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I leave the floor to Marc-Antoine, who is the Director of the Centre for Energy and Climate at Ifri. He will have the real challenge tomorrow morning to present the discussion of this session. You may perhaps summarize your comments on what you heard?

Marc-Antoine Eyl-Mazzega

Yes. I think Narendra woke us all up, so I will try to continue in that vein.

I think, in taking the global perspective, let us face it – Narendra, yes, you rightly said we need to talk more with one another and I think, still, this is also a place where we are talking and I think that is very important.

There is a very important momentum now. We have John Kerry meeting his Chinese counterpart, Zhenhua, as we speak now during several days, and then we will have the Biden/Xi Jinping meeting at APEC in San Francisco. Therefore, this is unique because there is no major COP development possible unless the Chinese and the Americans do not agree and this is the momentum for them to agree. I think we can expect that maybe something will happen there.

The second point is, on what will it happen? Well, I think – and Nicolas mentioned it – yes, the US has to do much more on fugitive methane emissions, dramatically more. It has to ramp up finance in that, and the Chinese need to peak the emissions way before 2030. Actually, both could do that and then, of course, to phase down coal. I think this is possible.

For India, Narendra, it is a specific case. You emit one ton of CO₂ per inhabitant, when the Chinese do approximately 13 or 14, the Americans 16 and here, the UAE or Saudi Arabia, 18. Therefore, there is a difference.

However, it brings me to my second point. We have to rightly discuss hydrocarbons and our governments also understand this. I do not know how many phone calls Patrick Pouyanné or the Shell CEO got from governments, ‘Help me here’, ‘Help me there’, ‘What can you do?’, but it is a new reality. It is not going to disappear and energy security is also central in our country.

What we need to have a discussion on is an orderly transformation of the hydrocarbons. Yes, energy security as well, but the problem is, if it is Iran or Russia that puts energy security in the declaration, everybody understands why.

I think this is clear and the story is the following. We need a predictable, stable oil price that allows consumers to afford the energy, but still to transition, and the companies and the governments to have the resources to invest in the alternatives. However, the problem is that we need to have this discussion and I think the discussion has gone away – that there were institutions for that, there were ideas for that, but I think it should be reinvested.

What we also need is that you, for example, India, tell countries here in the Middle East, 'If we look at the map of renewables in the world, we almost see nothing here in this region. How can that be, with all the money that you have?'

The second thing that you should also tell – because, so far, it has been being pushed heavily by France – is, 'How come the emerging economies are deprived of liquidity to invest in all these renewables, etc.?'. If we look at the current financial system, the risk in emerging economies is much higher than in Europe, it is much higher than in many places where, actually, the investments are required.

Therefore, this discussion also has to be taken up by you and hopefully there will be greater financial commitments here from countries in the region towards financing these low-carbon technologies and their deployment.

If you allow me just a word also, I think India and other countries, especially us – and it was hinted at several times – now we have the objectives, now we know that the technologies work, we know that the costs went down although they are up again because of interest rates, etc. What we need to focus on is value chains. Everyone has to invest in value chains and, here, the states will have a major role to play. They have to provide guarantees, etc., otherwise it will be very difficult for the scale-up and the de-risking.

Last but not least, if you allow me perhaps a word, three, four years ago, everybody was planning for an energy transition with low oil prices, with low gas prices. Well, now, we will have a transition with high oil prices and I think that offers quite some interesting momentum.

Of course, everybody is suffering, hence the need to orderly organize all that. However, the point is this is a unique opportunity to accelerate and I think TotalEnergies – and correct me if I am wrong – would not be able to commit that much money to renewables which are providing less profit if you did not have these high oil prices and countries like here obviously would be able to commit less to meet their targets if the oil price was USD 50.

Therefore, let us work on this opportunity, I think, and also let us get out of this binary situation where the north thinks only about itself, the south is demanding and is the victim. I think it is much more complex but, in any case, you are right, we need to work together more.