

Solar panels on top of canal impress U.N. chief

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India taking the lead in ending energy poverty: Ban

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Sunday praised India's ingenuity and cutting-edge technology while dedicating Gujarat's second canal-top 10-MW solar power project to the nation. The solar panels are arranged on top of the Vadodara branch of the Sardar Sarovar project canal, probably a first-of-its-kind project in the world to generate power.

In a brief address, Mr. Ban said he was honoured to inaugurate "this impressive project" and commended the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Looking at the canal top, he said he saw "more than the glittering panels — he saw the future of India and the future of our world. This facility shows how one project can have multiple uses of conserving land and using renewables."

He called on India to dramatically scale-up solar power and make it more than 10 per cent of energy mix by 2020.

For the February event on investment in renewable energy in New Delhi, he was sending his special envoy on climate change Michael Bloomberg.

He said access to energy was important to end energy poverty. "India is taking the lead in ending energy poverty and this project shows us how." He praised Mr. Modi's leadership saying this was the kind of leadership the world needed.

Action and commitment can create a safer and prosperous world, he said.

S.S. Rathore, chairperson and managing director, Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd, said Mr. Modi's idea led to a one-MW pilot project being commissioned on the Sanand canal in April 2012.

The new 10-MW megawatt project is on 3.6 km of the Vadodara branch canal of the Sardar Sarovar Project which passes through the city. It saves land and also prevents evaporation losses. There are nearly 35,000 solar panels and the power generated is fed into the State grid and also to operate pumping stations on the canal.

The total cost of this project is \$18.3 million and is financed by the State government. It was commissioned in November 2014. The Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam is likely to expand this project and even encourage private entrepreneurs.

'Emerging economies must help combat climate change'

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said here on Sunday that while respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, emerging economies such as India, China, South Africa and Brazil should take necessary action to combat climate change.

Interacting with presspersons after visiting a canal-top solar power project here, he said the developed countries had caused much more impact on climate than the developing nations and they had different capacities to tackle impacts. India was taking necessary action by projects such as the canal-top power project, a creative and impressive one which all developing countries should emulate.

To questions, he said climate finance was the most important aspect to make combating climate

change a success. India could play a vital role as one of the fastest growing economies.

He was catalysing funds into the Green Climate Fund, which had topped \$10 billion last year. He was optimistic about arriving at a new, robust climate treaty in Paris.