set the stage for the Paris Agreement in 2015 where yesterday's critics have become today's champions.
- India has developmental and demographic challenges and economic growth is central to bring it back to its growth trajectory.
- India cannot afford a fossil fuel phase-out but should aim at fossil fuel phase-down where for example, by 2035, all passenger vehicles are converted to electric vehicles.

- Countries have been utilising technology for innovative methods to devise clean and renewable energy and there might be energy storage devices in the future.
- The realisation that science evolves rapidly and technological solutions and so innovations, which might be relevant at one point might not be relevant at another point. India needs a roadmap of going green in tandem with the technological advancements.
- There is a need for improving standard of living, energy needs, urbanisation but needs to be done in a greener, sustainable and eco-friendly way. This is the main objective of Climate Diplomacy.
- India needs to assume an aggressive position on Climate Diplomacy and should lead from the front before heading to Glasgow for the COP26. India may not have created the problem historically but should be part of the solution both at the national and international level.
- India is people surplus but land deficit country where land is mostly used for agriculture and food production hence biofuels are not a feasible option due to the energy balance aspect as a country has to spend more energy into producing biofuel than it gets in return.
- India signed the Montreal Protocol which has been amended to phase down hydrofluorocarbons.
- There is a need for improving forestry, increasing green cover in India from 25 % to 33 %.
- It is important to connect the dots between climate and sustainability, make a net positive contribution and not just mitigate effects of climate change.
- There is the need for radical change, a holistic approach, cooperative federalism, and alignment between stakeholders.

# Glimpses



## Key Note Address

**Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)**



*India needs to assume an aggressive position on Climate Diplomacy and should lead from the front before heading to Glasgow for the COP26.*

Shri Jairam Ramesh remarked that the ecosystem of Climate Diplomacy has changed over the course of time and it was looked upon as a problem of the other countries (specifically the developed and industrialised countries ) and not of India. He noted that the per capita emissions in India is low as the denominator is 1.3 bn with an increase of 10 mn every year as compared to Europe, USA who have a bigger role in the international climate arena.

He remarked that there is a need for changing the domestic approach to bring about a change in the international Climate Diplomacy. He noted that India is most vulnerable to climate change due to heavy rainfall during the monsoon, sea level rise with 7, 000 km coastline, forests being the repository of coal, iron and mineral resources, retreat of the Himalayan glaciers. The frequency of floods, tsunami and other natural disasters have increased in the recent years.

He alluded that the first manifestation of changing India's Climate Diplomacy was reflected at COP15 conference in Copenhagen in 2009 and United Nations Climate Change Conference in Cancun in 2010. These transformative international forums set the stage for the Paris Agreement in 2015 where yesterday's critics have become today's champions.

He mentioned that "low carbon" is different from "no carbon" where the former is desirable, feasible and a country can grow at 7-8 % a year with a low carbon growth strategy. He noted that India may not have created the problem historically but India has been a part of the problem of climate change. It is now time for India to lead from the front and should actively be a part of the solution both at national and international levels.

Shri Ramesh noted India is most vulnerable to climate change and it has become more conscious of its vulnerability especially with respect to the impact of pollution and environmental degradation on public health and loss of biodiversity.

Talking about the challenges of Climate Diplomacy, Shri Jairam Ramesh noted that Europe , USA and China are making commitments for net zero carbon emission by 2050. For India, there is need for a roadmap and a strategy which goes beyond the one- dimensional approach of decarbonisation and focusses on low carbon growth trajectory by 2025 or 2030.

He noted that there is a need for improving forestry, increasing green cover in India from 25 % to 33 %. India absorbs about 10-12 % of annual carbon emissions through the forests and there is a need to reach a target of 25- 30 %. He mentioned that India has developmental and demographic challenges and cannot afford a fossil fuel phase out but should aim at fossil fuel phase down where for example, by 2035, all passenger vehicles are converted to electric vehicles.

The solar grid technology produces only 20% of energy and there is a need for baseload capacity which is generated from coal. He noted that India is not a part of a regional electricity grid where it can buy power to compensate for the low renewable energy capacity as this is not applicable in the context of South Asia.

India signed the Montreal Protocol, an international agreement made in 1987, designed to stop the production and import of ozone depleting substances. Its idea is to phase out hydrochlorofluorocarbons and replace it with HFCs. In the current times, the Protocol has been amended to phase down HFCs. He remarked that the realisation that science evolves rapidly and technological solutions and so innovations, which might be relevant at one point might not remain relevant at another point. India needs a roadmap of going green in tandem with the technological advancements.

