

A GREEN PARTNERSHIP: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON U.S.-INDIA CLIMATE PACT

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

The [U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership](#) raises expectations that the coming decade will see sustained financial and technological cooperation between the two countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions. At the [Leaders Summit on Climate organised by U.S. President Joe Biden](#), the world's attention was focused on countries responsible for the highest carbon emissions. India ranks third, behind the U.S. and China, although its per capita CO₂ emissions are less than 60% of the global average, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi pointed out. There is little confidence in a pandemic-stricken world, however, that future growth pathways will be aligned away from fossil fuels. The International Energy Agency, in fact, expects a dramatic rise in emissions as countries race to shake off the impact of the coronavirus, as they did after the 2008 financial crisis. Yet, the years to 2030, as President Biden put it, are part of a "decisive decade", and action to scale up funding and innovation can help all countries move closer to keeping global warming well below 2°C or even 1.5°C, as the [Paris Agreement](#) envisages. There are many aspects to the [bilateral pact](#) that could be transformative for energy-intensive sectors in India, starting with renewable power expansion to 450 GW. With open source technologies, India could incorporate innovative materials and processes to decarbonise industry, transport and buildings, the biggest emitters, apart from power.

Many developed countries tend to view India's reluctance to commit to a net zero emissions target as recalcitrance, but the climate change crisis originated not here but in the industrialised world, which has used up much of the world's carbon space. A forward-looking policy should, therefore, envision green development anew, providing funding and green technologies as compensation for the emissions space lost by poorer countries. This is a win-win game, since it would aid sustainable development, boost employment, clean up the environment and, crucially, help all countries emerge healthier from the pandemic. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who announced enhanced ambition at the summit for Britain to cut carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 over 1990 levels, advanced the agenda by calling for climate funding by rich nations to exceed the decade-old goal of \$100 billion. For the India-U.S. agreement to yield results, Mr. Biden would have to persuade industry and research institutions at home to share knowledge and subsidise transfer of technologies. He has won commendations for steering America around from the science-deprived Trump years and announcing enhanced ambition: cuts in emissions by 50% to 52% by 2030 over 2005 levels. But much of his climate effort will rely on executive authority, rather than bipartisan support. With political will on both sides, the engagement with India can become a model.

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