

6th

INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

International Dialogues and Conference 2019

20-22 November, 2019, New Delhi, India

CONFERENCE REPORT

MARKET DYNAMICS & SOCIAL DILEMMAS
OF PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Organized & hosted by

CRB CENTRE for
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact



Lead Partners

Laudes
Foundation



RSPO Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

www.sustainabilitystandards.in
www.c4rb.org

6th Edition

INDIA AND

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS



MARKET DYNAMICS & SOCIAL DILEMMAS OF PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

Writer: Papia Samajdar

Editor: Priyanka Chhaparia

Supported by: Sonali Paikarey and Siya Chopra

Design and layout: Papia Samajdar

CRB CENTRE *for*
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

Centre for Responsible Business
USO House, USO Road, 6 Jeet Singh Marg
Special Institutional Area
New Delhi 110067
Phone: 91-11-4108 853
Email: conference@crb.in and sonali.paikaray@c4rb.org



Lead Partners

Laudes —
— Foundation



Co-Hosts



Academic Institution Partners



Associate Partners



Logo Support



Goodness Partner



Industry Association Partners



Online Media Partner



Conference Manager



Conference Support Partners



Media Partner





PROLOGUE

In his celebrated book 'Built to Last', Jim Collins advanced the theory that visionary and enduring companies had a special ability that set them apart from others. These companies were able to distinguish between their timeless core values/purpose (stable and never changing) on the one hand and operating business principles (dynamic and ever-evolving to adjust with present times), on the other. In the present VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) characterised world, it is perhaps the best time for companies to introspect about Jim Collins' theory - what do they ultimately stand for? Why do they exist? What will make them last?



Businesses rely on inputs for production and delivery of quality products and services. In current times, there is ever more pressure to use their inputs judiciously, whether human resources, materials or capital. Only those businesses that have the vision and stamina to envisage a long term future strategy informed by an enduring core value would thrive – if we believed the above theory. There are enough successes and failures around us to draw these lessons from.

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) believes that sustainable business principles are a key ingredient that businesses of the future (and businesses with a purpose) should integrate into their enduring core values – that should ultimately inform their strategies and operations. This is a reality that has dawned on most large businesses worldwide, as was evident in Davos 2020 (refer the Davos 2020 Manifesto)¹.

Zooming into India, many leading businesses have made commendable strides over the last decade or so in giving due consideration to sustainable business principles – moving them from a peripheral function of the company gradually inwards into their strategies, on account of various reasons. The integration into the enduring core is a work in progress for most. Leaders of India Inc need to play an ambassadorial role in advocating for this integration to be accorded greater attention – not only for their businesses but for the entire economy. This would ensure that a commitment to sustainability is not jeopardised by changes that occur around businesses today, rather gets reinforced by it.

In CRB's sixth annual conference in November 2019, it was evident that a lot needed to be done by businesses and other stakeholders – and that time was running out. It cannot be business as usual, it can also not be stakeholder activism as usual. We all need to go beyond our comfort zones. For much too long, we have taken our earth's capacity to revive for granted. The resilience of our societal fabric as been tested beyond its breakage point.

The time is now for stronger commitments to be made by Indian business leaders. The time is now for the government to support business transformation. A step in this direction has already been taken by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs by developing the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC). The time is now for stakeholders to advocate for solutions. In this process, technology will need to play a role that reduces inequalities, not increase it across societies. Young millennials will have to be the harbingers of change, within and beyond 2030 – and we all have to rally with them.

Rijit Sengupta
CEO, CRB

¹ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/davos-manifesto-2020-the-universal-purpose-of-a-company-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>



CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| PROLOGUE | 2 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Technology, Labour Friendly Practices and Consumer Awareness will Pave the Way to Sustainability | 3 |
| INAUGURAL PANEL: 6th India and Sustainability Standards Annual Conference | 6 |
| HIGH LEVEL PANEL: Creating a Market for Sustainable Enterprises and Products | 8 |
| HIGH LEVEL PANEL: Bringing Paradigm Shift in Financial Sector to promote Sustainability | 10 |
| HIGH LEVEL PANEL: Business Solutions to Developmental Challenges in Emerging Economies | 12 |
| LAUNCH: Business Responsibility and Sustainability in India: Sectoral Analysis of Voluntary Governance Initiatives | 14 |
| LAUNCH: Impact Conclave | 16 |
| CHIEF GUEST: Importance and Nuances of Labour Standards and the Adoption of International Standards | 18 |
| PANEL: Sustainable Palm Oil Dialogue: Market Transformation towards Sustainable Palm Oil in India | 19 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sustainable Palm Oil Dialogue – ISPOC Meeting | 21 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Role of Municipalities in Promoting Sustainable Cities: Innovative Collaborations to Promote SDGs | 22 |
| WORKSHOP: On the Complexity of Mental Maps of Sustainability | 24 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Addressing Nutrition Security through Public-Private Lens — Challenges and Opportunities | 28 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sustainable Public Procurement as a Lever for Promoting Sustainability | 30 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sustainability Standards and Farmer Livelihoods: Global Lessons and Local Relevance | 32 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Integrating Sustainability in Bamboo Value Chain — Scope and Role of Standard | 34 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sourcing Policies/Practices of MNCs and Implications on Food Waste Management | 36 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Why Credibility Matters and What it Means to You | 38 |
| NETWORKING VILLAGE | 40 |
| PANEL: Policy Intervention for Circular Apparel and Textiles in India | 42 |
| WORKSHOP: Youth as Architects and Advocates on Sustainability in India | 44 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Roundtable on the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights | 46 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Global Value Chains and Women Empowerment | 48 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Applying Circular Economy in Plastics Management | 50 |
| WORKSHOP: On Circular economy within Small and Medium sized Enterprises in India | 52 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sustainability in Cafes as a Business Case: Why Indian Consumers Demand and Value Sustainable Products | 54 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Supply Chain Due Diligence — A Business Opportunity | 56 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Sustainability Education in Business Schools | 58 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Masterclass on Product Lifetime Extension | 60 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Role of Benchmarks and Reporting in Promoting Responsible Investment | 62 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Human Trafficking in Supply Chains | 64 |
| PARALLEL SESSION: Responsible Investing – Investors’ Perspective on ESG Considerations | 66 |
| CLOSING PANEL: Market Dynamics and Social Dilemmas of Promoting Sustainable Business | 68 |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TECHNOLOGY, LABOUR FRIENDLY PRACTICES AND CONSUMER AWARENESS WILL PAVE THE WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY

The 6th India and Sustainability Standards (ISS) International Dialogue and Conference welcomed sustainability professionals, academicians, financial experts, business representatives, Government officials, media and civil society personnel to discuss and debate on challenges and opportunities to achieve sustainability, like its previous five versions. The theme 'Market dynamics and Social Dilemmas of Promoting Sustainable Businesses' focussed on market trends, labour practices along with existing government policies, legislation and voluntary standards that can create the pull in the market to reward sustainable and inclusive business in India. The conference, conceived and presented by CRB, was co-organised with 69 partners, 149 speakers in 32 sessions with over 600 participants.

Delegates appreciated the ISS platform for continually being able to mobilise diverse stakeholders from across the globe to explore sustainability solutions with India practitioners. The ISS conference is unique in bringing together academia and businesses, and introducing new actors into this dialogue on sustainable business. This year, a focus was to provide opportunity to young consumers- the millennials into these dialogues.

One of the emerging points was the adoption of technology and labour friendly practices. To ensure India maintains a competitive edge, it is pertinent for it to adapt technology as well as invest in human resources. The challenge of tracking practices in the third and fourth tier of the value chain was repeatedly highlighted. There was an agreement that small and medium enterprises need to be mainstreamed into sustainability dialogues and practices.

One of the emerging points was for India to maintain a competitive edge, it is crucial to adopt technology as well as invest in human resources. The challenge of tracking practices in the third and fourth tier of the value chain was repeatedly highlighted. There was a strong agreement that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) needed to be mainstreamed into sustainability dialogues and practices.

Millennials emerged an important influence group to demand brands and businesses to adopt labour and environment-friendly practices. To tap into their energy, special workshop with youth as architects and advocates on sustainability/sustainable business was organised. Multiple sessions had participation from the youth.

The 'Networking Village' provided a place to unwind and have casual discussions, make new friends, address a small group of people, undertake working sessions and capture video bytes from experts. The exhibitors included entrepreneurs working in textile and apparel, urban sanitation, marginalised women entrepreneurs etc.

Keeping up with its efforts to reduce its Carbon footprint, the ISS 2019 conference adopted some innovative steps. Water was served in glass bottles and food was prepared with certified sustainable palm oil. The tea and coffee served were also certified. The bags distributed to the delegates were created out of up-cycled textiles and had handmade paper pens containing a 'seed' crafted by specially-abled people. Paper and plastic use was reduced by more than 50%.

CRB took one of the 2018 ISS conference recommendations to get a wider stakeholder participation, forward and launched an initiative 'Impact Conclave'. Impact Conclave is a digital multi-stakeholder platform that enables continuity in sustainability dialogues. This is an effort to ensure partnerships are nurtured and can be further strengthened before and after the CRB ISS Conference and test sustainability solutions related ideas. This platform will enable discovery of new and existing sustainability initiatives.



Emerging framework for action on sustainable business

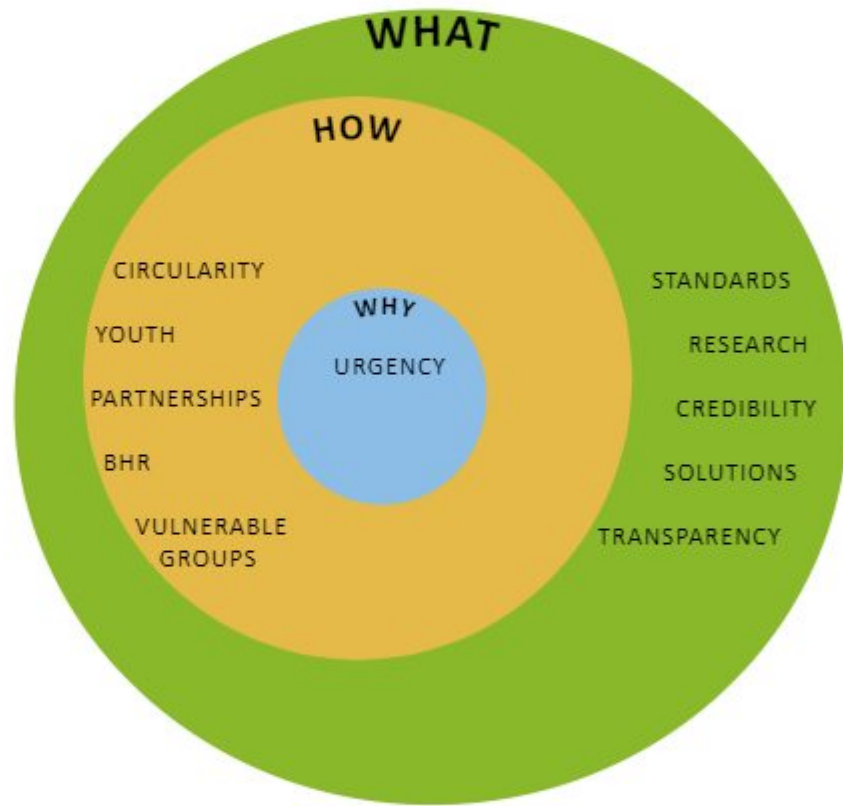
Speakers and participants alike agreed that sustainability is not an option anymore but a condition for future prosperity. The following key take aways from the 2019 editions of CRB's Annual Sustainability Conference could help CRB and its partners in building wider support for transformation towards sustainability/sustainable business in India.

- **URGENCY** – Sustainability is non-negotiable. We have to move beyond business as usual and act urgently. Companies should take proactive steps to clean their supply chain and not only when customer demands it.
- **CIRCULARITY** – Circular economy is a systems approach to economic development, and extremely relevant for Indian society and business. There are both business and political 'case' to promote circular economy.
- **PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION** – Everybody needs to work together and be a part of solutions. Conflicting views must be reconciled to reach crucial decisions. There is a need to bring all stakeholders on a single platform and promote exchange of ideas. Trust building is key to building strong partnerships.
- **VULNERABLE GROUPS** – Rights of vulnerable people need to be respected when allowing markets to function. Poverty is the worst form of violence. Asset creation is the surest form of reducing poverty and businesses can take a lead. Decent work is especially critical for informal workers, MSMEs and for home based workers (value chain). The challenge is to ensure collective voice of women and to reach the last worker in the value chain.
- **YOUTH** – Young India is starting to realise their power/influence in driving change towards sustainable consumption and lifestyles. Young consumers want to engage in issues related to sustainability. They are interested to know how they can contribute actively on this agenda - they need direction and some support.
- **BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS (BHR)** – BHR cross cut across all 17 SDGs and addressing BHR can help achieve SDGs. It includes promoting decent work for workers, ensure women workers are mainstreamed. Businesses need to work closely with the government.
- **STANDARDS** – There is a general lack of awareness about sustainability standards. Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) has emerged as a solution to address some of the key sustainability challenges. It is upto the practitioners to bring the standards to an implementation stage without diluting its intent or sanctity. International standards should be applied in each country according to local context and culture.
- **RESEARCH** – Stronger collaboration with the research community is an imperative. Indian researchers outside of the country should take it upon themselves to spread the word about the transformational changes happening in the Indian policy and practice space vis-a-vis sustainability/SDGs/ sustainable business. Policy needs to be informed by research (evidence).
- **CREDIBILITY** – Importance of credibility is a no-brainer. There is always pressure on producers and other players in the supply chain/value chain to enhance and demonstrate their credibility. Transparency is important in establishing credibility.
- **COST** – It is a long drawn debate whether sustainability means more expensive goods and services. There exist lack of awareness on low cost efficient processes. An ecosystem will only grow when the country has production of sustainable solutions.



- **TRANSPERANCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY** – Transperancy in data is much needed. It is crucial for both stakeholders and financial shareholders to understand what is going on and nudge the companies in the right direction. Data is the new oil.

The conference established that the need to achieve sustainability is a matter of urgency and cannot be ignored any further. Using Simon Sinek’s Golden Circle Theory (<https://simonsinek.com/commit/the-golden-circle>), an action framework has been attempted based on the (above) broad takeaways from the ISS 2019 conference. The framework below is self explanatory and will guide us as we work with our partners in acting urgently.



WHY?

The core purpose, cause, or belief

- Urgency of promoting sustainable businesses

HOW?

The different actions to be taken for the cause

- Adopt Circular Economy
- Develop meaningful Parternships
- Interest of Vulnerable Groups
- Youth demand and actions
- Mainstreaming Business and Human Rights

WHAT?

The functions or roles that need to be performed

- Implementation of Standards
- Collaboration with Research community
- Credibility at all levels
- Cost effective sustainable solutions
- Ensure Transperancy in operations

Figure 1: Framework for Sustainable Business



INAUGURAL DAY

NOVEMBER 20, 2019

6TH INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The inaugural panel set the mood for the upcoming three days of intense discussions, where stakeholders from all walks of life put their heads together to carve the best possible paths towards sustainability. The speakers introduced the challenges facing the world today and despite achievements, time to rest seems even further away. Appreciating the ISS platform, the inaugural session's panellists agreed that sustainability is the only choice left for survival.



SPEAKERS

MR. SURESH PRABHU

India's G20 & G7 Sherpa & Former Minister Of Commerce & Industry and Civil, Aviation, Government of India

MS. SHOKO NODA

Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), India,

MR. RAJIVE KUMAR

Chairperson, Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority and former Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh

DATUK DARREL WEBBER

Chief Executive Officer, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

DR. BIMAL ARORA

Assistant Professor, Aston Business School, UK and Honorary Chairperson, CRB

MR. MANJIT SINGH

Member of Governing Body, CRB

MR. RIJIT SENGUPTA

Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Shoko Noda opened the plenary by underlining UNDP's commitment to sustainable development. The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve a global blueprint for 'peace, prosperity, and people.' Ms. Noda acknowledged and appreciated the commitment of companies to SDGs and the Paris Agreement. She drew upon the difference between the SDGs from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the latter being designed with data crunched at the UN headquarters, while SDGs followed a holistic inclusive approach. She highlighted that SDGs belong to everyone and she was encouraged to see the collective progress made so far. Ms. Noda pointed out the role of India in achieving global targets due to the scale. UNDP is open to working with different sectors and companies to build a platform to best utilize expertise and resources of different actors. She reiterated the mission of 'leaving no one behind' and working together to be part of solutions. Ms. Noda lauded the ISS conference as being one of a kind to bring multi-level stakeholders together in one room.

Mr. Suresh Prabhu acknowledged ISS conference as an important platform which has proved its credibility over the years. He asserted that there is a global acceptance of the fact that adopting a sustainable way of life is the only choice. As sustainability holds varied meaning for people, codification of its components and standards, are important. Mr. Prabhu also warned of the dangers of these standards as it can create market entry barriers in a developing country. He argued that markets do not always provide the best solutions and hence, should not be allowed to dominate the discourse. Government intervention and regulation can plug the gaps. Sustainable business practices should acknowledge that poor needs to be treated with dignity, while allowing markets to function, concluded Mr. Prabhu.

Datuk Darrel Webber teased the idea that climate change cannot be prevented but can only be limited below a certain level. Urging everybody to have faith in humanity, he also requested the audience to act immediately. India is most impacted by climate change and it is taking measures to adapt and mitigate. Pointing to the fact that "climate change has no borders," action needs to be taken accordingly. He questioned the ability of businesses to survive if they continue as usual.



INAUGURAL PANEL

“We need to explain sustainability to business and customers both,” said Mr. Weber. Businesses need to work hard to adopt sustainability tools and measure them as well. They need to act urgently to clean their supply chain. He informed that RSPO could help with the standards. He ended his speech with a response to Greta Thunberg, “We dare not to fail you young people; we dare to change.”