Shri Ramesh noted that climate change is one of the environmental challenges but there are multiple planetary boundaries that the world needs to overcome including ozone layer depletion, acidification of oceans, deforestation, loss of biodiversity etc.. In India, pollution (water, air and soil) and chemical contamination is an urgent issue and more serious than climate change which leads to impact on mortality.

He gave an example of Germany's model of "*Energiewende*", which is the country's planned transition to a low-carbon, nuclear-free economy. He noted that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of Germany's daily electricity needs is catered by solar and wind energy. This has been possible by restructuring grid, electricity transmission and distribution systems where 8 mn Germans are energy producers. He noted that India and Germany need to collaborate and partner on utilising the immense potential of renewable energy.

He concluded by mentioning that there is a radically transformed situation in India with respect to Climate Diplomacy and the political environment is more accepting in the current situation. He opined that there is a need for bringing economic growth back to its trajectory, improving standard of living, catering to the energy needs, promoting urbanisation and industrialisation but in a greener, sustainable and ecological way.

## Remarks

**Mr. Peter Rimmele**, Resident Representative to India, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)



**Mr. Peter Rimmele** talked about the FICCI- KAS Reimagine India Series being the platform for constructive exchange of ideas, concepts and visions. He spoke about the European perspective on Climate Diplomacy with an emphasis on the issues in the European context.

He remarked that Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission had presented an ambitious climate plan to combat climate change at the European level and the European Council has endorsed the goal of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050. He mentioned that the Green Deal can be considered a massive paradigm shift in the EU's climate policy and entails a recovery plan for a post COVID-19 world.

Mr. Rimmele noted that the European Green Deal not only provided a comprehensive strategy and roadmap for achieving climate neutrality in 2050 for the EU member states, but it also affirmed the EU's ambition to become a global leader in best-practices climate action. He opined that climate change is a global phenomenon and EU had to devise a vigorous Green Deal Climate Diplomacy to help and contribute towards reaching the global 1.5-degree limit in a sustainable manner.

He talked about the challenges in EU's Climate Diplomacy including the consensus of the EU Member States on the implementation of the Green Deal, role of nuclear energy in Europe's future energy mix and socio-economic consequences of closing carbon-intensive industries. He noted that the EU's Climate Diplomacy are too narrow with a focus on reducing carbon emissions. He remarked that EU requires a broader understanding of climate geopolitics in order to expand and improve its already rich range of policy initiatives in this area and needs a paradigm shift from climate security to environmental security.

Mr. Rimmele suggested that a strategy for decarbonisation is necessary for nations that are heavily dependent on traditional energy inputs and to help them reduce their dependency on fossil fuels.

He concluded by mentioning that European Climate Diplomacy needs to take into consideration the need for a greener, environmentally sustainable and more equitable planet. There is a need for connecting the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment.



## Audience Interaction

**Q. How do we see India lead this Climate Diplomacy, leveraging our strategic ties and various alliances? Also, how do we see India as a lead in Bio-Energy sector, Biofuels, Sustainable Aviation fuels etc? ~ Colonel Rohit Dev**

A. India is people surplus but land deficit country where land is mostly used for agriculture and food production hence biofuels are not a feasible option due to the energy balance aspect as a country has to spend more energy into producing biofuel than it gets in return.

**Q. Are we talking any initiative of including the tribal people and their vast indigenous knowledge into tackling the unpredictable climate situation? ~ Ms. Pooja Shah**

A. India has the National Biodiversity Act passed by the Indian Parliament in 2002 and the Forest Rights Act which was passed in 2006. The important aspect of India's policy is the protection and regeneration of forests. About 200 mn people are dependent on the forest for livelihood and hence, tribal population needs to be made a partner in eco-restoration and wildlife conservation.

**Q. While in countries like the United States of America, climate change has been classified as a national security threat, why has India not done so, despite the negative ramifications it has on the country? ~ Mr. Vineeth Daniel**

A. Climate change has national security dimensions and India has maximum vulnerability to climate change but it is not feasible to classify it under national security aspect.

**Q. Within a period of 10 years major cities in coastal zone start sinking under sea water. What are the precautions to be taken by Center Government, States Governments & Urban Local Bodies of India? ~ Ms. Asha Avhad**

A. Sunderbans are under severe threat as well as of the some big cities of India including Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Puducherry. During the Tsunami of December 2004, mangroves played an important part. They act as "bio-shields" which protect the coastline against soil erosion and helps in carbon sequestration. There is a need for increasing the area of mangroves. There is also the need for relocating people and incentivising them for moving from the hazardous locations along the coastline and providing them sustainable livelihoods.

