

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Prime Minister Singh stand up for 2 degrees!**

**New Delhi: 8 July 2009**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was urged by Indians today to play a leadership role on climate change at the G8+5 Summit in L'Aquila, Italy. Activists across India signed a petition for the Prime Minister to agree with world leaders that global warming should not exceed 2 degrees C to avoid catastrophic climate change.

For the first time, India's citizens issued a call on their government to exert leadership on climate change and say yes to a demand that scientists and civil society have long been calling for across the world. In less than 24 hours, more than **2021** Indians signed on to an Avaaz.org petition calling on the Indian Prime Minister to show leadership in Italy.

The G8+5 Summit in L'Aquila will bring together leaders of industrialised nations and major emerging economies to consider an historic pledge to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees -- the level scientists warn will be "catastrophic". The meeting will mark an important step before 190 governments meet in December in Copenhagen to hammer out a global climate treaty.

The Indian government has been blocking agreement on the 2 degree figure citing impacts on its economy. India is currently the fourth largest emitter of climate-changing greenhouse gases and projected to be amongst the top three by 2015.

The country is on the frontlines of climate change and climate impacts are already costing the economy 2.6% of GDP. The real figure could be much more. The cost in terms of human suffering is already visible across the country. India has the largest number of poor people in the world and they are the most vulnerable to the floods, droughts, heat waves, storms, cyclones and other disasters that are expected to increase in frequency as climate change takes hold.

Scientists warn that if global warming rises past two degrees centigrade, the

world's climate systems are very likely to spin out of control. With the clock ticking the time for action is now.

**Ricken Patel, Co-Founder & Executive Director (Canada) of Avaaz.org**, said: "Indians want Prime Minister Singh to support a 2 degrees limit. This is a simple choice between a prosperous and energy-efficient future and a climate disaster with massive economic and human consequences."

**Malini Mehra, CEO of Centre for Social Markets**, the Indian NGO partner for the initiative and a leading force on climate advocacy, said: "India is at a cross-roads. We either take the high road to a successful conclusion at Copenhagen. Or we take the low road to nowhere. Today Indians are saying the choice is clear. We want our government to show leadership on climate change. It begins with 2 degrees and it's in our interest. We will be watching what our Prime Minister comes back with."

**END**

Note to Editors:

**Avaaz.org** is a community of 3.5 million global citizens -- including over 80,000 Indians -- who take action on the major issues facing the world today. The aim of Avaaz.org is to ensure that the views and values of the world's people shape global decisions. Avaaz.org members act for a more just and peaceful world and a globalization with a human face. [www.avaaz.org](http://www.avaaz.org)

The **Centre for Social Markets (CSM)** is an Indian NGO working to promote sustainability and climate leadership since 2000. Full details can be found at: [www.csmworld.org](http://www.csmworld.org)

In 2007, CSM launched the award-winning **Climate Challenge India** initiative, the country's first independent, non-partisan, non-political national mobilization effort on climate change. Climate Challenge India seeks to raise awareness of climate impact and opportunities and build a strong, pro-active domestic leadership agenda for the country. CSM also hosts the country's first Portal on India and climate change at: [www.climatechallengeindia.org](http://www.climatechallengeindia.org)