

DG Desk

Dr R K Pachauri, February 26, 2011

I accompanied the Secretary General of the United Nations to Los Angeles on Monday the 21st, and we spent an entire day in tinsel town, essentially to engage what the UN Secretary General and his staff referred to as the "creative community". The purpose of this was to see that we get some interest from producers, directors, script writers and film and TV stars in becoming champions of actions on climate change and the possibility of films being made on the subject.

As is the case with any such initiative, there were no immediate results to boast of, but there was clearly a very favourable response on the part of those whom we met. I spoke briefly at lunch on the occasion and in a panel discussion which was one of three such discussions, moderated by Larry King who has been associated with CNN for a long time.

The one lesson that I learnt from this trip was the fact that if we want to advance any cause it helps greatly to have an icon champion it. It was also revealing to see that these people are actually looking for social causes to support, because presumably it gives them some substance far above their normal activities. Mr Ban Ki-moon and his staff are now planning a similar foray into Bollywood and I have already spoken to Dr Prannoy Roy of NDTV to take the lead on this if it happens.

For many years in the initial period of TERI's evolution, I would advise colleagues to stay away from the limelight and not use the media for disseminating the messages that we carve out in the interest of sustainability and for the benefit of society. I am afraid today we have to be far more outgoing and use every opportunity and every icon to help us spread our messages. There is too much at stake and too little time in which to influence the course of events. I also believe the world has changed and that the time has come for us perhaps to advertise some of our events more aggressively for instance, in the case of DSDS. If we hesitate to do so we will neither get the attention that an event of this kind deserves nor would we attract persons of distinction who really add to the profile of the event. Given the social appeal of all that we are doing, I do not feel embarrassed at the thought of advertising our actions extensively, and in that effort I would also not hesitate to use Hollywood, Bollywood or even Nollywood (the cinema industry in Nigeria) which has extensive reach on that continent.