# Social Media Coverage





**FICCI- KAS Reimagine India Series**

**‘India’s Climate Diplomacy’**

**Special Address by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon’ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)**

Tuesday, August 24, 2021 | 1550- 1700 hrs | Federation House & Zoom

Programme

1550 hrs	Logging into respective devices for webinar
1600– 1605 hrs	Introductory Remarks by FICCI
1605– 1610 hrs	Remarks by <b>Mr. Peter Rimmele</b> , Resident Representative to India, KAS
1610– 1615 hrs	Introduction of <i>Shri Jairam Ramesh</i> by <b>Dr. Jyotsna Suri</b> , Past President, FICCI and Co-Chair of FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians
1615– 1620 hrs	Special Address by <b>Shri Jairam Ramesh</b> , Hon’ble Member of Parliament
1620– 1645 hrs	A Conversation with <b>Shri Jairam Ramesh</b> by <b>Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia</b> , Past President, FICCI and Co-Chair of FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians
1645– 1655 hrs	<b>Questions from the Audience</b> moderated by Mr. Neotia
1655 – 1700 hrs	Vote of Thanks by <b>Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia</b>

## FICCI- KAS Reimagine India Series

### 'India's Climate Diplomacy'

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#### Speaker Profiles

#### Special Address and Interaction

#### Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)



**Shri Jairam Ramesh** is an MP from Karnataka and a Member of Indian National Congress. By profession, he is an Economist and has a B.Tech. degree. Previously, he has been Union Minister between 2006 and 2014 and handled several important portfolios including Environment and Forests and Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation. Presently, he is the Chairman of Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change; Member of Select Committee on the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill.

He has been associated with various public organisations in India and abroad and has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the IIT, Bombay. He has special interest in China and has been the Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi since 2002. He has also worked in the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industry, Planning Commission, Advisory Board on Energy and other government departments at senior levels during 1980-1998. Additionally, he has been a columnist for Business Standard, Business Today, The Telegraph, Times of India and India Today.

He has to his credit publications namely "Mobilising Technology for World Development" (Co-editor), 1979, "Kautilya Today", 2002; "Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India", 2005; "To the Brink and Back: India's 1991 Story", 2015; and "Old History New Geography", 2016.

**Dr. Jyotsna Suri, Past President, FICCI; Co-Chair, FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians and CMD, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group**



**Dr. Jyotsna Suri** has been associated with Bharat Hotels since its inception. In the year 1989, she became the Group's Joint Managing Director. In 2006, she took on the mantle of Chairperson & Managing Director and since then, has been the driving force of the Group's operations.

Under her stewardship, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group became one of the leading privately-owned domestic hotel brands in India, engaged in the business of operating and managing hotels, palaces and resorts, with a focus on the luxury segment. The Group operates 12 luxury hotels, palaces and resorts under The LaLiT brand and two mid-segment hotels under The LaLiT Traveller brand across India's key business and leisure travel destinations, offering 2,261 rooms. In addition, the Group holds exclusive rights to operate and provide management consultancy services to a hotel in London, The LaLiT London, offering 70 rooms.

Dr. Suri was conferred with the Order of The Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star by Japan Government recently for her contribution towards strengthening strategic ties between India and Japan in economic and tourism sectors. She is the first Indian Woman to have received the Imperial honour since its commencement for foreign nationals in 1981.

Besides this she has been recipient of over 30 National and International awards and recognitions. She has also been featured in several power and business listings by renowned publications like Business World, Fortune India, Forbes Asia to name a few.

Dr. Suri holds various portfolios with Industry Associations – Past President FICCI; Co-Chair FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians; Chairperson FICCI Tourism Committee; Chairperson, Creative Industries Committee, FICCI; Executive Member of HAI; Council Member of World Travel & Tourism Council, India Initiative; Member of Board of Governors for National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology and Member of Board of Governors of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.

**Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia, Past President, FICCI; Co-Chair, FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians and Chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group**



**Mr. Harshavardhan Neotia** hails from a distinguished family that migrated from Rajasthan to Kolkata more than 100 years ago. He is an Entrepreneur, and presently Chairman of Ambuja Neotia Group.