Mr. Rajive Kumar spoke about regulations in the real estate sector. Reflecting on the comment “environment is a resource” made decades ago, Mr. Kumar was able to understand the true meaning only recently. “Sustainability should be a template for whatever one does, irrespective of the sector and place,” added Mr. Kumar. In real estate, companies are now committed to sustainability standards. Saying that there is a lack of awareness about low cost, efficient processes, he pressed upon the need for replicating successful examples. Businesses should look for models to have a clean supply chain. There is a huge market which offers a great opportunity to work towards sustainability. He resonated Mr. Prabhu’s claim that there is no dilemma when it comes to sustainability, as it makes a clear business case.

Dr. Bimal Arora shared the genesis of ISS as a platform. Pointing to the fact that people turn to the government for a solution to every problem, the expectation is also for the government to take responsibility. Dr. Arora argued that no nation can achieve sustainability by relying solely on the government; society and business need to join hands. There are several voluntary standards which have been implemented and have received acceptance in academia. There is still a long way to go customisation and inclusiveness need to be built in the standards; market empowered supply chain is not enough. Dr. Arora pointed out that CRB aims to fill the gap in the absence of a common and credible platform for multi-stakeholder participation for collaboration. As an initial attempt, he introduced Impact Conclave as an online portal, currently in the testing phase, which would enable long term discussions and participation.

The panel ended with Mr. Manjit Singh giving a vote of thanks and highlighting that ISS presents the opportunity to rekindle and resolve future action, reflect on past deeds, and learn today.

“Rights of vulnerable people need to be respected while allowing markets to function”
Shri Suresh Prabhu

CREATING A MARKET FOR SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES AND PRODUCTS



The first High level panel explored the situation of Indian markets' sustainable practices. Indian markets are evolving, and the pressure to keep sustainable practices at the helm of their activities is growing. The panel tried to analyse the good practices and the challenges towards this transition. Multi-stakeholder dialogues, greater consumer awareness and government support were some of the points which came forth. Demand for sustainability standards within Indian companies and discussion on pricing with brands were key suggestions from the audience.



MODERATOR

PROFESSOR CAROLINE ELLIOTT, Deputy Dean, Aston Business School, UK

PANELLISTS

DR. AMIT MITRA

State Minister, Department of Finance, Industry, Commerce and Enterprises, MSME and Textiles, IT and Electronics, Government of West Bengal

AMB MARTEN VAN DEN BERG

Dutch Ambassador to India

MS. VICKY SINS

Climate and Energy Benchmarking Lead, World Benchmarking Alliance

MR. EDWARD MILLARD

Director, Landscapes and Communities, Rainforest Alliance, UK

MS. SUMITA GHOSH

Founder and Managing Director, Rangсутra

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Amit Mitra oriented the audience towards the difference in scale and volume between Government programmes and private sector programmes. Lauding the work being done by businesses and NGOs, Dr. Mitra elaborated the reach of the Government by citing examples across sectors. He touched upon all the programmes being run by the Government of West Bengal to achieve sustainability – education, employment, environment, and health. To highlight the scale, Dr Mitra focussed on the budget allocation as well as the impact on the population. He concluded by saying though there is a need to check inefficiencies and leakages, the government should have the intent and design as it plays a critical role in sustainable development.

Amb. Marten Van den Berg, responding to the question if Indian markets are ready for sustainable sourcing, said that the option of not being ready is now behind. He opined that the current scenario of wrong pricing and wrong incentives has led to incorrect market outcome. A push towards market readiness is required which calls for dialogues with all stakeholders. Mr Van den Berg emphasised the need for compliance when it came to regulation. Companies are required to keep sustainability at the core of their business model and activities, especially Indian companies. "Putting money in CSR is great but it is also important to bring sustainable practices at core business activity," he remarked. "A demand for sustainable business orders from the financial sectors and share-holders will also make a difference," he added. Stating that larger companies have started acting on these issues and risks, the smaller and grassroots level organisation have been left behind. Smaller companies are required to be brought in the sustainable supply chain, share best practices, and get incentivised through Government programmes.

**HIGH LEVEL PANEL 1**

Ms. Vicky Sins introduced the role of her organisation in attaining sustainable practices amongst businesses. Saying that “What gets measured is what gets done,” she pressed upon the importance of benchmarking companies-based indicators of sustainable practices. She emphasised the role of Indian markets in the global agenda to achieve SDGs. “The world needs India to be ready,” she remarked. Companies should disclose sustainability performance data to all stakeholders to grow in the right direction. It is important that multi sector dialogues are held, societal expectations are considered, labour rights and human rights are respected, transparency is encouraged, and consumers are made aware. She said to achieve sustainability, the private sector needs to take responsibility to drive consumer awareness. She encouraged businesses to go beyond expectations while taking consumers along in the transition journey.

Mr. Edward Millard spoke about what the Rainforest Alliance has been doing to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to sustainability. “In the last 20 years, companies are trying to build a meaningful platform to help the poorest create wealth with assistance from Rainforest Alliance,” he said. Adding to the positive note, he said the private sector is now aware of their risks of ignoring sustainable practices. “Though there are barriers which need to be addressed, markets should be defined by demographics with access to the same information”, he added. Speaking about challenges, Mr Millard discussed hidden aspects of production, including child labour, and some of the worst human rights abuses. “Huge amount of work needs to be done to bring transparency, so much still needs to come out in the public eye,” he added.

The panel also had Ms. Sumita Ghosh who heads a grassroot level garment production enterprise (Rangsutra), supplying to bigger chains. Speaking from the experience of working with artisans, she said that rural India still suffers from a lack of livelihood opportunity and employment. She spoke about the importance of continuous on-the-job training to ensure market competitive products. “As far as markets are concerned, goods produced while following fair social and environmental practices are better,” she said. Ms. Ghosh added that B2B customers are sensitive and willing to invest to produce a quality product. Speaking about the challenges, achieving environment norms still lies in the future. The challenge to ensure consumers adopt these products is a big one, as there is a gap in communication and awareness. Though it is a growing interest, more effort towards building consumer awareness is required. “Yes, there are challenges, but as long as the communication channels are open, a lot can be achieved,” concluded Ms. Ghosh.

The panellist responded to questions around pricing, voluntary standards and partnerships. They concluded by expressing the importance of applicability of standards within in India, correct pricing, and open communication channels.

BRINGING PARADIGM SHIFT IN FINANCIAL SECTOR TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY



This session explored the role of the financial sector as one of the key drivers of sustainability practices. The panellists assessed successful models, gaps, and challenges particular to the Indian context. The speakers agreed that investing in responsible companies makes a strong business case; however, it has to be clearly communicated for Indian companies to make that shift. The panellists also agreed that there needs to be a host of other initiatives to make financial institutions and companies adopt ESG and sustainable practices.



MODERATOR

DR. A DIDAR SINGH, Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group

PANELLISTS

MR. CHANDRU BADRINARAYAN

Managing Partner, ECube Investment Advisors

MR. PAUL SCHUILWERVE

Chief Executive Officer and Country Head, Rabobank, India

MS. REEMA NANAVATY

Executive Director, SEWA

(video message)

MS. NORMA TREGURTHA

Lead Strategic Partnerships, ISEAL Alliance

MR. ASHLEY MENEZES

Partner and COO, ChrysCapital

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Didar Singh opened the panel by presenting the situation on sustainability in the Indian context. Saying that though sustainability features in every government conversation, practical applications are still being ignored. To achieve sustainable development goals by 2030, India alone requires 2.5 trillion USD; Dr. Singh questioned if the governments, organisations, and finance sectors are planning accordingly. He invited the panel to shed light on innovative financial models, challenges, and future. Dr. Singh believed that Environment Social Governance policies (ESG)— using both public and private resources – are the key to drive this transformation.

Through a video message, Ms. Reema Nanavaty shared her experience of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) with the audience. SEWA is the largest union with 1.7 million self-employed women; Ms. Nanavaty stated that the objectives of this union are to ensure asset creation and sustainable livelihoods for poverty alleviation. The SEWA cooperative bank is an example of an innovative financial model which provides access to financial instruments to the marginalised at grassroots level. Ms. Nanavaty concluded by saying "poor do not want charity, they want affordable and accessible financial instruments, which is the main aim of the SEWA cooperative bank."

edge, and information were some of the gaps listed by Mr. Schuilwerve. According to him, acknowledging climate change and believing sustainable practices is the answer is an effective way to address it. Mr. Schuilwerve added that inefficiencies in agriculture, food waste, nutrition, and pricing structure could be solved by working together.



Mr. Chandru Badrinarayan presented ECube Investment Advisors as a new initiative to channel foreign investment focussed on ESG to Indian markets. Stating that there is a business case for companies to integrate ESG practices, he claimed that 30 trillion USD in foreign investment is chasing ESG. According to Mr. Badrinarayan, the big companies have started showing trends towards ESG in their practices; however, the mid and small capital companies need money and mentorship to develop private equity approach for public-private investment to follow the ESG matrix in India. Saying ESG has both risks and opportunities, Mr. Badrinarayan emphasised the need to fill gaps in data, framework, standards, and advocacy. He believed that the investment sector is key in driving climate change and sustainability to the centre stage.

Ms. Normal Tregurtha built on the link between sustainability standards sector and the financial sector. The financial sector can act as a glue by driving sustainability in companies by adopting standards. She believed that companies with sustainability certificates are high quality clients for the financial sector. She agreed with the speakers that sustainability policies and their compliance is yet to be the main driver for financial loans. She added that in spite of existent good frameworks, they need to be tailored for India. She believed that real change would happen when the business case for sustainability is clearly articulated. Complex issues such as ESG adoption and transition towards sustainability cannot be solved singularly but needs a host of drivers. Regulations, leadership, innovative financial products, specific models such as eco-business funds are crucial steps.

Mr. Ashley Menezes resonated Mr. Badrinarayan's view by saying that the international financial sector is an important force to drive companies to adopt ESG and invest in responsible businesses. Stating that Indian companies are being driven to consider adopting sustainable practices due to a sleuth of commitments and foreign investors, Mr. Menezes emphasized on the role of regulators to ensure adoption of ESG framework. He believed that investors and regulators with a market mechanism could successfully drive this transition.

The panellists concluded that the financial sector shoulders a responsibility to build market orientation towards sustainability.

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN EMERGING ECONOMIES



The High-Level Panel discussed the role of businesses in driving sustainability. Though aspects such as water, energy, resources drive big companies to design efficient systems, however, aspects of human rights are still under appreciated. The panel discussed some of the best practices and successful business models followed by companies as well as challenges. The panellists agreed that SDGs can serve as robust guidelines to make companies rethink to be more inclusive and responsible.



MODERATOR

DR. JONATHAN PINTO, Associate Professor, Organisational Behaviour and Negotiations, Imperial College Business School, UK

PANELLISTS

MR. P.S. NARAYAN

Global Head, Sustainability and Social Initiatives, Wipro Ltd. and Managing Trustee and Head, Wipro Foundation

MR. TERRY NELIDOV

Managing Director, Erb Institute for Global Sustainability Enterprise, University of Michigan

MR. BISHOW PARAJULI

Country Director (India), World Food Programme

MR. RAM KUMAR MISHRA

Director, Institute of Public Enterprises

MR. MARKUS LOENING

Founder, Löning – Human Rights & Responsible Business, Former German Human Rights Commissioner

HIGHLIGHTS

The stage was set by Dr. Jonathan Pinto questioning if emerging economies function differently than the developed ones. Arguing that the desire to own a car is a legitimate aspiration, Dr. Pinto pointed out numerous social dilemmas in the sustainability debate.

Mr. Terry Nelidov opined that every sector has a role to play in sustainability. Representing Erb Institute, he spoke about the institute's focus on social and environmental risks and opportunities in business.

Mr. Markus Loening spoke about defining clear roles and duties for corporates to protect human rights. For progress, it is important to look at downsides and flaws, he said. Mr. Loening believed that human progress happens collectively across geographical areas and needs open borders. According to him, businesses need to value retaining employees as it brings down the cost and delivers sustained quality. Once companies make this linkage, they will focus on providing their employees better labour conditions. External pressure on big companies to ensure a clean supply chain has started to improve the situation, he added.



According to Mr. P.S. Narayan, big businesses have engaged with some of the human rights issues in the previous two decades. According to him, it was in the interest of big businesses to do so, especially for resource and cost efficiency as well as brand reputation. Discussions around human rights have however lagged as businesses don't see the benefits of non-quantifiable aspects like the wage gap and working conditions directly. Alignment of human rights with the business charter is crucial. He emphasised the need for businesses to focus on long term impacts which should stretch beyond their physical boundary. Mr. Narayan also named sustainable consumption as one of the challenges, where businesses need to relook at its processes.

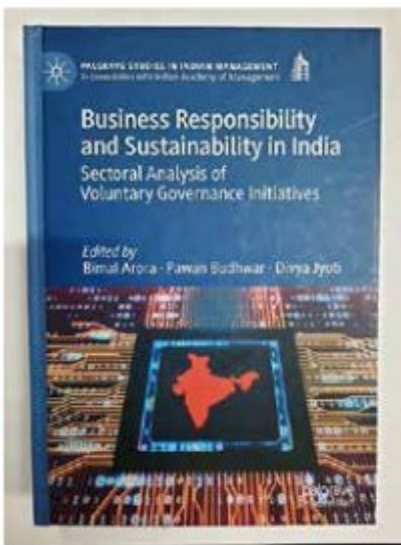
According to Mr. R.K. Mishra, for a society to sustain itself, it needs to follow the philosophy of 'live and let live.' Society should wish for collective good thoughts, health and happiness. Quoting Gita and Gandhi, Mr. Mishra said sustainability is in the blood of every Indian. Companies should follow a similar philosophy--going beyond profits as it is part of society. It is possible for everyone to thrive, said Mr. Mishra. However, he warned that models of smaller countries cannot be implemented in a country like India. "We need a model which can serve a large number of people with affordable pricing," he added. Saying that little money is spent on research and development, companies have become myopic and do not comply with unwritten social norms. They must rethink the processes to become inclusive and just.

Mr. Bishow Parajauli, representing the World Food Programme, said food for healthy living and nutrition is a basic human right. For Mr. Parajauli, good business should be sustainable and serve the society. He highlighted that in spite of progress, a huge number of people do not have access to required calories. He suggested that saving and preserving food is a good business case, as is providing accessibility of food. "CSR is a very innovative step for India", he said, "the implementation and impact should be closely monitored to make requisite changes for better impact." Malnutrition hotspots, based on data, should be identified and interventions should be planned accordingly. In a broad sense, businesses should focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a guiding framework.

BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN INDIA: SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES



BOOK LAUNCH



The book, "Business Responsibility and Sustainability in India: Sectoral Analysis of Voluntary Governance Initiatives", edited by Bimal Arora, Pawan Budhwar, and Divya Jyoti, presents few select Voluntary Sustainable Standards (VSS) in different industry sectors, as examples of collective steering and reflect on their approach, models, strengths, limitations, and challenges as they are being adopted in India.

Divided in eleven chapters, the book is targeted at policymakers and civil society in India to better understand the interplay between VSS and policy. It aims to reach out to different actors involved in setting up, implementation and uptake of VSS and at governance and regulation and business sustainability researchers. Some of the sectors addressed in the book are palm oil, tea, cotton, pharmaceuticals, and forests.



Ms. Bhavna Prasad, Director of Sustainable Business in WWF-India, contributed to the chapter on palm oil; an affordable oil which is resulting in massive amount of deforestation in Indonesia and Malaysia.

These countries produce 90% of the global palm oil, with India being the largest importer. The chapter attempts to build a narrative around increasing Indian consumption which contributes directly to global deforestation. Though a challenge, it also presents an opportunity as Indian markets can be used as a lever of change across the supply chain.

The chapter assesses RSPO and other standards, how they fare at the market level, their relevance to India, and highlights some of the issues such as uptake of sustainable palm oil, lack of awareness, and loopholes in the standards.

Dr. T.R. Manoharan, Senior Advisor at the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), contributed to the chapter on the role of voluntary sustainable standards (VSS) including India's footprint beyond its boundary.

Touching upon the issue of slow adoption of VSS by the Indian Government, he pointed to the non-inclusive process of standard development. New regulations by FSC, which is to be released soon, mandate certification of forests to achieve the sustainable goals in the forestry sector.

The chapter touches upon the cost of certification, government incentives, and multi-stakeholder engagement as some of the factors for successful adoption of VSS.



Mr. Saji M. Kadavil, Lead Consultant-M&E, Research and BD in Responsible Business, Sustainable Agriculture and CSR, wrote the chapter on tea, a complex industry yet everyone's lifeline.

The chapter reviews existing private labels, certification and their impacts on the economy. In India, there has been high growth in private labels over the past decade, but the issues remain the same. There are 30% small tea growers in India, as compared to 70% in Africa or Latin America.

The chapter talks about lack of governance system in spite of standards in the private sector, and the inability of the standards to address the existing issues.

Mr. Amol Mishra, Global Commercial Director, CottonConnect, shaped the cotton and textile chapter. The chapter looked at the issues faced by the farmers, the environmental ramification, market linkages, and structural and governance challenges.

It builds on the role of existing standards to address the challenge. Amongst the many challenges, the chapter details on the issues of implementation of standards and market distortion.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF IMPACT CONCLAVE LAUNCH



Impact Conclave is a digital multi-stakeholder platform that enables continuity in the sustainability dialogues. This is an effort to ensure partnerships are nurtured and can be further strengthened. This platform will also enable the discovery of new and existing sustainability initiatives. Through this platform, we hope to reach a diverse group, though our focus would be on small and medium enterprises to provide them with knowledge and support as solution partners.



