

Keynote Remarks by Secretary, Ministry of Environment- INDIA

Side Event: On 3rd November 2021-Nitrogen-Climate Opportunities

Hon. Mahinda Amaraweera, Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka

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All dignitaries and my dear friends

- Nitrogen is one of the most pressing pollution issues facing humanity today. Since the 1980s, the amount of nitrogen in the environment has increased rapidly. Globally, as a result of human activities, 200 million tonnes of reactive nitrogen entered the environment (air, soil, and water) annually.
- Nitrogen pollution needs to be addressed through a coherent approach that considers all the different impacts of nitrogen pollution through effective reduction in air and water pollution, lower greenhouse gas emissions, improve biodiversity, and health and sustainable livelihoods, at the time. This would automatically help address multiple Sustainable Development Goals.
- With this background, Government of India led the “Sustainable Nitrogen Management” - Resolution and was adopted unanimously in UNEA-4 in March 2019. This was a historic moment for India to gain leadership on the global stage on nitrogen climate. The time has come for coordinated policy and better nitrogen management. As a proponent of the UN resolution on “Sustainable Nitrogen Management” India is playing an active role in its implementation.

- India has already started implementing the National Clean Air programme by expanding the list of pollutants to be measured including PM 2.5 and by increasing its installed capacity for monitoring.
- India's neem-coated urea policy is slowing down the urea consumption in Indian agriculture, thereby significantly reducing nitrogen pollution from the agriculture sector. India's experience with organic farming suggests that a proper planning is required for a transition from fertilizer-based farming to organic farming. It can take a farmer 3-5 years to shift to organic farming completely.
- India is leading the International Solar Alliance and has declared its vision to gradually replace fossil fuel-consuming vehicles with electric vehicles. In the meantime, Euro6 (Bharat Stage IV) norms were introduced for vehicles based on fossil fuels to reduce air pollution (including N pollution) significantly.
- India is also implementing waste –to-energy and waste- to- compost projects on an industrial scale to reduce C and N emissions from waste.
- An interdisciplinary national committee is constituted in the Ministry to oversee the implementation of “sustainable nitrogen management” with a mandate to develop national strategies for sustainable nitrogen management and to suggest measures to minimize nitrogen waste by 2030.
- The committee will promote innovation on anthropogenic nitrogen use and recycling emphasizing the opportunities for the circular economy;