

Press Release

INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE APPOINTS DR AJAY MATHUR AS NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTOR GENERAL AT FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE ISA ASSEMBLY

15 February 2021, New Delhi, India – The International Solar Alliance (ISA) today announced Dr. Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special Assembly of ISA members. The ceremony was hosted by India as the organization’s President.

A coalition of 73 member countries, ISA was launched at the end of 2015 to accelerate the demand for and use of safe, sustainable, and affordable solar energy for all. It aims to mobilize over \$1 trillion of investment into solar projects by 2030 through focused advocacy, policy and regulatory support, capacity building, and by overcoming perceived investment barriers. Dr. Mathur succeeds Mr. Upendra Tripathy, who has served as Director General since 2017.

Dr. Mathur’s leadership appointment to the ISA takes place in a year when addressing global climate change transition commitments will take center stage: 2021 started with the US’s renewed climate focus through the Biden administration and will culminate with COP26, the UN’s Climate Change Conference in the UK in November. As the sole multilateral forum dedicated to solar energy transition and building upon existing milestones, including pooling resources across its members, and creating economies of scale to reduce the cost for clean energy, ISA is poised to renew its commitment towards global solar transition through the new leadership.

Speaking at the ISA’s Special session of the Assembly, Dr. Mathur, said: I am deeply honoured by the faith reposed in me by the ISA Assembly.

I look forward to work with all the member-countries in integrating solar applications into their country’s own energy development strategies, and to welcoming new Members into the ISA family, especially now that the Assembly has enabled universalisation of membership to all UN countries. In my first hundred days, I would like us to initiate an assessment of solarisation opportunities in our member countries – including what do we do now, and what do we do as the next step; and to identify the institutional and business models that can help implement these goals. At the same time, we would work with partners to enable the financing of the solarisation initiatives that we would like to take up now, and finalize the first such financing partnerships in my first hundred days.

I believe that ISA has an important role in working with our member-countries and the financial institutions to create and facilitate the funding and implementation of solar projects which can change our energy pathways to bring us reduced costs, better and more livelihoods, greater convenience, as well as reduced – and ultimately zero-carbon emissions.

Incoming Director General Dr. Mathur brings a wealth of leadership expertise across all key areas of energy transition, from policy, research, and technology commercialization to financing, international cooperation and institutional development. Currently, also Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a key driver of the energy transition to renewables and reduction in urban air pollution for the past five years, Dr. Mathur has held leadership appointments at the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, the World Bank, and the Green Climate Fund. In 2020, he received an Icon SWM-CE Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to environmental protection.

Ms Barbara Pompili, Minister for Ecological Transition of the French Republic and ISA Co-President commended India, the outgoing DG, Mr. Tripathy and the significant progress made since the founding of the International Solar Alliance in Paris in 2015: “We can be proud of what we have achieved collectively since the inception of ISA. I would like to congratulate India’s leadership in this regard. Thanks to these tireless efforts, today ISA is a firmly established, well-recognised and dynamic international organisation fully committed to scaling up solar power across the world. Even during the pandemic, ISA’s activities have not slowed down. Instead, we have reached a new milestone with the recent decision to open ISA membership to all UN Member countries.”

Congratulating Dr Ajay Mathur on his appointment as the new Director General of the ISA, Minister Pompili said: “Dr Mathur is a global leader on technological approaches to address climate change and has extensive experience relevant to the management of an international organisation such as ISA. As co-president of ISA, France extends its full support to Dr Mathur. We are fully confident that he is the right person to further the development of ISA, particularly through its universalisation, robust governance and support to concrete initiatives to facilitate solar power deployment, such as the “STAR-C” programme. A stronger ISA will be key to sustaining the renewed global momentum in combatting climate change.”

Mr. R.K. Singh, Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy for India and ISA Co-President, said: “The ISA, under the leadership of H.E Mr. Upendra Tripathy has grown to become an able global body working effectively towards energy access, energy security and energy transition. Since ISA’s inception, the world has seen a concerted effort by all the stakeholders who joined this unique organization to take the global agenda under the Paris Agreement forward. Today, I compliment the Assembly for unanimously accepting the candidature of Dr. Ajay Mathur nominated by the Republic of India to take up the position of next Director General of International Solar Alliance. I am certain that all the ISA Member Countries, Prospective Member Countries, and ISA Partner Organizations will work constructively with the new Director General to take the mandate of the ISA forward. On behalf

of ISA Assembly, I thank the First Director General of the ISA, H.E Mr. Upendra Tripathy, and extend my best wishes to Dr. Ajay Mathur for his coming term.”

Outgoing Director General Mr. Tripathy expressed his gratitude to all the member countries for their trust and support in the last five years, since the inception of the ISA. “I have witnessed the ISA’s growth from the dream of an idea to the go-to international organisation on solar energy. As Secretary MNRE, I negotiated the Framework Agreement of the Alliance. As, Director general of the ISA I put all my experience, strength, and expertise to build a strong governance, increase and universalize the membership and implement concrete programmes to scale-up solar energy across our Member countries. In a short time period, ISA became a well-recognised international organisation, and the global voice of solar energy. The ISA is now a vibrant source of initiatives and leadership stemming from its members and partners. I am glad to see more and more countries joining the ISA to work together to pool efforts and resources to bring solar to the world to the next level.

I would like to thank the Assembly and the Standing Committee for their guidance to translate 21st century visions of a One Sun One World One Grid and a World Solar Bank into reality.

I would like to thank all my colleagues for their tireless work, dedication and commitment to ISA’s mission. I wish my successor, Dr Ajay Mathur, the staff and the Alliance to continue to grow and thrive at a critical time when solar energy is now central to global efforts for achieving the sustainable development goals and the implementation of the Paris Agreement.”

-ENDS-

About the International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance (ISA), was launched at COP21 in Paris to address their special energy needs and has recently expanded its membership scope to include all UN member states. There are 90 signatories and 193 prospective members. The ISA provides a dedicated platform for co-operation, through which the global community, including governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations, corporates, industry, and other stakeholders, can contribute to help achieve the common goal of increasing the use and quality of solar energy in meeting energy needs of prospective ISA member countries in a safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner.

ISA’s Key Milestones

- ISA aggregated demand for 23GW across various solar programs worth USD 13Bn



- ISA led the price discovery for a project for 272,000 solar pumps, with a cost reduction of more than 40%
- ISA formed an International Steering Committee to institutionalize the World Solar Bank
- ISA issued a Letter of Award to an EDF-led consortium to design a roadmap for India's ambitious Global grid (OSOWOG).

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