"We are successful in bringing multiple stakeholders in one room at the conference; however, we are unable to take the conversations specifically and meaningfully forward. To bridge that gap, CRB has developed the Impact Conclave."

Mr. Rijit Sengupta

"The Impact Conclave is a mechanism to continue interacting as a group, follow up, and include interested participants who are unable to attend the conference. We have extended this conference platform at the digital level."

Dr. Bimal Arora

"Keep pushing Governments, businesses, NGOs, and Academics to work with practitioners and further the relationship."

Dr. Caroline Elliott



SECOND DAY

NOVEMBER 21, 2019

IMPORTANCE AND NUANCES OF LABOUR STANDARDS AND THE ADOPTION OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS



Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State for Labour and Employment, (Independent Charge) graced the inaugural plenary of the second day of ISS 2019 as the Chief Guest. He talked about the importance and nuances of labour standards and the adoption of international standard. Shri Gangwar also gave an overview of the efforts being made by the Government of India to protect and ensure the rights of workers in the country. He mentioned the consultation process that the Ministry follows with different groups to ensure inclusivity.

Shri Gangwar congratulated CRB for bringing a diverse group of stakeholders together to discuss various aspects of sustainable development and hoped that the dialogues at ISS 2019 would lead to policy recommendations, at national as well as international levels.

SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL DIALOGUE: MARKET TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL IN INDIA



The session brought important players and consumers of the sustainable palm oil sector to take stock of the Indian markets. Are Indian markets conducive to shifting towards certified sustainable palm oil, what can be done to speed up the uptake, the challenges and the potential solutions, were tabled by the speakers. Keeping it interactive, important aspects were added by the audience to this very engaging session. The panellists agreed it is a slow transition but also expressed positivity towards it. Consumer awareness, climate change impacts, and pressure built by the financial institution can play an important role in this transition.



MODERATOR

MR. KAMAL PRAKASH SETH, Associate Professor, India Country Head, Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

PANELLISTS

MR. DARREL WEBBER
CEO, RSPO

MR. PAUL SCHUILWERVE
CEO and Head, Rabobank India

MR. PRAKASH CHAWLA
Chairperson, AAK Kamani

MR. SANDEEP BHAN
COO, Sime Darby Oils

MS. TEENAL SETHI
Chief Risk Officer, RaboBank

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Kamal Seth initiated the morning panel with a passionate video reminding us of our dependence on nature. Saying that the failure to move towards our commitments to produce and consume sustainable palm oil will come at a huge cost, he invited the panellists to share their role in forwarding the agenda.

Mr. Prakash Chawla reflected on his organisation's journey as one of the biggest manufacturers of speciality oils and shared its current practices, which are aimed at enhancing sustainability. Mr. Paul Schuilwerve representing Rabobank India talked about its sector focussed policies which mandates the engagement with industry clients. As a facilitator, Mr. Darrel Webber highlighted that his most important responsibility is to ensure that right people who can voice their opinion are represented at RSPO platforms. He also mentioned that RSPO comes out with policies governing the sector through universal consent. It encourages its members to become ambassadors to encourage sustainable palm oil procurement, production and consump-



tion of certified palm oil across regions. Mr. Sandeep Bhan, representing Sime Darby Oil - the largest producer of sustainable palm oil, said his company is 100% RSPO compliant, Malaysian sustainability compliant, and Indonesian Sustainability Compliant.

Elaborating on the certifications provided by RSPO, Mr. Darrel Webber explained the system of buying or supporting certified sustainable palm oil. The credit system provides market access to small farmers as well as big plantations. Mr. Ashwin Selvaraj added that 40% of global palm oil production comes from small scale producers, though regionally it can go up to 90%. Saying that there is a price difference for credits between mills and small farmers, the difference is due to the cost involved in getting small farmers certified.

Since palm oil is being grown for India outside India, there should be shared responsibility of sustainability between countries. Sharing a survey result, Mr. Seth said that consumers in India are happy to pay the premium of extra cost of using certified palm oil. He made a case for spreading consumer awareness, especially among millennials to demand companies to use certified palm oil in their products. Mr. Webber and Mr. Schuilwerve believed that consumer awareness has the potential to drive change.

Though India has shown a 10% growth in certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) consumption, it is negligible when compared to global CSPO production. Mr. Bhan added that the Indian and multinational FMCGs show keen interest towards sustainable palm oil, but the Indian traders are resistant. Cost is another factor slowing the uptake. Unless the products are priced properly, it is difficult to promote large scale use of expensive oils, added Mr. Chawla. He stressed upon the slow, stage-wise shift as consumers become more aware. He also opined that certificates have the largest potential to steer India towards sustainable palm oil consumption. The cost of climate change impacts needs to be built in the product pricing, added Mr. Schuilwever, agreeing with Mr. Chawla. Mr. Schuilwerve also mentioned policies by the financial sector can be a driving force.

India produces 2-3% of its home demand, relying on exports for the rest. According to Mr. Bhan, India does not have a choice other than importing, due to the growing demand. Though the Government wants to explore local oilseeds as a substitute to reduce imports, the demand for palm oil will not change in the next couple of decades. Growing palm oil locally though is a good idea theoretically, the panellists pointed to a host of issues. Dr. Webber warned about allocating land in an ecologically sensitive area, which can never get RSPO certification as it's not sustainable. Mr. Schuilwerve also questioned this decision by saying issues like water scarcity and landholding are not conducive to palm oil production. Mr. Chawla added that palm oil is not an easy crop to grow and requires multiple support and facilities. The panellists requested to engage with the Government to present the impacts of growing palm oil in the North East to dissuade them from making this mistake.

Mr. Seth introduced the India Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition (ISPOC) forum. The forum aims to engage with RSPO non-members to educate them about palm oil and its impact. The experience shared by Mr. Rijit Sengupta resonated with the speakers saying there is a growing trend of Indian companies showing interest in sustainable palm oil consumption. The session was wrapped up by Ms. Teenal Sethi summarising the key points as mentioned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consumer awareness can drive companies to use sustainable palm oil. Millennials can play an important role
- Engage and influence Government not to grow palm oil in ecologically sustainable areas
- Relook at product pricing, build in the cost of climate change impact, and address the issue of water scarcity in the products
- Engage with Indian companies who are aware of impacts of palm oil to facilitate the shift as part of the pledge 'India will not import deforestation'



India Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition or ISPOC is a voluntary business led coalition to promote government policies for sustainable palm oil uptake, address supply chain issues and mobilize end users by engaging with various stakeholders. The coalition was established in 2018 by Rain Forest Alliance, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, AAK Kamani, IDH, The sustainable Trade Initiative and Centre for Responsible Business.



The session was designed to gather ideas on the three verticals through a group discussion. The steering committee members laid down the issues which can be tackled by ISPOC. Three groups were formed to present ideas to address issues around supply chain, government policies and end users. The ideas presented at the end of the session are:

BRANDS AND LOCAL COMPANIES

- Encouraged to increase product communication through labelling and certification.
- Profile of the sustainable growers in India should be created for tangibility and learning.
- Documentation of positive impacts to create a repository to share with media.
- Reach out to the brands to join ISPOC to influence SPO uptake. Identify other platforms and association to engage with them. Development and delivery of webinars, seminars, knowledge platforms in partnership with brands and other identified stakeholders.
- Train and support domestic vendors and MSMEs.
- Develop systems for document traceability. Mapping and engaging suppliers to understand the current tracing system and practises.

CONSUMERS

- Increased regional media engagement (radio, newspaper) – Regional media is more accessible and are keen to cover local issues.
- Social media engagement to question their favourite brands.
- Design and implement school programmes as part of the awareness building campaign.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- Identify and partner with research agencies which have a leverage with the ministry to ensure incentives schemes such as preferential tariffs are implemented by the Government.
- The policies need to be linked to production. Identify the right kind of linkage to avoid unsustainable incentives for Indian production. Ensure that palm oil production within India follows the sustainability parameters.
- The advocacy campaign should have a broader approach to include sustainability and trade commitments and should consider agriculture, health, trade policies.

The committee members agreed to table these ideas at their meetings to prioritise the action points mentioned by the groups. The action plans would be contingent on resources and the capacity of the members organisations.

ROLE OF MUNICIPALITIES IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CITIES: INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS TO PROMOTE SDGS



CRB CENTRE FOR RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

The session examined coherent issues hindering municipalities' productivity in India and explored innovative collaboration methods beyond CSR to promote sustainable cities and SDGs. Sustainable cities mean different things to different people, which make it complex. For creating safe and sustainable cities, relevant stakeholders need to come together to forge an action-driven partnership; and need to employ technology and incremental innovation. And of course, ownership of the city in the hearts and minds of the people can go a long way.



MODERATOR

MR. RENE VAN BERKEL, Representative – UNIDO, India

PANELLISTS

MR. PRABHAT PANI

Head, Social Sector Interventions and Projects, SP Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR)
Senior Advisor, Tata Trusts

MS. DIYA NAG

Associate Director, Programmes, The Asia Foundation

MR. ALOK SINGH

Director, Department of Horticulture, South Delhi Municipal Corporation

MR. SANDEEP KOTA

Associate Director, Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC)

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Prabhat Pani shared how technology along with data and analytics can play a significant role in planning for smart and sustainable cities. Data can enable municipalities to devise effective policies, projects, budgets, and support them in improving productivity to employ available resources efficiently to make cities livable and sustainable. Therefore, municipalities should focus on four critical pointers while planning for smart and sustainable cities: 1) Employ open data methodology to ensure transparency, 2) Encourage higher engagement and participation from communities, 3) Ensure data should be publicly available and shareable to encourage innovation, and 4) Invest in technology and make it mainstream for scaling and replicating innovative processes and solutions. He also shared the success stories on how technology and data enable municipalities to better plan resources, projects, and engage stakeholders. Hence, to succeed, there is a need for a multi-stakeholder approach and employ technology to explore innovative models and

discover consensus. "When municipalities provide better services, people are willing to pay," he concluded.

Ms. Diya Nag spoke about the role of gender equality and technology while designing smart cities. She addressed the issue of safety, especially safe transits and creating safe neighbourhoods. Saying that technology can be an answer for complicated issues such as safety, Ms. Nag introduced the Safetipin app. The app is a safety audit of the neighbourhood, designed according to nine indicators. Mining data with digital technology can be at an individual, neighbourhood, and city level, which can assist the government in making tangible changes, she concluded. She acknowledged that often municipalities do not have enough resources to engage with technology. Conversations with the public and multi-stakeholder dialogues, along with digital interventions, are key to making our cities safe.



Mr. Sandeep Kota built upon the ever-growing issue of solid waste. Claiming that the impact of solid waste stretches beyond localised challenges, he believed that its management is beyond municipalities. Financial constraints are one of the biggest hurdles, according to him. He opined that a shift from the existing linear system needs to be made to a circular system. Increasing product life can reduce the waste generated. According to Mr. Kota, municipalities can explore the PPP model for entire collection, segregation, and transportation process of solid waste. Other suggestions included reaching out to companies for public awareness and exploring decentralised models.

Mr. Alok Singh took the example of parks as inclusive public spaces, which are a key feature of a sustainable city. With over 6,000 parks in Delhi, effort has been made for the communities to use these spaces judiciously, for improving their health, as children's playground, and as stress busters. He talked about the innovative approaches taken to convert this once neglected aspect into thriving safe spaces. Mr. Singh also detailed the aspects of sustainability embedded in their plan, be it waste water recycling, from waste to manure, or sculptures from waste materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Technological interventions should be used to generate data, reach scale, and assist in strategizing and planning smart cities.
- Municipalities should seek help from corporates, institutions, and philanthropists for some of the complex issues around planning smart cities.
- Different models, especially PPP, should be explored for solid and water waste management.

WORKSHOP ON THE COMPLEXITY OF MENTAL MAPS OF SUSTAINABILITY



Dr. Bimal Arora and Professor Lutz Preuss were the architects of this workshop. The main purpose of the workshop was to show how applied research theory works. The idea of mental maps was to capture the complexity of ideas and perception of a development practitioner. Mental maps help in understanding how individuals make sense of issues and how do they approach them.



The workshop had two components to it, requesting delegates to give their perspectives on how they viewed sustainability, the challenges, and workarounds. The second component was data analysis. The workshop was part of a larger project under PROGRESS.

The data analysis from the workshop was envisaged to create the evidence for a theory proposed by Professor Preuss in his paper titled 'COGNITIVE FRAMES IN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY: MANAGERIAL SENSEMAKING WITH PARADOXICAL AND BUSINESS CASE FRAMES'. The paper has been published in Academy of Management Review, 2014 issue. Over the course of 3 days, 20 student volunteers collected mental maps of 300 participants.

The partial data analysis shared by Professor Preuss showed that sustainability is a complex subject evident from the number of linkages. Climate change emerged as one of the most pressing issue. Dr. Arora emphasized that there are different ground realities and different people in the same organization would also have different perspectives. The main concern then was to think beyond the narrow perception and create tool sets for engagement. The project aimed to address this by creating tool sets which can be used by the organization, internally as well as externally.

Professor Preuss indicated that he would be willing to attend ISS 2020 next year also and share his detailed findings.

PROMOTING SDGs FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA WHILST INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS



PANEL 1

The session was divided into three panels; each panel discussed the issues of women workers and the role of grassroots organisations in addressing some of the issues as well as brands' initiatives to improve the situation. The speakers agreed that a lot of work needs to be done to achieve the sustainable development goals number 5,8,10, and 12 and one of the biggest challenge is our societal construct in the way women are treated. The initial panel highlighted the issues faced by unorganised women workers. The second panel covered grassroots initiatives to empower local women workers and the final panel brought brand representatives working in the sector.



MODERATOR

MS. LAKSHMI BHATIA, Convenor, Women in Value Chain

PANELLISTS

MS. BHARTI BIRLA
International Labour Organisation

MS. MAVEEN PEREIRA
Director, Trade Craft Exchange

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Bharti Birla presented a broad picture of the importance of multi stakeholders in improving work conditions for women and SDGs. Saying that though internationally business practices are seeing a shift due to heightened consumer awareness, the situation in South Asia remains exploitative. Displacements due to agrarian crisis, climate emergencies or other reasons lead to loss of livelihood. This in turn results in adoption of precarious employment due to distress which gets capitalised by market forces coupled with weak legislation, regulation and lack of implementation. Ms. Birla touched upon various international declarations, guidelines and frameworks and said that businesses cannot be sustainable and competitive without a healthy and productive workforce. Ms. Birla opined that the lack of collective voice poses a huge challenge. She suggested direct engagement

with businesses to establish the value of decent workplace and partnerships as the way forward to addressing the SDGs.

Ms. Maveen Pereira initiated her presentation by inviting the audience to join the Trade Craft Exchange forum. She pinned the existing issues regarding the way people are socialised, and remarked that unless we address those issues, nothing will matter. "To enable change, we have to collaborate and SDGs give that platform," she added. Stating that issues of women workers are similar across formal and informal employment, there has to be multiple ways of tackling injustice. She suggested working with supply chains, mobilizing women workers, building capacity, and influencing the Government to look at trade policies.

PROMOTING SDGs FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA WHILST INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS



PANEL 2

The session analysed some of the recurring issues faced by women workers. It also explored some of the likely solutions which has gained popularity and the need for mindset shift when it came to managing women workers.



MODERATOR

MS. SONAKSHI AGARWAL, Programme Coordinator, Homebased net

PANELLISTS

MS. SEEMA SHAH

CEO, Sadhna

MS. URMILA YADAV

Artisan and Member, Sadhna

MS. ELIZABETH KHUMALLAMBAM

Leader, Nari Shakti Manch

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Seema Shah spoke about Sadhna's journey and its contribution to SDGs. She traced the history of Sadhna and its home-based work considering the local customs. Realising that income generation should be tied up with quality, the artisans were trained to deliver accordingly. Sadhna provides social security and strives to empower the women artisans, socially and economically. Ms. Shah also spoke about the organisational structure which includes women artisans as board members and owners of the organisation. She said that beating market competition was one of the challenges, which Sadhna requires support for.

Ms. Urmila Yadav, an artisan and group leader with Sadhna, reflected on her journey since she started working with the organisation. She also shared her experience of challenging and changing the social practices in her family. Talking about the impact, she mentioned that she was able to educate her children with her earnings and gain the support of her hus-

band. She appreciated Sadhna for providing the financial aid and loans to fellow artisans in time of duress.

Ms. Elizabeth also agreed that the poor labour conditions of women workers are intrinsically linked to the social set up. She stated that the belief that good business needs good working conditions has taken a back seat. She believed that business models need to include conducive work conditions and social benefits in their business strategy. According to the survey conducted of 2000 women workers, there is rampant sexual harassment but the workers are not aware of anti-sexual harassment policies. The survey also showed that women who did complain had lost their jobs. One of the initiatives taken by her forum is to break the overbearing role of male supervisors and workers. This is done by fostering partnerships with companies and mobilizing women workers.

PROMOTING SDGs FOR WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA WHILST INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS



PANEL 3

The session sought to explore initiatives taken by brands to address the issues. The speakers agreed that things need to be done differently. Artificial Intelligence and climate change add to the complexity. The panellists agreed that multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships are key.



MODERATOR

MS. LAKSHMI BHATIA, Convenor, Women in Value Chain

PANELLISTS

MR. RANJEEB SARMA

Head of Social Compliance, Marks and Spencer, India and Sri Lanka

MR. RAPHAEL JOSE

Supply Chain Sustainability Expert

MS. GARIMA DHIMAN

Ethical and Charity Coordinator, Monsoons

MS. SUSAN BHAKLAI

CEO, Industree

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Ranjeeb Sarma stated that sustainability and business has to go hand in hand. As a retail chain, Marks and Spencer believes in collaboration to deliver nutritious food to the consumers. In India, the focus is on gender and the brand is working to make a change across the textile sector through partnerships with other brands and inter-government bodies.

