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Notable senior officials including Indian Ambassador to the United States S. Jaishankar and National Security Advisor to President Obama, Susan Rice, among other industry leaders, environmental activists and government officials attended a sponsored U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue to facilitate cooperation on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission standards between the two nations.

Tension stems from disagreement on 2007 adjustments to the Montreal Protocol, which was created in 1989 to reduce global emissions of ozone-depleting substances. Indian officials have publicly resisted including hydroflourocarbons (HFC's) produced by fossil fuel energy production under the Protocol because HFC's are not ozone-depleting substances even though they are powerful GHG's, according to Bloomberg. The adjustments created timelines for reduction of HFC emissions, hoping to reach global baseline levels by 2030. Indian Premier Manmohan Singh stated last year that India's current lack of viable non-HFC producing energy substitutes make the Protocol's HFC phasedown unfeasible.

In the dialogue, Rice highlighted recent cooperative developments between the countries. These include progress in nuclear power utility negotiations under the Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, which aims to use American investments to build reactors powering New Delhi and Mumbai to decrease GHG's. Rice also praised the largest off-grid renewable power project in the world, Ladakh Renewable Energy Initiative, which aims to provide 20,000+ MW of power to northern rural India by 2022.

Conference attendees hope to turn dialogue into concrete progress before the UN Climate Summit in September.

Sources: E&E News; Aspen Institute; U.S. Dept. of State; Energy Information Administration; Nuclear Regulatory Council; Bloomberg News; Ladakh Renewable Energy Development Agency
