

Top Priority to Protection of Human Health, Environment: Srikant Jena

“The chemical industry in India has played a significant role for the economic development of India. Chemicals, including petrochemicals, contribute a total annual production worth about US \$ 43 billion, equivalent to 3% of India’s GDP. It is a matter of pride that the Indian chemical industry ranks 6th in the world in terms of volume and is 3rd largest in Asia. The Government recognises the proactive role of CII to create and sustain an environment conducive to growth of the industry, and the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals has been closely working with CII to resolve vital issues”, said **Mr. Srikant Kumar Jena, Minister of State for Chemicals & Fertilisers**, speaking at the inaugural session of the Conclave on “Sustainable Chemistry: Green Solutions for All,” organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) , here today.

The Minister expressed pleasure that this Conclave is focusing on the need for the growth of chemical sector on a sustainable basis, keeping in view the imperatives of protection of human health and environment. He said the Government of India was concerned about the safety aspects of chemical industry in the background of the recent judgments relating to Bhopal gas tragedy and public outcry thereon. He stressed on the need to balance the economics of industrial growth with social aspects like safety, environment protection, societal benefits etc.

“This has brought back in focus the importance of green chemistry, which is the only sustainable way forward. Sustainability and sustainable development are concepts that are now engaging the attention of policy makers, academicians, scientists, corporate bodies and the society for quite some time now. The fact that this subject matter has been chosen for such serious and detailed deliberations, is a welcome sign that the chemical industry is aligning itself to the larger societal concerns on sustainability. It also shows the willingness of the industry to share the responsibility of achieving this important goal.

Setting up of Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Regions (PCPIRs) in different parts of the country demonstrates the Government’s commitment to providing quality infrastructure for the growth of indigenous chemical industry. These regions will have petroleum-based industry including refineries, service units to support process industries, utilities and infrastructure providers, etc. They will provide hassle-free and competitive business atmosphere along with sustainable environment and will also make the Indian chemical industry globally competitive.

Further, he exhorted businesses to take benefit of the liberal regime and adopt eco-friendly technologies and products. He wished the Conclave all success, and hoped it would lay down a clear charter of action to achieve sustainable growth in the country.

Earlier, welcoming all the participants to the conclave, **Mr. Hari Bhartia ,President, CII** and Co-chairman & Managing Director of Jubilant Organosys Ltd , said we are now witnessing the emergence of the Asian economy, and growth of regions like Africa and

Latin America. This has put enormous pressure on food and other resources, and has also exacerbated the problem of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions. While the chemical industry forms a very crucial pillar to the modern economy, the material and energy demands of society hinge critically on the progress of this sector which is central to many other sectors. The total investment in the Indian chemical sector today is about us\$ 60 billion, and it employs nearly 1 million persons. The sector also contributes 13-14% of total exports and accounts for 8-9% of total imports of India.

By definition, he added, sustainable chemistry means the design of chemical products and processes that reduce or eliminate the use or generation of hazardous substances and applies across the life cycle of a chemical product, including its design, manufacture, and use.

CII is cognisant to the need today to mainstream corporate sustainability in all business decisions and imperatives. The CII-Sohrabji Godrej Green Business Centre and the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development were leading multiple initiatives in this direction, such as the green buildings, the Mission for Sustainable Growth, climate change strategies, voluntary disclosures, etc.

Closing the session Dr. (Ms.) Sarita Nagpal, Deputy Director General, CII , emphasised the need to address all problems at the root, and this was the first time CII was organising a Seminar on this topic. The future of the Indian chemical industry has to be green and “innovation” is a key word in the way forward.

The Conclave, organised by the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, saw the presence of over 150 persons at the inaugural session from industry, government, research and academic institutions, NGOs and the media.

September 03, 2010
New Delhi