Ms. Garima Dhiman spoke of the challenges to drive change at the ground level. She also emphasized on partnerships with grassroots organisations which has helped the brand to orient its perspectives towards women workers. Stating that the apparel organisation continues to search for partnerships and collaborations, she lauded the ISS conference as one such platform to join hands. She invited NGOs and other grassroots players to work with them.

Mr. Raphael Jose called the SDGs as aspirational goals and highlighted that businesses are keen to move in the direction. However, the main drivers of business sustainability are

not SDGs as they are yet to trickle to the operational levels. He maintained that companies need to plan sustainable practices focusing on both internal as well as external stakeholders. Mr. Jose stated that businesses need to close the existing knowledge gap and design actions to achieve business goals sustainably.

Ms. Susan Bhaklail stated that profits are important and all operational planning needs to build in social and environmental footprints along with profits. She spoke about the initiatives by Industree to establish set ups in towns and villages to reduce travel time, training needs, and engage with male supervisors to alter their managerial style. Ms. Bhaklail agreed that if the workers are happy and skilled, they will meet the deadlines.

The session ended with an invitation to brands to talk about challenges they face while working locally and to enable partnerships to make a difference in the lives of these workers.

ADDRESSING NUTRITION SECURITY THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE LENS — CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



The session brought out the intensity and magnitude of one of the largest issues plaguing the world – lack of food and nutrition. One of the most diverse panels in the conference, the speakers represented every sector linked to the issue. Malnutrition is one of the biggest impediments to human development, and despite numerous national programmes, the issue looms. A plea was made to everyone to share a nutrition tip every day to bring about consumer awareness. The panellists also agreed that sustainable food systems need to be built, government programmes need to be re-evaluated, companies need to shoulder the responsibility of preventive diseases, and consumer awareness needs to be driven.



MODERATOR

DR. SHRUTI SHARMA, Government Partnerships Officer, UNWFP

PANELLISTS

MR. ARJAN DE WAGT

Chief Nutrition Section at UNICEF India

DR. SHARIQUA YUNUS

Head of Unit and Programme Officer (Health and Nutrition), United Nations World Food Programme

MS. SAKSHI JAIN

Technical Project Coordinator, FFRC, FSSAI

MR. VIVEK ARORA

Senior Advisor, Tata Trusts

MS. DIPANWITA CHAKRABORTY

Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility and Sustainable Development, Asia Pacific Cargill

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Shruti Sharma opened the session by unpacking SDG 2 on zero hunger and what it entails. She urged that hunger be considered as a multi-dimensional problem and needs a multifocal aspect to achieve food sustainability and sustainable agriculture. It is important to revisit the existing food system approach – starting with what we produce to what we consume. Calling food a right, Dr. Sharma referred to the various National policies in the direction. She said India faces a nutrition paradox – while it boasts of the highest food plan, ironically it also suffers the triple burden of obesity, under-nutrition, and over nutrition. She proposed that the private

sector can play a preventive and curative role with innovative treatment mechanisms.

Mr. Arjan de Wagt built on the case presented by the moderator. Citing data on the lack of appropriate nutrition, Mr. de Wagt urged all sectors to put nutrition security at the core of its business. Lauding the National policies attempting to reduce malnutrition, he pointed out to a few challenges as well. Saying that the programmes are missing coverage, continuity, intensity and quality of programmes, he introduced the acronym 'C²IQ'. "In India, we know what needs to be



PARALLEL SESSION

done, but it requires 'C²IQ' and requires all of you – including the private sector, companies and people," he concluded.

Dr. Shariqia Yunus highlighted the importance of nutrition in the first two years from the conception of a child for the proper development. Referring to the data shared by Mr. Arjan de Wagt, she pointed to the gaps in existing policies and programmes. She also cited the results of countrywide mapping done to understand the source of nutrition for children below two years distributed by states under 'Take Home Ration' (THR) of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). She agreed with Mr. de Wagt that minimal quality assurance and quality control systems are in place. There is a requirement for proper labelling of products, and complimentary food and feeding habits need to be looked at. She ended her speech saying, a lot needs to be done to ensure nutrition security is achieved.

Ms. Dipanwita Chakraborty presented the private sector perspective to the gaps in nutrition security. According to her, to achieve SDG 2, the food system needs to work well i.e. be sustainable, equitable, and resilient. Stating that the role of the private sector is to tweak the system, she said that her organisation is well-positioned to analyse value chain and contribute to creating a good food system. She emphasised on a holistic approach, with partnerships between various stakeholders at the focal point. Research and development and innovation also play an important role. Saying that food companies have a huge responsibility to invest in innovative technology, she believed that they need to go beyond customers and consumers to communities. Stating that commu-

nities are agents of change, she also made a point of driving behaviour change towards nutritious food options. "Whatever we might do, if the community is not convinced about the intervention, the scheme might fail," she said.

Mr. Vivek Arora reminded us that the thrust for nutrition security in government schemes is relatively recent. He pointed to governance issues and improper implementation as reasons behind failure to achieve 100% food security. However, he laid extra emphasis on inclusiveness and ownership as key to achieving nutrition security. He stressed upon 3 As – available, accessible, and affordable. Mr. Arora proposed cooperatives as an effective model which can be applied to foods, as it proved to be successful for milk and cereals. He concluded by saying that middlemen need to be removed from the value chain, women-oriented self-help groups should be encouraged, and farmers should be linked to markets.

Ms. Sakshi Jain spoke about the evolution of the Food Safety Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) from strengthening standards and platforms to encouraging a system of self-compliance, where enforcement is not required. Focused on awareness building, nutrition and safety, FSSAI is responsible for quality assurance and consumer awareness among other roles. Addressing the audience, she reminded everyone that nutrition is not limited to the unfortunate. Everyone needs to be responsible and inculcate a habit of safe, healthy, and sustainable eating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Re-evaluate the national and state policies to incorporate coverage, continuity, intensity and quality to make maximum impact.
- Consumer awareness and behaviour change is required to ensure nutritional security
- Corporates and businesses should play a preventive role with innovative technology, redesigning food systems and more investment towards research and development.
- Everyone needs to be on board to drive the agenda of nutritional security. As individuals, a campaign can be created to reach thousands of people by sharing a daily nutrition tip.

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AS A LEVER FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY



The session followed a roundtable format with subject matter experts sharing their experience and learnings in the public procurement. The speakers spoke about the challenges, opportunities, and the possible solutions to integrate sustainability in procurement.



MODERATOR

MR. VIRAF MEHTA, Chief Executive, Partners in Change

PANELLISTS

MR. PRANJAL JYOTI GOSWAMI

Sustainability Practitioner and Industrial Hygienist,
(organisation)

MS. JHUMKI DUTTA

Project manager, Partners in Change

MR. SANJAY KUMAR

General Manager, DFCCIL, Ministry of Railways,
Government of India

MR. UPMITH SINGH

Programme Management Head, Government
e-Marketplace (GeM)

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Viraf Mehta initiated the round table discussion by stating that India is at the cusp of several possibilities to direct public procurement. He wanted the discussion to focus on human rights during public procurement, especially since the National Guidelines on Responsible Business (NGRBC) have been formulated. He hoped that the guidelines could bridge the gap in information about non-performing financial assets of private companies and have useful and authentic information from the 1000 listed companies in the public domain. Mr. Mehta was also hopeful that mandatory non-financial reporting (ESG) for every company would ensure every Indian company report on India specific initiatives

which are aligned to international frameworks. He invited the experts to share their experience and challenges for sustainable procurement.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, representing the Ministry of Railways, pointed out the gaps when it comes to procurement by the ministry. He mentioned that the environmental and social cost of a product should also be considered while procuring as products' upfront cost might not fetch the optimum value. Mr. Kumar believed that procurement policies of companies have the potential to drive markets towards sustainability. He also pointed to the anomaly of data when it came to the



PARALLEL SESSION

percentage of GDP spent by the Government on procurement. Mr. Kumar stated that though policy gaps for sustainable public procurement have been taken care of, implementation of the rules on the ground presents a different story. He believed that it is important to build the capacity of procurers as well as market to aid the sustainability agenda. He also mentioned that verification of vendor claims remains a challenge as standards such as Indian Ecomark are non-functional. Mr. Kumar briefly touched upon the multi ministerial task force established in 2018 to look into these issues. As a pilot, the task force is studying three products namely paper, air conditioners and clinical products. The main task is to establish specifications of these products including that of sustainability. To tide over the challenge of the upfront cost, the General Financial Rules (GFR) and manual have been revised to take the cost of life cycle. As monetisation of the value adds by considering social and environmental parameters is currently not possible, the task force is considering the cost of ownership which includes upfront, repair and maintenance, and cost of disclosure. Mr. Kumar invited ideas from the group to aid the taskforce.

Pranjal Jyoti Goswami built on the progress towards sustainability by adding that conversation has shifted from responsible purchasing to sustainable procurement. He, however, added that consideration of environmental footprint in procurement is still missing. He also questioned the impact on the supply chain through policy designed to drive sustainability. Lauding the ISO 20400 drafted in 2017 as guidelines for universal procurement strategy, he opined that these standards have been well accepted. He added that sustainable procurement is not about burdening producers and manufacturers but should be included in tendering or bidding processes to achieve a sustainability roadmap. Stating that it is hard to achieve evidence of sustainable public procurement in public, he believed that good practices can be borrowed from private procurement. He stated that Applying the lens of human right approach while purchasing uniforms for the defence sector can transform the way procurement takes place. He concluded by saying that sustainability and affordability have to co-exist and as public procurement has multiple interfaces with SDGs, it can improve the delivery of

multiple goals.

Mr. Upmith Singh agreed with Mr. Kumar about the disconnected figures when it came to public procurement expenditure. Stating that as public procurement in India is guided by multiple acts, numerous manuals and policies (GFR) collating data on procurement becomes a challenge. The study conducted by GeM in partnership with agencies revealed that 18% of GDP or INR 35 lakh crores is spent by Government annually for public procurement. Calling GeM, the 'Amazon' of public procurement, the electronic platform operates within the ambit of public procurement rules. Mr. Singh stated that 50% procurement is done by banks and PSBs, which is of little knowledge. He believed that GeM can enable adding sustainability costs to each product if the Government wants to bring in these aspects. Promoting innovative products by start-up companies, open ideation, and nudging supply-side demand are some of the initiatives taken by GeM.

Ms. Jhumki Dutta, representing Partners in Change, added that considering the triple bottom - Planet, Profit, and People- in public procurement, conversations around 'people' aspects are missing. She spoke about an initiative of Partners in Change, which looks at public procurement of children's school uniform to talk about human rights issues like child labour, women worker exploitation, wage disparity etc. This is with the aim to use school uniforms as the entry point to discuss how the government as a procurer can drive conversations on social issues. She added that stakeholders are required to come across to address the triple bottom line.

The roundtable concluded with everyone being on board with the view that public procurement can indeed be a driver of sustainability. However, challenges and issues at multiple levels need to be addressed collectively. Sustainability in public procurement should apply the social and the environmental lens to ensure the best value of products. Good practices and learnings can be borrowed from private companies which have taken the lead in sustainable procurement. Ultimately, sustainability and affordability have to co-exist to deliver on the SDGs.

SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS AND FARMER LIVELIHOODS: GLOBAL LESSONS AND LOCAL RELEVANCE



The session sought to explore individual experiences pertaining to sustainability standards in the agricultural sector. Sustainability standards are a tool to encourage the uptake of good agricultural practices. The speakers discussed the role of these standards in the Indian context, the challenges while implementing them, and if these standards have a positive impact on poverty alleviation by providing access to resources.



MODERATOR

MS. VIDYA RANGAN, Senior Manager, Impacts and Evidence, ISEAL Alliance

PANELLISTS

MR. EMMANUEL JIMENEZ

Executive Director, International Institute for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

MR. MURLI DHAR

Director of Agriculture, WWF India

MR. RAJEEV BARUAH

Head of Smallholder Programme, Better Cotton Initiative

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Vidya Rangan started by laying down the objective of the session for the audience. The challenges and the learnings were the key discussion points to enable a better understanding of the efficacy of sustainability standards in the agricultural sector. Focusing on the certifications model, she also introduced a more recent alternative – systemic model. She invited the speakers to ponder on the impacts of certification on small and medium farmers as well as group certification for better market leverage. She also asked them to respond if the grassroots implementing body becomes the main decision-maker as they control the entry of marginalised and migrant farmers in this scheme.

Mr. Emmanuel Jimenez, responding to the points raised by Ms. Ranjan, noted that there are four key takeaways based on their experience. He believed that schemes should ensure that farmers get access to all the assets – human, social and financial--to make a difference. He also said that good design of policy or schemes is not enough, implementation matters. He also expressed his views on the unpopularity of insurance products among farmers. He highlighted the lack of documented evidence of scaled-up programmes as most impact studies look at pilot projects. He concluded by saying that the context is important as culture and practices vary across region and trust is a key factor in standards adoption.



PARALLEL SESSION

Mr. Rajeev Baruah responded to Ms. Rangan's points as an implementing body working with 10% of the Indian farmers. He mentioned a few challenges, such as slow down of agricultural growth, neglect of public sector investment, and gaps in farmer outreach towards good practices. He talked about the initiatives taken by BCI to plug these gaps which included investment for outreach, creating networks, and training.

Mr Murli Dhar noted that top-heavy approach of standards development without the involvement of growers leads to

tension. He believed that implementation would be faster if a bottom-up approach is followed while crafting the standards. For quick acceptance of standards, bottom ups approach should be adopted to customise it according to every group's requirements. Mr. Dhar also noted that standards need to be evaluated to check if they are helping farmers to cope with climate change. He expressed that due diligence or compliance structure does not work and a systemic approach would work better to address the challenges in the sector.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Top-down approach needs to be replaced with the bottom down approach to frame inclusive standards
- Capacity building for farmers, public investment, and systemic approach to sustainability can aid the sector.
- Create an environment for research and outreach to counter the existing mindset that organic cotton is expensive.
- Bring indigenous knowledge together with technology and research. Science should validate the local traditional practices, thereby providing credibility and respect to traditional practices.

INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY IN BAMBOO VALUE CHAIN — SCOPE AND ROLE OF STANDARD



The session followed a round table discussion moderated by Mr. Mukesh Gulati. It sought to identify sectors which can adopt bamboo products, existing standards, challenges in the sector and some of the suggestions by the experts attending the session.



MODERATOR

MR. MUKESH GULATI, Senior Advisor, Foundation for MSME clusters (FMC)

PANELLISTS

MR. T.P. SUBRAMANY

Director and Regional Coordinator for South Asia, INBAR

MR. ARUN BANSAL

Chairperson, Non-Wood Forest Product, Network of Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF)

MR. SANJAY KUMAR

General Manager, DFCCIL, Ministry of Railways

MR. SANJEEV S. KARPE

Managing Director, Native Konbac

HIGHLIGHTS

Calling bamboo a 'hyped' subject and providing an overview of the sector, Mr. Mukesh Gulati initiated the round table discussion. He introduced a project conducted by the Foundation for MSME clusters (FMC) along with SEMCA, SIDBI and Copenhagen Business School, which aims to promote 2000 enterprises in 18 clusters (artisanal or industrial), generate employment, increase revenue, and link it with state and national bamboo missions. Mr. Gulati stated that the informal sector comprises mainly of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population and there is no accurate data on bamboo production and its economy in India. Standardisation of products is another issue which curtails the sector in terms

of mass procurement.

India has the 2nd largest reserves of bamboo in the world, 90% of which comes from forests – holding only 4.5% market of its products. To ensure that the sector grows in a sustainable manner, Mr. Gulati believed that the informal sector needs to be formalised. In order to do so, he invited the specialists around the table to highlight the role of standards for the sector and engage with five core questions:

- 1) Are there existing standards in the bamboo sector?
- 2) Are the existing standards robust enough for the promis-



PARALLEL SESSION

ing sub sectors of national importance?

3) Are the stakeholders aware of these standards?

4) What are the challenges faced by value chain in implementing the standards?

5) And finally, is there a need for creating new standards, new compliance – if so, what is the way forward?

There are around 30-40 available product specific standards, and an attempt is being made to compile all the existing standards in one place for analysts, added Mr. Gulati.

Mr. TP Subramany representing INBAR gave an overview of existing standards, standards under development, its benefits, constraints and challenges. He also added that there is a special Taskforce to assess and work on standards for the bamboo sector.

Mr. Sanjay Kumar representing Indian Railways said that bamboo is a resource. Indian Railways is one of the big procurers of wood products and the lack of standards for non-wood products has led to bamboo's slow adoption. However, according to him Indian Railways can be a big market for bamboo products. He also opined that exports could be another sunshine sector.

Mr. Arun Bansal opined that it is important to prioritise the promising sectors to drive Indian bamboo market without

comparing to countries like China. According to him, housing and construction is one of the sunshine sectors. He also said that there are standards for bamboo products for replacing woods, however upscaling production is a problem.

Mr. Sanjeev, representing Konbac, which uses bamboo as a construction material, opined that the available standards for the construction sector is not enough. They need to be reviewed and updated contextualising it to the available species in India.

Some of the other promising sectors suggested by the speakers included biofuel, furniture and utensils, and artisanal products. Though standards are important for market adoption, the group also opined that these standards need to be educational and be more integrative rather than top down in nature. Government needs to promote certification; there must be investment in research and development and monopolisation of species needs to be curbed. The group also agreed that it is important to consider the cost of certification and who needs to shoulder this responsibility.

SOURCING POLICIES/PRACTICES OF MNCs AND IMPLICATIONS ON FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT



The session was designed to explore the practices adopted by corporations and NGOs to tackle food waste innovatively. Food waste happens at every level from harvesting to consumption as cooked food. The speakers shared some of the initiatives taken by their organisations to manage this complex issue.



