

**INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUES AND CONFERENCE**

Post Conference Report

2020

*SUSTAINABILITY A KEY TO BUSINESS RESILIENCE IN AN
UNCERTAIN WORLD*

LEAD PARTNERS



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.
South Asia



ISB | Bharti Institute
of Public Policy



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The **7th India and Sustainability Standards (ISS) International Dialogues 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 six versions. The theme **‘Sustainability a Key to Business resilience in an Uncertain World’** focused on the new challenges we face with the pandemic which has added a layer of unprecedented uncertainty. The conference, conceived and presented by CRB, was co-organised with **63 partners and 200 speakers in 29 sessions with over 800 participants.**

Delegates appreciated the ISS platform for continually being able to mobilise diverse stakeholders from across the globe to explore sustainability solutions with Indian practitioners. The ISS conference is unique in bringing together academia and businesses, along with introducing new actors into this dialogue on sustainable business. This year was unique as it was the first time in CRB’s history that this conference had to be conducted as a virtual conference. Owing to travel restrictions due to Covid-19, there was an unprecedented reliance on technology in order to make this conference a success.

One of the emerging points was that although on one hand the pandemic has ushered in a period of uncertainty for individuals, businesses and governments, on the other, the looming disaster as a result of climate change has been well known. Hence, the pandemic must be used as an opportunity to reshape and reorient businesses and policies to address wider, more pressing issues of sustainability and to ensure that the recovery from the pandemic is guided by the principles of sustainability and the SDGs

Some of the key takeaways that stemmed from the three-day conference included:

- Adopting a systems approach ensuring that we look at the entire system as a whole rather than its parts. This would allow for an integrated approach to addressing the SDGs and pave the way for a green and inclusive development.
- The need for improving access to digital technology and its transformative power for inclusive and equitable development were discussed.
- As practitioners across business, government, civil society, academia, it was discussed that there was a need to expand thinking of communities not just as beneficiaries but more as economic actors and mainstream them into value chains better.
- Local value creation is critical, and will need to be led by community-based organisations who will need sufficient investments and technological support. This is key to building resilience in terms of withstanding shocks where most needed.

Most importantly, the conference highlighted that all stakeholders will need to come out of their comfort zones and innovate as it can no longer be ‘Business As Usual’ and develop tools/approaches/interventions to address the most pressing sustainability challenges we are confronted with, together.

INAUGURAL DAY
OCTOBER 28, 2020

◆ INAUGURAL PANEL

SUSTAINABILITY A KEY TO BUSINESS RESILIENCE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

GUEST OF HONOR



SHRI. SURESH PRABHU
India's Sherpa at the G20
Former Minister of Commerce & Industry and
Civil Aviation

KEYNOTE



DR. RAJIV KUMAR
Vice Chairman
NITI Aayog, Government of India

SPEAKERS



HEIDI HAUTALA
Chair
European Parliament
Working Group on
Responsible Business
Conduct



DR. ASHOK KHOSLA
Chairman
Development
Alternatives



DR. YASMIN ALI HAQUE
Representative
United Nations Children's
Fund
(UNICEF)



DR. BIMAL ARORA
Faculty Member
Aston Business School,
UK
Honorary Chairperson
CRB



BEVERLEY POSTMA
Chief Executive Officer
Roundtable on
Sustainable Palm Oil
(RSPO)



FRANK HOFFMANN
Regional Project
Manager
Friedrich Naumann
Foundation for Freedom
(FNF)



ASHWINI CHHATRE
Executive Director
Bharti Institute of Public
Policy

The inaugural session set the tone for the conference as a whole. The day began with the Guest of Honour, Mr Suresh Prabhu situating the pandemic in the context of wider uncertainties posed by climate change. He reminded the audience that the end of lock-down must be an opportunity to adopt new ways of being. Although this pandemic has brought with it an added layer of uncertainty, he stated, climate change and its uncertainties have been known to us for some years now. 'Every crisis provides an opportunity. Coming out of this lockdown should entail coming out of the old economy and practices.' Hence, he advocated for starting afresh, by locking in old habits and unleashing new ways of thinking and action through a collaboration between government and businesses in promoting resilience.

His powerful message was followed by Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog. Dr Kumar highlighted the importance of optimising the triple bottom-line for businesses in his keynote address. He reiterated the criticality for businesses to assess their performance, not only from the lens of financial performance, but also consider social and environmental parameters. He asserted that 'the year 2020 has shown us that we need a different relationship between business and government- the one of trust. There needs to be trust between the corporates and government - based on mutual trust, transparency, accountability and efficiency.' It is imperative to build back better, he added, as we no longer have the luxury to rely solely on retrofitting solutions.

◆ INAUGURAL PANEL

SUSTAINABILITY A KEY TO BUSINESS RESILIENCE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Dr Ashok Khosla, the Founder of Development Alternatives followed Dr Kumar's address. He asserted that the degree of the social and economic distress requires businesses to think and act in different ways. 'The SDGs were introduced five years ago' he stated, 'to ensure that the world is safe and this means that we must go from the linear economy of extraction to the circular economy without being disruptive to the world's resources'. Hence in order for businesses to be resilient, they must invest in people and avoid investing solely in assets. Efficiency in businesses, he added, should be in the context of resilience. Businesses must recognise the growing importance of societal aspects and invest in partnerships with civil society agencies.

Dr Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF Resident Representative India – underscored the value of business strategies and policies pertaining to sound working conditions. UNICEF, she stated, will continue to work on promoting family friendly policies across workplaces, starting with the readymade garments sectors in the country. This is because such policies have proven to be invaluable in the context of the pandemic and must be replicated across organisations and businesses to build resilience.

Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy (Indian School of Business) began by urging the audience to better understand the concept of 'resilience' especially in the context of business and community resilience and aim for transformation. He highlighted the successes of social safety nets such as 'Aadhaar connected PDS systems which prepared us to alleviate suffering during the lockdown.' Hence, he advocated for building upon the digital infrastructure. Digital transformation, he concluded, is one area where business and government can work together.

Frank Hoffman, representing Friedrich Naumann Foundation regional office, South Asia - highlighted the need to advocate for a balance between international legislations and those at national levels. This is essential in order to understand and estimate how businesses would need to adapt to them.

According to Beverley Postma, CEO of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil - there's been never a stark reminder in recent history that we must adapt our business models and government policies around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She emphatically stated that 'sustainability is the key to human resilience. If we want to recover after the pandemic, we need to break away from individual business mindsets and engage collectively in sustainable business resilience.' This succinctly captured the essence of the discussion and the panel.

Heidi Hautala MEP, Chair of EU Parliament Working Group on Responsible Business Conduct asserted that EU companies have significant leverage in promoting responsible business in their global value chains. This must be used to enforce sustainability with all its partners involving a multi-stakeholder engagement process.



Lastly, Dr Bimal Arora, Honorary Chairperson of CRB and faculty at the Aston Business School, brought to the fore the theory of 'narrative economics', which involves the study of the spread and dynamics of popular narratives and stories and called on delegates to spread the narrative captured in the conference theme (Sustainability a key to Business Resilience in an Uncertain World) – so that it goes viral. The session was concluded was CRB's board member, Dr Meera Mitra. She tied together the valuable insights of the speakers which led the way for an engaging conference.

◆ HIGH LEVEL PANEL 1

DESIGNING AN ENABLING ECOSYSTEM TO BUILD BACK BETTER – GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE

PANELISTS



ATUL BAGAI

Head of Country Office
United Nations
Environment Programme
(UNEP)



DR. SANJEEV CHOPRA

Director
Lal Bahadur Shastri National
Academy of Administration



NADIA RASHEED

Deputy Resident Representative
in India
United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP)



DR. ASHIMA GOYAL

Professor of Economics
Indira Gandhi Institute for
Development Research



ARVIND MAYARAM

Former Finance Secretary
of India



**MODERATOR
Anindya
Chatterjee**

Regional Director, Asia
International Research
Development Centre
(IDRC)

HIGHLIGHTS

The second session for the day sought to understand what kind of mechanisms and tools would allow for building back better and build resilience in an uncertain world. The session was chaired by Dr. Anindya Chatterjee, Regional Director, Asia for IDRC. He began the session by taking a moment to appreciate the adaptable nature of people. ‘This conference is happening virtually this time and tests our ability to adapt.’ This also shows, he added, that there is a need to recalibrate our work to ensure progress and to work hand-in hand with local experts. It is only by working together that we will emerge from this crisis stronger.

Dr Ashima Goyal, Professor of Economics at the Indira Gandhi Institute for Development Research, praised the governance structures in India. She stated that these structures ensured that despite enforcing one of the harshest lockdowns, there were no hunger deaths in the country. She further stated that ‘this pandemic has shown us the importance and value of improved environmental standards as a result of reduced congestion and reduced air pollution.’ Hence, moving towards an India where high environmental standards are the norm, must be the goal.

This was followed by Mr Sanjeev Chopra, Director at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration. He highlighted how disaster management had become mainstreamed into administration and governance with Covid. He also reiterated Dr Goyal’s appreciation of the social safety nets in India such as the Right to Work and the Right to Food, which according to him, provided a valuable cushion to the country’s rural workforce in such a trying time. Hence, it was gleaned that governance structures in India are well equipped to address concerns of hunger & equity, leading inclusive growth in India.

Nadia Rasheed, Deputy Resident Representative in India – UNDP, started by highlighting the vital role of small and medium enterprises in the road to recovery from the lockdown. This, coupled with

◆ HIGH LEVEL PANEL 1

DESIGNING AN ENABLING ECOSYSTEM TO BUILD BACK BETTER – GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE

promoting rural inclusion, would also provide an opportunity to support women-led enterprises and promote recovery efforts that are more inclusive. She also noted the scope for SMEs to build capacity, build their digital capacity, accessing markets and credit. This ties together with the role of the government especially at the local level to allow for seamless co-ordination. She concluded by saying

that there is a need to have ownership from the private sector and civil society and that there needs to be data driven, evidence-based decision making.

Arvind Mayaram,
Former
Finance
Secretary



of India, began by stating that a macro view is very critical and important. He went to state that in addition to this, there is also a need to look at the development process rather than looking how the government is tackling a pandemic. The pandemic, he stated, has deepened the digital divide as is evidenced by the gap in access to online education to students across the country. Hence, 'in order to move forward and have inclusive growth, we need to find ways to bridge the digital gap, kickstart economy by putting money in the hands of people and look at ways to change regulations and reinvent governance.' We need to re-invent governance, he concluded, in such a manner that it allows freedom to find economic solutions.

The session was concluded by Mr. Atul Bagai, Head of UNEP India. He built on the statements of the panel by reiterating the need to fundamentally rework our relationship with nature and redesign societies to be sustainable. Post COVID, he added, the non-environmentally friendly companies may be looked down in business valuations with a corresponding need to focus on considering environmental impacts. Lean and agile supply chains will become the norm for businesses. In terms of how we achieve SDGs, he said that countries that are able to achieve SDGs will have resilience in terms of addressing economic losses.

Hence, the panel agreed that economic growth without sustainability would be futile. Growth must be inclusive, and businesses must look beyond profitability.

◆ HIGH LEVEL PANEL 2

PATHWAYS TO OUR COMMON FUTURE – BUSINESSES IN POST COVID19 ERA

PANELISTS



**PROF. TENSIE
WHELAN**

Director
NYU Stern School,
Business's Center for
Sustainable Business



**KARIN
KREIDER**

Executive Director
ISEAL Alliance



**HERMAN
MULDER**

Co-founder & Chair
SDG Netherlands



**HIMANSHU
BAKSHI**

Managing Director
Danone India



**MODERATOR
ARUN MAIRA**

Chairman
HelpAge
International

HIGHLIGHTS

The final session of the day began with Arun Maira, Chairman of HelpAge International. He started by emphasizing on the need for systems thinking. This, he added, is required to mitigate the challenges we face. Transformation of systems requires an understanding of the stakeholders, solutions, power relations and the social realities that comprise the system. Hence, we must ask - What are the different ways in which we must work together to accelerate the new future that we would like to achieve? He further stated that universal solutions cannot be developed and implemented. We need local solutions with collaborations with local stakeholders. Hence, the need is for context specific and innovative solutions.

He was followed by Himanshu Bakshi, Managing Director of Danone India who raised an important point, stating that 'sustainability cannot be just a target or metric. It needs to be a part of the entire organization's DNA.' This will set the pace at which organizations work towards achieving SDGs. There is also a simultaneous need for training management because the lack of understanding about sustainability, lack of attention to supply chain and lack of reporting are all challenges to sustainability.

Tensie Whelan, Director of NYU Stern Centre for Sustainable Business, began by highlighting the disconnect between sustainability strategy and implementation. Within a company, such a disconnect has the potential to lead to a gap in measuring the financial gains of sustainable practices and investments. Hence, she stated that while talking about responsible and sustainable business, the role of consumer engagement and investor responsibility is highly valuable and cannot be ignored. She mentioned FabIndia as an example of a company that looks at the entire ecosystem, which includes having job opportunities for artisans. They have created artisan co-ops and have brought financing to the co-ops. This is an example of working with all the players in the system.

Karin Kreider, Executive Director at the ISEAL Alliance began by elaborating on the importance of standards in assessing the progress made especially towards meeting SDGs. These standards provide benchmarks and milestones to track progress. She went on to state that for the sake of 'our collective future, we need to work together- government and civil society all have important roles to play.' She added that in the context of the pandemic, new models of governance and business will be needed in order to accelerate growth.

◆ HIGH LEVEL PANEL 2

PATHWAYS TO OUR COMMON FUTURE – BUSINESSES IN POST COVID19 ERA

The session was concluded by Herman Mulder, Chair of SDG Charter, Netherlands. He emphasized the need to make new partnerships in order to accelerate the progress that has already been made towards sustainability. This was critical to avoid going back to the pre-Covid state of things. 'Covid has taught us that we need to take all the SDGs together. They work in tandem and influence each other. We should leave no SDG behind. Failing to meet one will have a domino effect on the others.' He added that businesses need to look beyond risk and should consider double materiality - It's not just the outside in but also the inside out. Do companies serve society or only shareholders? Businesses must look beyond profit and concentrate on impact. They must question their purpose which will translate into strategy. This also correlated with Mr Bakshi's statements and provided a well-rounded discussion.



