

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF SMT. D. PURANDESWARI  
HON'BLE MINISTER OF STATE, HUMAN RESOURCE  
DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
At 34<sup>th</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru National Science exhibition for  
Children 2007  
On December 21, 2007 in PUDUCHERRY**

Distinguished friends and guests,

I have great pleasure to be with you this evening on the occasion of the inauguration of the thirty fourth Jawaharlal Nehru National Science Exhibition for Children 2007 which is being organized jointly by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi and the Government of Puducherry. At the outset I would like to thank the Government of Puducherry for hosting the exhibition this year. The venue of this year's exhibition in the historic city of Puducherry, has a special significance as it would offer participants who have come over here from different parts of the country an opportunity to get acquainted with the culture, customs and the history of the place: Sri Aurobindo, one of the greatest philosophers of modern India and a freedom fighter, established his Ashram here. The city also takes pride in being the workplace of the great Tamil poet, freedom fighter and reformer Subramaniam Bharati also known as Mahakavi Bharathiyar. I hope that the participants in general and children in particular will seize this opportunity to become familiar with the socio-cultural heritage of Puducherry.

In order to develop well defined abilities and skills such as spirit of inquiry, creativity, objectivity, courage to question, aesthetic sensibility, and the knowledge of science is extremely important in the modern pattern of education. Hence, ever since

the dawn of Independence, development of Science was accorded high priority by our policy planners in the country. Our first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru accorded topmost priority for science and, scientific research to foster technological inventions as he was convinced that it could work wonders for overall development of the country. Accordingly in 1958 he put in place a scientific policy enshrined in the Objectives of Scientific Policy Resolution, wherein it was emphasized that the policy of the government would be *inter alia* to foster, promote and sustain, the cultivation of science and scientific research in all its aspects pure, applied and educational. Shri Nehru was quite clear and emphatic that the government should encourage and initiate with all possible speed, programmes for the training of scientific and technical personnel, on a scale adequate to fulfill the country's needs in Science as an infallible instrument to boost our economic progress and growth.

However well-conceived, a formal system of education is not adequate to achieve the desired goals of science education. Rigid and theoretical lessons of the formal system and the often inadequate demonstrations and experiments do not provide opportunity to the naturally curious children to indulge in the joy and meaningful experience of scientific investigation. Science Exhibitions like what has been organized to-day offer an opportunity to the students to express and exchange their creative ideas, help them to learn the methods of science, provide them with opportunity to develop their problems solving skills and creative abilities. I am glad that the NCERT has been carrying on with such meaningful programmes for over 30 years, now which, I

am sure, would arise and sustain the interests of the children in learning and properly comprehending learning in science.

I am sure the young scientists in the making present here would explain their ideas and perceptions on these important societal issues and the role of science and technology to the general public, especially children, who would be visiting the exhibition. I am told that thousands of children, including those who are present here, have been associated with the exhibitions held at the district and state levels and have in turn interacted with the visitors. Child to child communication, in my opinion, the most effective way of putting across ideas of science and technology that may not otherwise be comprehended easily.

The theme of the exhibition this year is Science and Technology for Sustainable Development. What do we mean by sustainable development? Vertically the term 'sustainable development' may be referred to the development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the capability of the future generation to meet their own needs. In horizontal sense Sustainable development at different levels requires individuals to understand their responsibility for preservation of the environment and adopting a lifestyle consistent with the balanced environment. Such a lifestyle is closely linked with the attitudes and values towards our environment and care and concern for people across the globe. Our Constitution reflects these attitudes and values and provides a framework for articulating the concerns of balanced development.

Mother earth is 203 million years old and it took a very long time to make it habitable. The diversity of plants, animals and the mountains, rivers etc, which we all see have evolved over many years. It is difficult to imagine that so many generations of plants, animals and humans have lived before human beings came to exist in their present form. Early man hunted for wild animals and relied on gathering fruits and vegetables for survival. The survival of early man was based upon the availability of resources in the immediate environment. But due to excessive hunting or destroying too much vegetation, a threat was created to their supply of resources and chances of survival. As humans evolved it led to treating the environment harshly. To begin with land was used for agriculture and eventually civilization and industrialization. These developments changed man's relationship with the earth. At one time mankind relied on earth for survival and sustenance. Now he has started to control and exploit it, often without recognizing the environmental consequences. Human beings through pollution and over consumption, have now threatened the sustainability of Earth's life support systems. This process must be controlled sooner or later, sooner rather than later.

In this context particularly important is the role of children who will inherit the earth. Although there are a large number of NGOs, voluntary organizations, who have taken up the task of orienting masses on sustainable development. The efforts made by NGOs and government need to be supported by vibrant and aware citizens who choose clean and healthy environment and pro-actively work to sustain the vegetation, pollution free air,

preserve water oil, and energy, and prevent wastage of food etc. The children are the most important stakeholders in this process of sustainable development. They have to exercise their discretion for pro-environment behaviors, as also to work actively for creating awareness among members of the family, school and neighborhood. Individual and collective action at various levels is the need of the hour. As educated and responsible citizens, the children have to ensure that the earth they may live on is healthy and capable of sustaining life. They must be taught that they must protect the environment to protect themselves. That is a huge challenge. Our young visionaries have to dare to dream, share their vision, and create a movement strong enough to reverse the course of events leading towards ecological balance and sustainable development.

The past few decades have seen major changes in the fields of science, technology and economy. The distinctions between them are getting blurred. I am sure this will be duly reflected in the models displayed in the exhibition, which have been developed around specified sub-themes. I am also confident that the science models displayed in the Exhibition here will provide adequate glimpses of various facets of sustainable development and the role science and technology can play in this endeavour to save mankind from the human onslaughts inflicted on Nature in the name of development and growth. With these words, I am glad to inaugurate the Science Exhibition.

Jai Hind.