MODERATOR

DR. ARPITA MUKHERJEE, Professor, Indian Council for Research on International Relations (ICRIER)

PANELLISTS

MR. ATIN TYAGI

Project Lead, Corporate Sustainability, Climate Change and Water Management Systems, Jain Irrigation Systems Limited

MS. ARUNA RANGACHAR POHL

Lead, India Foundation for Humanistic Development (IFHD)

MS. MINAKSHI DEY

Lead, Corporate Responsibility, Sodexo

MS. VANDANA SINGH

CEO, Food Security India, India Food Banking Network

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Arpita Mukherjee started the panel discussion by posing some tough questions to the speakers. Linking food and its waste to resources such as water, power, and labour, she invited the panellists to talk about the initiatives taken by their organisations to tackle the issue of food waste. She also requested them to speak about their experience, learnings, and challenges and reflect upon how the Government can support and businesses can do to minimize food waste.

Mr. Atin Tyagi spoke about several initiatives taken to reduce water consumption in agriculture. He cited data to emphasise the use of resources in agriculture, saying wasting food

due to inefficiencies is wasting resources. He exemplified initiatives taken to promote sustainable agricultural practices among farmers. Mr. Atin talked about Jain Good Agricultural Policies (GAP) standards covering micro-irrigation processes to harvesting and post-harvesting practices to reduce waste. He also mentioned efforts towards consistent quality and traceability of produce, which are important for exporting. He emphasised upon the need for training the farmers to minimize waste. Infrastructure is the key challenge, especially for storage, believed Mr. Tyagi. He described the fact that there are many players working in this value chain and there is no single platform to comment/ discuss in relation to food



PARALLEL SESSION

waste requirements.

Ms. Aruna Rangachar talked about her organisation's efforts towards sustainable production of maize under the Government initiated scheme Public Private Partnership for Integrated Agricultural Development (PPPIAD). The scheme brings all the three main stakeholders – government, corporations, and the farmers together in a multi-stakeholder process to address sustainable agricultural practices in the value chain. The scheme has been successful in initiating infrastructure investment, use of technology to enhance good harvesting practices, geo-tagging farms for traceability, reduction of logistical emissions, better yield, less wastage and farmer reinvestment. One of the key roles played by IHFD is to design projects shaped by multi-stakeholder demands to fit in Government schemes. She agreed with Mr. Tyagi on the importance of the capacity building of the farmers. Ms. Rangachar pointed out to the fact that everyone continues to work in silos. There is a need for a 'reset' button to redesign the management of common resources like land and water. She recommended formulating such Government policies and creating market systems that can incentivize farmers to reduce waste.

Ms. Minakshi Dey spoke about sustainable consumption from the perspective of Sodexo, one of the largest food facilitators in the world. Sustainable procurement, procuring

from local vendors, and giving preferences to women-led SMEs were some of the company policies mentioned by her. She mentioned that the SDGs are well integrated into the company's business practices in every department and training modules. She spoke about the use of technology to contain waste at cooking and preparation level, which remains a huge challenge.

Ms. Vandana Singh spoke about their initiative as a food bank to collect surplus packaged food and distribute it to the NGOs taking care of children and elderly. The food is collected well within the expiry date, she said. Saying that 30-40% of food is wasted globally, she pointed to the criticality of arresting this waste. Lack of infrastructure and policies to incentivize corporates to donate food, donation in kind under CSR, lack of National policies to arrest food waste were some of the challenges pointed by her.

According to Dr. Mukherjee, designing national policies in relation to food is a challenge as practices and systems vary across India. The session concluded with examples of practices to curb food waste at the consumer level. The closing remarks also touched upon a policy paper for the Government to be drafted by CRB and a pledge by the audience to ensure zero food waste at a personal level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create consumer awareness to eliminate food waste. Public campaigns and drives, especially in schools, will get optimal results.
- Government policies and corporate action needed to minimize food waste.
- Relook at land and water as common resources to promote optimal use.
- Eliminate food waste at a personal level.



Credibility, its definition, and drivers were the topic of discussion in this session. The panel spoke about their experience when it came to standards and its application. The speakers agreed that though standards are important, the process of development needs to be inclusive and customised to the local practices for successful adoption.



MODERATOR

MS. NORMA TREGURTHA, Director, Projects and Partnerships, ISEAL Alliance

SETTING THE CONTEXT

MS VIDYA RANGAN, Senior Manager, Impacts and Evidence, ISEAL Alliance

PANELLISTS

MR. DARREL WEBBER

Chief Executive Officer, RSPO

MR. THOMAS VAN HAAREN

Senior Manager, Consumer Goods Forum

MR. SUMIT GUPTA

Deputy Director Standards Development and Quality Assurance, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

MR. MANISH PANDE

Director and Head, Project Analysis and Documentation Division, Quality Council of India.

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Norma Tregurtha initiated the session by highlighting ISEAL's credibility principles as codes of good practices covering a set of quality standards, compliance, and measurement. According to her, the realisation that key characters of standards constitute a high impact tool gave rise to credibility principles. She invited Ms. Vidya Rangan to elaborate on ISEAL's credibility principles before the panellists could add to the discussion.

Ms. Vidya Rangan introduced the Credibility Principles to be embodied within the ISEAL code that members must comply with. Stating that as there are numerous standards and cred-

ibility tools currently available, designing credibility principles provides a good guidance framework. Ms. Rangan added that the principles are used to raise awareness of what credibility means. She also said that ISEAL is currently engaged in documenting the impacts by holding consultation with the members across sectors which includes information on data quality, ethics, equity, and risk management and remediation.

The panellists were invited to build on the meaning of credibility particular to their sectors, the gaps, challenges and the way forward.



PARALLEL SESSION

Mr. Darrel Webber, responding to the question on the importance of credibility, said that credibility holds a different meaning for different players of the value chain. According to him, there is an existing tension on how to be credible to the producers as well as others down the value chain. Mr. Webber emphasized the key hallmark of good standard inclusiveness and transparency of the processes while developing standards. Stating that blind spots exist while implementing standards, he believed that multi-stakeholder inclusive processes are the only way to cover these gaps towards sustainability.

Mr. Thomas van Haaren believed that to ensure sustainability standards meet the industry expectations, they should be subjected to independent review to create a benchmark for big consumer companies. According to him, standards on programme management criteria required a review. He also added that auditors are required to be knowledgeable to ensure improvement in companies' compliance towards sustainability. Mr. van Haaren introduced the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) tool, which companies can use to meet their sourcing and procurement requirements.

Mr. Sumit Gupta highlighted the challenges of implementation of standards in India. He believed that for schemes and programmes to be accepted, it needs to be customised to

local market conditions. Since the standards are a financial investment, it makes better business sense if the certified products can guarantee price premiums or a commitment from the buyer to bring larger orders, he opined. He highlighted the need for long term and short-term benefits for companies to be motivated to invest. He also raised the issue of accessibility of standards and different styles of functioning. He concluded that GOTS is implementing the standards amongst its members and moving towards ISEAL membership.

Mr. Manish Pande opined that credibility label provides confidence to stakeholders leading to faster adoption of sustainability schemes and programmes. He highlighted that as producers are important stakeholders, they should be important players during the development of standards. Mr. Pande presented the process of designing and developing sustainability schemes followed by the Quality Council of India. The council also monitors the impact on all its stakeholders and curtails the misuse of the term sustainability, he concluded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Process of development of standards needs to be inclusive and transparent.
- For quicker adoption of standards, they need to fit the local market expectation.
- Compliance should have short term and long-term goals which need to be clearly communicated for companies to invest in the adoption of standards and certification.
- Documentation of impact on all stakeholders of the value chain is important.



CONCLUDING DAY

NOVEMBER 22, 2019



NETWORKING VILLAGE

The Networking Village provided a place to unwind and have casual discussions, make new friends, address small group of people, and know the best of the practitioners at ease. The exhibitors included entrepreneurs working on textile and apparel as well as solutions for urban sanitation.

Basic Shit

Basicshit is a waste recycling collective creating utility products and structures in public places. Since its inception in 2014 by Ashwani Aggarwal, its goal has been to develop accessible toilet units targeting sanitation woes plaguing Indian landscape.

The focus isn't just the creation of structures but also ensuring waste management by converting human waste into usable by-products. Basic Shit aims to create a clean and safe environment for public sanitation.

"We received good design inputs to provide women friendly toilet booths."

Mr. Ashwani Aggarwal,
Founder, Basic Shit



Mind Map Exercise



Students from different educational institutes were engaged as Research Associates. They helped in collecting data from the conference participants in the form of mental maps. Networking village provided them a space to engage with delegates and interact with them on different issues of sustainability.





Interview Booth

Networking village was also to interview the experts who attended ISS 2019. The interviews aimed to capture the multi-stakeholder viewpoints on challenges and opportunities surrounding thematic areas that CRB works on. The snippets of these insightful interviews would be available on CRB's portal.



Other Exhibits



The ISS 2019 presented a multi stakeholder platform. Professionals from diverse backgrounds came together to forward the common theme of sustainability. It presented a big opportunity for partnerships and meaningful collaboration for a common goal.

POLICY INTERVENTION FOR CIRCULAR APPAREL AND TEXTILES IN INDIA



The session sought to look at the opportunities and challenges faced by the apparel and textile industry focussing on circularity. The speakers agreed with the general tone that sustainability is the only way forward. They also expressed that India is beginning to show the shift, but there is a huge gap between big brands and smaller suppliers down the chain. The panel closed with some recommendations and suggestions to drive sustainability.



MODERATOR

MS. ANITA CHESTER, Head, Sustainable Raw Materials, Laudes Foundation

PRESENTERS

MR. SIDDHARTH LULLA, Consultant, Intellectap

MS. PRIYANKA KHANNA, International Expansion Manager, Fashion for Good

PANELLISTS

PROFESSOR DR. VANDANA NARANG

Director, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)

DR. NARESH TYAGI

Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Limited

MS. SHIKHA SHAH

CEO and Co-founder, Fibre Labs

MR. CAGDAS DOGRU

Environment Project Leader, H&M

MR. ANANT AHUJA

Head, Organizational Development, Shahi Exports

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Anita Chester put driving sustainability in the fashion industry at the core theme for discussion. She opined that fashion can be a force for good with three key focus areas namely -- sustainable material, transition to circular economy, and labour rights. Elaborating on the concept of a circular economy, Ms. Chester referred to it as a system level approach to economic development, a systemic shift to build environmental and social resilience together with economic benefits.

Professor Vandana Narang, representing National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), spoke about the integration of circularity tools in its courses. She shared that the institute is aware of its responsibility to educate students about sustainability and circularity and its subsequent impact on Indian economy. NIFT also explores innovative technologies to make production sustainable and has collaborated with Massey University to train students in minimizing waste. She mentioned that students are designing with alternative materials, experimenting with sugarcane fibres, and producing zero waste designs. The aca-



demographic curriculum includes sustainability and its tools as part of its attempt to contribute to knowledge building. Additionally, students are taking up circularity as a research topic, added Professor Narang.

H&M is a global apparel brand, operating in India for the past 20 years, said Mr. Cagdas Dogru. Claiming that the brand is committed to sustainability, Mr. Dogru spoke about the policies driving that mission. In India, H&M aims to provide sustainable fashion and quality at an affordable price to expand its reach. Elaborating on the sustainability policy of the brand, Mr. Dogru spoke about efforts made towards protecting workers rights, using circular and renewable material, and ensuring transparency and accountability. Recognising that not everyone in the supply chain has the culture of sustainability and circularity, it is a journey from awareness building to implementing which requires regular follow-ups and necessary amendments. H&M is especially focussed on getting rid of hazardous chemicals in their supply chain, added Mr. Dogru.

Representing Shahi Exports, a family-run Indian textile export house, Mr. Anant Ahuja spoke about sustainability principles which are at the core of its business practices. A key motivation for Shahi is the idea of employment creation and working for the betterment of the women workforce. Mr Ahuja shared that Shahi sees itself as an extension of the brands it works with and ensures sustainability at all levels. Responding to the question of funding research and the role of policy in this direction, Mr. Ahuja argued that good policy and research are the key enabling factors for ensuring circularity in the space of fashion. Circular economy is at a nascent stage and the path to achieve it is in the testing phase, he said. He introduced 'Good Business Lab', a research incubator set up by Shahi to undertake research and development. He opined that the sector needs research support which comes at a cost.

Dr. Naresh Tyagi resonated the belief that concepts of sustainability in India are still nascent. Awareness is required at all levels, he said, consumers will appreciate the sustainable value chain, only if aware. He spoke about the initiative 'Share Happiness' by Aditya Birla Group, which accepts old clothes and recycle them. In six months, 60,000 garments have been collected and recycled. The group has also started a digital design lab where all the samples and patterns are produced virtually, eliminating the physical samples. Mr. Tyagi acknowledged that though good work is happening, it is fragmented. The group has adopted a life-cycle approach in their sustainability efforts, he added. Building on the need for awareness, he stressed upon internal stakeholders as a powerful tool to create awareness through their decisions and choices. He concluded by saying all the stakeholders need to be on a single platform in order to build capacity, exchange ideas, and find ground solutions.

Ms. Shikha Shah spoke about her learnings from starting her own company. Referring to her personal experience, she suggested that entrepreneurs need to be patient, as a different set of problems are encountered at different stages. She recounted the difference between discussion stage and action stage and the gaps therein. Alternative materials should not be confined to a case-study or research but need to be worked with. Ms. Shah believed that brands can drive manufacturers to work with suppliers of alternative materials. She concluded by saying the solutions from research and development need to be translated into business practices.

Ms. Priyanka Khanna expressed that innovation is the key driver for sustainability. For an innovation platform to succeed there should be a collaboration between brands and manufacturers as well as entrepreneurs. Building on it, Ms. Khanna opined that policy interventions should also be treated as innovation and presented her organisation as a knowledge partner.

Mr. Siddharth Lulla began by introducing his organisation as a follower of the ecosystem approach to drive circularity across the value chain in India. He spoke about the range of activities being undertaken, with the key aim is to drive policy change. Mr. Lulla concluded by expressing his appreciation of being part of the circularity sector as the scope for sustainability is a big value add.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Awareness building among internal and external stakeholders is key to achieve sustainability. Sustainability is a shared responsibility, brands and consumers should work together to drive it.
- Need policy support to encourage circularity in the textile and apparel industry.
- Collaboration and dialogues will fuel ideas and innovation, build capacity, and present solutions.
- Incentivize research in the circularity sector and apply the results of research to business practices.

WORKSHOP

YOUTH AS ARCHITECTS AND ADVOCATES ON SUSTAINABILITY IN INDIA



The workshop was preceded by a panel discussion to orient the youth on sustainability practices adopted, challenges and opportunities. The group was then divided into four groups which sought to brainstorm and come up with sustainable practices that youth can adopt.



A brief panel session moderated by Ms. Neha Buch sought to look at the actions taken by entrepreneurs to pave a path towards sustainability while trying to achieve profit. She opined that efforts towards sustainability could be directly linked to the mortality.

The panellists Ms. Shailaja Rangarajan, Founder & Director, Rimagined, Mr. Abhishek Mazumdar, Co-Founder, The Logical Indian, and Ms. Aparna Rajagopal, Founder, Beejom Farm, were the three entrepreneurs who shared their sustainability journey. Talking about responsible consumption and SDG 12, Ms. Rangarajan urged the audience to think about the impact of their consumption before making a choice as a starting point towards sustainability. Talking about his media start up, Mr. Mazumdar stated that startups can manage to make profits along with following ethical practices. He further added that their editorial section often has content related to sustainability and he believes that supply will drive demand. Ms. Rajagopal spoke about her journey in establishing a farm in which through the activities and elements they are able to look at the entire food chain. According to her, following ethics and ensuring transparency in claims of organic and correct pricing are the key to achieve the goals of sustainability.

THE YOUNG PARTICIPANTS WERE DIVIDED IN FOUR GROUPS

YOUTH AS ACADEMIA
Facilitated by
GAURI SHARMA, SUSS

YOUTH IN MEDIA
Facilitated by
DHRUV SHAH, AIESEC-INDIA

YOUTH AS ENTREPRENEUR
Facilitated by
ASHIM BERRY, SWECHHA

YOUTH IN COMMUNITY
Facilitated by
WIOLETABURDZY SETH

EACH GROUP ASSESSED FOUR ISSUES

Sustainable Lifestyle

Climate Change

Responsible Business

Career in Sustainability

ACTION PLANS AT THREE LEVELS

Individual

Organisation

Society



YOUTH AS ACADEMIA

- At the individual level, one can promote green houses and create awareness.
- At an organisation level, facilitate a plantation drive, use public transportation and introduce and facilitate trainings.
- Disseminate research amongst people.

YOUTH AS ENTREPRENEUR

- As an individual, make more conscious decisions.
- As an organisation, incentivize sustainable activities and initiatives.
- As a society, collaborate with RWAs and appoint sustainable community agents.

YOUTH AS MEDIA

- As an individual, promote ethical conversations and consumption through media houses.
- As an organisation, push brands to reveal the source of their products and create more jobs in sustainability.
- As a society, institutionalise sustainability from a young age.

YOUTH IN COMMUNITY

- As an individual, choose careers with organisations committed to sustainability.
- As an organisation, monitor Global Reporting Initiatives and reward good business practices.
- As a society, establish local communities to educate people and give alternative sustainable solutions.

ROUNDTABLE ON THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



The session delved into the state of business practices with respect to human rights, looking at nuances from academic, lawmaker, and small businesses perspective. Though there are reasons to celebrate as the issue is now at the forefront with the Ministry's draft National Action Plan for businesses and human rights, challenges persist. The panellists shared their perspectives touching upon the advances and the roadblocks faced by them. Resources, finances, and compliance were the common threads. Some tough questions were raised, and a unanimous conclusion was reached that collaboration and conversation is as essential as compliance.