SECOND DAY
OCTOBER 29, 2020



PLENARY: INDIA INC. LEADS BY EXAMPLE - RESPONSIBILITY IN REVIVAL



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South Asia

- **SHRI GYANESHWAR SINGH** - *Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (Keynote Address)*
- **VIRAF MEHTA** - *Adjunct Faculty, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs*
- **SHUBHA SEKHAR** - *Regional Director, Business & Human Rights, Coca-Cola*
- **ASHISH GARG** - *President, Institute of Company Secretaries of India*
- **VIDYA TIKOO** - *Senior VP – Sustainability, Aditya Birla*
- **SEEMA ARORA** - *Deputy Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry*
- **DR. BIMAL ARORA** - *Chairperson, Centre for Responsible Business (Moderator)*

The plenary session of the day began with Mr Gyaneshwar Singh from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. At the outset, he began by emphasizing the need for shareholders to recognize that they are connected to the stakeholders in any business. Recognizing this would allow businesses to understand and appreciate this connection, which in turn would lead to their longevity. He added that through Covid, there is an opportunity to discuss the relationship between profit maximization and responsible business conduct. Covid has also exposed the fault-lines of the way businesses currently operate. Hence, there is a need, he stated, for practitioners and businesses to come together in order to identify the road blocks and follow SDG 17 to build resilience.

This was followed by Viraf Mehta, Adjunct Faculty at the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs. He added that India is faced with an immense opportunity wherein a value chain approach must be adopted especially in Tier 1, Tier 2 cities. Doing so would allow businesses to demonstrate their commitment to social, economic and environment sustainability.

Seema Arora, the Deputy Director General for Confederation of Indian Industry talked about the role of larger companies to shoulder the responsibility of bringing the smaller firms and SMEs in their value chain up to speed and de-risk their business in order to build resilience. We need to create a level playing field because everyone will not be compelled towards engaging businesses for sustainability.

Ashish Garg, started by elaborating on the role of ICSI in supporting its stakeholders. He talked about the transformation regarding financial disclosures. He added that 'a number of initiatives have been taken by the Government to enable better transparency, responsibility and accountability by businesses in India'. This has ushered in a new era that will ensure better governance.

Dr Vidya Tikoo, Senior Vice President - Sustainability - Aditya Birla Management Corporation, added here that the shift in the way businesses function has been altered by customers and the changing

◆ 29th October | Plenary

nature of demand. There is a demand for certified goods, sustainable goods and the more that consumers are aware about these certifications, the higher the demand there is for such certified products. This has caused businesses to reevaluate their value chains in order to meet the demand. Another key point she mentioned was that business disclosures play a crucial role in setting



benchmarks by external agencies.

Shubha Sekhar, the Human and Workplace Rights Director, Eurasia, Central & Eastern Europe & North Africa, The Coca-Cola Company was the last speaker of the plenary.

The session was moderated by Bimal Arora who reiterated the need to focus on stakeholders rather than shareholders. He added that India had made sustainability and SDGs context specific. This would enable it to meet SDG 17. The government in India has led the way towards sustainability and now businesses must step in. He concluded the plenary session by adding that a transition must be made from stakeholders to right holders. This can only be done if businesses work towards achieving the SDGs through effective partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Shareholders must recognize that they are connected to the stakeholders in any business. This would allow businesses to understand and appreciate this connection, which in turn would lead to their longevity.
- India is faced with an immense opportunity wherein a value chain approach must be adopted especially in Tier 1, Tier 2 cities.
- A transition must be made from stakeholders to right holders. This can only be done if businesses work towards achieving the SDGs through effective partnerships.

FAMILY - FRIENDLY POLICIES: AN APPARATUS FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE & CONTINUITY



MODERATOR

Dr. Chemba Raghavan, UNICEF

PANELISTS

- Tejas Sampat, Senior Director, Corporate Responsibility & Offshore Sustainability, PVH Inc
- Niraj Lal, Head CSR - Arvind Mills
- Srihari Balakrishnan, President, KG Fabrics
- Ines Kaempfer, Executive Director, CCR CSR Hong Kong
- Dinesh Mehra, General Manager (Finance & Administration) - Richa Global Exports Pvt. Ltd
- Vivek Singh, Programme Manager, Centre for Responsible Business
- Kriti Tula, Doodlage
- Dr. Chemba Raghavan, UNICEF

The first session of day two brought up some of the themes that had been discussed on the first day. The session began with Mr Vivek Singh from CRB who introduced the speakers and set the context for this session. He handed over to the first speaker, Dr Chemba Raghavan of UNICEF, who talked about how Covid transformed the roles played by family members and parents especially for advancing children's development. This has led to a closer examination of the need for family friendly policies across the globe. In contexts where traditional support systems are lacking, the need for family friendly policies has been felt even more acutely. This is essential for business continuity and resilience.

She then handed over the discussion to Niraj Lal, Head CSR - Arvind Mills. He began by talking about the long history of Arvind Mills and the challenges that such a long-standing organization can face when hit by such uncertainty as the pandemic has caused. He added that 'for the first time in its 80-year history, Arvind Mills had to close for 3 days because of Covid'.

Dinesh Mehra, General Manager (Finance & Administration) - Richa Global Exports spoke next and introduced the work done by his organization. He also reiterated the need for family friendly policies to build resilience during uncertainty.

Tejas Sampat, Senior Director, Corporate Responsibility and Offshore Sustainability at PVH Inc introduced himself and PVH next. He added that PVH follows life- work policies rather than work-life policies- it is around because the organization believes that it is life that work and family follows.

Kriti Tula from Doodlage introduced herself and stated that unlike the bigger organizations represented at the panel, hers at the advantage of incorporating sustainability considerations right from the inception stage. This has allowed them to select the kinds of organizations they would like to partner with, in keeping with their motivation for sustainability.

Srihari Balakrishnan, President, KG Fabrics began by introducing his work. He said that the organization firmly believes in allowing for personal development as an integral component of work and this involves understanding the value of sustainability.

Ines Kaempfer, Executive Director, CCR CSR Hong Kong, was the last speaker at the session and introduced her work.

Following the introductions, Dr. Chemba Raghavan began by asking Tejas to elaborate on his experiences with family friendly policies. He stated that PVH had adopted of work life policies even before Covid hit, which enabled them to adjust quickly to the new realities, at a time when the whole world was shut

FAMILY - FRIENDLY POLICIES: AN APPARATUS FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE & CONTINUITY

down. Ines then also contributed to the discussion about the role of family friendly policies in ensuring business continuity and resilience. She added 'if companies can fulfill the child care and development needs of their workers, it can be a great tool for enhanced retention, productivity for businesses'. This reiterated the value of preparedness in organizations as they help not only with retention but also employability.

When asked about the key drivers in implementing family friendly policies, Niraj Lal stated that the role of family friendly policies is not restricted to the workers. Such policies ultimately benefit the organization as 'only with happy employees, can a happy organization be built'. However, he also added that this line of thinking must form a part of the underlying principles of an organization if they are to be fully and effectively implemented. He concluded by saying that it is imperative to build policies in the interest of blue-collar workers and enable them for vertical movement within the organization.

The discussion then moved to Dinesh, who discussed the initiatives Richa Global had taken with regard to sustainability. These included those pertaining to health, nutrition, and child development. Srihari Balakrishnan discussed the steps his organization has taken towards sustainability. This included engaging with the employees, listening to their needs and accordingly liaising with HR to design policies that were required by the workers. He added that has been important for them to make sure that their workers and their children have their aspirations. While maternity leave, creches, etc are transactional in nature, KG Fabrics aims to put frameworks and structures in place for its employees.

Kriti then shared her experience with such policies from the perspective of an MSME. She added that the advantage of having a small organization lies in incorporating sustainability from the first step. It has allowed her organization to interact more directly with the artisans, ensuring that their demands and needs are understood. This has played a role in their success. She said, 'every artisan who started with us has stayed with us and that is important to a business.'

The discussion therefore highlighted the need for having family friendly policies in place, the value of incorporating such policies at an early stage and ensuring that there was space for feedback from employees so that these policies are robust and adapt to the changing needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establishing family friendly policies across the globe for business continuity and resilience.
- Enabling open communication and feedback among all employees so as to ensure that organizational policies are in keeping with their demands and needs.
- Imperative to build policies in the interest of blue-collar workers and enable them for vertical movement within the organization.



BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS ACROSS FOREST-LINKED COMMODITIES



MODERATOR

Dr. Joshua Bishop, Conservation Economist – WWF Australia

PANELISTS

- Bhavna Prasad, Director - Sustainable Business, WWF-India
- Aloka Majumdar, Head of Corporate Sustainability - HSBC India
- Dheeraj Talreja, President, AAK India
- SN Venkatraman, Executive VP - Marketing & Commercial, ITC – PSPD
- Srinivas Prasad, General Manager, Navbharat Agro Products Limited
- Anjana Shanmugavel, Senior Manager, Sustainable Business, WWF India

The session began with Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business setting the context for the discussion on building sustainable supply chains. The interlinkages between deforestation, environmental degradation and human health have been highlighted during Covid. It is therefore, imperative to have a multi-stakeholder discussion on protecting forests, which is a complex issue.

Anjana Shanmugavel, Senior Manager, Sustainable Business, WWF India then began her presentation to the panel by setting the context for the discussion. She started by explaining the social,



environmental and economic benefits of nature. This was followed by how this impacts businesses and should incentivize them to act sustainably throughout

their supply chains. Lastly, she elaborated on the issues in India linked with the wider discussion.

She handed over the discussion to the moderator, Dr. Joshua Bishop, Conservation Economist – WWF Australia. He introduced himself and his work. Then he stated that there is an imperative to balance economic needs with the importance of deforestation and habitat conservation.

He handed over the discussion to Dheeraj Talreja, President, AAK India. Dheeraj began by introducing the work that he has been doing at AAK India. He stated that his work focuses on ensuring that economic growth and sustainability go hand in hand. He reiterated that ‘reversing nature’s loss is everyone’s responsibility.’

SN Venkatraman, Executive VP - Marketing & Commercial, ITC – PSPD was the next speaker who introduced his work with the panel. He said that in order to build back better and have green growth, ‘sustainability has to be woven into the business fabric.’

■ BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAINS ACROSS FOREST-LINKED COMMODITIES

Aloka Majumdar, Head of Corporate Sustainability - HSBC India, was the next speaker. She began by discussing the role of a financial institution with regard to sustainable finance. "Sustainability financing for HSBC has two elements, first to support activities that pursue SDGs and second, bring in ESG considerations while making financial decisions." She added that over a period of time, HSBC decided to incorporate ESG considerations in their lending decisions. This has evolved over time and one of HSBC's sustainability risk parameters is forestry. Setting targets is essential but these must be adapted to the local context in order to fulfil global commitments.

Lastly, Srinivas Prasad, General Manager, Navbharat Agro Products Limited gave an introduction about himself and his work with local farmers.

There was a brief discussion and Q&A after this. One of the issues discussed was how to engage farmers and communities in rebuilding nature. Another issue discussed by Alok was how to incentivize financial institutions in lending for sustainability. She stated that the financial sector has evolved from looking at sustainability as a challenge to understanding that it is an opportunity. Next, she said, that the approach is geared towards enduring that their customers can achieve low carbon emissions. Lastly, the opportunities to bridge the gap between local standards and global standards was discussed by Srinivas. The value of trust and transparency was discussed by Dheeraj Talreja, who also elaborated on technological interventions and their potential to inform smallholder farmers and local level practitioners. While there is an increased awareness in India about sustainability, he added, the journey towards it is still long. 'Sustainability is a big word and people get confused. It's not important to do big things, it's important to do smaller things which make a bigger impact' he concluded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Essential to have a multi-stakeholder discussion on protecting forests, which is a complex issue.
- Need for balancing economic needs with the importance of deforestation and habitat conservation.
- It's not important to do big things in order to be sustainable, but it is important to do smaller things which make a bigger impact.

BUSINESS RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS: A MULTI – SECTOR PERSPECTIVE ON DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (SDG 8)



OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Bouba Housseini, Program Officer - Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

MODERATOR

Gillian Dowie, Senior Program Officer, Employment and Growth at International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

PANELISTS

- Stuart Carr, Professor of Psychology, Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology Program - Massey University, New Zealand
- Chitra Prasad, General Manager, Organizational Development, Shahi Exports
- Devyani Hari, Director, Centre for Responsible Business
- Bala Reddy. V, Founder & CEO - Our Food
- Kamlesh Vyas, Managing Director, Group Mars (Mars Jewels, Hosur and Rams Jewels, Mumbai)
- Sridhar Easwaran, Senior Vice President and Head FPO Institutional Development, Samunnati Financial Intermediation & Services Private Limited

The session began with Devyani Hari introducing and welcoming the panel. Dr. Bouba Housseini, Program Officer - Canada's International Development Research Centre was the first speaker from the panel. He introduced the work that IDRC is doing with CRB and how it relates the IDRC's larger goals. He also addressed how IDRC has had to adjust its work in the context of Covid. This is based on the realization that pre-Covid practices can no longer continue and be expected to be successful.

Gillian Dowie, Senior Program Officer, Employment and Growth at IDRC then talked about how the inequality in accessing social protection has become stark during lockdowns and the pandemic. This is the case all over the world and not just in India. MSMEs and blue-collar workers suffered due to sudden closers and this had a severe impact on their livelihoods.

Prof Carr, Professor of Psychology, Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology Program - Massey University, New Zealand added to this and said that private organizations and their role in achieving SDGs cannot be understated. He also said that despite this, however, a business case for living wages had yet to be made. In order to address this, research evidence is required in order to allay the fears of employers and to push them to pay living wages. He noted that there is a relationship between decent wages and productivity factors such as work attitude, low turnover etc. Hence, evidence-based approaches and research is essential to build business case for living wage.

Kamlesh Vyas, Managing Director, Group Mars joined the discussion and was asked about the policies Mars had adopted for the artisans and workers. He gave an introduction about the work that he does and the value of the artisans to his company. This led their policies to entail the provision of basic necessities to workforce, which are counted as investments, rather than revenue expenses.

