



**Opening address  
by  
the President of Iceland  
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**

**THE TERI'S TECHNOLOGICAL EXHIBITION  
New Delhi  
5 February 2005**

Distinguished ministers,  
scientists, leaders of business, the media and  
other progressive endeavours  
Dear Indian friends  
Ladies and gentlemen

India – the largest democracy on earth, the leading economy of the future, the home of more races and religions than any other country on the planet – is indeed the proper place to host an exhibition on tomorrow's solutions, to demonstrate how technology for sustainable development can help us create a better world, resist climate change and give future generations the opportunity to enjoy progress without feeling guilty about destroying the environment.

We have spent three days in deliberations and discussions on the problems and solutions of sustainable development.

We have come from near and afar, from Europe and America, from Asia and Africa.

We share a profound responsibility for the fate of all people, every nation, every race. Whether we come from governments, international organisations, the world of business, science, the media or from other walks of life, we share a challenge which is the essence of our democratic dialogue, the core of our moral and public duty.

India has brought us together and by the broad membership of our assembly has indicated that what is needed is a global coalition, an open network of all who care and are willing to take action.

But public will is not enough. A democratic mandate is not enough. The framework of our global coalition is not enough.

We urgently need practical solutions, new approaches, concrete and relevant, new technologies, applicable in all settings, all communities, in villages as well as larger cities, relevant for the poor as well as the rich, for every one of us, for the entire human family.

This is a lesson India has learned, a lesson India has taken to her heart, a lesson India must bring to others.

It is a manifestation of how India combines practicality with her vision of the future, combines the needs of the villages with the problems of busy cities, that following the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit we assemble here today to celebrate this exhibition of technologies which are relevant to our quest for a better world, a world of survival and harmony, a harmony which brings us well-being and solid progress, harmony with nature and sustainable resources.

Buildings made more energy-efficient; demonstrations of how we can reclaim wastelands, manage distillery effluents; the creation of new furnaces for the glass industry; various pollution control systems; biomass gas fires – the list goes on, the variety is exciting, the success concrete, the application global, relevant, urgent and visionary; such is the essence of this exhibition.

What is at stake is our own future, the survival of the human race, and each and every nation must play its part, demonstrate its willingness to change for the better, whether large like India or small like Iceland, whether an Asian subcontinent or a North Atlantic island, whether a vast country in the south or a volcanic territory in the north, close to the Arctic Circle.

In Iceland we have also learned our lessons. We have seen how resources can be employed in new ways, how nature offers us opportunities for a more sustainable world if we apply ourselves to the urgent technological challenges.

Fifty years ago Reykjavík, the capital of my country, was covered with smoke from coal fires. Now over 90% of the houses in Iceland are heated with geothermal energy, the air is pure and fresh every day of the year.

We have learned to use the heat from the bowels of the earth, the hot springs and the geothermal resources gained from drilling as deep as three kilometres. In this way we provide electricity to industry and large cities. The first aluminium smelter entirely driven from geothermal resources will open Iceland in the near future, a landmark in processing this metal from geothermal and sustainable resources. But we also use geothermal power to heat greenhouses which provide us with vegetables and roses, for driving spas and swimming pools, health clinics in different parts of the country.

We are, however, not the only nation which enjoys the geothermal option. We have now established co-operation with over fifty countries in this field, with nations far apart, with China and Russia, with Central Europe and California; and also with Africa, because that continent is indeed rich in geothermal resources.

The geothermal option is available all over the world. But our mindset has prevented us from exploring its usage. We are too occupied with gigantic projects, big dams, large power stations driven by oil or nuclear fuel.

The geothermal option can, on the other hand, be tailor-made for every need, for a single household as well as a village, for a city as well as a larger region.

What is needed is the appropriate technological vision, the practical down-to-earth approach.

The exhibition which we open here today is inspired by a similar vision.

It enables us to think in new ways about our future, to realise how many options we enjoy. It demonstrates what can be done, how together we can indeed create a better future.

I congratulate TERI for bringing the exhibition together and I thank our Indian friends for their leadership and vision.

With those words I duly declare the exhibition open.