MODERATOR

PROFESSOR VASANTHI SRINIVASAN, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and Governing Body Member, CRB

PANELLISTS

MR. RAJIVE CHAWLA

Chairman, Integrated Association of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of India (IamSMEofIndia)

MS. SHURUCHI AGARWAL

Programme Manager, United Nations Development Programme

MR. MARKUS LOENING

Founder and CEO, Loening Human Rights and Responsible Business, Germany

MS. SUMEDHA DWEVEDI

Indian Police Services, Senior Superintendent of Police, National Human Rights Commission

HIGHLIGHTS

Professor Srinivasan began the session by expressing pleasure over the fact that conversation on businesses and human rights based on UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights has progressed parallelly since 2011. This led to the Indian commitment to Human Rights by businesses and they were asked to report on the action taken in accordance with these principles. Analysing the disclosures, the consensus is that there is still a long way to go before businesses become completely transparent. Stating that different stakeholders are assessing business and human rights differently, time is critical to decide what can be done collectively to address this complex problem. She showed concern about how term stakeholders and its strategic focus has overwrit-

ten the rights perspective. Whose rights are being violated when businesses focus on managing and engaging people as stakeholders, she questioned. Vulnerability as key dimension in a right holder's perspective is ignored in stakeholders' perspective. Conversations of risk management and risk mitigation as stakeholder management and conversation of empowerment, equality and justice as rights perspective needs to converge. She invited the panellists to present their ideas and perspectives on the National Action Plan for Businesses in India.

Mr. Markus Loening spoke about the legal perspective in Germany which builds pressure on corporates to respect



human rights. The global community demands companies to contribute to global good. Saying that the legal system in Germany and India, is quite similar, Mr. Loening shared that Germany has made reporting on human rights management mandatory for corporations more than 600 employees. An analysis of the reports however points out that most companies are unsure about how to approach this aspect. Companies face pressure from legal frameworks, consumers, media, financial investors, and millennials to respect human rights and mitigate climate change in their practices. This has made big brands to set up human rights departments. He concluded that there is a need for standardised tools, data, and digital technology to bring in SMEs into the discussion, draft and implement a law particular to them, and mandate them to report which is a more robust plan rather than depending on unbinding and voluntary National Action Plan.

Ms. Suruchi Aggarwal took us down memory lane when Human Rights perspective was mainstreamed by the United Nations. The binding UN guiding principles took shape after a lot of push back from UN and the world. Building an evidence-based business case for why corporates should follow the UN Guiding Principles was one of the reasons why it was ratified, she said. UNDP is assisting Asian countries to develop or improve their National Action Plans for business and Human Rights. Calling SDGs with 169 indicators as ambitious, Ms. Aggarwal believed that it addresses the entire spectrum and recognises all the stakeholders. Stating that business and human rights are cross cutting across 17 goals, if the human rights goals are achieved, the achievement of SDGs can pace up. Showcasing the policy commitment by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, she mentioned that the National Voluntary Guidelines were revised once the UN Guiding Principles and SDGs came to accommodate them in the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct bringing 4000 companies under the mandatory reporting ambit. She concluded by saying that India would be the second Asian country to have a National Action Plan (first being Thailand), which followed an exhausting consultative process leaving no one behind.

Ms. Sumedha Dwevedhi gave a snapshot of what the UN

Guidelines seek to achieve. Outlining the role of the Human Rights Commission in India in creating awareness about their rights and the redressal process in case of violations, she spoke about various initiatives taken by the Commission. The three-pronged strategy followed by them consists of awareness building, evidence-based advocacy, and incentivising and awards. According to her, the National Action Plan has clear goals and action points which can be implemented and measured to drive the Business and Human Rights agenda. Ms. Dwevedhi took some case studies to elaborate on the complexity of issues and the role of UNHRC which sometimes extends beyond its mandate. Recognising that business and Human Rights is a vast area, a core group has been constituted which will assess the tools of information dissemination, review the laws and regulations and conduct a baseline assessment in accordance with the UN Guidelines. She concluded by saying that as businesses do not exist in a vacuum, they should not disregard that business and society swim and sink together.

Mr Rajive Chawla seconded Ms Dwevedhi saying that businesses are a reflection of society and emerges from it. Our actions as stakeholders are shaped by the resources available, though regulating the non-compliant is an important aspect. Referring to the judicial actions taken to control air pollution, Mr. Chawla talked about the negative impacts on livelihood. Stating that rights to livelihood is also a human rights issue, he emphasized upon the preparatory time required by small companies to move towards positive changes. This time is contingent on various aspects like availability of resources, technology, resources etc. He however opined that there have been shifts in business practices towards respecting human rights, laws have been drafted, promoting human resources issues to human rights issues. Micro enterprises often struggle to survive which makes human rights implementation a challenge. MSME sector is driven by fear or greed, and the burden of compliance might lead them to adopt malpractices. Stating that there is a roadmap in the right direction, Mr. Chawla believed that the intent of every stakeholder is right, everyone needs to move together provided there are India centric solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Standardise the indicators to measure human rights issues. Use digital tools to measure it.
- Have a robust business case for respecting human rights by building pressure from consumers, governments, and legal frameworks.
- Legal fraternity can assist in strengthening the mechanism in collecting data from businesses and SMEs to ease compliance.
- Big businesses and brands have started adopting pro human rights practices, but a shift in MSMEs is required who can be shown the way by big brands.
- Micro and small enterprises are often burdened by the issue of survival; India centric solutions need to be designed to assist the transition.



Recognising that women rights are an important aspect of human rights, this session delved into the various initiatives taken by businesses to encourage their participation. The speakers were requested to talk about the actions taken, their impact, and the challenges faced while trying to bring women to the forefront. The panellists presented a plethora of action being taken, however, maintained that this transition would happen with time and support from Government, employers, and society.



MODERATOR

MS. DEVYANI HARI, Director (Programmes), CRB

PANELLISTS

MR. ALOK KUMBHAT

General Manager – Internal Audit & Compliance,
Jewelex India Pvt. Ltd

DR. NARESH TYAGI

Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Fashion
and Retail Ltd

MS. VASUNDHARA DASH

Employment Marketplace Expert, UNDP

MS. SOMA ROY

Compliance and HR Expert, Gems & Jewellery sector

MS. KRITHIKA RAM

India Director, WEConnect International

MR. ANAND VIJAY JHA

VP & Head Corporate Affairs, Public Policy, Communi-
cations & Sustainability, Walmart

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Devyani Hari started the session on a positive note by mentioning innovations and good cases where women are being integrated into the value chain. She set the stage for the panellists to talk about what is being done by different stakeholders, their initiatives, success stories, challenges, and way forward to address this important agenda.

Ms. Vasundhara Dash began by highlighting the paradoxical situation of increasing education levels among women in India and decreasing participation in their workforce. Talking about the initiatives, she mentioned that job providers throughout the value chain, as well as job seekers, do not function as a collective. She mentioned that the aspirations and expectations of the candidates is the biggest challenge

as the education and skilling does not match. The project tried to bridge the gap and bring them together. Hyperlocal jobs are where the demands are, and the participants find a lot of synergy with the employers. This has led to interventions at hyper local level with local businesses, youth, associations but more needs to be done. Lack of business training for women and widespread social barriers are why very few women are entrepreneurs. Providing psychosocial support to women was another initiative Ms. Dash touched upon. Lack of support systems at home, and from employers also pose as gaps. As this is a transformative process which is slow, things are moving in the right direction, she added.

Ms. Krithika Ram started by saying engaging women in a



business is a new dialogue in India. She introduced her organisation and its work. Part of its work is to educate corporations about the importance of diversifying procurement sources and help identify women-owned organisations from whom they can procure. Apart from that, Ms. Ram also talked about enabling forums and dialogues for sharing best practices and challenges while procuring from women businesses. Saying that they have a network of 9,000 women-owned enterprises across the globe, WEConnect International builds the capacity of women businesses and improves their market access. Tracking value chains and helping companies to diversify responsibly is another help provided by them. Talking about challenges, Ms. Ram stated that the networks and members and the demand is US-driven and needs to be localised. Arguing that Government policies can be counterproductive to the agenda, she emphasized the need for defining what is a woman-owned enterprise. Women need support and proper orientation of what is expected from her, so as to ensure the growth of her organisation as well as have a multiplier effect. She concluded by inviting collaboration with organisations which are keen on or are considering diversifying their value chain.

Ms. Soma Roy started by saying women are stepping up as heads and CEOs in the gems and jewellery sector, which was once considered a man's world. Saying that there are many fragments in the jewellery sector, she touched upon the challenges while mining the precious metal and stones. Diamond trading and manufacturing, jewellery manufacturing, and retail are the three segments with the largest value chains in India. Men rule the diamond sector, said Ms. Roy pointing to social patterns. Sharing that our social perception does not allow women to be in charge or hold an important position; this remains a very big challenge. She believed that advancing women empowerment stretches beyond giving them a job; it requires addressing the underlying economic, social, and political barriers. Men are equal contributors to society and need to be engaged at all levels. Lack of upskilling opportunities, poor work conditions, low wages, women-friendly facilities, and exposure to dangerous chemicals are some of the challenges in the sector. She concluded by talking about some of the women-centric initiatives taken in the sector.

Mr. Alok Kumbhat reiterated what Ms. Roy said about more women joining the jewellery sector. Women need to be incentivised in terms of education, get a boost in

their confidence, and provided adequate support. Engaging women employees contributes to the stable work environment as they do not jump jobs, show better dedication towards their work responsibility, and are more skilled to work in the diamond and jewellery sector. He concluded that to have equal representation of gender in the organisation is beneficial, despite all the challenges.

Dr. Naresh Tyagi talked about the women-friendly policies put in place by Aditya Birla Group. Saying that women have better skill set and heightened creativity, the group could shorten the skill development programme from six months to a month. Dr. Tyagi spoke of encouraging micro-manufacturing bringing small production units to local villages. Stating the success of this model, he said these nine units have 99.8% women employees. Showing the benefits obtained from this model, Dr. Tyagi noted that it is sustainable as it reduces carbon emissions and increases social benefits in the targeted remote villages by enhancing women employment and education. Dr. Tyagi also mentioned the initiatives to promote women entrepreneurs who can, in turn, provide employment to other women. He concluded by saying that the initiatives in the remote areas of India, though new, are replicable in other clusters. Dr. Tyagi believed that bringing the informal sector to the formal sector is the biggest challenge and Government policies can facilitate a faster transition.

Mr. Anand Jha spoke about the various steps taken to integrate women in retail and production units of Walmart. Training women to inculcate confidence in them, especially for production, results in higher productivity and a better understanding of the factory processes. Mr. Jha said that women now voice their opinion and bring fresh perspectives. Mr. Jha pointed out that they have a wider talent pool in Walmart now. Saying that the bedrock of innovation is heterogeneity, Mr. Jha shared that Walmart currently employs 20% women and their target is to extend that to 50%. He also mentioned the consultative work being done with the Government on a policy level to encourage more women to join the workforce. Stating that some Government policies pose as roadblocks for women participation, he stressed upon the need to revisit these policies. Saying that the three most challenging periods in women's life, as per Walmart's study is marriage, motherhood, and mobility, Mr. Jha talked about liberal policies to provide support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Policies, infrastructure, and practices need to be women worker-oriented.
- Need to bring MSME on board as they are important stakeholders and employers. Facilitate the transition from the informal sector to the formal sector.
- Government policies need to be relooked at as some of the pro-women laws are counterproductive.
- Special focus on behaviour change to build acceptance towards women workers, boosting skills and confidence of women to become entrepreneurs, and employing people based on their skills and not gender.

APPLYING CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN PLASTICS MANAGEMENT



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

The session brought together speakers who tried to identify the reasons behind the widespread impact of plastic waste. The panellists discussed the various initiatives being taken to construct a robust circular economy around plastics. Voices representing corporates, recyclers, NGOs and scientists presented different perspectives on issues around plastics, its use and waste management. The speakers believed that plastics waste management requires all hands on deck to design and implement pragmatic designs.



MODERATOR

MR. SRIKRISHNA BALACHANDRAN, Programme Manager, Circular Economy and Plastic Waste Management, UNDP and Co-Founder and Head, Igotgarbage

PANELLISTS

MR. AJAI KUMAR

Associate Vice President, Plastic Recycling and Water Initiatives, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt. Ltd

DR. JUDI LOWE

Marine Scientist Dive Tourism

MR. ASRAR MOHAMMED MUNSHI

Chief Functionary, ESree Foundation

MS. RAJESH PAHWA

Owner, 21st Century Polymers

MS. BHAVNA PRASAD

Director, Sustainable Business, WWF India

MR. RAHUL PODDAR

Owner, Shakti Plastics Industries.

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Judi Lowe started the session by talking about the impact of plastic waste on the oceans and marine life, which has superseded the damage caused by climate change and destructive fishing. Coral reefs, a protective shield against coastal erosion, face enormous threats from all the three factors. She stated that there is no ocean, coastline or country which is not directly affected by plastics. Referring to the great garbage patch, she mentioned that there are five of them between Japan and Hawaii some metres deep. Plastic waste also impacts those away from the shores; plastics have entered our food chain and drinking water. "Plastics are extremely pervasive; we consume equivalent to one credit card

per week", she said setting the context for the discussion for the panellists and talk about action being taken to tackle this monstrous issue.

Saying no one can survive without adopting a sustainable approach to everything they do, Mr. Ashok Kumar presented the viewpoint of corporates. Referring to Ellan MacArthur Foundation's study on circular economy, he opined that India had invented its large-scale circular economy before the study. Saying that plastics were invented to address the ill effects of previous packaging materials, he blamed the human race for its irresponsible use and disposal and demonising



it. Emphasising that there is a difference between collection and recycling, Mr. Kumar said India recycles 60% of plastics but needs a robust plastic waste collection system in India. Mr. Kumar said that creating a circular economy in plastics recycling requires a concerted effort from multiple sectors, multiple players, and various agencies dealing with numerous components. Saying that plastics recycling is a discontinuous value chain, he stated that it is too early to get companies committed to this sector. He opined that there must be a pragmatic approach rather than an idealistic approach, as a substitute for plastics is not possible for the next 50 years. The positives need to be considered and the negatives must be minimized.

Mr. Krishna Balachandran built on the joint programme run in collaboration with UNDP, which is based on four pillars. These include incorporation of the informal sector with the formal sector, strengthening municipal infrastructure, end to end traceability, and collaborating with all relevant stakeholders.

Ms. Bhavna Prasad initiated the panel discussion with a video which reiterated that plastics or microplastics are inescapable. She argued that plastics are in our diet, water and air and is not limited to littering issue. Most of the pollution is contributed by plastics which we are unaware of; Ms. Prasad expressed that mere collection of plastics that we see or know about will not bring the issue under control. She blamed the situation on the lack of waste management policies by government and corporates, production design, leakages and composition of plastics. While plastics used in packaging goes up to 44% in India and 26% globally, it is also the highest contributor to marine pollution. Talking about WWF's programme to ensure no plastics in the environment by 2030, Ms. Prasad said the programme looks at the entire value chain. System's approach is the key and should include product life extension, recovering and stopping leakage in the collection and design changes. She proposed that waste management systems must go beyond Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and research and development in alter-

native packaging materials need to be aggressively explored. She concluded by introducing Unplastic Collective, a collaborative platform focussed on eliminating unnecessary use of plastics, reuse and reduce leakage by bringing together players in production and consumption of plastics.

Mr. Asrar Munshi agreed with Mr. Kumar that plastics are not a problem - it can be reused and recycled, it is the consumers' lack of knowledge about its responsible usage, storage and preservation which is problematic. Stating that awareness does not automatically translate into practice, he stressed upon the need for behaviour change to drive sustainability. Mr. Munshi also talked about curbing the use of plastics by the unorganised sector. He said that moving to alternative packaging materials may not be as effective as practising waste segregation. He recommended that municipal bodies and urban bodies should encourage and support corporations in waste segregation and generation and have rules of co-processing the waste.

Mr. Rahul Poddar, drawing from his experience as a recycler of municipal waste, said that the biggest issue is that of mixed waste. Contaminated plastics cannot be recycled and ends up being littered. He stressed upon the role of technology to convert multi-layered plastics into granules which can be used to make recycled products. Lack of support from municipal corporations for collecting plastics waste is another challenge highlighted by Mr. Poddar. He hoped that there would be systems in place for proper segregation and collection so that recyclers can get suitable materials. He concluded by saying that he foresees a brighter future with more interest and investment in the plastics recycling sector.

Mr. Rajesh Pahwa built upon the uses of plastics, calling it the best human invention. Saying that awareness about recycling is limited, he gave out some of the processes included in the entire process. He noted that plastics could be recycled multiple times and stressed upon the variety of products which can be manufactured.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A concerted effort by all stakeholders to minimise the adverse effects of plastics using pragmatic approaches is needed.
- Use platforms to bring all stakeholders together in a collaborative fashion.
- Support, in the form of policies and incentives from municipal corporations, would encourage recycling.
- Practising source segregation and establishing effective collection systems are essential for a circular economy in plastics to become successful and sustainable.
- The entire value chain needs to be considered, production needs to be redesigned, and alternative materials should be incentivized to control the issue of plastics pollution.

WORKSHOP ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY WITHIN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES IN INDIA



The workshop conducted by Dr. Prasanta Dey and Dr. Bimal Arora, aimed to explore the current state of the circular economy within SMEs' supply chains in Indian industries, their issues and challenges in adopting circular economy, and the strategies, resources and competencies that Indian SMEs need to implement circular economy effectively.