Chitra Prasad, General Manager, Organizational Development, then discussed the work of Shahi Exports. PACE, is an example of a life skill training program for women workers, which has been in place for over 11 years and is one of Shahi Exports' key sustainability initiatives. The organizational development team has been trained over the years, to handle grievances. Research data from a

BUSINESS RESILIENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS: A MULTI - SECTOR PERSPECTIVE ON DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH (SDG 8)

third party (Good Business Lab) has enabled them to understand the requirements in terms of decent work. She went to say that there is a need 'for scientific data to understand impact.'

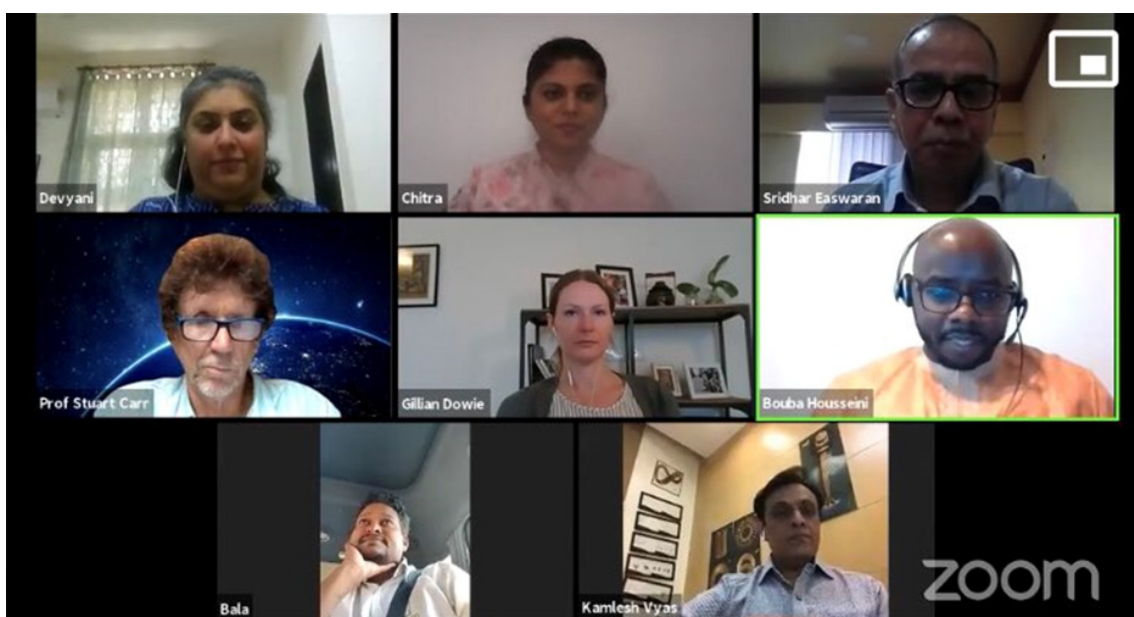
Sridhar Easwaran, Senior Vice President and Head FPO Institutional Development discussed his experience of working with the government in implementing schemes for FPOs. He stated, 'institutional capacity building is crucial for FPOs to function and flourish. Samunnati plays the role of connecting FPOs to government schemes and develop capacity of FPOs'.

The last speaker was Bala Reddy. V, Founder & CEO - Our Food who also touched on a similar point and said, 'farmers are losing income as they are not adding value to raw agricultural produce.' He then spoke about the work done by Our Food which works with young, small and marginal farmers and helps in setting them up with equipment to undertake processing and adding value.

Hence, the emerging points from this discussion concentrated on the need for collaboration with employees for ownership and participation. The involvement of employees at every stage would result in a more successful and resilient business. The role of the government cannot be ignored in such uncertain times as it needs to support organizations in taking care of employees during a crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A business case for living wages had yet to be made. For this, research evidence is required in order to allay the fears of employers and to push them to pay living wages.
- Policies that entail the provision of basic necessities to workforce, must be considered investments, rather than revenue expenses.
- There is a need for collaboration with employees for ownership and participation. The involvement of employees at every stage would result in a more successful and resilient business.



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR IT & ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY



PANELISTS

- George Paul, Chief Executive Officer - Manufacturers' Association of Information Technology (MAIT)
- Pranshu Singhal, Founder - Karo Sambhav
- Satish Sinha, Associate Director - Toxics Link
- Dr. Manish Pande, Director and Head, PAD Division at Quality Council of India
- Nancy Gillis, CEO, Green Electronics Council
- Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business
- Dr. Sandip Chatterjee, Director, Department of Electronics Materials & Component Development Division - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India
- Tabrez Ahmad, Group Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy Dell Technologies

This session sought to bring together key stakeholders in order to discuss the chief elements to for incorporating principles of sustainability and environmentally sound management of electronic goods, as envisaged in the National Policy on Electronics, 2019. It began with Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business setting the context for the session and introducing the co-hosts for the session, MAIT and the Ministry for Electronics and IT.

Nancy Gillis, CEO, Green Electronics Council introduced the organization and their work in advocating for sustainable technology. She discussed the value of a lifecycle perspective and using each decision to make impact on a large scale.

George Paul, CEO, MAIT, then provided an introduction about MAIT, its brands and partnerships as well as its role in the electronics industry. The EPR Framework and its success was also discussed. The circular economy, he added, needs to be not just restricted to cities but must reach even the towns and rural areas. There needs to a shift in society regarding waste and end of life products. This must be in tandem with legal guidelines which demarcate the roles of states and the role of the Centre.

Dr. Sandip Chatterjee, Director, Department of Electronics Materials & Component Development Division - Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, discussed the need to audit recycling plants, whether they are fully equipped to do so or not. Next, he spoke about the need to know what materials are moving, how much plastic is being sent and the resource efficiency for circular economy is information that is still missing. While refurbishment is in the informal sector, there needs to be a Right to Repair Act in India. This is because in the informal sector, it is impossible to know what standards are being followed for the refurbished products.

Pranshu Singhal, Founder of Karo Sambhav then discussed the importance of promoting a level playing field. This, he said, is critical for better industry performance in end of life management of electronics and IT. There's also a dearth of analysis of documents submitted. The demand for 'good recycling' is still limited because there is no brand or producer pressure. This will be remedied by creating a level playing field. Lastly, there need to be standards across the electronic waste value chain.

Dr. Manish Pande, Director and Head, PAD Division at Quality Council of India presented the work done by QCI. He reiterated the need for standardization in the electronic waste value chain.

■ TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR IT & ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

Dr. Sandip Chatterjee added here that recycling should be considered as the last resort. Repair and refurbishment are more important for material circularity and optimum resource use.

Dr Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link discussed the policy and regulatory framework. He said that the biggest issue is resource use, reuse and recycling of the resources. 'Finiteness of the resource is the key issue. When we talk about circularity, this is the key point.' So, he continued, policy should not only focus on end of life but on the entire life cycle.

Lastly, Tabrez Ahmad, Group Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy Dell Technologies contributed to the discussion. He stated that IoT is crucial for understanding the lifecycle of products as it allows for collecting data and analyzing it at each stage. This will allow for key interventions for minimal hardware and increased efficiency. It is also essential, he said that the industry must talk to their supply chain partners and also collaborate with others in the field. This will allow for communication, knowledge sharing and exchanging best practices.

Pranshu Singhal added here that there must be traceability and transparency regarding the materials to be recovered. Counterfeiting leads to increase in costs and prices in e-waste management. Market surveillance is required to stop counterfeiting, and promote transparency in the materials recycling segment.

The session concluded with a short Q&A session and a consensus that there must be greater communication between the stakeholders as well as transparency in the supply chain in order to fully allow for a circularity in this sector

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A lifecycle perspective should be used to inform each decision in order to make an impact on a large scale.
- The circular economy needs to be not just restricted to cities but must reach even the towns and rural areas. There needs to a shift in society regarding waste and end of life products.
- There is a need for a level playing field. This is critical for better industry performance in end-of-life management of electronics and IT.
- There is a need for standardization and transparency in the electronic waste value chain.



RESPONSIBLE RECRUITMENT: A POST COVID-19 AGENDA ACROSS SUPPLY CHAINS



MODERATOR Dr. Tina Kuriakose Jacob, Head, Central Government Partnerships - International Justice Mission (IJM)

PANELISTS

- Neil Giles, Chief Executive Officer, Traffik Analysis Hub
- Nadia Bunce, Manager, Social Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum
- Hannah Newcomb, Managing Director - Responsible Recruitment Toolkit (RRT)
- Surajit Dey, Registrar (Law), NHRC

This session and panel were introduced by Nandini Sharma of CRB. She then handed over the discussion to Dr. Tina Kuriakose Jacob, Head, Central Government Partnerships - International Justice Mission. Dr Tina talked about the value of incorporating the UN and Human Rights principles in organizations. She spoke about the National Voluntary Guidelines and their role in India as well as how they have evolved since their inception. Hence, there is a need, she said, to effectively implement UN guidelines in India and to ensure that businesses respect human rights. This is especially in the context of Covid, due to which a number of workers were deprived of wages and livelihoods.

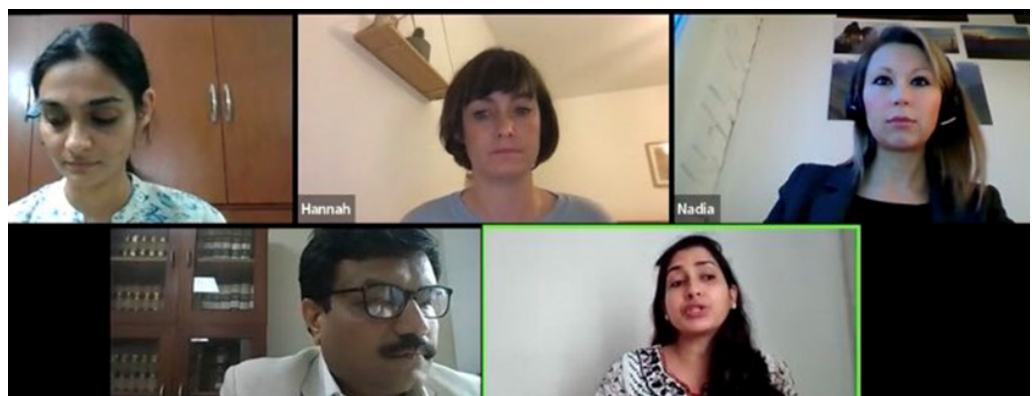
Surajit Dey, then addressed the panel and raised the issues of environmental hazards, workplace displacement and life with dignity. He stressed on the pivotal role of business and human rights in India. He stated that the pandemic has highlighted the need for building sustainable supply chains and providing sustainability certifications on a priority basis. These must take place in tandem with taking into account the concerns of vulnerable groups such as women and children to improve supply chain environmental and social performance.

Nadia Bunce, Manager, Social Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum then introduced the work done by her organization. She stated, 'responsible recruitment is respecting principles that no worker should pay for a job and the cost of recruitment should be borne by the employer.' This is more important in the context of Covid than ever before.

Similarly, Hannah Newcomb, Managing Director - Responsible Recruitment Toolkit, said, 'no business can be prepared for the crisis but those with responsible recruitment policies are better off in tackling crisis.' Hence, the session reiterated an emerging theme of the conference – companies that set up safety nets, protect their workers and focus on the larger picture rather than solely on profit, can truly be resilient even when faced by an anomaly like Covid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to effectively implement UN guidelines in India and to ensure that businesses respect human rights. This is especially in the context of Covid, due to which a number of workers were deprived of wages and livelihoods.
- The pandemic has highlighted the need for building sustainable supply chains and providing sustainability certifications on a priority basis.
- Companies that set up safety nets, protect their workers and focus on the larger picture rather than solely on profit, can truly be resilient even when faced by an anomaly like Covid.



SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL DIALOGUE INDIA



FIRESIDE CHAT

MODERATOR Kamal Prakash Seth,
Country Head - India

PANELISTS

- Vivek Voora, Sustainability Standards Advisor, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Girish Deshpande, Sustainability Director, Procter & Gamble

PANEL DISCUSSION

MODERATOR Dan Strechay, Global Outreach & Engagement Director, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)

PANELISTS

- Dheeraj Talreja, President, AAK India
- Reuben Blackie, Sustainable Agriculture Manager - PepsiCo, Asia
- Anita Neville, Senior Vice President of Group Corporate Communications, Golden Agri-Resources
- Ilse van Dijn, Attaché for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, India & Sri Lanka Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The session had an introduction by CRB's Bhavya Sharma. The fireside chat was moderated by Kamal Prakash Seth, Country Head – India who gave the context for the session. He then gave an introduction about RSPO and their partnership with CRB. There were 2 poll questions posed to the audience. The first was – which country or region is the largest importer of palm oil and 100% answered 'India'. The second question posed was – what percentage of our daily use products utilize palm oil or its derivatives? The correct answer, guessed by 100% of the audience was 50%. He proceeded to explain palm oil and its value.

Girish Deshpande, Sustainability Director, Procter & Gamble joined the discussion and made the crucial point that FMCGs must commit not only to profit but also to the planet and people. This means protecting the environment as well as human and labour rights. Consumer driven demand for not just products that work but are also have a clean supply chain have led P&G to set policies in place that make our products more sustainable.

Vivek Voora, Sustainability Standards Advisor, International Institute for Sustainable Development then added that palm oil produces more edible oil per hectare as compared to its other oil seeds counterparts while using lesser fertilizer input. This makes it a more sustainable option. However, there is room to make the palm oil plantations more sustainable and that links well with the work being done by RSPO and Rainforest Alliance.

The next part of the discussion which began with Dan Strechay, Global Outreach & Engagement Director (RSPO). He began by saying that despite the awareness about sustainability, certain key markets such as India and China are still not very receptive to sustainably sourced palm oil.

Anita Neville, Senior Vice President of Group Corporate Communications at GAR, added here that markets are not homogeneous and as an FMCG, Golden Agri Resources has to look at the pivot and work on the feasible solution accordingly. She further stated that the responsibility falls both on consumers to demand sustainable products and on producers to provide them. She added further that educating consumers is a key part of driving a change in demand for sustainably sourced products.

■ SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL DIALOGUE INDIA

Dheeraj Talreja, President, AAK India contributed by discussing market development in India and the price sensitive nature of the market.

