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Apologies from Gurdeep and all of you for not being able to spend much more time here, much as I would have loved to be a part of the discussions, particularly, on this important subject of integrating renewable energy in the new transition that the nation is going through. In fact, I just addressed a Conference of TERI where also they are discussing the transition to renewables in a big way and the future of the energy sector.

I must also compliment the regulators, the power companies, the Ministry for having taken a very holistic view of how renewable energy will play an important role and how, going forward, we will see larger and larger impact of clean energy in the Indian power sector. I am also very delighted that NTPC has chosen to move forward to replace all the existing over 25-year old plants with modern, efficient super-critical plants, thereby, bringing down pollution in significant measure and also contributing to climate change initiatives of the power sector.

In fact, probably, when we calculate the savings in pollution out of this change, of these old, inefficient plants, the impact will be far more than the large thrust that's been given to renewable energy. This step itself will create a significant improvement and today is the right time, the costs are low, we already have the balance of plant, land, water, all the infrastructure. So I was told by Mr Gurdeep Singh that this will happen at under Rs 4 crore a megawatt, so that's good news for this sector. Just

like solar power has come down to under Rs 3 in the first year, we will also see this replacement at attractive prices.

Of course, NTPC also has very ambitious plans, nearly 10,000 MW of own plants and 15,000 MW of traded energy from solar or other forms of renewable energy which now in the new context Gurdeepji we should actually revisit. This was decided two years ago. And, any good, robust and dynamic company has to continuously relook its own programs and plans as the times change. In fact, I said it on an earlier occasion; I think John Keynes had said that when the facts change, when circumstances change, I change, what would you do?

And I think situation in renewable has changed significantly, newer and newer technologies is making it better to integrate renewable energy into the grid. I believe you are also working on seeing how thermal plants can ramp up and down faster so that spinning reserves which are a problem in India can also take the benefit of efficiently run coal-based plants so that our need for spinning reserve comes down and we can use the thermal plants itself as a spinning reserve. While you may also like to look at possibly pump storage or the gas-based plants getting revived again so that India, simultaneous to the thrust to renewable energy along with the movement towards better integration of renewable energy into the system, also provides adequate capacity of spinning reserves. And I think that holistic approach is the strength of our current policy on renewables.

I am also very delighted that today commemorates the synchronization of the first ever generating unit of NTPC at Singrauli, some 35 years ago. That's also a very milestone achievement but then 35 years also reflects that it's time to change and come up with a much better plant, a more

modern and efficient plant. In fact, I have as a policy decided that the old system of R&M as you used to call it of old plants after 25 years due to which you are only extending the life but continuing with the large amounts of pollution. I personally believe that's the wrong way to go about things. I believe we must remain abreast with technology. And, therefore, I hope NTPC has no more plans of R&M investment on these old plants. They should all be scrapped ASAP and we should look at better modern technology serving this nation.

I believe in today's interaction you have IPPs, state utilities, different people, different sectors participating so I am sure you will come up with a robust agenda of how renewable energy as it takes centre stage in India's energy mix can dovetail with the coal-based thermal plants and both can prosper simultaneously in an environment which is in the interests of the nation, in the interests of the people of India. I would also urge all of you to ensure that costs should remain affordable for the poor of India. The people of India should not be burdened with any further energy costs. So one of the important dimensions and dynamics of your discussion should also be the affordability of power and I am sure during the course of the discussions today, you will ensure that the ideas are sustainable, help us meet our climate objectives, yet do not cause a burden on the people of India. How to make these ideas more effective and efficient in a cost-effective manner is the mandate that we have all to work on.

And given your own performance while a lot was made out of Plant Load Factors being down, I think you are at upward of 70%? 77.8%! I am not satisfied with that. Why not 90%? And I am told some IPPs are also running at 102%. Sorry? Not some, we want all of NTPC now to aspire to do even better and even more. Maybe you should start

trading some of the surplus power and I think last time we had changed the rules that you don't even have to wait for the state utility to give you permission. If they don't say no, then you have an... has that happened or no? What nonsense? Work in progress, when did we decide that? No, no, but I had said make it a policy at the centre, Jyoti Arora was here somewhere. Can we immediately make that a policy what we had discussed in Baroda that if the state does not say no then even NTPC should be allowed to sell on the exchange, that will reduce the costs and the losses to the states.

*Aap banayeye isko*, make it a tariff policy engagement, which state is objecting? Any state here which has an objection to that? Any state representatives are here? Decision makers are not here. Please talk to them ASAP and I see no reason, the state only stands to benefit from that. And with enough power on the exchange should there be a need for them they can buy power on the exchange, it's not a big deal. But more occasions than not they will save money. So I think the objectives should be clear. Our objective is to maximize output, minimize cost, and yet do it in a sustainable manner, in a energy-efficient manner, in a manner that keeps the costs of the DISCOMs also low. Because under UDAY we have to get them all back into profits and I do hope the regulator sir will continue to support such initiatives.

One issue that comes to light based on what this decision was taken during monsoon in Baroda. And if it has taken us 5 months to implement it I am not happy about it. I think the speed of decision making is the essence of good governance. And I hope the regulator, our own ministry, our public sector undertakings, all of them sitting here will take note of this request that a decision made in public interest, in national interest which is good for the industry, which will

help to keep the costs down should not take so long to implement. And I would urge all of you, whichever is the decision pending at our ends and sir the regulator also should look at what is the backlog? What is pending? Can we take faster decisions? Are there issues on which we don't have to revisit the way? Our own effort through tariff policy is to make it easier for you to take a decision quickly. If you still need more clarity, we are happy in policymaking. Jyotiji, I would urge you to have a meeting Secretary and you with the CERC to discuss any more clarifications, anymore policy certainty that is required by the regulator which can help faster decision making. Can we all aim that all pending matters we will resolve, maybe in the next one month and 45 days between ministry, between regulator, between public sector units, between states. Let everybody start taking decisions faster so that the sector moves forward.

One last point before I conclude is just a thought that I would like to throw before the regulator, before the policymakers and NTPC. Can you all think of some now innovative ways to bring down the cost of power? For example, currently the cost of power is determined with a capacity charge and a merit order charge or a variable cost which varies from state to state and plant to plant. I would urge you to look at some innovation in this method of costing, in this method of valuing power or charging tariffs also. And in that it may be worth as a consideration, just for a thought to look whether capacity charge could be pooled across the nation. That may become a way forward to bring down the cost of power, particularly in far-flung areas, deep south, in the west, far away from the coal mines. It may help us to bring down the cost of power in different places and encourage states to buy more power and serve

their people with 24/7 power and help us really do away with DG sets and invertors once and for all.

And, possibly, a similar approach on gas could help turn around the gas sector. So various new approaches are possible, with the solar tariffs breaching Rs 2-3 in the first year with a nominal 5 paisa increase every year, I think we are even further encouraged towards renewable energy and I do hope today's conference will help us in planning comprehensively the future of the power sector in India, the future of a clean power sector in India so that we leave behind for the next generation a better world to live in.

Thank you very much.