The workshop started with Dr. Prasanta Dey talking about SMEs and their relevance in the economy. He emphasised that there was a need to extend the idea of sustainability and talk about the philosophical aspect of it. Circular economy is a paradigm shift in how we think today. Companies need to find their optimum point and work accordingly. He emphasised the importance of sustainability among SMEs; SMEs are sandwiched between demand and supply. To survive the dynamic business environment, economic sustainability sometimes becomes more important than social and environmental sustainability. Circular economy is a philosophy of transformation and has five components- take, make, distribute, use, and recover.

The participants were divided into two groups and were encouraged to deliberate on the different aspects of a circular economy. The team discussed for twenty-five minutes and then each team gave a presentation highlighting the different steps that can be taken to meet various aspects of the circular economy within SMEs. The groups presented the challenges and possible solutions to tackle them. Using sustainability standards and checking small vendors against the indicators could be a viable option for the supply chain.

GROUP 1 Small Manufacturing Unit

- Group one presented its opinion as a small manufacturing unit.
- The issues raised by them revolved around traceability, quality measurement, and low skills.
- They opined that tracking every step of procurement and manufacturing can be done in the form of QR code which the consumer can also access.
- A common registration platform for all SMEs could be helpful in the process.
- Low skilled labour without any technology is a big issue, which can be tackled through automation.



GROUP 2
Small Bakery

- The second group presented the case study of a small bakery.
- The group presented challenges about quality, procurement, and marketing.
- They also shared some solutions which can reduce the burden on the SMEs.
- The group believed that social media can play an important role in marketing.
- For quality control, bakery can promote standards which will be beneficial to them as well as the consumer groups.
- The group also tackled issues like food waste, energy, and water.

The workshop concluded with Dr. Dey sharing a framework which can be adopted by the SMEs to reduce carbon footprint by adopting a circular economy.

SUSTAINABILITY IN CAFES AS A BUSINESS CASE: WHY INDIAN CONSUMERS DEMAND AND VALUE SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS



The session was designed to gauge the experience of tea and coffee businesses with respect to sustainable practices and demands of sustainability by the consumers. Focusing on the demand side, the speakers agreed that consumers would get more demanding once there is more awareness. Though there is a need for environmental protection, challenges such as cost and pricing, collaboration and incentives can pose as impediments.



MODERATOR

MS. ROSY CHOUDHURY, Director, South Asia, Rainforest Alliance

PANELLISTS

MR. VIMLENDU JHA

Co-founder, Swachha

MR. ANURAG PRIYADARSHI

Global Sustainability Manager, Tata Global Beverages Ltd

MR. ABHISHEK MAZUMDAR

Co-founder, The Logical Indian

MR. AMULEEK S BIJRAL

CEO, Chai Point

MR. MOHAN VARGHESE

Vice President: Tea Manufacture Operations, Kanan Devan Hills Plantation Company Private Limited (KDHP)

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Rosy Choudhary began the session with the question, how do we generate demand for sustainable tea and coffee in Indian markets? Stating that consumer-facing businesses hold huge potential to influence consumer demands especially from millennials and youth –the desired impact hasn't been achieved. She invited the panellists to talk about their experience of domestic demand for sustainability.

According to Vimlendu Jha, Indians are experiencing a lifestyle change which is also leading to a growing number of challenges. According to him, responsibilities of sustainability needs to be a Government agenda, and not on con-

sumers as they are the last point in the value chain. Mr. Jha believed that an ecosystem will grow only if the production, policies, and incentives are designed accordingly. He opined that equality in consumption is important and not everyone can opt for sustainable options. Stating that unsustainability increases mortality and morbidity at an individual, societal, and national level, he stressed on broadening the conversation beyond fad and focus on implementing it. He mentioned that as India is growing in terms of economy but also in terms of challenges, it becomes important to talk about sustainability.



Mr. Amleek S. Bijral echoed Mr. Jha in stating that end consumers have minimal interest in the value chain. They are however interested in their health and wellbeing, which is what Mr. Singh encashes on. As a supplier, his strategy is to ensure healthy certified products. “Anything good for the environment acts as a bonus, but cannot be imposed on private businesses,” he added. He proposed the use of humour and to make communication consumer oriented. He believed that Indian consumers are ready for the change in consumption patterns but want to be told in an easy and light-hearted way. He gave examples of how sustainability has been conveyed to his customers--by positioning the usage of sustainable packaging as aspirational and by ensuring tangible ways for them to touch and feel.

Mr. Mohan Varghese spoke about the challenges brought by climate change and the need for environmental protection, stating that to sustain production, the tea and coffee plantation sector has to adopt environmental sustainability practices. Admitting that sustainability is expensive, he proposed that awareness campaigns should be designed by governments, NGOs, and the media collectively. Saying that there

is a robust business case for sustainability, a collaborative effort to make it successful is the key.

Mr. Abhishek Mazumdar agreed with Mr. Varghese about the role of media in the sustainability agenda. He also warned that social and behavioural change takes time. Building on the role of media, Mr. Mazumdar talked about how editorial policies, with sustainability at the core, can bring about massive changes. Saying that content can change consumer mindset, it is important to have consumers on board to ensure that sustainability campaigns succeed as he believes that only consumers can drive demand for sustainability.

Mr. Anurag Priyadarshi echoed Mr. Mazumdar when he stated that the younger consumers want to engage in issues of sustainability and that sustainability is an area that shouldn't be limited to larger cities and everyone, including the tea shops in villages, should know about it. He was also of the opinion that there is a need to educate the current consumer about Rainforest Alliance being one such certification and believes that the whole country should benefit from certification and not only sites of export.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consumer awareness is important to drive the demand for sustainability. The communication should be consumer-oriented and light-hearted.
- Equality in consumption is important, as not everyone can opt for sustainable products.
- A collaborative effort by all stakeholders is required to make sustainable practices business as usual especially for smaller plantations.
- Media should recognise their responsibility in the sustainability discourse and take necessary steps to change mindsets and behaviour.

SUPPLY CHAIN DUE DILIGENCE — A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY



Ms. Purva Gupta, Global Coordinator, Global March Against Child Labour, initiated the panel by pointing out to the upcoming legislations on due diligence to check child labour in the western countries; bound to have an impact on countries like India. The session attempted to explore the actions which can be taken collaboratively and individually to ensure supply chains are devoid of human rights exploitation. The session also sought to explore how due diligence in human rights can be a business opportunity. Mr. Vivek Singh, Programme Manager at Centre for Responsible Business, concluded by inviting everyone to join 'Impact Conclave', an online platform where one can continue the discussions forward.



MODERATOR

MS. GHAZAL MALIK, Policy Research Coordinator, Global March Against Child Labour

SPECIAL KEYNOTE

MR. RICHARD BARLOW, Head – Bilateral Political Affairs, British High Commission

PANELLISTS

MR. RANJEEB SARMA

Head of Compliance, CSR, Plan A & Admin, Marks & Spencer India

MS. VIDYA TIKOO

Head Sustainability Cell, Aditya Birla Group

MR. NAMIT AGARWAL

Lead Specialist, Private Sector Engagement, Oxfam

MR. AJOY VARGHESE

Vice President South Asia, International Justice Mission

MS GEETANJALI MASTER

Advocacy and Communications Specialist, UNICEF

MR. KELVIN SERGEANT

Sustainable Enterprise and Job Creation, ILO

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Richard Barlow started his presentation expressing shock over prevalence of human trafficking in the western world in the 21st century. He spoke about the legislature in Great Britain which has mandated companies to publish data on tackling modern human slavery. He believed that this law has empowered businesses, financial institutions, consumers and NGOs alike to tackle the issue. Congratulating Indian efforts to address this issue, Mr. Barlow said that the British High Commission is happy to partner to further the agenda of eliminating modern slavery and labour rights violations. He concluded by lauding the ISS platform as it successfully brings multiple stakeholder together to share their experi-

ence and work towards creating successful businesses which values human rights.

Ms. Vidya Tikoo spoke about the model and framework on sustainability and good governance developed and implemented by the Aditya Birla conglomerate of companies. Its human rights policy used the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) as the base document, incorporating the requirements of OECD, UNPRI, and other international standards. Speaking about challenges around due diligence on human rights, she said there was no standard methodology or comprehensive list of rights to be considered. 38 human



rights have been identified after multiple consultations and the group is now trying to identify which rights get impacted by the group's activities. She foresees the role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in helping businesses map its supply chain, collect data, and help them identify and regulate human rights violations.

Mr. Kelvin Sergeant started by quoting data on jobs created globally, with women employees within their supply chain. Stating that though there are some positive changes within supply chains, there remains a tremendous deficit when it comes to respecting human rights and labour rights. He mentioned the action and programmes initiated by ILO in collaboration with governments and other NGOs to tackle these challenges. He concluded by talking about 'Decent Work in Global Supply Chains' Resolution passed by ILOs which pens down the do's and don'ts for supply chains including SMEs.

Ms. Geetanjali Master added additional facets to the issue of child labour; children as workers, children of workers, and as community members. Asking how we are treating opportunities for these children, she stated businesses are a key stakeholder and needs to be part of this discussion. She believed that removing children from supply chains is a behavioural and cultural change and emphasized the need to empower communities to raise their voice constructively. She also believed that it is critical to move beyond compliance while collaborating, reinforcing and promoting government action. She concluded by saying communities should

be strengthened so that they can participate in the resolution making process.

Mr. Namit Agarwal reiterated that most companies are only able to disclose information about their own practices. Stating that mapping the entire chain is complex, it needs a multi stakeholder approach. He spoke about a study which looked at due diligence in tea (Assam) and sugar (UP and Maharashtra) sectors. The study showed multiple issues plaguing the sectors when it came to human rights violations. Calling the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights as an opportunity, Mr. Agarwal believed that conducting due diligence is a long way away. Stating that due diligence is only a starting point, mechanisms for conducting it properly are missing. He concluded by saying that companies collectively need to move towards transforming their business models to make an impact.

Mr. Ajoy Varghese opened his speech by pointing to the dark side of business, state, and communities; which creates a nexus to enable crimes to flourish affecting millions of people. He believed that businesses are significantly exposed to the dark side and cannot ignore them while working to remove exploitation. He congratulated ISS as a forum which explores solutions. Mr. Varghese concluded by saying that local governments and local justice systems hold the primary responsibility of cutting the crime of human trafficking and modern slavery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Multi stakeholder collaboration is essential for due diligence in supply chain
- Mechanisms and processes to conduct due diligence to identify violations needs to be established.
- Empower communities to voice their opinion, work with them to design interventions on the ground.
- Local Governments and local justice systems need to step up to tackle crimes of trafficking.
- Be part of the online platform 'Impact Conclave' to keep the discussions alive, challenge the status quo and design interventions for measurable impacts at ground level.



This session sought to reflect on the role of business schools in preparing and training the youth to demand and practise sustainability. Though a large number of B school curriculums are still oblivious to sustainability, the shifting trend is laudable. The panellists discussed the evolution, steps taken, and the way forward for B-schools in the sustainability dialogue.



MODERATOR

DR. VASANTHI SRINIVASAN, Professor, Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Management, Indian Institute of Management Bengaluru and Board Member, CRB

PANELLISTS

MR. LINGARAJ DINNI

Group Manager, Sustainability, Wipro

DR. CAROLINE ELLIOTT

Deputy Dean, Aston Business School

DR. BISWAJIT NAG

Professor of Economics, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)

DR. SANGEETA MANSUR

Founder – Catalyst, Bhairavi Business and Consultancy

DR. RUPPAL W SHARMA

Professor of Marketing and Head of Delhi Centre, SPJIMR

DR. MANFRED MAX BERGMAN

Chair of Social Research and Methodology, University of Basel

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Sangeeta Mansur, the curator of this session, initiated the conversation by stating the objective. Though there is a huge number of business schools disengaged with the topic of sustainability, Ms. Mansur pointed to ones with varying degrees of interest. She believed that these B-schools need support to close the gap between interest and intent. Ms. Mansur also appreciated the representation of corporates in the panel. Setting the stage for further discussion, she urged everyone to use this space for strategic, reflective, and candid conversations. She also teased the question as to how should B-schools integrate SDGs and sustainability?

Mr. Lingaraj Dinni introduced Wipro's philanthropic work in the field of education. As the company believes that education is a critical lever for transforming society, the Azim Premji Foundation has been working to reform education to improve outcomes. From that context, Mr. Dinni spoke about current programmes which orient students towards sustainability and SDGs. Expressing his views on sustainability as a job opportunity, he believed it is a cross-cutting issue. Instead of a separate position, all job descriptions should include sustainability requirements, he opined. Stating that India does not have a repository of local cases of sustainable business practises, Wipro is working with institutions to



build on it as evidence for sustainability.

Dr. Vasanthi Srinivasan initiated the panel discussion by stating that the conversation now has evolved from should business schools teach sustainability to different forms of sustainability and what matrix should be followed. She also shed light on the fact that there are no overarching expectations as universities differ on how sustainability should be integrated into business-related courses.

Dr. Biswajit Nag introduced his institution, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), as a think tank, conducting training for Government employees before getting into business education. Due to its history, IIFT has strong ties with both the government and businesses. Dr. Nag shared examples of business students applying sustainability lens either in their corporate jobs, social sector work, or in further education. He opined that these examples, in turn, become part of a module to be shared with other students. He concluded by saying that SDGs are multifaceted goals -and should be integrated in every subject.

Dr. Caroline Elliott started by saying that the responsibility of carrying on the agenda of sustainability lies with the university management. She shared that at Aston Business School, faculties are also committed to sustainability. She also stated that accreditation, though a tedious process, urges and reminds universities to move towards sustainability. To ensure students retain lessons of business ethics, she spoke about the importance of teaching method and assessments in the form of reflective projects. Aston is working with other busi-

ness schools to integrate sustainability curriculum and has also adopted UN Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME).

Dr. Ruppal Sharma spoke about the SP Jain Institute of Management and Research's new initiatives to build and educate students on sustainability and SDGs. Some of the models discussed by her were extra-curricular, building a long-term relationship with society and being part of a change. She, however, warned about the danger of a single perspective, especially while assessing a brand. Exposure is important to ensure that students make the right decision. Having a course on ethics is not enough; reflection is important and hence purpose, re-imagination, and conscience is key, she concluded.

Dr. Manfred Max Bergman sounded the alarm bells by saying business schools are still following traditional outlook of keeping customers and competition as the centre. Disagreeing with this approach, he quoted studies which are reflective of big diversion from the current state of affairs in everything - power centres, business functions, environment. He said B schools continue to ignore these warnings. He opined that it is essential to look beyond SDGs and sustainability integration in the curriculum in the wake of complete transformation – political, social, and economic. He concluded that the global south will drive economic strength, and B-schools across the world need to catch up to this reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build more sensitivity to sustainability among business, students, and community.
- Artificial Intelligence and technology should become an integral part of the sustainability discourse.
- Business schools should incorporate sustainability as a cross-cutting topic. It needs to ensure that students are encouraged to reflect, question, and make informed decisions while considering brands.
- Business schools need to incorporate the forthcoming changes and design their curriculums accordingly. .

MASTERCLASS ON PRODUCT LIFETIME EXTENSION



This module developed on product lifetime extension and presented the reasons for increasing durability of products and how it can be done. Stating consumers need to be aware of when to repair and when to replace, a few popular consumer goods were considered to elaborate. Two successful case studies were presented, which showcased the far-reaching impacts of upscaling.



PRESENTERS

MS. NAOMI SCOTT MEARNS

Consumers International and Co-lead, Consumers Information Programme, One Planet Network

MS. BEATRIZ MARTINS CARNEIRO

Programme Management Officer, UN Environment

MS. SHAILAJA RANGARAJAN

Founder, Rimagined

MR. SHRIYANS BHANDARI

CEO, Greensole

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Naomi Scott Mearns introduced the criticality of extending the lifetime of products, emphasising heightening product durability is very crucial to sustainability. The Consumer Information Programme provides details on how to improve the availability, accessibility, and reliability of information to all stakeholders. Information from packaging to labelling of any product is important, the programme provides guidelines so that consumers and manufacturers can benefit alike.

Ms. Beatriz Carneiro said that the current linear economy system spends more than the carrying capacity of the planet. Circular economy approach and extending product lifetime are strategies to reverse the trend. She presented a training module to understand which consumer products should be replaced and which should be repaired as there are various

criteria to be considered. She opined that the challenge to overhaul the system is a complex one which can be achieved through collaboration. She also recommended five strategies which can assist in the transition namely refurbishing, upcycling, promoting second hand market, repairing and remanufacturing. The module also covered approaches for policy makers to consider helping the sector thrive. Presenting examples and case studies, she concluded her presentation with steps which can be taken in the direction towards circularity.

Ms. Shailaja Rangarajan calling recycling a myth, proposed upcycling as a viable strategy to tackle the looming issue of waste. Saying that almost every product can be created from waste, it should be looked at as a resource. Taking the ex-



ample of her firm, which produces a range of products from discarded and waste material, Ms. Rangarajan stressed that innovative design and relooking at the waste is critical to sustainability. Without compromising on quality, her organisation ensures material lifecycle extension, job creation, and a different perspective when it comes to waste. Stating that her brand creates customised, upscaled fashion, the challenge her team faces is the loss of replicability. She concluded by saying that upcycling presents a robust business case, provided the market perspective favours upcycling.