Ilse van Dijn, Attaché for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, India & Sri Lanka Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands added here that as a part of the Amsterdam Declaration, the first part is to engage with all the relevant stakeholders. The drive for sustainability was found through consumers and producers first with policy catching up, rather than the other way around.

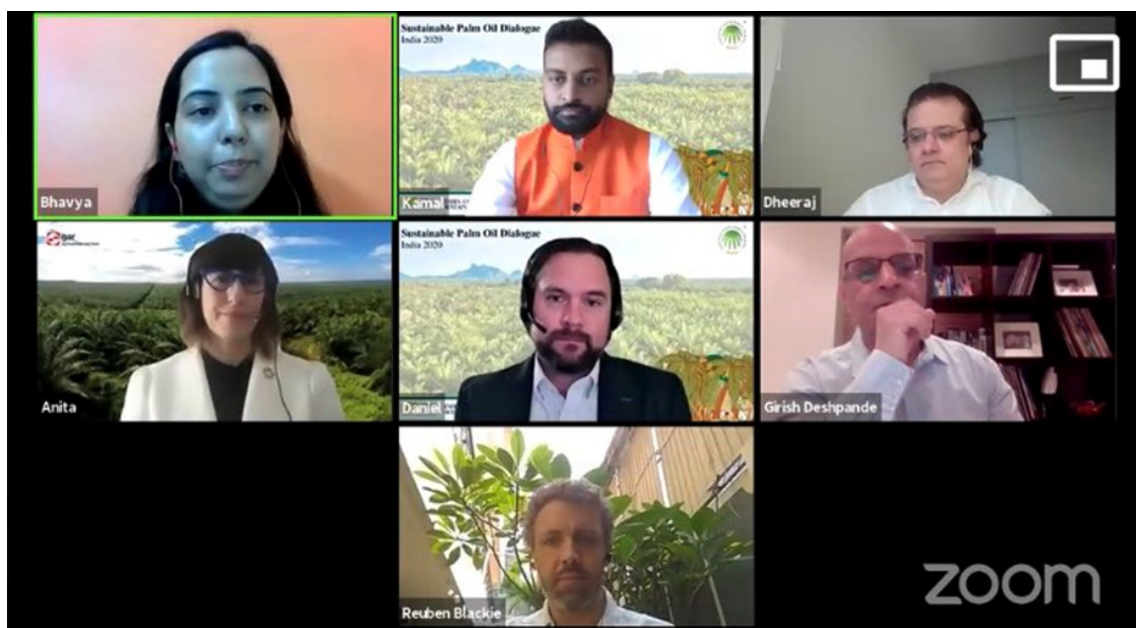
Lastly, Reuben Blackie, Sustainable Agriculture Manager - PepsiCo, Asia stated that the commitments on sustainability are integrated into PepsiCo's business. 'Once you start developing your supply chain relationships, then you are able to better understand supply chain challenges.'

The discussion concluded after a brief Q & A session. The key takeaway was summarized by Girish Deshpande who stated that sustainable supply chains result in resilience – this is resilience from environmental as well as economic shocks. Dan concluded the session by saying that education, awareness and being sustainable from the start are key points.

Kamal officially launched the Business Guide – How to Transition to Sustainable Palm Oil at the end of the session. He provided the context and the need for such a document and said that the 'why' should be clear for the organizations before delving into the 'how'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- FMCGs must commit not only to profit but also to the planet and people.
- Educating consumers is a key part of driving a change in demand for sustainably sourced products.
- The drive for sustainability is found through consumers and producers first with policy catching up, rather than the other way around.
- Sustainable supply chains result in resilience – this is resilience from environmental as well as economic shocks.



IS LIVING WAGE “RELEVANT” AND “URGENT” IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19?



ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
India

A movement
to end
discrimination



MODERATORS

Stuart Carr

Professor of Psychology, Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology Program
Massey University, New Zealand

Dr. Bimal Arora

Assistant Professor in Management, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability at Work and Organisational Department - Aston Business School (ABS), Aston University, U.K.

PANELISTS

- Ranu Bhogal, Director- Policy, Research & Campaigns, Oxfam India
- Arijit Raha, Secretary General & CEO, Indian Tea Association
- Prabhat Bezboruah, Chairman, Tea Board India
- Dr. Rahul Suresh Sapkal, Assistant Professor, Centre for Labour Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai
- Alistair Leadbetter, Supply Chain Development and Business Support Manager, Traidcraft
- Ranjana Das, Lead Specialist - Private Sector Engagement, Oxfam India

The session started with Ranjana Das, Lead Specialist - Private Sector Engagement, Oxfam India setting the context for the session and introducing the panel.

Stuart Carr, Professor of Psychology then addressed the panel and called Covid the ‘grand disruptor’ with the potential to cause harm but also be opportunities for change. He also emphasized that in this context it is vital to remember that SDG 8 is about decent work and economic growth, not one or the other. SDG 5 and SDG 10 are also important to place in this context especially in the tea sector that’s being discussed at the panel.

He was followed by Dr. Bimal Arora who raised a crucial point – if there are no jobs, then how can we have a discussion about living wages? With this, he handed over the discussion to Prabhat Bezboruah, Chairman, Tea Board India. He departed from the consensus during the discussion and went on to stress that there was no migrant labour employed in the tea gardens. He further added that the economic distress was not faced by the regular workers, but rather by the seasonal workers. He concluded by saying that sustainable wages can only be discussed once sustainable business is established.

Arijit Raha, Secretary General & CEO, Indian Tea Association joined in and continued from the points made by Prabhat. He added that living wage encompasses more than just money. It includes nutritious food, shelter, etc. Hence, living wage is means to an end and not an end in itself. We should keep the dialogue going on to understand the implications and challenges.

Ranu Bhogal, Director- Policy, Research & Campaigns, Oxfam India diverged from the discussion in her analysis of the issues. She said that Oxfam’s research has shown that there must be a distinction drawn between the permanent and the temporary workers in the tea gardens. The plucking during peak season is mostly done by temporary workers who have no access to job security or any real benefits. They rely solely on their wages. Additionally, she said that it must be borne in mind that

IS LIVING WAGE “RELEVANT” AND “URGENT” IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19?

these workers are also consumers. This means that there is a need to ensure that there is a constant demand from them. She concluded by saying that a fair wage for workers is the right of the workers.

Dr. Rahul Suresh Sapkal, Assistant Professor, Centre for Labour Studies added that living wage has been in the discussions for some time now and should not be up for debate. However, there is a lack of accountability in the private sector so as to monitor whether a living wage is paid to the workers. The discussion should also bear in mind that living wages consider the ideal family size (2+2) but there are divergences from this so a fixed wage cannot be the norm. It needs to consider the realities of those who depend on these wages. These are workers who have no say in the policy process and they are not part of labour unions. Hence, there is a need for accountability in the private sector.

Alistair Leadbetter, Supply Chain Development and Business Support Manager, Traidcraft was the last speaker in the session. He reiterated Stuart Carr’s opening comments about living wages being crucial in tackling poverty which is central to achieving the SDGs. Living wage is an ethical, human and economic issue. To consider it purely in monetary terms, he added, would not be helpful and would not consider all aspects of the issue.

The session allowed for a lively debate on the issue of living wages in the context of tea plantations in India. It brought together diverse views about the need and feasibility of living wages and proved that this is a crucial debate to have in the context of Covid.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Living wage encompasses more than just money. It includes nutritious food, shelter, etc.
- Living wage is means to an end and not an end in itself. It is important to keep the dialogue going on to understand the implications and challenges.
- Must ensure that there is a constant demand from workers, by recognizing that they are also consumers.
- There is an urgent need for accountability in the private sector to ensure that they pay their workers fair wages.



■ **RECOGNISING INVISIBLE WORKERS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS**



goodweave®

MODERATOR Lee Swepston, Global human rights expert and Chair, Independent Standards Committee, GoodWeave International

PANELISTS

- Jill Tucker, Head of Labour Rights Programme, Laudes Foundation
- Manoj Bhatt, Country Director, GoodWeave India
- Meenakshi Sarna, Creative Director and Co-Founder, Eastern Heritage
- Rani Bhati, Facilitator, Child Friendly Community Programme, GoodWeave India
- Vinti Singal, Program Manager- Apparel and Accessories, GoodWeave India

This session focused on taking the dialogue on informal, hidden supply chains forward. It began with Vinti Singal, Program Manager- Apparel and Accessories, GoodWeave India introducing herself and the session.

Lee Swepston, Global human rights expert and Chair, Independent Standards Committee, GoodWeave International was then introduced. He also moderated the discussion. He started by saying that while there is a recognition on fair labour rights in the garment industry, there are a number of issues that are unresolved especially in the informal sector. This brings with it additional challenges of traceability and reliable data on the extent of the child labour. With Covid, he added, there have been attempts by some Indian states to abolish their labour rights, which is a worrying sign. With this context, he introduced Manoj Bhatt, Country Director, GoodWeave India who took the discussion forward.

Manoj began by addressing the history of the textile and garment industry in India as having been a cottage industry. These workers remained unrecognized and hidden. This has not changed over the years and as a result 83% of the workforce outside of agriculture is in the informal sector. This has larger ramifications for social security for these workers. While they are vital for the garment industry, they remain poor, neglected and often are deprived of their basic rights. Child labour is one such example. These issues were exacerbated with Covid.

This was followed by Rani Bhati, Facilitator, Child Friendly Community Programme, GoodWeave India who shared her experiences in trying to get access to education and employment. She highlighted the struggles her village's workers have faced with Covid and the lockdown.

Meenakshi Sarna, Creative Director and Co-Founder, Eastern Heritage then joined the discussion and elaborated on the work done by her organization. She discussed the challenges of obtaining data about labour rights' violations and abuses. She stated that Eastern Heritage began surprise audits which allowed them to circumvent this challenge and get a true assessment of the issues. She added that collaborating with other organizations such as GoodWeave would allow for an opportunity to exchange knowledge and learn from their best practices. She concluded by saying that there is a need to promote the fact that adherence to human rights is good business.

Jill Tucker, Head of Labour Rights Programme from the Laudes Foundation began by introducing her work at the Foundation. She then explained how severely the garment sector suffered during Covid with brands regaining on their orders. The impact on the entire supply chain has had disastrous

RECOGNISING INVISIBLE WORKERS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

effects for human rights and livelihoods of those who depended on these jobs. She concluded by saying that workers' protections and wage assurances cost money which suppliers do not have due to the losses suffered by them during Covid. It becomes much easier then, she added, to shift into the informal, unmonitored and informal space.

Lee then discussed a new EU legislation that seeks to address slave labour and aims at incentivizing businesses to treat workers fairly and ensure that their rights are not abused.



Vinti then narrated a story about a young girl found employed as child labour during one of GoodWeave's surprise inspections. It highlighted some of the issues that had been discussed by the panel.

To conclude, Jill reiterated that Covid and economic distress have led to further imbalance the power relations between the buyer and the supplier. There is fear that companies will not be incentivized to uphold labour safeguards as profit considerations become the prime focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need to meaningfully address the challenges of traceability and reliable data on the extent of the child labour.
- There is a need to promote the fact that adherence to human rights is good business.
- Companies must be incentivized to uphold labour safeguards instead of making profit considerations the prime focus.

PROMOTING GREEN AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH TO BUILD BACK BETTER POST COVID



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Prem Das Rai, Former Member of Parliament - Sikkim, Lok Sabha

MODERATOR

Pankaj Pachauri, Journalist, Founder - GoNewsIndia

PANELISTS

- Dr. René VAN BERKEL, UNIDO Representative - UNIDO Regional Office in India, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- Kumar Anubhav, Founder, NotOnMap
- Deeksha Vats, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Group
- Shrashtant Patara, Chief Executive Officer, TARA and IMEDF Senior Vice President, Development Alternatives Group
- Dr. Jyotsna Goel, Senior Researcher - Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
- Sandeep Mukherjee, Vice President, RBL Bank

This session began with Laura Kelly, Director - International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) who set the tone for the discussion. She stated that Covid has provided an opportunity for governments and businesses to invest in green and blue jobs and climate resilient infrastructure as we recover. Further, she added, that businesses, governments and finance all have a key role to play in green and inclusive recovery.

Zeenat Niazi, Vice President, Development Alternatives picked up from the need for green and inclusive recovery. She said that there are many ways to recover – most of them monetary to stimulate consumption and create jobs. But this is a bridge, she said, towards building a resilient economy and to achieve the SDGs. She added that there is a need to encourage continued learning, manage connectivity, and develop tracking and feedback systems.

Mr. PD Rai, Former Member of Parliament and Sustainable Development Champion, Sikkim was the next speaker. He began by saying that Covid truly highlighted the extent to which humans are damaging the environment. Nature received a respite during lockdowns across the globe but there was a simultaneous decline in economic activity. He added that there is a need to move beyond resource intensive towards service; focus on inequity of consumption and support green MSMEs. 'Building back better has to start from the ground-up.'

Mr Pankaj Pachauri then introduced the panel and moderated the session. He laid out the context and reiterated the need to reset the economy, society and planet.

Kumar Anubhav, Founder, NotOnMap gave an introduction about his work. He then added to the discussion by stating that there is a need to provide valuation of natural resources as well as of the assets that exist in such areas. Community level development can help build sustainable and resilient jobs. He concluded by saying that there needs to be sustainable eco-tourism.

Shrashtant Patara also discussed the disconnect between the principles that run a business and those that govern life in local communities. He explained how TARA seeks to address this disconnect while being deeply embedded in communities. Organizations seeking to build resilience in such communities must also question how relevant they are to those communities. He concluded by saying, 'the narrative has shifted from growth to resilience.'

Deeksha Vats, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Group elaborated that being a sustainable business must entail being responsible towards the environment, people and communities.

PROMOTING GREEN AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH TO BUILD BACK BETTER POST COVID

Mr. Rene Van Berkel, UNIDO Representative, Regional Office, added that there are three areas of government support – the first is conditional and linked with performance; government can create demand for inclusive and green development which address the future of Indians such as healthcare, waste management, public transportation; third component is to take regional opportunities and leverage the net migration of skills in regional areas.

Dr. Jyotsna Goel, Senior Researcher at CBGA found that their research showed a lack of government funding for climate change action. At this stage where the government has limited funds, this is the area that appears to be suffering. However, it should be viewed as a revenue generating area rather than one that is draining funds.

