

LEADING BY EXAMPLE: PROTECT OUR SPECIES, PROTECT OUR PLANET

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OPINION

Leading by Example: Protect Our Species, Protect Our Planet

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The world is facing the greatest rate of extinction since we lost the dinosaurs over 60 million years ago.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that an increase of fewer than 2 degrees Celsius in average global temperature will put nearly one-third of all Earth's species at risk of extinction, and any further increase will threaten full ecosystems. What is becoming clearer and clearer, as evidenced by the IPCC report late last year, is that human activity and the delicate balance of the world's wildlife are inexorably linked and that the need to address our impact on climate is ever more urgent.

We must remember that a significant component of the global fight for climate action is meeting our global energy demands in a more sustainable way. Our continued reliance on fossil fuels, especially for electricity generation and transportation, contributes to the majority of greenhouse gas emissions annually. In addition, the United Nations estimates that 3 billion people globally rely on coal or other burned substances for cooking meals for their families and heating their homes, which not only contributes to climate change but results in an estimated 4 million premature deaths every year due to inhalation of the dangerous pollutants released into the air.

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The U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals aim to address these challenges. By 2030, U.N. partners seek to double the global rate of improvements in energy efficiency, supply sustainable energy services in developing countries, and ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

And in India, the National Solar Mission, an initiative of its national and state governments to promote solar power, aims to deploy 100 gigawatts of solar photovoltaic by 2022. Achieving these goals will not only help to reduce our impact on our climate but also protect the millions of species that call Earth home.

There is no panacea. Both the public and private sector must lead in the innovation, creativity and exploration that will help make fulfillment of the SDGs a reality.

Critical to this effort is the involvement and leadership of companies and organizations within the developing world, where the private sector on average accounts for 9 out of 10 jobs. And India is an especially important place for these efforts, since it is expected to see some of the most rapid increase in energy demand and have the greatest opportunity to help bend the curve toward more sustainable solutions.

Fourth Partner Energy is one of India's leading providers of distributed solar power, with more than 1,700 installations in the country and a presence within top industrial and commercial companies, including major global businesses like Unilever, Skoda, Pepsi and Schneider. Our objective is simple: to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy to help ensure India and other developing nations are leading the fight against climate action. The way we achieve this objective is also simple: by providing our customers reliable and economic renewable energy that saves them money on their power bills while shifting our collective electricity mix to cleaner and more sustainable sources.

As the energy sector within India continues to grow, Fourth Partner Energy, together with financial support from the Rise Fund, has capitalized on this momentum by expanding our customer base and more than doubling the deployment of systems over the past year. Our aim is to expand the use of rooftop solar by businesses and organizations across India, South Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East, thereby doing our part to help meet the world's clean energy goals. We are excited about our role in helping to drive significant environmental impact, which has the potential to avert more than 16 million tons of atmospheric carbon over the next several years, all while helping global businesses save on their power bills.

We are proud of the work we have achieved to date and the work we are on target to accomplish, but much remains to be done. This year, we call on not just the renewable energy sector, but the broader energy sector and business community to double down on our commitment, focus and creativity to help meet the U.N.'s 2030 goal. This is a goal we all need to reach, for the sake of all of the Earth's species — including our own.

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