The Group operates across five business verticals: Real Estate - covering the entire gamut of housing, retail and commercial spaces, Hospitality - including hotels, resorts, clubs and restaurants, Healthcare with multispecialty hospitals, Education, and Start-up Incubation. Headquartered in Kolkata, the group's projects are mostly located in Eastern India.

Mr. Neotia did his schooling from La Martiniere for Boys, Kolkata. He graduated with a B. Com (Hons.) degree from St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, and went on to complete the Owner President Management Programme (OPM) from Harvard Business School, USA.

His work in social housing earned him the honour of being conferred with Padma Shri from the Hon'ble President of India in 1999. He is also a recipient of the YPO Legacy of Honour Award. He was recently conferred the D.Litt. (Honoris Causa) by the Vidyasagar University, West Bengal, and 'Honorary Life Fellowship' by AIMA (All India Management Association).

He is an active Member and Past President of FICCI and also Past President of AIMA. He is presently member India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) Trust, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), and Chairman of National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training & Research (NITTTR).

He has also formerly been on the board of IIM Kolkata, IIT Kharagpur, and a member of The Court of Jawaharlal Nehru University.

He heads Jnana Pravaha, a Centre for Cultural Studies and Research in Varanasi, as its chairman and is one of the trustees of Shree Somnath Trust that manages and maintains the Somnath Temple in Gujarat.

He also serves as the Honorary Consul of Israel in West Bengal.

## ORGANISERS

### Mr. Dilip Chenoy, Secretary General, FICCI



**Mr. Dilip Chenoy** is currently Secretary General of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). He leads the permanent secretariat of the industry chamber, which is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India, and a potent voice for policy change. FICCI represents over 2,50,000 members through Member Bodies covering all the States of India.

Before joining FICCI, Dilip served as Managing Director & CEO of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). NSDC fosters private sector investment and initiatives in training and skill development.

Dilip has also worked in several key industry organizations, including SIAM as its Director General. He was a member of the Harvard Business School project under Professor Michael Porter that worked on the competitiveness of Indian industry. With varied experiences of working in the private sector, he advises start-ups including organisations in the digital, education, skills and livelihood space. Dilip has also served as Chairman of an Engineering Institute.

A fellow of the World Academy of Productivity Science (WAPS), he was awarded the Indian Achievers Award in 2018, The Game Changer Award in 2015 and the Rashtriya Media Ratan Award in 2013.

**Mr. Peter Rimmele, Resident Representative, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)**



**Mr. Peter Rimmele** is currently the Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office, India.

He has a First Law Degree from Freiburg University, as well as a Second Law Degree from the Ministry of Justice Baden-Württemberg, Germany and a M.A. in Geography.

After working as, a jurist, judge and lecturer, he took public office as Ministerialrat, Head of Division at the State Ministry of the Interior in Saxony, Germany, from November 1991 on until 2000.

There he first served in the Police and Security and later in the Local Government Department.

On behalf of the German Foreign Ministry he served in East Timor as Registrar General, Head of Civil Registry and Notary Services (UNTAET), and became later the principal Advisor for Governance Reform for GIZ (German International Cooperation) to the Ministry of Administrative Reform and the Anti-Corruption-Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, where he served for 7 years. He then moved to Rwanda, also as Principal Advisor Good Governance/Justice Program. Earlier he was Resident Representative Lebanon, Director of Rule of Law Program Middle East North Africa, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.



## **About the Partners**

### **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)**

Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialization, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

A non-government, not-for-profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry. From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies.

FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community. FICCI's vision is to be the thought leader for industry, its voice for policy change and its guardian for effective implementation.

### **Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung**

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as "Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education", in 1964 the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. We promote and preserve free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. We focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

The leitmotif of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation "Germany. The next chapter" is supported by a thematic focus. With the three main topics Innovation, Security and Representation and Participation, it is quite clear which topics the Konrad Adenauer Foundation will focus on in the coming years.

We cooperate with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, we seek to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation on the foundations of our objectives and values. Together with our partners, we make a significant contribution to the creation of a global order that empowers every country to determine its own developmental priorities and destiny in an internationally responsible manner.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has organized its program priorities in India into five working areas:

1. Foreign and Security Policy
2. Economic, Climate and Energy Policy
3. Rule of Law
4. Political Dialogue focussed on Social and Political Change
5. Media and Youth

The India Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation takes great pride in its cooperation with Indian partner institutions who implement jointly curated projects and programmes.