Sandeep Mukherjee, Vice President, RBL Bank concluded by saying that in India, what didn't work is not factoring in an uncertainty like the pandemic while what worked is digital payments. This is an area that requires more investment so as to allow for greater penetration.

The key takeaways from the session then were that first, the command-and-control model of governance has not worked and change is needed. Second, solutions must be found locally. Third, cutting budgets of social policies and green policies will prove to be counterproductive in the long run.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is an opportunity for governments and businesses to invest in green and blue jobs and climate resilient infrastructure as we recover. Businesses, governments and finance all have a key role to play in green and inclusive recovery.
- There is a need to encourage continued learning, manage connectivity, and develop tracking and feedback systems.
- There is a need to move beyond resource intensive towards service; focus on inequity of consumption and support green MSMEs.
- Community level development can help build sustainable and resilient jobs.
- Organizations seeking to build resilience in communities must also question how relevant they are to those communities.



■ SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION TO EMPOWER CONSUMERS



MODERATOR Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International

PANELISTS

- Beatriz Martins Carneiro, Programme Management Officer Ecolabelling & Consumer Information
- Hem Kumar Pande, Former Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
- Abhishek Mazumdar, Co-Founder & CEO - The Logical Indian
- Dr. Hitesh Bhatt, Director – Marketing and Communications, Editorial Director – STOrai – Retail Magazine By The Industry For The Industry, Retailers Association of India
- Amar Deep Singh, Senior Programme Officer, CUTS international

The session began with an introduction from the moderator, Naomi Scott-Mearns, Sustainable Consumption Manager, Consumers International. She set the context for the session and the partnership with the One Planet Network.

Beatriz Martins Carneiro from One Planet Network began by saying that preserving the economic value of consumer products is crucial for ensuring longer product lives. Targeted information for consumers can help them take the right decisions. She added that there is also a need for regulations and transparency from businesses to consumers. She concluded by elaborating on the role of NGOs and civil society in acting as watchdogs and to keep a check on greenwashing.

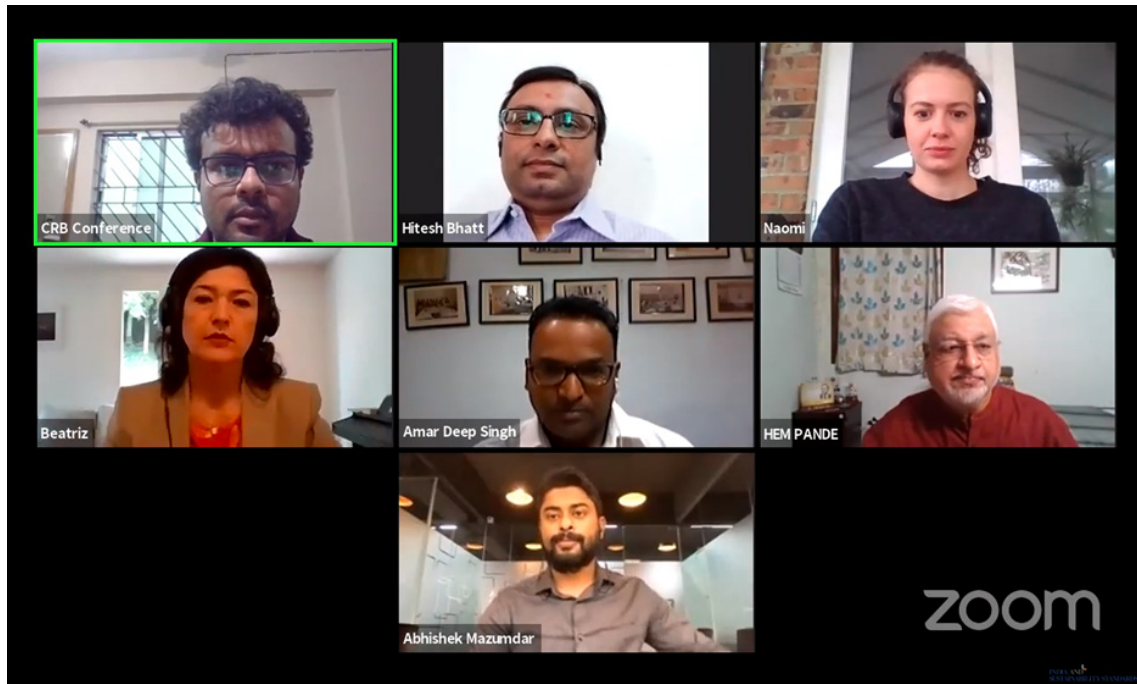
Amar Deep Singh from CUTS added here that there have been consumer awareness campaigns on the reduction and management of e-waste and plastic waste. He elaborated on the work done by CUTS International in Jaipur and its various awareness campaigns in partnership with other organizations across India.

Mr Hem Kumar Pande, Former Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution shared his experiences as a part of the government and the Jaago Grahak campaign. He discussed the role of this campaign in empowering consumers across the country and the need for businesses to engage more meaningfully with their consumer base. 'If businesses need to sustain in the long run, then they need to consider stakeholders such as consumers in their decision making, not just shareholders.' He concluded by stating that we need to think about sustaining the sustainable practices.

Abhishek Mazumdar from The Logical Indian began by introducing his organization and its work. He added that any sustained change in consumer behaviour will require effort. Hence, there needs to be consistent action and campaigning in raising awareness. He stressed on the value of information and the power it has to shape a better society. Change does not need to occur only at the policy level. It takes time to shift business and consumer behaviour and that is what will result in lasting change.

Dr. Hitesh Bhatt was the last speaker in the session and began by talking about the importance of making consumers realize how they would gain by supporting a particular brand. There is a need to show them how sustainability fits with the overall ideology of the organization or brand.

SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION TO EMPOWER CONSUMERS



Hence, the session focused on communicating with consumers, providing them with the information and tools to make informed decisions and select brands and businesses whose mission resonates with them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If businesses need to sustain in the long run, then they need to consider stakeholders such as consumers in their decision making, not just shareholders.
- There needs to be consistent action and campaigning in raising awareness.
- Communicating with consumers, providing them with the information and tools to make informed decisions and select brands and businesses whose mission resonates with them must be paramount.

VSS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SDGS IN INDIA



VSS COLLABORATION INDIA

OPENING REMARKS Sanyukta Samaddar, NITI Aayog

नीति आयोग
National Institution for Transforming India

GLOBAL EXPERIENCES & LESSONS FOR INDIA

- Cristina Larrea, Lead, Sustainability Standards, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
- Joseph Wozniak, Head, Trade for Sustainable Development - ITC

PANELISTS

- Amresh Deshpande, India Country Manager, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) International
- Sumit Gupta, Head of Quality Assurance & Implementation, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)
- Vijay Jain, India Program Manager - Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI)
- Vidya Rangan, Senior Manager, Impacts and Evidence - ISEAL Alliance
- Ritu Baruah, India Program Manager - Bonsucro
- Sanjib Bezbaroa, Executive Vice President Corp Env Health Safety and Sustainability - ITC
- Deepak Arora, Vice President – Public Affairs, Nayara Energy Limited

This session was held in collaboration with NITI Aayog on the role of VSS in achieving SDGs in India. Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business set the context for the session. He stated that voluntary standards have become crucial in promoting responsible business. These are now picking up in India as well. This provides an opportunity to scale up voluntary sustainable standards in India. He also discussed CRB's role in engaging with other stakeholders to allow for peer learning and collaboration with organizations adopting such standards. He further states that the VSS Collaboration India Initiative will be launched during this session. He concluded by saying that through CRB's experience, 4 key issues have emerged regarding VSS – aligning with policy, strengthening knowledge, building capacity and outreach and communication.

He was followed by Sanyukta Samaddar, IAS, Adviser (SDGs) at NITI Aayog. She began by saying that SDGs provide the framework to build back better and faster. She then introduced the work done by NITI Aayog in the context of SDGs. She added that India has succeeded in localizing the SDGs at the sub national and regional levels. She further stated that NITI Aayog has not only developed a national framework for SDGs implementation in India, but as one of the few countries globally integrated the SDG targets with the vision and objectives of the states and UTs in India.

Her contribution to the panel was followed by Cristina Larrea, Lead, Sustainability Standards, International Institute for Sustainable Development. She introduced the work done by IISD and in particular IISD's Sustainability Standards Program. She added that VSSs must be made a universal tool. However, she said that demand for certified products does not grow at the same pace as supply. Hence, 'there is a need to incentivize sustainable consumption in developing economies.' There is a need for collaboration between the various stakeholders – governments, civil society actors, etc. She concluded, 'some of the direct measures that could be taken include schemes for small scale farmers, support to cover certifications, promote landscape certifications, monetary help.'

Joseph Wozniak, Head, Trade for Sustainable Development – ITC joined here to discuss what steps may be taken for wider use of VSS in the context of Covid. He introduced the work that ITC is doing regarding VSS as well as their publication linking VSS with SDGs. He added that while there is a lack of quantitative data, ITC's experience shows that there is a need for knowledge and capacity building on certifications. Standards have the potential to become a tool in achieving sustainability. He then elaborated on ITC's publication, Linking VSS with SDGs which highlights the extent to which sustainability practices promoted by VSS align with SDGs. The greatest linkages between VSS and SDGs are found with SDG 2, SDG 8 and SDG 12.

Rijit then launched the VSS Collaboration India Initiative. He discussed the work that had been done by CRB with 20 –25 organizations in this regard. The panel was then concluded by Sanyukta who suggested that the next step could perhaps be identifying the key sectors for intervention in partnership with NITI Aayog.

VSS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SDGS IN INDIA

The next panel was introduced by Vidya Rangan, Senior Manager, Impacts and Evidence - ISEAL Alliance. She set the context for the discussion and gave an introduction about ISEAL's work.

She then handed over the discussion to Sumit Gupta, Head of Quality Assurance & Implementation, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). Sumit gave an introduction about GOTS and their work both in Germany as well as in Bangladesh and India. He also elaborated on GOTS's work in India in the context of India's organic cotton production.

Sanjib Bezbaroa, Executive Vice President Corp Env Health Safety and Sustainability – ITC discussed the trends in business thinking about sustainability. He introduced ITC's work and its outlook on VSS. He added that 'transformation that should be recognized keeping in account the conversation between businesses, civil societies.' He also discussed the work done by the Alliance for Water Stewardship Today. He added that while earlier sustainability was dictated by GRI and reporting standards, today sustainability is essentially about risk management.

Vijay Jain, India Program Manager - Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI) shared his experience of working in the Indian context given that RMI is still in its nascent stages in the country. He discussed that one of the key areas of focus is to eliminate child labour from the mica supply chain in India. The core of VSS, he added, is how to protect the workers, the environment and the community. He added that while businesses understand the need to protect their workers, they do not yet fully understand the need to incorporate VSS in order to do so. Hence, he concluded, 'for better acceptance and implementation, we should let sustainability standards be more people driven rather than market driven.'

Deepak Arora, Vice President – Public Affairs, Nayara Energy Limited was the last speaker of the panel. He discussed the energy sector and how it is a cross cutting sector. He concluded by stating that while implementing VSS within a collaboration, it is vital to remember that the different parts move and align and a varied pace. Hence, there is a need to use common language in the value chain and to communicate effectively. The session concluded with a brief Q&A session that highlighted the need for context specific enabling conditions for sustainability impacts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Since the demand for certified products does not grow at the same pace as supply, there is a need to incentivize sustainable consumption in developing economies.
- For better acceptance and implementation, sustainability standards should be more people driven rather than market driven.
- There is a need to use common language in the value chain and to communicate effectively while implementing VSS within a collaboration.



THIRD DAY
OCTOBER 30, 2020



- **SANJAY SINGH** - *Group Head - Paper & Packaging, ITC Limited*
- **DR. ROHINI CHATURVEDI** - *Independent Consultant, Forest Landscape Restoration*
- **RAKESH CHATURVEDI** - *Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chhattisgarh*
- **VIJAY PRATAP SINGH ADITYA** - *CEO, Ekgaon*
- **DR. SAVITA** - *Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Himachal Pradesh*
- **ASHWINI CHHATRE** - *Executive Director - Bharti Institute of Public Policy (Moderator)*

The session aimed to facilitate a dialogue on the following aspects of forest-based economy:

- Understanding the value chains in forest-based economy and the issues and challenges
- Policies influencing a sustainable forest-based economy
- Different partnership models between communities and businesses, opportunities and challenges for businesses
- Sustainability standards to formalize potential linkages for forest-based products

The session anticipates constituting a working group on developing a strategy and an action plan for identifying, fostering and promoting a responsible forest economy.

Dr. Rohini Chaturvedi, Independent Consultant, Forest Landscape Restoration kicked off the discussion on the forest-based economy. “The idea of a forest economy or a tree-based economy is not new. What is new though, are the multiple agendas jostling for space on the same resource, whether it is from the climate change, industrial value chain or infrastructure development”. She spoke about the importance of treating communities as equal stakeholders who must have a seat at the table. Traditionally between public and private sector the actual communities were not regarded as equal stakeholders. “The state or businesses cannot create a blueprint for how communities should be involved. It should be a negotiation”

Ashwini Chhatre, Executive Director - Bharti Institute of Public Policy, carried the point further by stating that “To treat community stakeholders as equals in terms of a forest-based economy requires us to treat them as economic actors”.

Dr. Savita, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Himachal Pradesh, continued the discussion by sharing her experience of SDG based policy implementations in Himachal Pradesh, under which they were committed to increasing the forest cover from 27% to 30% by 2030. “Communities should not be thought of beneficiaries. The rural households depend on forests for Fofd, Fuel, Small timber and fodder. They know more about the species than we do. We should think of them as partners and potential managers who can help manage the forest resources”. She then spoke about lack of market linkages and lack of sustainable harvesting protocols when it came to forest resources and medicinal plant species available in her state.



