



Paris Climate Accord: *After America's exit*

With President Trump's announcement, fears of the United States pulling out of Paris Climate Accord have finally come true. This decision has put a question mark on the future of the agreement and may have a serious impact on global efforts for a greener future .

Historically the United States, along with Europe, has contributed 52% of the share of cumulative carbon emissions since industrialization. The resultant global warming and its associated impacts pose a serious risk to people and all forms of life on our planet. All scientific evidence proves that for a sustainable future, global efforts are required; and the Paris Climate Accord was a remarkable achievement towards this cause. Therefore, this abandonment of climate-leadership rightly worries the scientific community, business leaders and academicians across the world.

The beauty of the Paris Agreement lies in its flexibility and the fact that it allowed countries to set their own emission targets. The Paris Agreement rightly asked the developed nations to take greater responsibility and provide financial support to developing countries for implementing measures to curb global warming. America's exit means that India will have to work with countries such as China, the EU and Russia in ensuring that the global transition to cleaner & renewable energy sources does not stop. Most importantly, 'de-carbonization' is the next industrial revolution that will result in innovations that will reshape energy markets as we know them and alter the existing geopolitical and economic order. Those countries that take leadership in this area will benefit significantly in the longer run.

The way forward for India

India's growing economy and wellbeing of its vast population requires concerted efforts towards a sustainable future. Therefore, India must focus on the following steps to become a world-leader in the 'clean energy' space:

1. Focus on research and innovation

India must have a strategic focus on climate research. Government policies should be strengthened to incentivize innovation and educational set-up should be developed to attract bright talent towards this field. Best of the scientific minds will consider India as their destination only if they get support and infrastructure for their futuristic thinking. Becoming a lead player in the next wave of green technology requires an honest and pragmatic approach towards R&D.

2. Establish world-class institutions

India is already one of the leading countries in the renewable energy sector. The next step is to establish institutions of international repute to share expertise and knowledge with other countries in the developing world. This will not only expand the influence of India's soft power, but will also provide employment opportunities to its ever-growing engineering and technical talent pool.

3. Build global alliances

'Green-alliances' should be considered as important as economic and military alliances. India can lead the way in building consensus and joint efforts for a greener future. The International Solar Alliance is a great step towards this and India must continue to act as a climate leader, both at the regional and the international level.

We are witnessing one of the most exciting transitions in the history of the humankind. The choices that we make today, will define the future of the entire planet. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned during his recent trip to France, "It is not just a question of protection of environment but it is the responsibility of all of us to save Mother Earth... What we got from our ancestors, it becomes our responsibility to give to the coming generations and the future world."