

Both local actions and global solutions are needed to prevent climate change

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The mitigation of climate change requires both effective local actions and global-level agreement, the Indian Minister of Environment and Forestry Jayanthi Natarajan suggested on Wednesday, September 18, at the Koli Forum.

Natarajan was responding to a question by Dr Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the IPCC, for participants at the Koli Forum: Should we forget about striving for a [global agreement](#) on climate change and focus instead on local solutions? In his video greetings to the forum, Dr Pachauri expressed disappointment at the fact that an agreement had not been put into place despite more than 20 years of discussion.

The international bioenergy experts who gathered at Koli were not ready to give up on trying to reach an agreement, but they emphasized more than before the importance of strengthening the local solutions.

Of the experts who attended the Koli Forum, 93 per cent stressed the need for local-level solutions if preference would be given to one of these alternatives, while 7 per cent of these influential people would like to see a global-level solution.

Finland's Minister of the Environment Ville Niinistö thanked the region of North Karelia for its regional investment in forest know-how and a resource-efficient bioeconomy.

"The price of [climate change](#) is going up all the time. One should not

think too modestly; let us be at the same time local and open to the whole world. The demand for these solutions is particularly great in China and India," Niinistö reminded the audience.

In Minister Natarajan's opinion, India has not benefitted from natural resources in the same way as the prosperous Western nations, whose growth has been based on squandering the natural resources. There has already been progress in India with the help of local and regional actions. In Minister Natarajan's opinion, now Western nations have the opportunity and reason to help India move in the direction of global targets. Of India's 1.2 billion [inhabitants](#), 300 million are living below the poverty line.

In Niinistö's opinion, Finland has much to offer in terms of improving India's standard of living, but these solutions must be such that they can be carried out affordably.

Mikko Kosonen, president of Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, emphasized that solutions are always born local.

"Finland has great opportunities to bring solutions to the market, for which there is a global demand," he said.

Both Niinistö and Kosonen emphasized the significance of economic growth for alleviating poverty and strengthening social justice globally. However, central to these issues is the question of the quality of growth.

"There are many technology-based services for improving quality of life that do not demand natural resources in the same way as traditional forms of production. For example, preventive health care and other welfare services offer tremendous possibilities for growth," Kosonen acknowledges.

Dr Pekka Hallberg, an influential member of the Koli Forum, also responded to Pachauri's question about the emphasis of global and local.

"There is a great need to develop international rules of the game, but they are hard to find. It is necessary to proceed along two paths. Local solutions can also be simple, for example temporarily fixed emissions permits have produced good results in terms of protecting waterways," Hallberg noted.

The third international Koli Forum focused on the significance of forests and water as the key factors of a sustainable and competitive bioeconomy. The Forum is arranged every other year to bring together opinion leaders from the spheres of business, politics, science and culture, to search out the best policies for a future that takes into consideration both the potential and the limitations of natural resources.

Provided by University of Eastern Finland

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