Rakesh Chaturvedi, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Chhattisgarh, then presented the scenario of policy programs and initiatives being undertaken in his state. He spoke about the non-timber-based resources being harvested and market

linkages being created for the same. “Creating market linkages has been a challenge. We are trying to attract business by providing subsidized land, guaranteed inputs etc to set up value chains within the state”

Sanjay Singh, Group Head - Paper & Packaging, ITC Limited, spoke about his experience as a large corporate player in the forest economy. “We learned that anything you do in CSR if it is linked to your core business then the CSR will be sustainable and run for perpetuity”. He gave various examples of the same, which he experienced over 40 years of working as part of a large conglomerate.

Vijay Pratap Singh Aditya, CEO, Ekgaon, shared his views on sustainable business practices that help farmers. “Most civil society initiatives surrounding livelihoods fail because they lack a core principle. Rural and farm-based enterprises end up in exhibitions and melas because they lack a core principle”. Ekgaon works with farmers and is a farm-to-fork value chain, he said.

Ashwini Chhatre, then concluded the panel by summarizing the points mentioned and highlighting the way forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A better understanding of forest economy value chains is needed in order to address its issues and challenges
- There should be a true partnership between government, business and communities with communities recognized as true stakeholders and as potential managers of forest-based economies and supply chains
- There is a need to build sustainability standards for forest-based products
- Setting up of a working group to develop a plan for identifying, fostering and promoting a responsible forest economy

◆ 30th October | Parallel Sessions

PARTNERSHIP FOR NUTRITION



MODERATOR Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business

PANELISTS

- Kirti Mishra, Cofounder and Director, Ecociate Consultants
- Pranjit Talukdar, Associate Director - Resource Mobilization and Communication, Heifer International
- Amit Kumar Singh, Country Representative- India, Tanager
- Dr. Shariqua Yunus, Head of Unit & Programme Officer (Health and Nutrition), United Nations World Food Programme
- Meetu Kapur, Executive Director- Food and Agriculture Center of Excellence - Confederation of Indian Industry
- Dr. Manju Yadav, Assistant Director, - Nutrition ICDS, Rajasthan

Nutrition is essential for human development; it is also central to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 development agenda.

This session on nutrition aimed to highlight the existing engagement models/mechanisms on achieving SDG 2 existing across landscapes and their significance and provided a platform for public and private players to discuss the opportunities and challenges and design the next steps in a post COVID world.

As an introduction Nandini Sharma opened the discussion by highlighting the fact that nutrition has been one of the highest priorities in India particularly now in the Covid & post Covid era. She then explained the scope of the discussion which would cover various aspects of nutrition security, the journey till date, the evolving policy landscape and what lies ahead. Furthermore, she added, the importance of the role of private players in helping achieve public policy goals related to nutrition security needs to be discussed.

The introduction was followed by Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business who outlined the structure of the discussion to follow.

Starting with Dr. Manju Yadav, working for the State of Rajasthan, who went on to share her experience in implementing nutrition security policy. She spoke about areas of focus. "We are working on three major areas namely Institutional Service for providing supplementary nutrition and beneficiary sensitization that is how nutrition can be supplemented at home by the beneficiaries themselves, second growing of nutrigardens and third identifying S.A.M children".

She also mentioned how her department is working on ways to provide more fortified supplements post Covid with the assistance of World Food Program. They are also focusing on developing nutrigardens at the Anganwaadi Level and Beneficiary household level. "To ensure that the work continues during the pandemic letters were issued for the Anganwaadis to stay open, not for the beneficiaries but for the employees". Even the Medical Teams and Women SHG (self-help groups) are also involved in this initiative.

Additionally, her department is working on identifying S.A.M children i.e. those children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Also, guidelines were issued at all levels including how medical interventions and referrals are to be conducted once the children are identified.

■ PARTNERSHIP FOR NUTRITION

problems in monitoring. She mentioned how her department is working on strengthening the IT infrastructure and software systems to improve reporting and monitoring. She said “All of this is not to win prizes. Our goal is that no beneficiary should be left behind”

Dr. Shiriqua Yunus then spoke about the malnutrition challenge that the country faces. “Although India has made steady progress, we still face a lot of challenges”, she said. She highlighted the different indicators of malnutrition and how the country fares on those. Stunting, the first indicator, which means lower height than ideal for a given age, 38.4% of children under the age of 5 years are stunted. This compared to under 10% for other BRICS countries like China and Brazil. The second indicator, wasting, is prevalent in 21% of children under 5 years. This indicator, while others have reduced has actually increased. Third indicator, underweight, is at 35.5%. Anemia, the fourth indicator, is at 50%. “Malnutrition is a spectrum from under nutrition on one side to overweight and obesity on the other extreme. In India both extremes are on the rise, despite all the programs, policies and safety nets malnutrition is high. We call it C-Square IQ i.e. lack of continuity, lack of consistency, lack of intensity and lack of quality in implementation”.

Meetu Kapur Executive Director- Food and Agriculture Center of Excellence – CII then spoke on private sector engagement in nutrition security. She highlighted examples of public private partnerships that were driven by CII. Firstly, fortification i.e. reaching out to member companies to provide at least one product that is nutritionally fortified. Second, creating a platform for food and non-food companies to discuss and ideate on nutrition and health. Third, nudging companies to look at health and wellness at the workplace for employees. “Our aim is to create an enabling environment through the companies act and the CSR rules to better incentivize private players to participate in nutrition security”

Pankaj Mahajan then spoke about the issues around nutrition and how in order to address the same we have to look at it holistically. “By holistically I mean that in order to address nutrition security we have to look at issues around income, education and health & sanitation. We can provide nutritious food but if challenges of income, education and health and sanitation are not addressed nutrition security is not going to improve”, he said. He also mentioned that we need to look at our agricultural policies as till date they are focused on growing and feeding calories. He then spoke about the role of private sector is important in achieving the SDGs particularly in sharing knowledge, technology, resources but most importantly in project management skills.

Amit Kumar Singh, Country Representative- India, Tanager then spoke about the challenges and importance of partnerships to create an ecosystem for achieving nutrition security. “A lot of studies show that most initiatives focus on the supply side even now. Provide the nutrition but still the challenge of last mile connectivity is not being properly addressed.

Kirti Mishra, Cofounder and Director, Ecociate Consultants spoke on awareness and accessibility of nutriproducts. “There are two challenges when it comes to nutriproducts, awareness which can be addressed by behavior change communication and the second is accessibility where the challenge is building a business case”

Pranjit Talukdar, Associate Director - Resource Mobilization and Communication, Heifer International spoke on the challenges on bringing together the triad of farmers income, nutritious diet and the market i.e. affordability, awareness and availability. “Through partnerships we can

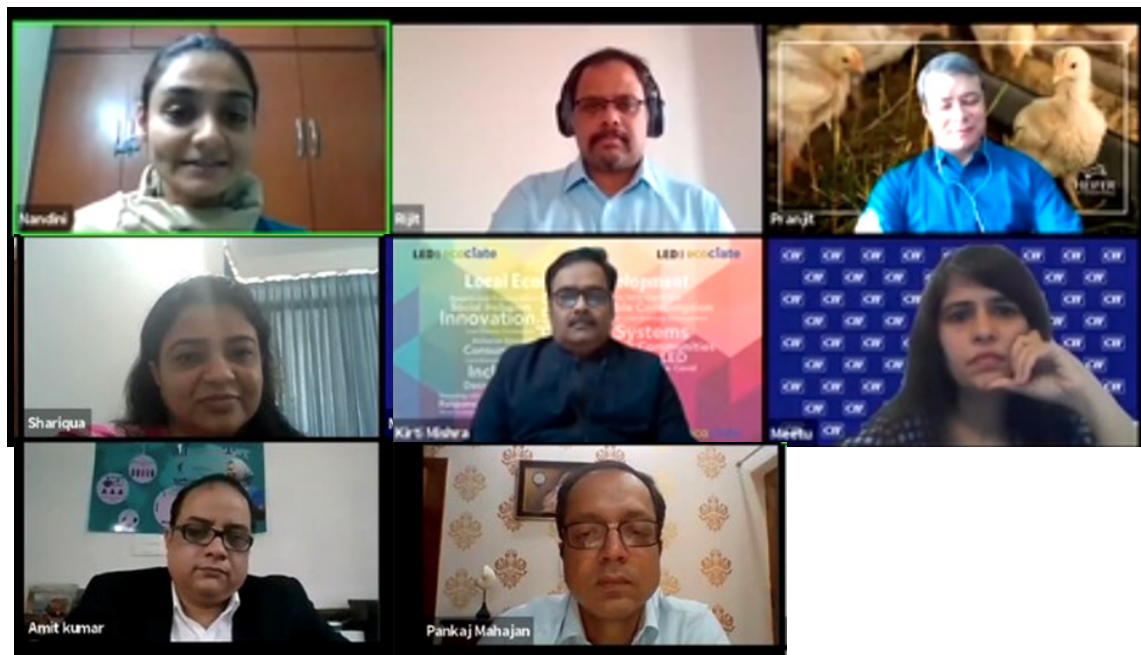
■ PARTNERSHIP FOR NUTRITION

create programs that can improve the living wage of rural households so they can earn enough to be able to afford nutritious food”. He then spoke about the partnership program that his company undertook with Cargill that aims to improve the livelihood of 100 million individuals by 2030 through poultry production.

Rijit Sengupta then summarized the discussion, covering all the salient aspects and highlighted the key learnings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The aim for all policies must be that no beneficiary should be left behind especially during periods of uncertainty.
- There must be a holistic approach towards nutrition. If challenges of income, education and health and sanitation are not addressed nutrition security is not going to improve.
- Through partnerships, programs that can improve the living wage of rural households can be created so they can earn enough to be able to afford nutritious food.



CIRCULAR DESIGN IN APPAREL: ENABLING CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE



PREM JAIN MEMORIAL TRUST

Laudes ———
— Foundation

PANELISTS

MODERATOR Dr. Bhim Adhikari, Senior Environmental Economist - Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

- Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Vice Chancellor - World University of Design
- Payal Jain, Founder Trustee - Prem Jain Memorial Trust
- Jason Kibbey, Chief Executive Officer - Higg Co.
- Ritu Kumar, Fashion Designer
- Anita Chester, Head of Sustainable Raw Materials, Laudes Foundation
- Shailaja Rangarajan, Founder & Director at Rimagined
- Ajit Pattnaik, General Manager & Head-Tailoring, Lifestyle Business at Raymond Limited
- Venkat Kotamaraju, Director, Circular Apparel Innovation Factory

Circular economy can help us revolutionize our production and consumption systems, on which the world economy depends. Given that uncertainty and risks have increased manifolds owing to climate change, fear of pandemics, as well as geopolitics, a transition to a circular economy is more urgent than ever. To enable such transition at a systemic level, design is the most crucial element.

The session discussed how design can enable circular transition in products and processes and boost social inclusion. It further aims to explore how policy can play a role in decision-making.

Devyani Hari, Director, Centre for Responsible Business started the panel by explaining what circular design means. Today the apparel industry has a linear process whereby we get fibre, we use it and then we throw it. This is problematic. "The apparel industry is the second most polluting industry in the world. From pesticides to water pollution, from chemicals for processing to microplastics for packaging and the garbage generated when apparel is disposed is simply astounding. This method of consumption and production needs to end". Circularity tries to introduce sustainability into the process. At the design level by designing out waste and pollution, at the production level by working with natural systems and trying to regenerate them and at the consumption level by prolonging use as much as possible. "There are 7Rs that can help us think about circular design Re-Think, Reduce, Re-use, Repair, Refurbish, Recover and Recycle", she said. Circularity is inclusive, concerns itself with not just recycling but starts at the design level and is not just focussed on how and what we produce but also on how we consume.

Anita Chester, Head of Sustainable Raw Materials, Laudes Foundation took up the discussion by highlighting the initiatives of her foundation "This pandemic has shown the fragility of our interconnected world and is a wakeup call for our complacent society". She further added that the innovations in materials sciences for apparel are focussed on use of waste to produce new materials through chemical and mechanical recycling, natural fibre welding, recycling liquid waste from food to generate microbial cellulose to generate new fibres. "There is a tremendous opportunity in Asia and India for applying their technologies by not just looking at production but at whole supply chains", she said.

■ **CIRCULAR DESIGN IN APPAREL: ENABLING CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE**

Ritu Kumar, Fashion Designer, then spoke about the Indian fashion industry and the changes she has seen in terms of sustainability and inclusivity practices. “We have never had a problem in talking about sustainability in India. Being in a post-colonial regime that forbade any kind of imports we had to find domestic alternatives. This has led to the employment of over 16 million people but more importantly kept India’s native craft and textile sectors alive whereas they have been relegated to museums around the world”. She further emphasized Indian cultural ethos and how waste is an anathema as it relates to apparel and how we have a culture of hand-me-downs. She further added that this has changed in the last decades as we have started following European mores.

Payal Jain, Founder Trustee - Prem Jain Memorial Trust, echoed her thoughts and talked about the work her trust is doing “We need to go back to our traditional roots. We have a large captive skilled labour pool steeped in our traditional weaving arts and we should look to leverage that as much as possible”. She further added that there is gradually growing appreciation for Indian craft work particularly textile weaving and we should look to capitalize on that. She also said that the concept of circularity and less wastage which was earlier a part of our culture should be enforced further.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Vice Chancellor - World University of Design, chimed in with his thoughts about how his institution is trying to introduce circularity in his curriculum. “80% of the environmental impact of a garment gets decided on a designer’s table so designers have a very important role to play in achieving circularity”. He further stated that they have been trying to focus not just on design but functionality as well as he felt that circularity can be achieved if a garment can have multiple uses.

Jason Kibbey, Chief Executive Officer - Higg Co., then spoke about his views on circularity. “A decade ago, very few companies had sustainability programs at scale and it was more focussed on environmental health and safety. That has changed dramatically over that last few years. Now most major apparel players have large sustainability teams and resources focussed on achieving circularity”. He then went on to point out that although the commitment is there the journey is still in its early part as companies are still trying to figure out how to achieve sustainability and circularity at scale. He further added that till now it has been on reducing the carbon footprint and recycling.

Venkat Kotamaraju, Director, Circular Apparel Innovation Factory, then talked about what his organization is trying to achieve. “We have been trying to create an ecosystem of support in order to promote circularity and sustainability”. He then talked about the risks faced in the industry and how they are trying to support the mitigation of these risks.

