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## Government urged to tackle climate change

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Former Union minister and Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh delivering public lecture on climate change in Chennai on Friday. — DC

**Chennai:** India is vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change and it is essential that we provide the political leadership to address the issue, said former Union minister and Congress Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh, while delivering a public lecture, organised by the Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, on Friday.

Jairam Ramesh, who played a key role in global climate summits at Copenhagen (2009) and Cancun (2010), said India's adopted position on the topic has been "simple". According to him, it can't be expected to bear the burden, as it didn't cause the problem to the extent that other countries like United States and China have.

Secondly, it must be provided with the technology and finance. But more importantly, the country has been prioritising economic growth to lift people out of poverty and hence it is the classic case of "grow now, pay later."

Stating that energy is at the heart of the climate change debate, Ramesh said, "India must rethink its strategy on renewable sources of energy. Germany, which doesn't have sunlight for six months in a year, is a world leader in solar energy."

According to the former minister, who held key portfolios of rural development, environment and forests during UPA regime, growth must not only be rapid and inclusive, but also embrace the third dimension of being sustainable. "Global warming is a problem due to increasing prosperity and not because of poverty," he said.

Pointing to domestic constraints such as the economy's dependence on monsoon rains, the 7,000 odd-km coastline that is at huge risk due to rising sea levels, the retreating of Himalayan glaciers, mineral rich forests being razed, Jairam Ramesh said there must be development of scientific capacity within the country to find solutions.

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