

ONE LAKH DEATHS DUE TO POLLUTION, INDIA NEEDS TO BE ENERGY EFFICIENT: UN REPORT



PTI: Nearly one lakh premature deaths take place annually due to air pollution in India and some other countries which can be avoided by 2030 by improving energy efficiency measures in transport and industrial sectors, a UN report today said.

The fifth Emissions Gap Report 2014 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was released today, said that countries across the globe need to “shrink” greenhouse gas emissions to net zero between 2080 and 2100 in order to limit global temperature rise to two degree Celsius.

The report said that improving energy efficiency can be an excellent opportunity for linking sustainable development with climate mitigation.

Launching the report in India, report co-author and professor at TERI University Ritu Mathur said that given the frequencies observed of extreme events taking place in the world as well as developing countries like India, there is a need to improve the preparedness level as countries like India have lesser coping capacities with such extreme events.

In many cases these benefits have a higher priority for governments than climate change mitigation. Hence improving energy efficiency can be seen as an excellent opportunity for linking sustainable development with climate mitigation, it said.”Improving energy efficiency also has important positive social impacts. It reduces, for example, air pollution and its public health risks. Nearly 100 000 premature deaths related to air pollution in six regions: Brazil, China, the EU, India, Mexico and the USA. These could be avoided annually by 2030 through energy efficiency measures in the transport, buildings and industrial sectors,” the report said.

The report, released ahead of UN Conference on Climate Change in Lima, Peru, said that in order to limit global temperature rise by two degree Celsius and head off the worst impacts of climate change, global carbon neutrality should be attained by mid to late century.

“Taking into account non-CO₂ greenhouse gases, including methane, nitrous oxide and hydrofluorocarbons, total greenhouse gas emissions need to shrink to net zero between 2080 and 2100,” the report said.

Asked specifically about India, Mathur said, “There has been an observation that extreme events have become more frequent and more massive across the world and India is no exception. We have lesser coping capacities in developing countries.”

“Given that the intensities and frequencies of such extreme events are likely to increase, we need to improve our level of preparedness, high level of adaptation and all of these need a lot of infrastructure and finance for which we have to keep working simultaneously while looking at the mitigation side,” she said.

The report, which has been produced by 38 leading scientists from 22 research groups across 14 countries, examines whether pledges made by countries are on track to meet the internationally agreed two degree Celsius target.

“Countries are giving increasing attention to where they realistically need to be by 2025, 2030 and beyond in order to limit a global temperature rise to below 2 degree Celsius.”

“This fifth emissions gap report underlines that carbon neutrality and eventually net zero or what some term climate neutrality will be required so that what cumulative emissions are left are safely absorbed by the globe’s natural infrastructure like forests and soil,” said Achim Steiner, UN Under Secretary General and Executive director of UNEP in a statement.

Source: <http://chimalaya.org/2014/11/21/one-lakh-deaths-due-to-pollution-india-needs-to-be-energy-efficient-un-report/>