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Dear ICC community,

When you drive through the vast, serrated and saw-toothed expanse that is Ladakh, you can almost feel the vibrations of millions of years of its ecological history. The breathtaking landscape stretches limitlessly, beyond the shimmering horizon, while pregnant blue skies can give a pilgrim soul a singular sense of hope. You understand you are small and the cosmos is infinite and measureless.

Ladakh lies in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, extending from the Kunlun Mountain Range in the north to the main Great Himalayan Range in the south. Long before the boundaries of India were delineated on a map, they were understood to encompass this vast, sacred geography. Pangong Tso, for instance, is a natural border between China and India. The magnificent view of the blue lake is one of the most centering, spiritual experiences.

It is from the center that each of us measures the self, and the self should carry the center with it wherever it goes, so as to not lose its bearings. But, of course, it does. So often I find the 'self' in a flux, ever-shifting, always moving, like a tiny boat down a river. It is carried forward in time, often out of my own grasp. But it is in moments like these, when gazing upon the crystal blue and azure depths of Pangong lake, that the self feels totally connected to the cosmos, not fragmented and alone.

Isn't that one of the roles of nature's wonders? To provide us with an outward projection of how we feel within? Where for a fleeting moment, we may experience the underlying reality of our existence. It tells us that in our common despair, we are united. Just as each peak, each range is bound to the mountain, all of it eroding together.

On this Earth Day, the 50th anniversary, we have prepared a special issue for you, with voices of hope, for a future yet undefined. But a future filled with countless possibilities. We need to work harder than ever before to create a just, equitable and compassionate society. We need to strive even more to protect this precious planet, the only home we have ever known. We are not separate from and superior to nature, but a tiny measure of it, imbued with equal parts humility and responsibility.

As a friend recently said to me, now more than ever, we are all Sisyphus. And we will succeed.

We hope you enjoy this issue's beautiful illustrations, courtesy the incredible team at Current Conservation who collect these artworks from contributors across the world. Our heartfelt gratitude to our changemakers, each of whom have shared their hopes and dreams for an India in the not so distant future.

Stay safe. Stay strong.

Warm regards,

Shloka Nath
Director, India Climate Collaborative

By Mr. Ratan N. Tata, Chairman, Tata Trusts

"My dream for India on Earth Day 2020, is for the country to be a true ally of all of its ecosystems, and for it to provide equal opportunity to all persons based on true merit."



By Dr. Navroz Dubhash, Professor, Centre for Policy Research

"By 2070 India will be, and must be, a more prosperous and just society. But true prosperity is not about wealth alone. It is equally about clean air and rivers, an environment that supports rather than undermines our health, and a climate system that has not been pushed to its limits. And justice includes ensuring that the livelihoods of the poorest in India, which depend on nature, are viable. Well before 2070, we have to put aside the idea that prosperity and environmental quality are separable things. Our dreams for a future India must have shades of green."



By Rohini Nilekani, Founder-Chairperson, Arghyam

"It's true that the future just ain't what it used to be! Fifty years used to be a long timeline. It isn't anymore. After all, the Club of Rome was set up to address humanity's "problematic" 52 years ago. And here we are now in 2020, having heeded very few lessons from that conversation, and maybe headed for even more problematic issues than were envisioned then! Climate change is at the top of that list, even though the pandemic is at the front of our consciousness right now. We cannot afford to let carbon and climate recede to the back of the agenda, once the pandemic passes.

In 2070, according to current projections, India will be at peak population of 1.7 billion. But what kind of a people and a country will it be? I hope that the next generations will be smarter than mine has been, when it comes to issues of the environment and climate, and the pursuit of human well-being. Let's imagine a country that will recognise prosperity beyond mere GDP, to include regenerative natural capital, and indicators for human health. Let's plan for a post consumption generation that has a less material and more spiritual understanding of happiness. Let's create a culture in the arts and the sciences so that, in 50 years, we can UPEND the future - and discover Unlimited Potential for Environment Nourishing Development."

Please see the recently released report, [Opportunities for Philanthropy: Community Resilience and Climate Action](#), supported by Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies and the India Climate Collaborative. Today, more than ever, we need ambitious, accelerated climate action that targets the most vulnerable. The report identifies opportunities for philanthropy, and collaborative action in building community resilience.



By, P. Sainath, founder-editor of the People's Archive of Rural India

"An India that has fully realised those ideas embedded in our Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy and which has seen Climate Justice Triumph over Climate Chaos - and those two streams are very closely linked. An India that has preserved and nurtured, not destroyed her natural resources, her many climatic and agro-ecological zones, and has ended inequality.

Victor Hugo once famously said: there is no army on earth mightier than an idea whose time has come. In India that time has come - and the idea is justice: social, political, economic, gender and climate."

By Vidya Shah, CEO, EdelGive Foundation

"As the human race progresses, I envision our mother earth as a place of harmony, equity and inclusivity. Harmony, as we learn to live in accord with nature and its abundance; Equity, wherein all communities irrespective of gender, caste, creed, religion and social status have equal access and ownership of our resources; and finally Inclusivity, ensuring that opportunities for growth are available to the most marginalised."



By Mridula Ramesh, Founder, Sundaram Climate Institute

"Almost every spiritual discipline emphasizes that everything one needs to find fulfillment is to be found within one self. This lockdown has forced us to evaluate that proposition quite seriously. Those of whom found a measure of peace during these troubled times may have chanced upon the keys to their own happiness.

By 2070, we will clearly be in one of two possible worlds - a world of peace or a world of war. Each is distinct - there will be no in-between. The world of peace requires us to value what has been given free by nature, value the young, the weak and the voiceless - something our structures and our economies do not do well today. The shift will not come in technology - because technology only amplifies what is. The shift will come with understanding. Hopefully, the lockdown has moved us forward in that direction."



By Vaishali Sinha, Chief CSR, Communications and Sustainability Officer

"India today is poised to don the mantle of a global climate leader and become a role model for sustainable and climate compatible growth. I envisage a future where policymakers, businesses and common citizens will all act in unison to create a low carbon economy that practices smart conservation of scarce natural resources. To me this means a new India where even the poorest can dream of a better quality of life through access to cleaner and cheaper energy, where smart cities come equipped with climate resilient infrastructure and where a billion people have cleaner air to breathe and abundant safe water to use.

I look forward to seeing homes and industries being powered by renewable energy with bare minimum dependence on carbon spewing fossil fuels, energy efficient "green" buildings that emit less carbon and a fleet of eco-friendly electric vehicles forming the backbone of public mobility. This should be backed up by increased forest cover and more efficient agricultural techniques that conserve water to create a sustainable ecosystem which we can be proud of. However, at the heart of all this will be the common Indian with sustainability firmly entrenched deep within his psyche and values. A billion conscious consumers who are sensitive about their environmental footprint and lifestyle choices will ensure that India continues to set fresh benchmarks for green growth."

Image credits:

Thank you Current Conservation for contributing such beautiful illustrations for our Earth Day special newsletter. We would like to also thank the following artists for their artwork used alongside the quotes of:

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