Shailaja Rangarajan, Founder & Director at Rimagined, then added her perspective and talked about what her company is attempting to accomplish. “We are trying apply the concepts, principles and tools to help build a circular economy and not just in apparel. The problem lies in the over consumption model and the GDP driven model that looks to dump products at an ever-increasing pace” she said. She then talked about how they are repurposing waste fabric into new products.

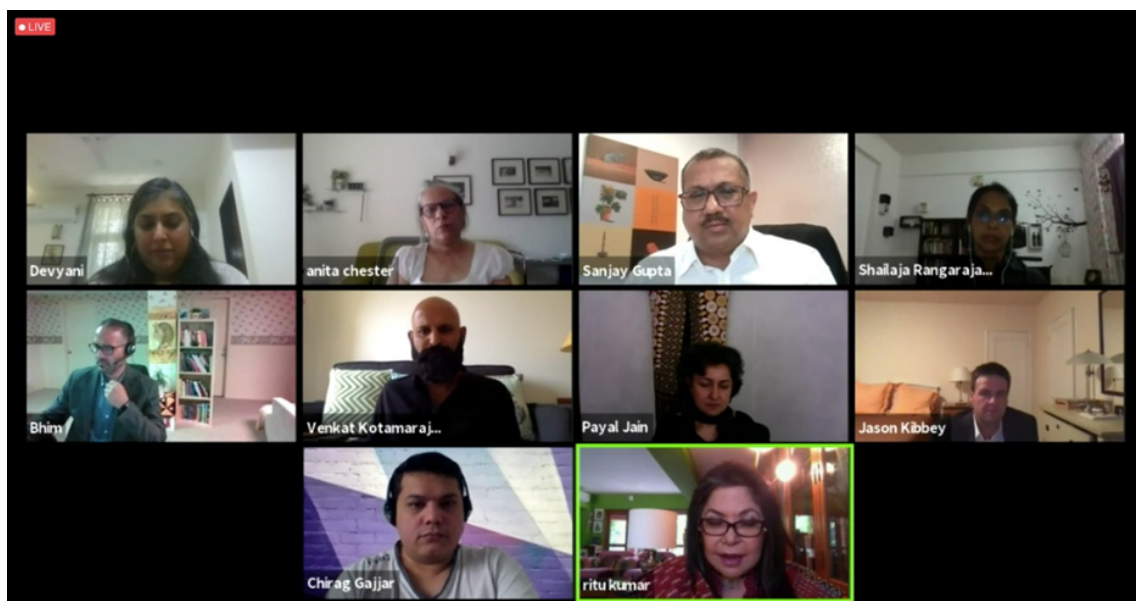
■ CIRCULAR DESIGN IN APPAREL: ENABLING CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Chirag Gajjar, the spoke about consumer behaviour and what role they have to play “The linear model does not work we need to change that particular at the consumer end. Consumer behaviour needs to shift back to reuse and recycle”.

The panel then concluded by all speakers chiming in with their concluding points.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The apparel industry is the second most polluting industry in the world and its model of production-consumption-waste needs to end
- A circular economy which reduces waste, promotes reuse at the consumption level and sustainable practices at the production level is needed
- Social inclusion at the consumer level was highlighted to be the most important as conscious consumer can affect real change in companies by choosing what to buy



PUBLIC CONSULTATION: YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABILITY (YFS) INDIA ALLIANCE



SPEAKERS

- Kamal Prakash Seth, Country Head - India
- Bhavya Sharma, Programme Officer, Centre for Responsible Business
- Wioleta Burdzy Seth, Co-founder, Human Circle Foundation
- Gauri Sharma
- Pauline Laravoire, Sustainability Director, Techno India Group | Founder, Y-East | Curator, Offbeat CCU | Director, Technopreneurs' Surrogate Ventures
- Aashish Beergi, Co-founder & CEO - MASH Project Foundation
- Punyasloka Panda, Founder, Blueyard Education
- Nishu Kaul, Director, (Earth Day) South and S East Asia
- Sheetal Antil, Program Manager - Climate Reality India
- Ashim Bery

Youth can be the catalyst for increasing the demand for sustainable growth for communities, environment and harmony in the society. Several youths focused organisations and communities have exemplified that with the right guidance, the tremendous energy of the youth in India can be utilised for driving the sustainable development goals. The youth is ready to take up the 'shared responsibility' and engage constructively with the key stakeholders involved, namely, businesses, governments, consumers and the civil society in general.

Kamal Prakash Seth, Country Head – India, started the discussion by highlighting the initiatives undertaken by youth for sustainability. The vision of this alliance was to empower youth to take action that promotes sustainability and helps in achieving the SDGs “Young people under the age of 35 make up more than half of the population of India. They can vote for change by casting their vote for another party and they can vote for sustainability by voting with their wallets and only buying products that meet sustainability standards”

Pauline Laravoire, Sustainability Director, Techno India Group | Founder, Y-East | Curator, Offbeat CCU | Director, Technopreneurs' Surrogate Ventures took up the discussion by describing how her organization fits into the vision of mobilizing the youth. Their goal is to empower youth at the national level. “Our job is to act as an enabling platform to get all stakeholders together to discuss and promote youth empowerment and mobilization”

Punyasloka Panda, Founder, Blueyard Education, then spoke about what his company does which is practical learning “We are interested in action and actionable progress. Practical learning plays a crucial rule in answering the Question “how?”” We focus on teaching climate action and teaching through the Socratic method so what is learnt can be applied. That is how we craft our educational curriculum.

Bhavya Sharma, Programme Officer, Centre for Responsible Business then talked about sustainability “We work on integrating sustainability into business practices as we believe it is not only possible but also the need of the hour”. She further highlighted the 5 thematic areas that her organization works on namely Business & Human rights, SMEs, SDGs in private sector, circular economy and voluntary sustainability standards.

■ PUBLIC CONSULTATION: YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABILITY (YFS) INDIA ALLIANCE

Sheetal Antil, Program Manager - Climate Reality India, talked about her organization which was founded by AL Gore with a view to catalyze global solutions to the climate crisis. “Our goal is to bring about a positive change in the attitudes and behaviors of younger generation so that they can help address the challenges of climate change”

Nishu Kaul, Director, (Earth Day) South and S East Asia, then took up the discussion by talking about the Earth Day network. “Our goal is to create youth ambassadors who can take up the fight against climate change and mobilize support for earth day events and activities to create awareness”

Aashish Beergi, Co-founder & CEO - MASH Project Foundation, talked about his foundation that seeks to create awareness about climate action and bring together various stakeholders and aid eco entrepreneurs by providing them support, resources and media coverage.

Gauri Sharma, furthered the discussion by talking about her organization SUSS, which looks at sustainability and the fashion industry. “We looked at the supply chain and the impact of the industry and we wanted to connect with like-minded people and organizations working on the same issue. That is how SUSS was born as a facebook page, a space to meet and connect with people and to engage in dialogue with them”

Ashim Bery, SWECHHA, then talked about their work relating to the river Yamuna. “Our aim is to empower youth to enable them to take responsibility for the environment by educating them on the various means on conserving water and by teaching them sustainable water usage practices”

Wioleta Burdzy Seth, Co-founder, Human Circle Foundation concluded the discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Youth dividend in India needs to be harnessed for promoting sustainability the can make change by either voting or by voting with their wallets. They need to be educated in the role they can play in promoting sustainability
- Awareness and call to action for the youth needs to be built so they can be active ambassadors for promoting sustainability



◆ 30th October | Parallel Sessions

WOMEN, WORK AND PEACE



MODERATOR Reema Nanavaty, Director, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

PANELISTS

- Dr. Ravi Kanbur, Professor of World Affairs, International Professor of Applied Economics and Management, and Professor of Economics - Cornell University
- Ela Bhatt, Founder - Self-Employed Women's Association of India
- Margie Sastry, Author
- Isabel Guerrero Pulgar, Founder, IMAGO Global Grassroots
- Prof. Indira Hirway, Director and Professor, Centre for Development Alternatives (CFDA)
- Jyoti Macwan, General Secretary, SEWA
- Kapilaben Vankar, President, SEWA

SEWA's experience working on Shri Ela Bhatt's concept of "Building an Economy of Nurturance" has shown that, women are the key to building a community or an economy. The success of SEWA's members in sustainably managing their tiny and microenterprises, in spite of the current Covid-19 crisis and the economic slowdown is a solid proof of the fact that in this globalized work, it's the local decentralized economy that still functions and women workers are the drivers of this new economic model. In a woman, we get a worker, a provider, a caretaker, an educator, an entrepreneur, a leader and a networker.

This session looked at this experience and approach of SEWA, focusing on women, as she works to establish a stable and peaceful community – build an economy of Nurturance. Through this nurturing economy, Women's participation and representation has come out as an integral part of the development process. Women bring constructive, creative and sustainable solutions to the world.

Kapilaben Vankar, President, SEWA kickstarted the discussion by talking about her experiences of working for the organization for over two decades. "Informal workers like me hardly have any identity or rights. Being organized is very important as it creates a safety net and mutual support system that allows us to flourish". She went on to talk about the benefits of organizing and how it gave them a collective voice, the ability to collectively bargain and to create a presence that could not be ignored or overlooked. She also added that it gave her a sense of empowerment and confidence in tackling challenges.

Margie Sastry, Author took up the discussion by introducing a book she had edited and introduced which is a compendium of speeches by Ela Bhatt, namely 'Women, Work and Peace'. "Of the 500 odd speeches I had to pick 10 but ended up with 27 for the book. It was so hard to stop at 10 given what Ela Ben talked about and the way she said it"

Prof. Indira Hirway, Director and Professor, Centre for Development Alternatives (CFDA), furthered the discussion by talking about her organisation's efforts in promoting and taking up the cause of women workers. "We need a comprehensive strategy to remove the dependency of women on patriarchal division of labour"

Dr. Ravi Kanbur, Professor of World Affairs, International Professor of Applied Economics and Management, and Professor of Economics - Cornell University, then talked about his views on the book. "All young aspiring technical economists should read this book and use the idea and apply them by marrying them to their statistical and econometric skills". He then talked about how the book challenges conventional economic thinking.

■ WOMEN, WORK AND PEACE

Isabel Guerrero Pulgar, Founder, IMAGO Global Grassroots then added her views on the book. She talked about the hundred-mile principle, feminine leadership and empowerment. “These three principles are not just beautiful words but the core tenets at SEWA which they live with day in and day out”

Ela Bhatt, Founder - Self-Employed Women’s Association of India, then talked about the book and her experiences with SEWA. She talked about how the book came into creation and how she as an author felt that she missed out on adding more content to the ‘peace’ section. “This lockdown has been the worst violence, during peace time, that has ever been afflicted on the work force. Ours has been a peaceful protest march against this violence as livelihoods were destroyed”

Reema Nanavaty, Director, Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) then concluded the session.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- The experience and approach of SEWA, focusing on women was discussed as a way to achieve greater sustainability
- Women’s participation and representation is an integral part of the development process that brings constructive, creative and sustainable solutions to the world.

DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE



MODERATOR Dr. Sangeeta Mansur, Sustainability Leadership & Communication Catalyst, Founder - Bhairavi Business & Consultancy

PANELISTS

- Anirban Ghosh, Chief Sustainability Officer - Mahindra Group
- Dr. Ashish Aggarwal, Associate Professor - Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow
- Dr. Tata L Raghu Ram, Chairperson, Fr. Arrupe Centre for Ecology & Sustainability Professor, Strategic Management Area, XLRI Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur
- Prof. Nathalie Ormrod, BSc Marketing Programme Director and PRME Director at Aston Business School
- Dinni Lingaraj, Group Manager, Sustainability - Wipro
- Nidhi Pundhir, Director, HCL Foundation

The forum on sustainability education in B-schools was a peer platform conceived through the CRB annual sustainability conference - for inspiring the journey of sustainability education and research among academic institutions.

The session this year, aimed to explore critical factors involved in the sustainability journey of academic institutes and ways for academic institutions to understand and support needs for strengthening business resilience (resource efficiency, circularity, supply chain transparency, risk prevention and mitigation, among others).

Dr. Sangeeta Mansur, Sustainability Leadership & Communication Catalyst, Founder - Bhairavi Business & Consultancy, opened the discussion by discussing the journey of 5 years that this forum had taken. "The segment that teaches sustainability is very very small".

Dinni Lingaraj, Group Manager, Sustainability – Wipro, discussed the programs undertaken by Wipro. "We engaged with education institutions at all levels of education from K-12 through to higher learning for creating educational programs on sustainability". He then spoke about their initiative with the IIMs in creating a compendium of case studies on sustainability that were India focused.

Dr. Ashish Aggarwal, Associate Professor - Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, carried the discussion forward by talking about his experience in running the MBA in Business Sustainability at IIM Lucknow. "There is not enough demand for competent and competitive young graduates or market opportunities in the sustainability sector. There are only very few large companies that attract talent". He then spoke about how there are very few academicians and researchers that are interested in business sustainability and lack of research

Prof. Nathalie Ormrod, BSc Marketing Programme Director and PRME Director at Aston Business School then spoke about the need for management support even at business schools in order to have successful business sustainability programs. "Sustainability is a holistic process and it is interdisciplinary. So, you need to build interconnections between various departments".

■ DRIVING SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

Dr. Tata L Raghu Ram, Chairperson, Fr. Arrupe Centre for Ecology & Sustainability Professor, Strategic Management Area, XLRI Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur then added to the discussion by sharing the viewpoint of a private institution. He highlighted the challenges of creating such a course in a private, for profit, educational institution. “Leadership needs to have the vision to implement such a program. There is a lot of resistance and getting buy in from the faculty council is difficult and takes persistence. This can only happen is the leadership is committed”

Nidhi Pundhir, Director, HCL Foundation, then spoke and gave her perspective from the point of a foundation and as a part of the CSR group of a large corporate. “In my experience sustainability is taught too late. Many people learn about sustainability after they start working. We need to start investing in early years and start teaching about sustainability”

Anirban Ghosh, Chief Sustainability Officer - Mahindra Group, talked about the career challenges that exist for aspirants pursuing a specialization in sustainability. “A candidate cannot move up the career ladder in a corporate armed with just a degree in sustainability from a business school. He would still need general management and business skills and his knowledge of sustainability would work as a complementarily. Therefore, the need is not to have a specialized program, rather a strong program on sustainability embedded in the overall management program.”

