



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh talks to Slovenian President Danilo Turk (left) and Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou as Teri director-general R.K. Pachauri (right) looks on at the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit in New Delhi on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Manmohan backs Pachauri

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Feb. 5: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed disappointment with the Copenhagen climate change summit but expressed satisfaction that the Copenhagen Accord had provided a face-saver. "A modest accord that is fully implemented may be better than an ambitious one that falls seriously short of its targets," said the Prime Minister inaugurating the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit organised by TERI.

He confirmed that the UNFCCC would remain the centerpiece of global cooperation on the climate issue and the purpose of the Copenhagen Accord was to contribute to the negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol and on long term cooperation. "It is not a substitute but a complement to these

core international agreements. There is much in the Copenhagen Accord that can bring consensus on the two-track negotiating process. For this to happen, this process has to recommence in right earnest, perhaps from March this year," he maintained.

The PM made it clear that India had already conveyed its determination of voluntary mitigation action to the UNFCCC by January 31 by reducing emission intensity of GDP by 20-25 per cent by 2020 on 2005 basic levels. "We are also very serious about fulfilling and perhaps even exceeding this target," he told a distinguished gathering comprising of, amongst others, of four European heads of state. Slovenian President Danilo Turk, Finnish PM Matti Vanhanen, Norwegian PM Jens Stolteberg and Greek PM George Papandreou

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The PM also emphasised that despite recent criticism of the IPCC, the debate did not challenge its core projections on greenhouse gas accumulations affecting temperature, rainfall and sea level rise. Very significantly, putting his weight behind Dr R.K. Pachauri, he said, "India has full confidence in the IPCC process and its leadership and will support

it in every way that it can."

The Prime Minister regretted the lack of global consensus on burden sharing pointing out that industrialised countries needed to respond with bolder initiatives to contain their future emissions. They also needed to provide greater financial and technical assistance to developing countries both for adaptation and mitigation, he said all the time insisting on the central UNFCCC principle of "common but differentiated responsibility". Dr Pachauri maintained that if temperature increase was to be limited to between 2-2.4° C, then global emissions must peak no later than 2015. "If they do not... the costs of taking action would turn out to be extremely high and we may be embarking on an overshoot scenario and this would require much larger costs," he said.