

# PREVENT DEGRADATION OF OCEAN AND ITS ECOSYSTEM: VICE PRESIDENT

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Vice President's Secretariat

## Prevent degradation of ocean and its ecosystem: Vice President

### Asks scientists to step up research on ocean and marine energy

### Interacts with Scientists of National Institute of Oceanography

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for fully tapping the enormous potential of the Blue Economy for the country to achieve higher economic growth.

Observing that the objective of the Blue Economy is to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and employment opportunities through maritime economic activities, the Vice President wanted appropriate programs to be initiated for sustainable harnessing of ocean resources.

Interacting with the Scientists of National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), in Dona Paula, Goa today, Shri Naidu pointed out that India was meeting most of its oil and gas requirements through imports and urged the scientists to step up their research in areas such as ocean energy and marine energy. "Scientists should study the potential of renewable energy derived from the ocean-- from wind, wave and tidal sources", he added.

Asking the Institute to act as a nodal centre for Blue Economy related research and technology development, Shri Naidu said there was a need to focus on ocean centric technology to harness the marine resources for sustained growth of India. Development of technologies for deep sea mining, underwater vehicles and underwater robotics for extraction of minerals should be initiated. "NIO should also undertake research on development of drugs from the sea", he added.

The Vice President said that a focused approach in some of the areas such as minerals from the ocean, energy from ocean can make India a global leader and serve our national goals. 'However, while pursuing the "blue growth", every effort must be made by all the stakeholders, including private and public sectors, to prevent further degradation of the ocean and its ecosystems', the Vice President cautioned.

In view of global warming, resource degradation and marine pollution, we have to conserve and sustain our oceans as time is running out, Shri Naidu said and advised CSIR-NIO to play a major role through its ocean observation studies in understanding different ocean processes due to climate change.

Shri Naidu lauded NIO for providing specialized services to society in addressing ocean-related problems. He also expressed happiness that the institute helped in preparing India's claim for an extended continental shelf with an area of about a million square kilometres.

The Vice President also attended a presentation on various aspects and applications of Oceanography and visited laboratories and exhibition galleries at NIO. He applauded the good work being done by the Scientists and Scholars of NIO, especially in the field of conservation.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am delighted to visit this institute and address all of you. After becoming the Vice President, I have decided to visit various scientific and research institutions to interact with scientists for a better understanding of the work being undertaken by them and share my thoughts.

I am glad to interact with all of you and get a deeper appreciation of the excellent work being done by you. Oceans are of vital importance for the wealth and the well-being of present and future generations. They hold 97 per cent of the planet's water, while two per cent is found in glaciers and ice caps and only one per cent comprises earth's fresh water.

We are aware of the fact that oceans produce more than 50 per cent of the world's oxygen and absorb 40 per cent of the carbon dioxide, buffering the impact of global warming, underlines the crucial role played by them. Thus, they help in regulating the global climate.

Oceans cover 72 per cent of the surface of our blue planet and provide humankind with food, minerals, energy, fresh water and oxygen. They regulate climate, emission absorption and shoreline protection and support livelihoods as well as job creation. Indeed, oceans are our life support system.

Currently, it is estimated that more than three billion people depend on marine and coastal resources for their livelihoods. Enhancing more than 80 percent of global trade, marine and coastal environments constitute a key resource for economic development.

Considering the importance of oceans on the life and sustenance of humanity, the United Nations has taken steps to declare the period 2021–2030 as the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Further, the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG-14) proposed by UN, which deals with life below the waters, emphasizes the importance of oceans in modulating and sustaining life.

With this background, it is important to prioritize our efforts in ocean science and technology to achieve the national goal of transforming India to be the third largest economy in the coming 10-15 years.

I am happy that CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography an autonomous body of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India is doing research on different aspects of Ocean such as the impact of climate change, marine biodiversity, coastal hazards such as coastal erosion and storm surge, marine hazards like tectonics and slumping of seabed.

I understand that foundation of ocean science is mostly based on observations. To take up ocean observation studies, scientists like you need appropriate tools and platforms. I am told that research vessels are an ideal platform to do ocean observations. Research vessels and their equipment represent a significant technological asset.

I am glad that two dedicated ocean-going vessels, RV Sindhu Sankalp and RV Sindhu Sadhana

are managed by CSIR-NIO. With these two dedicated vessels, I am sure that CSIR-NIO will be able to carry out all the relevant studies in India's Exclusive Economic Zone, which constitutes 2/3rd of our land area.

From the presentations made to me by different groups, I understand that CSIR-NIO is playing a major role in understanding science of the North Indian Ocean such as dynamics of its circulation, basin-wide bio-geo-chemistry and tectonic framework of basin evolution.

I am informed that the efforts of CSIR-NIO led to establishing India as a pioneer in poly-metallic nodule mining with an allocated mining site of 75,000 sq. km in the central Indian Ocean.

I am glad that CSIR-NIO helped to prepare India's claim for extended continental shelf with an area of about a million square kilometres and this institute launched India's Antarctic research programme in the early 1980s.

I am also happy to note that the CSIR-NIO provides specialized services to society in addressing ocean-related problems, in addition to its planned research projects. I am happy to learn that this institute has successfully carried out more than 1300 projects funded by oil & gas companies, ports, power plants, chemical industries, municipalities and industrial estates.

I understand that CSIR-NIO has also carried out Marine Environmental Impact Assessments for several prestigious and nationally important developmental projects such as Sea Bird Project of Indian Navy at Karwar and others involving offshore prospecting for oil and gas by ONGC, HPCL, IOC and BPCL among others.

Dear sisters and brothers, development along the coast has been increasing over the years. I have been informed that the Government of India has already planned development of ports and allied facilities through Sagarmala. Different coastal economic zones are planned. The Sagarmala project, which seeks to modernize ports through IT enabled services, is expected to give an impetus to the economy.

With India looking towards oceans for the economic growth through the Blue Economy, important institutions like NIO will have to step up their research in areas such as ocean energy and marine energy. It should be noted that India is meeting most of its oil and gas requirements through imports. Scientists should study the potential of renewable energy derived from the ocean-- from wind, wave and tidal sources.

The objective of the Blue Economy is to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and employment opportunities through maritime economic activities within the Indian Ocean region.

All of you will agree that, India should fully tap the enormous potential of the Blue Economy to achieve higher economic growth trajectory and initiate appropriate programs for sustainable harnessing of ocean resources, research and develop relevant sectors of oceanography.

However, while pursuing the "blue growth", every effort must be made by all the stakeholders, including private and public sectors, to prevent further degradation of the ocean and its ecosystems.

In view of global warming, resource degradation, and marine pollution, we have to conserve and sustain our oceans as time is running out. Hence, CSIR-NIO should play a major role through dense ocean observations and high-resolution ocean models over the Indian Ocean to meet the challenges in understanding different ocean processes due to climate change.

The Institute should also act as a nodal centre for Blue economy related research and technology development. There is a need to focus on ocean centric technology to harness the marine resources economically for sustained growth of India. Development of technologies for deep sea mining, underwater vehicles and underwater robotics for extraction of minerals should be initiated. NIO should also undertake research on development of drugs from the sea.

I strongly feel that focused approach in some of the areas such as minerals from the ocean, energy from ocean can make India a global leader and serve our national goals.

I wish all the success to each one of you ,the scientists and staff of CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography in your future missions.

JAI HIND!"

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