

DG Blog

Dr R K Pachauri, December 31, 2010

We are now in the final hours of the year 2010, and while one learns from the experiences that we went through in 2010, it is important to look forward to all the challenges that lie ahead in the coming New Year.

I returned from a brief trip to China yesterday, with my flight cancelled the previous day on account of the fog in Delhi and rescheduled for the 29th. As we contemplate our plans for the New Year, I cannot help commenting on my most recent experience of this visit to China. This is a country that I first visited in 1981, and when one travels there now it almost seems like one is on a different planet. China has been transformed perhaps far more rapidly than any other country in the world. What is particularly noteworthy is the transformation in the attitudes and the level of professionalism in everything that the Chinese do. I landed in Beijing at 11.10 a.m., was met by my hosts at the airport and taken directly to my hotel where the key for my suite was ready, and I immediately got into a series of meetings. We then held a workshop on our joint China-India study followed by some media interviews, a short reception and a trip to the airport where I caught my flight to Changsha.

The trip to Changsha was a revelation because Mr. Zhang Yue, the Chinese entrepreneur and his assistant Juliet Jiang were there to greet me around midnight at the facility where I stayed. Mr. Zhang Yue is perhaps close to being a billionaire if not actually so, but what is remarkable is his attention to detail, his passionate dedication to sustainable development and justifiable pride in all that he is doing. He manufactures air conditioning systems and has now revolutionized building construction by creating prefabricated material which is not only energy efficient but very low in the intensity of natural resources use. The township that he controls is full of products made out of recycled material. He was to meet me at 7.30 a.m. for breakfast on Tuesday, but failed to do so because I was told that he worked till 4.30 a.m. putting up posters and displays in the room which I was to visit in his office displaying all the work that he is doing. He was with me after breakfast from 8.00 a.m. onwards. I am not too sure there are too many billionaires in the world who would show so much passion for an exhibition meant for only one individual.

Another interesting experience I had was at Guangzhou, where my connection was cancelled and rescheduled. I had to spend the night at the airport hotel, and the next morning after I had checked in and gone through immigration etc. I wanted to connect the computer in the lounge, while I was waiting for my flight. I found that I left by mistake the universal adaptor which I carry with me. The lounge staff connected me by phone to the hotel, and I informed them of what I had left behind. They asked me to call after ten minutes and when I did so I was told that the adaptor had been found and the airline staff had been informed to convey it to me. By then it was time to board the aircraft, which I did, but I asked the lounge staff to hold the item with them till I gave them further instructions. However, the airline staff who escorted me to the aircraft promised to try to see if the adaptor could be brought to the aircraft. Sure enough before the flight took off I received the adaptor which showed enormous commitment on the part of a number of individuals and a genuine desire to deliver what certainly would not have happened in most parts of the world.

As I have said before we in TERI do show tendencies at times to be casual and regard many tasks as unimportant. In reality, achievers are those who provide enormous attention to detail, and who do not take anything for granted. I hope in the year 2011 all of us would strive towards a higher level of professionalism and commitment to our cause and the tasks we are to perform.