Ms. Shreeyas Bhandari spoke about his initiative to recycle sports shoes. He presented the evolution of the idea to a

business case and eventually implementation and its impact. The slippers which are made from the discarded shoes have been accepted as fashionable; his organisation has also donated over a million slippers to children in remote districts who were unable to afford shoes. Talking about the impact of this initiative, he mentioned the reduction of waste ending up in landfills, livelihood to women, reduction in transport cost as the slippers are made closer to the donation centres, and reducing drop out rate of girl students from school as now they could trudge to school without injury.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transition from a linear model to circularity is an important strategy towards sustainability.
- Proper labelling and proper information need to be made available to consumers and manufacturers.
- Upcycling has many advantages and makes excellent business and social case; however, it needs to be incentivised for proper market uptake

ROLE OF BENCHMARKS AND REPORTING IN PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT



The session explored the benefits of benchmarking, standards, and reporting in the current day scenario. Though businesses are more open to talking about sustainability now, adopting it as an integral business practice lies in the distant future. Financial investors are aware of the risks of unsustainable practices, yet the cost of risk is not built in their investment practices. All the speakers agreed that though standards and reporting are an important part of the transition, a lot of work needs to be done to see the process through.



MODERATOR

MS. VICKY SINS, Lead Climate and Energy Benchmark, World Benchmarking Alliance

PANELLISTS

MR. SHASHANK SINGH

Senior Manager Sustainable Finance, WWF India

MR. RAJIB DEBNATH

Auditor, Management Consulting,
Bureau of Indian Standards

MR. DHEERAJ

Programme Manager, Praxis

MR. KINJAL SHAH

Regional Director India – Middle East, Responsible Jewellery Council

MR. DEEPAL ARORA

Vice President, Public Affairs, Nayara Energy

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Vicky Sins initiated the afternoon session by promising a short and interactive session. After introducing the panelists, she elaborated on the tasks of the World Benchmarking Alliance which she represented. Saying that everything that they do is in the public domain, the main aim of the organisation is to enable transparency in the private sector as well as to mobilise the financial sector to allocate funds to support the private sector to make the required changes. Currently, the World Benchmarking Alliance is benchmarking the largest 2000 global companies with indicators of social transformation at heart. She invited the speakers to opine if there is a business case for corporates to report on sustainability.

Mr. Rajib Debnath started by talking about the poor status of sustainability reports published by companies after the SEBI mandate. With 'confidence level' as low as 20%, these reports fail to attract the financial sector. Mr. Dheeraj added that the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct could be used as an umbrella framework. Saying that auditing itself is a business, the Government guidelines are a better instrument to drive sustainability in businesses. Mr. Kinjal Shah representing the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) reiterated the need for reporting to make industries transparent which can be achieved by designing SDG specific standards. Saying that abiding by multiple



standards, which is now a compulsion, Mr. Arora opined that it protects volatile industries like oil and gas from risks. Mr. Shashank Singh said though businesses are talking about SDGs, they are not at the core of business practices. He opined that setting standards and getting companies to follow them along with technology intervention is important for the transition towards sustainability.

Given that there are only ten years left for achieving SDGs, the speakers discussed the likely solutions to create comparable data and fasten the process. According to Mr. Debnath, the current standards can be used to fill some gaps; however, there is a need to develop processes and procedures to achieve identified indicators. Mr. Arora opined that certain goals demand higher focus when it comes to certain industries and benchmarks and standards should be designed accordingly. According to him, companies must focus on reducing negative impacts. Mr. Singh opined that the financial sector and businesses need to be pushed and regulated to include considerations of environment and sustainability.

Responding to the question if standards and reporting are effective in making any changes, the panellists unanimously expressed its importance. Stating that lack of negative reporting by companies is an issue, it is important to ensure companies monetise the value additions, said Mr. Debnath.

- Stating that human rights and labour issues are hard to monetise, Mr. Dheeraj argued that reports need to be concise with action taken instead of commitments made. Mr. Arora added that the mandate to report has put pressure on companies to move towards sustainability. Mr. Shah believed that extensive reports have the capacity to interest the financial sector and investors towards lending. The panel ended by concluding that reporting is important, but the lack of reliable and comparable data, and excessive green or rainbow washing in reports are common challenges which need to be overcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reporting by companies needs to be sharp, highlighting value adds and actions. Government guidelines should be used to push companies towards it.
- Review existing standards, set aspirational indicators, and measurement areas.
- Use technological aid to generate credible, independent, and democratic data.
- Set standards for financial investors to demand sustainability compliance from businesses.



European
Research
Council



This session sought to flesh out the issues of human trafficking particular to slave labour, bonded labour, violations in businesses and supply chains. The panellists agreed that though the legal system has played a small role in tackling this issue so far, the new instruments can play an important and definitive role. Admitting that law and law enforcers alone will not be able to eliminate this issue, the emphasis was laid on partnerships with communities, businesses in the informal sector, Government and NGOs.



MODERATOR

PROFESSOR HILA SHAMIR, Tel Aviv University

PANELLISTS

MR. MANOJ BHATT

Country Director, Goodweave India

MR. VIRAF MEHTA

Advisor, Partners in Change

MS. KIM MISAO

Country Director, Free the Slaves

COMMANDER ASHOK KUMAR

Regional Director, International Justice Mission (IJM)

MR. KLAAS HENDRIK ELLER

Post-Doctoral Fellow, Tel Aviv University

DR. VEERENDRA MISHRA

Director, National Institute of Social Defence, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India

HIGHLIGHTS

Professor Hila Shamir began the session by elaborating on the topic and introducing the relationship between sustainability and human trafficking. To successfully achieve SDG 8 and safeguarding the triple bottom line - planet, profit, people- the task at hand is to eradicate forced labour and modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour. Professor Shamir mentioned a few legal instruments to aid this agenda, saying the contemporary definition of trafficking has been broadened to include women, children, and men in forced prostitution, slavery, or slavery practices within or beyond borders. "Trafficking today can be considered as a bundle of rights violation, which can come in a variety

of forms." Stating that businesses continue to preserve traditional practices of labour exploitation by pushing it further down the supply chain, the voluntary standards and goodwill of companies is not enough. Professor Shamir also stated that though the criminal justice system has a huge role to play, tackling the issues in the informal sector requires a holistic and systemic approach. She set the stage for the panel discussion by stating that contemporary anti-trafficking strategies involving non-state actors focusing on businesses responsibility, as traditional anti-trafficking strategy are not adequate. She posed a sleuth of questions for the panellists to address.



Dr. Klaas Eller spoke about the current status of legal and Government instruments to address human trafficking. Calling laws an important tool to control supply chains, he said knowledge about the new legislatures are important for businesses, NGOs, and grass-root organisations. Looking at the downside of the legal system, the lack of a single robust instrument and a mesh of legislatures at various levels makes it complicated. Dr. Eller stated that human trafficking is encouraged by incentives offered by global buyers and the political economy of home states, and exists both within and around supply chains. He elaborated on two competing standards namely mandatory transparency and mandatory due diligence. The hope is pinned on the fact that these instruments would put pressure on businesses by public, Government, financial sector to take more robust steps to tackle slavery. Though these instruments have substantial blind spots, he concluded that there is a window of opportunity to ameliorate them based on practical evidence as well as conceptual legal work.

Mr. Manoj Bhatt introduced Goodweave, saying that it holistically works with the supply chain to solve issues of child and adult trafficking. This is done in partnership with businesses. The hesitancy of suppliers in lower levels of the chain to be transparent, fragmentation of supply chains, and the lack of awareness of violations were some of the complexities mentioned by him. The informal sector – the biggest GDP contributors - is hidden, with maximum employment of trafficked workers. Calling trafficking an organised business, poor, marginalised and illiterate people are commodities of this market, he said. There is a need to make supply chains visible by providing support to them, he added. Mr. Bhatt also talked about issues around the rehabilitation of identified trafficked adult workers. Saying that smaller businesses do not treat trafficking of adult workers as victims of trafficking, Mr. Bhatt emphasized on spreading the education around this issue. He concluded that it is important that businesses are part of the collaboration to tackle human slavery and child labour, along with strong instruments of compliance and due diligence.

Ms. Kim Misao spoke about the community maturity toolkit developed to identify, educate, and tackle issues of human slavery in communities. Sharing these tools with organisations working on other sectors is also part of their agenda. She agreed with Mr. Bhatt that as supply chains are hidden,

organisations working on other focus areas can easily miss the violations. She also spoke about her organisation's work at the district level to help with the rehabilitation of bonded labour.

Commander Ashok Kumar presented the perspective on the issues as a representative of the law enforcement agency. Taking the aid of a personal example, Mr. Kumar remarked that human trafficking is a real, factual, and a connected issue. He argued that human slavery is not an issue of poverty, nor is limited to any region or sector. The number of people crossing into the northern and eastern belt of India ends up in organised and in unorganised supply chains which indicates the relation between human trafficking, bonded labour, and modern slavery. Speaking about the impact of human trafficking, Mr. Kumar elaborated on communities getting dislocated, disintegrated, and disengaged and losing entitlement to basic human rights. Offering a solution to this issue, Mr. Kumar opined that business responsibility, criminal justice systems, organised crime, or human trafficking are the three verticals which need to be looked at. It is important to have deliberation and awaken the public justice system of that region to clean the supply chain, he believed. Calling the draft Traffic of Person (TOP) bill has a robust instrument and has now integrated the fourth pillar of collaboration to move towards clean and transparent supply chains.

Dr. Veerendra Mishra built on Commander Kumar's presentation to highlight that though things have progressed, confusion remains. Addressing the question "How does one ensure there is no trafficking in the supply chain", he said Government agencies and brands alike have not been able to devise any robust system calling, which remains the biggest challenge. Stating human trafficking is 'visibly invisible', Dr. Mishra remarked that though everyone knows about the issue, it has not gained enough empathy and hence remains hidden. Unawareness on the part of both the victim and the perpetrator leads to normalisation of the practice as business as usual. Dr. Mishra emphasized partnerships to tackle this complex issue; he concluded by saying everyone has to be on board including community and criminal justice system especially in the supply chains.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Robust legal instruments need to be put in place and strengthen the criminal justice system to ensure that law plays an important role.
- Establish partnerships with community and people to tackle this complex issue of human trafficking in supply chains.
- Creating a systems approach to tackle incentives presented to preserve human trafficking.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTING – INVESTORS’ PERSPECTIVE ON ESG CONSIDERATIONS



The session sought to explore investors’ role in driving Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) practices in corporates. Indian companies are moving towards their adoption as pressure from international funding agencies is growing. The business case is clear as returns are higher when invested in companies with good practices. The panel believed that companies in India need to be made more aware and assisted so that ESG finds a place in core corporate policies.



MODERATOR

MR. CHARANJIT SINGH, ESG Expert, Climate Finance and Clean Energy, Moody Analytics

PANELLISTS

MR. ANIRBAN GHOSH
Chief Sustainability Officer, Mahindra Group

MR. CHANDAN BHAVNANI
Group Executive, Vice President, Yes Bank

MR. PANKAJ SINDHWANI
Chief Business Officer, Tata Capital

DR. R.K. MISHRA
Director, Institute of Public Enterprises

MS. ANJANA SESHADRI
ESG Officer, NEEV Fund

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Charanjit Singh talked about the genesis of Environment, Social and Governance considerations and the business case supporting investment in organisations compliant with these practices. Stating that there is a clear incremental growth in focussing on good practices, Mr. Singh expressed that companies in India have been faster in the uptake of good governance policies, whereas social and environmental practices are yet to be taken seriously. He believed that ESG would soon become the most important considerations for assessment while considering an investment. Mr. Singh invited the speakers to shed light on their experience as pro ESG investors.

Mr. Chandan Bhavani echoed Mr. Singh in saying that most corporates adopt sustainable and responsible practices as they see monetary value in it. He also believed that investors are driving ESG in corporate practices. Mr. Bhavani, however, mentioned that ESG considerations are not the core deciding factor for investment in Indian markets, as not all banks have incorporated them in their core policies.

Ms. Anajana Seshadri introduced NEEV Fund and their funding policies. A joint initiative between India and the United Kingdom, the fund is focussed on the affordable asset and infrastructure creation for low-income groups. The mandate



of the fund is ESG focussed, with strict compliance and due diligence processes, the cost of which is borne by NEEV. Talking about the challenges, Ms. Seshadri mentioned that companies need assistance and efforts need to be made for them to see value in ESG compliance.

Mr. Pankaj Sindhwani represented Tata capital, a joint venture between the TATA group and IFC Washington -. The primary aim of the fund was to channelise global climate money to Indian climate markets. Mr. Sindhwani also resonated the opinion that ESG is a central cause and companies have a pressure to follow the global mandate. Saying that though Indian companies haven't been resistant to the ESG considerations, more education and awareness is required. According to him, ESG mandates are secondary in smaller corporates which is a challenge. Stating that Government intervention in terms of coordinated policies are missing, he also believed that regulators are yet to play an important role in driving ESG compliance.

Mr. R K Mishra believed that it is important to bring in evidence-based and specific policies which can be incorporated in company practices. He emphasised the need for

designing methodology for ESG adoption, as its integration is important and the biggest challenge. He suggested that a matrix needs to be created which can then be interpreted by each sector and company aiding in ESG adoption. He also pointed out that banks and funding agencies need to understand the value of ESG practices and focus on quality instead of quantity.

Mr. Anirban Ghosh built on the fact that the understanding of sustainability has evolved, and companies are now taking ESG seriously to make their businesses sustainable. He mentioned that reporting standards are important, and companies need to be held accountable for the negative impacts caused by it. He made a few suggestions on how ESG practices can be integrated including building it into performance indexes of executives and incentivising them. He also hinted that boards could drive the ESG agenda and the role of regulators may play an important role in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Articulate and convey the business case for adopting ESG practices.
- Build awareness and knowledge among small companies so that they see the value in ESG adoptions.
- Banks and investor agencies should consider ESG compliance as core factors while assessing a portfolio.
- Evidence-based policies, performance-based matrixes, regulators and boards can all play an important role in ESG adoption.

MARKET DYNAMICS AND SOCIAL DILEMMAS OF PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

The three days ISS Conference on Market Dynamics and Social Dilemmas of Promoting Sustainable Business concluded with collective experience sharing and suggestions for the next conference. With a special note of gratitude to all the organisers, partners, and participants, the panellists were generous with their comments and demands for the 2020 conference. The youth suggested a more hand on design so that the platform can be a practical guide of sustainability. All the speakers agreed that those who are yet to see the value of sustainability need to be a part of the ISS platform to truly drive the agenda of SDGs.



MODERATOR

MR. RIJIT SENGUPTA, CEO, CRB

CHIEF GUEST

JUSTICE DR. D.K. ARORA, Chairperson, Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Appellate Tribunal

PANELLISTS

MS. MEERA MITRA

Senior Adviser and Lead, Forum for State-Private Collaboration on SDGs, CRB

MS. NORMA TREGURTHA

Lead Strategic Partnerships, ISEAL Alliance

MR. DATUK DARREL WEBBER

CEO, RSPO

PROFESSOR MANFRED MAX BERGMAN

Professor, Department of Social Science, University of Basel

HIGHLIGHTS

Ms. Meera Mitra initiated the closing plenary by recalling the idea behind ISS conference. Talking about India's role in the global scenario, she highlighted the need for businesses to participate in driving holistic growth and reducing poverty. She expressed the need for including the informal sector in the sustainability debate. To enable that, a step by step approach, flexible standards, hand holding and patience is key. Calling data, the 'new oil', Ms. Mitra nudged the idea of big changes especially as artificial intelligence and robotics take centre stage. She closed her speech by recognising the role of standards to ensure corporates respect human rights. Collaboration remains key and dialogues are crucial to chart a fair path towards sustainability where everyone has a role to play, she concluded.



Justice Dr. D.K. Arora spoke about the role of the judiciary in the past decades towards protecting human rights, environment, and resources. He said the time is ripe for rebalancing developing economies especially in the Indian context as it is blessed with three 'Ds' – Demand, Democracy, and Demography. Make in India has a far-reaching impact, as India is now amongst the biggest investment hubs. Mentioning some of the landmark judgements, Justice Arora closed his speech by saying the welfare of the society is dependent on all its members as they all have an equal stake in it.

Dr. Manfred Bergman opened his speech by saying sustainability is in a schizophrenic state, as people are not sure what it stands for. Referring to non-labelled products, Dr. Bergman expressed scepticism about their sustainability. He believed that partnerships should be developed and brought on board those who do not concern themselves with sustainability. Warning about the onset of the 4th industrial revolution, Dr. Bergman expects a major impact on consumption. "And while SDGs are framed to change our current behaviour, just working on them is not enough to deal with the 4th industrial revolution." He placed his hope on India in this geopolitical power shift to become producer oriented and curbing unsustainable consumerism.

Mr. Darrel Webber had a sleuth of recommendations for the audience. Expressing gratitude over private-sector commitments and civil society initiatives, he believed the blame game needs to be halted. People need to be held accountable along the value chain. A change in paradigm to make consumers sustainable is the need of the hour. Indian brands and retailers who are not convinced about sustainability need to be 'converted'. Mr. Webber suggested that the ISS platform should be made more interactive.

Ms. Norma Tregurtha congratulated everyone undertaking the journey of achieving sustainability. Though a relatively high number of members have achieved certification under voluntary standards, many more Indian stakeholders need to be covered under the processes. She highlighted that the ISS platform is especially important as the debates have become more nuanced and the recognition for continuing is deep. She mentioned that though sustainability continues to be driven by stakeholders outside India, there is a shift. India needs to be active in all the conversation especially about ground-level problems to keep the situation 'real'. Ms. Tregurtha emphasised the need to talk about failures. She agreed with the panellists about including stakeholders who remain unaware of sustainability on this platform. She concluded with the recommendation that ongoing projects and initiatives need to be described more with better measurement. She encouraged that a theme on failures should be included at ISS to talk about problem resolution and learnings on the ground level.

Mr. Rijit Sengupta thanked the participants and delegates for giving their valuable time towards the cause of sustainability. He also congratulated his team at CRB for working around the clock to make ISS 2019 a success.



Lead Partners

Laudes —
— Foundation



Co-Hosts



Academic Institution Partners



Associate Partners



Logo Support



Goodness Partner



Industry Association Partners



Online Media Partner



Conference Manager



Conference Support Partners



Media Partner

