



DNA, Mumbai, 07 Nov 2007

Cost of India's pollution=4% of GDP

The foul truth

Veerappa Moily

<p>90% of India's surface water resources are polluted to the extent that they are not fit for bathing</p> <p>The three major contributors to water pollution are the domestic sector, the industrial sector and the agricultural sector. 75% of the effluent are from the domestic sector</p>	<p>India's urbanisation, skewed in favour of a few large cities, has led to congestion of cities, proliferation of private vehicles and increased pollution. The situation is exacerbated by a shift from railways towards road transport and from public to private transport due to inadequate expansion of public transport</p>	<p>Consolidate pollution control laws</p> <p>Make clean technologies mandatory in new industries</p> <p>Require environmental audits for industry</p> <p>Tax based on pollution load</p> <p>Reduce subsidies on fertilisers and pesticides</p>
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Moily panel suggests a brand new approach to utilise natural resources in a sustainable manner

Rajesh Sinha.

Pollution costs India nearly four per cent of its GDP and 200 million person days of work. About Rs 36, 000 crores are lost each year due to water related diseases. Making his point with more such startling statistics, Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) chairman Veerappa Moily on Friday spoke of the need for a bottom-up approach, with decentralisation and empowerment of local governments as a must for sustainable development.

With climate change ushering in a host of aggravating environmental problems that have begun to affect society and economy, prominent experts and policy makers at a conference on Vision 2025, organised by The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) called for wholesale restructuring of policy and governance to address the problem.

Emphasising the need for equitable and environment-friendly growth, Moily said urban and rural local bodies should

be fully empowered to deal with all types of civic services, adding that centralisation of even basic municipal functions such as water supply and sanitation into the hands of water boards and authorities has led to a massive decline in the role and status of local bodies, which is now sought to be reversed.

He said people must be made stakeholders in the environment through awareness campaigns. The poor have to be turned into agents for environmental restoration by involving them in say forest management, waste management, recycling and so on in manners that create incentives for them to use natural resources in sustainable manner, Moily held.

He said that for a country of India's size and population, "not to speak of its poverty levels", environmentally sustainable development is not a luxury but a necessity "I mention poor in particular because of their greater dependence on natural/common resources," he added.