Dr. Sangeeta Mansur, Sustainability Leadership & Communication Catalyst, Founder - Bhairavi Business & Consultancy, concluded the discussion by summarizing the various viewpoints from public educational institutions, private educational institutions, CSR departments of large corporates, foundations and large corporations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sustainability education should be part of the curriculum at business schools
- The education should ideally be embedded within the overall program itself
- There is a greater need for academic research and building a body of work around sustainability studies
- There is a need to develop sustainability studies as a multidisciplinary, multi subject holistic curriculum that draws on various disciplines, faculties and departments



TOOLS AND APPROACHES FOR BUSINESS TO BUILD RESILIENCE



MODERATOR Edward Millard, Director, Landscapes & Communities - Rainforest Alliance

PANELISTS

- Veronika Semelkova, Sustainability & CSR Coordinator, Sucden Coffee
- Martine van Weelden, TEEBAgriFood Project Manager, Capitals Coalition
- Ramkumar Menon, Chairman of World Spice Organisation
- Rosy Choudhury, Director - South Asia, Rainforest Alliance
- Dr. Saji M Kadavil, Manager - Sustainable Agriculture, South Asia at Rainforest Alliance
- Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business
- Angelica Cardiel Alanis, Leader of Water management projects - AB Inbev, Mexico
- Pedro Martins, LivUp

This session took a closer look not at the why but the how - the tools/approaches that business can use to move its sustainability agenda forward. The discussion focussed on four such tools: Standards and certification; Valuation of the intangible benefits of sustainability; Multi-stakeholder initiatives; and Industry forums.

Global leaders and change-makers from leading companies shared real experiences/cases to provide exposure to spark innovations.

Edward Millard, Director, Landscapes & Communities - Rainforest Alliance, started the discussion by talking about the current trends in sustainability. "There has been increasing global awareness about the need for sustainability. From policy and Paris accords to companies demanding ethical supply chains with low carbon footprints". He then talked about what business resilience means and how we can achieve them.

Veronika Semelkova, Sustainability & CSR Coordinator, Sucden Coffee, spoke about how her company deals with sustainability and business resilience. "We are not an NGO or a research project. We are traders and as such all our initiatives have to balance with profitability. We work with all the stakeholders in our supply chain to try and promote sustainability". She then spoke about how her company works with farmers, consumers and other organizations to make the company's supply chain greener, sustainable and resilient.

Martine van Weelden, TEEBAgriFood Project Manager, Capitals Coalition then spoke on her organization's initiatives. "We focus on 4 kinds of capital in looking for sustainability. Natural Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital and Produce Capital" She then added that they are looking for ways and means to make practices more sustainable in food, agriculture and processing sectors and protecting biodiversity.

Angelica Cardiel Alanis, Leader of Water management projects - AB Inbev, Mexico talked about examples as to how her company is implementing sustainable practices "We standardize proven techniques into scalable processes in order to make our business more resilient and sustainable". She then went on to describe how they try to not only implement sustainable process but also how they monitor and measure the impact of the same when they work with their supply chain stakeholders.

TOOLS AND APPROACHES FOR BUSINESS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Pedro Martins, LivUp then spoke about how his direct-to-consumer food tech company is an end-to-end firm that works with organic farmers at one end and the consumers at the other. “We take ownership of responsibility of the entire supply chain and make sure that sustainable practices are used at every level”

Ramkumar Menon, Chairman of World Spice Organisation, then talked about the challenges in the spice sector. “We realized that these initiatives can only work as a multi stakeholder model. That is how we started the national sustainable spice program”. He then talked about the gaps in the supply chain which was leading to rejecting their export produce. This, he then added, led them to implement standardized sustainable approaches to address the gaps in the supply chain.

The panel then concluded with Edward Millard summarizing the key learnings from the discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- This session discussed on the “How” of building business resilience as there is an ample body of work on the tools and ways of building business resilience but very little on actual implementation challenges
- Various business leaders shared case studies on how they actually implemented policies that help build sustainability and resilience in their respective organizations
- Four tools were chiefly discussed: Standards and certification; Valuation of the intangible benefits of sustainability; Multi-stakeholder initiatives; and Industry forums



BUILDING BACK BETTER: IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF INFORMAL WOMEN WORKERS IN POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY PHASE

WOMEN IN VALUE CHAINS



HIDDEN HOMEWORKERS (CO-FUNDED BY EU)



MODERATOR Bharti Birla, Project Manager (CTA) - Sustainable Global Supply Chains - International Labour Organization

PANELISTS

- J D Giri, Director - Shahi Exports Pvt. Ltd.
- Viyakula Mary, Executive Director - Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE)
- Vijiya Kumari, Member - Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE)
- Robin Man Amatya, CEO - SAARC Business Association of Home-Based Workers (SABAH Nepal)
- Shanta Shakya, Member - SABAH Nepal
- Devyani Hari, Director, Centre for Responsible Business
- Lakshmi Bhatia, Director - SustainAbility
- Rohan Preece, Business and Human Rights Manager, Traidcraft India
- Smita Singh, Senior Project Manager, EU Delegation to India
- Sonakshi Agarwal, Programme Coordinator, HomeNet South Asia Trust

The session aimed to showcase and deliberate on solutions being tested/ implemented to improve the plight of home-based workers and to identify key stakeholder partnerships and collaborations to improve their situation.

The session’s anticipated outcomes included (i) Best Practice Dossier; (ii) Policy Input Note; and (iii) Call for Action – Opportunities for pilots.

Smita Singh, Senior Project Manager, EU Delegation to India, started the discussion by walking the panel members through the advocacy efforts of the EU in India pertaining to women’s rights. “We ensure that all programs cutting across sectors have a specific focus on women’s rights” she said. She emphasized further by highlighting the issues they monitor and how they are addressed which may relate to wellness, pay parity etc.

Sonakshi Agarwal, Programme Coordinator, HomeNet South Asia Trust furthered the discussion by highlighting the salient points of a recently conducted study on the impact of the pandemic on homebased women workers. “The entire earning season was wiped out with majority of the HBWs reporting zero pay and majority of the respondents were forced to borrow to make ends meet”. She further shared the drop in earning during lockdown and the levels that they have recovered to which is half that of pre pandemic levels.

Rohan Preece, Business and Human Rights Manager, Traidcraft India, then spoke of his company’s perspective in dealing with the pandemic. His company works in agriculture and garment value chains in India primarily with HBWs. “Majority of HBWs are women, they are not contractually engaged, earn piece meal wages, have no security as they belong to the informal sector and are some of the most

BUILDING BACK BETTER: IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF INFORMAL WOMEN WORKERS IN POST-PANDEMIC ECONOMIC RECOVERY PHASE

vulnerable category of workers in the labour force.”

Viyakula Mary, Executive Director - Social Awareness and Voluntary Education (SAVE), then gave insights from working on the ground with HBWs. She talked about the challenges faced by such groups “They want continuous employment and a direct relation with the factory and to be recognized as formal workers” she said.

Shanta Shakya, Member - SABAH Nepal, a HBW shared her experiences with the panel members. She talked about the challenges of earning wages during the pandemic and the lack of opportunities “We are invisible to the government and do not have any support to survive through the pandemic”

Samridhi Dhakul, SABAH Nepal, the spoke about how she navigated her organization through the pandemic to better support the members and help them earn “Work dried up in textile and garment sectors, so we had to pivot in order to ensure our members, HBWs, continued to earn wages. We looked at the frozen food industry, retrained our members to get work in this sector through virtual sessions and ensured continuity of pay”

J D Giri, Director - Shahi Exports Pvt. Ltd., chimed in and talked about his company and how it was started by a HBW 40 years ago “We have now become one of the largest exporters in India and more than 70% of our workforce is women”. He then talked about how his company navigated through the pandemic.

Bharti Birla, Project Manager (CTA) - Sustainable Global Supply Chains - International Labour Organization, spoke of her organization which looks at the lower tier workers in supply chains i.e. HBWs. She then went onto an assessment that her organisation made related to the impact of the pandemic globally as it pertains to the HBWs. “During this pandemic approximately 495 Million working hours equivalent of work was lost. This is a loss of around 17% of the total jobs we had at the end of 2019 with a corresponding reduction of 11% in wages. But in the South Asia region this is magnified with a job loss of around 25% and wage loss of 17%”

Lakshmi Bhatia, Director – SustainAbility, concluded the panel by summarizing the panel discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The need to reskill and retrain women and home-based workers so they can successfully pivot to other endeavors than apparel and crafts was highlighted.
- 3 major areas on which further work was needed were highlighted: Best Practice Dossier, Policy Input Note, and a Call for Action – Opportunities for pilots.



TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL SANDSTONE SECTOR IN RAJASTHAN



MODERATOR Mukul Rastogi, Chief Executive Officer - Centre for Development of Stones

PANELISTS

- Dr. Waris Husain, Senior Staff Attorney - American Bar Association, Center for Human Rights
- Fanny Fremont, Executive Director, Responsible MICA Initiative
- Varun Sharma, Programmes Director - ARAVALI
- Manish Singh Gour, Secretary, Manjari Sansthan
- Katherine Torres, Senior Technical Officer on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in Supply Chains - International Labour Organization
- Govind, M/S Sri Kripa Stones
- Utkarsh Kalani, Director - Shree Agencies Pvt Ltd, Cerapave Ceramics World of Stones, CERAPAVE
- Lizette Vosman, Program Officer, Business and Human Rights, Arisa
- Peter Cook, British Deputy High Commissioner for Gujarat and Rajasthan

There is a growing cognizance among stakeholders from different constituencies on the importance of pursuing and promoting Business Sustainability. Businesses world over are acknowledging the relevance and importance of sustainable business as the most effective way to navigate uncertainties, overcome challenges and seek out opportunities. Sustainability is no longer an option, but a business imperative.

The sandstone sector in India is an important sector both in terms of economic contribution and employment generation. In keeping with the need of the times, it will be important to create a blueprint for a sustainable sandstone sector and to explore whether the time is now right to work together to develop a code of conduct/protocol for the sandstone sector.

This session will focus on the sandstone sector in Rajasthan; together with key state specific, national and international stakeholders we will explore whether the time is now right to consider an industry-wide, and local stakeholder driven, sustainability protocol. Against a backdrop of international standards and a drive for increased transparency we will hear directly from the industry itself and discuss the possible ways of developing and implementing a code throughout the sandstone supply chain to work towards ethical sourcing for both domestic and international markets.

Peter Cook, British Deputy High Commissioner for Gujarat and Rajasthan, kicked off the panel discussion. He spoke of the challenges faced by the industry and the labor practices particularly that of bonded laborers. He mentioned “In India change cannot be top down. It needs industry and community level partnerships to bring about real meaningful change”

Utkarsh Kalani, Director - Shree Agencies Pvt Ltd, Cerapave Ceramics World of Stones, CERAPAVE, took the discussion forward by briefing the audience about the Sandstone mining supply chain. He further shed light on the current labor practices in the industry related to enforcement of child labor laws, sustainability and wage practices.

Manish Singh Gour, Secretary, Manjari Sansthan shared the role that his organization has played in the sandstone industry viz-a-vis in helping improve its labor practices and reducing incidences of child labor. “We worked with business, local communities and partner institutions to help improve labor conditions, reduce child labor and bonded labor”

■ TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL SANDSTONE SECTOR IN RAJASTHAN

Govind, M/S Sri Kripa Stones, took the discussion further by talking about how his company is implementing relevant CSR initiatives to help the industry they are in. “We are looking at CSR initiatives that increase the workplace safety of our workers in the supply chain and provide healthcare and education to the children of our workers”

Lizette Vosman, Program Officer, Business and Human Rights, Arisa highlighted how the report published by her organization in 2005 created the groundswell for improvement in the sandstone mining industry. She further added that buyers should use their buying power to enforce change by adopting a policy of ethical sourcing. She said that improvements in labor management practices and improving the plight of unskilled workers should be a key policy task. She said that “Covid has made the government realize the value of the unskilled invisible laborers in the supply chain”

Dr. Waris Husain, Senior Staff Attorney - American Bar Association, Center for Human Rights, brought his perspective as a lawyer and how ethical sourcing guidelines are taking shape. He said that “Going forward both US and EU governments will create some kind of mandatory due diligence guidelines for its domiciled countries when it comes to imports and supply chains”



Fanny Fremont, Executive Director, Responsible MICA Initiative talked about her experience in implementing similar models in Jharkhand and Bihar using multiple-stakeholder approaches and public private partnerships. “We are trying to create guidelines and goals and creating ways to measure progress of the same in order to improve supply chain conditions”

Varun Sharma, Programmes Director – ARAVALI, talked about the livelihood of the labor in the mining supply chain in India. He spoke about the high prevalence of Silicosis, a medical condition prevalent in sandstone miners where they inhale silica dust into their lungs, and how there is no policy or medical health policy to address the same “Our goal was not only to pressurize export units to provide better safety standards for the labor force but also to initiate dialogue between them and the other stakeholders. This led to a government policy on Silicosis”

Katherine Torres, Senior Technical Officer on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in Supply

■ **TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL SANDSTONE SECTOR IN RAJASTHAN**

Chains - International Labour Organization talked about child labor laws and the importance of eliminating child labor entirely.

The panel concluded by summarizing the various views mentioned on the panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Building ethical supply chains is the need of the hour as businesses the world over are adopting sustainability reporting guidelines
- The initiative taken to build a blueprint to make the sandstone sector in Rajasthan was discussed and how well it has been implemented
- The challenge of getting policy formulated to provide medical assistance to workers facing silicosis was highlighted
- A code of conduct needs to be created that encompasses child labor laws, worker safety rules and ethical sourcing

ENABLING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN INDIA



MODERATOR Namit Agarwal, World Benchmarking Alliance

PANELISTS

- Harpreet Kaur, BHR Specialist - Asia Pacific, UNDP
- Miriam Barbara
- Dr. Vidya Tikoo, Senior Vice President - Sustainability - Aditya Birla Management Corporation Pvt. Ltd.
- Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business
- Alok Singh, Regional Director - South Asia, Ethical Trading Initiative
- Ankita Nanda
- Damandeep Singh, Director – CDP India
- Gopinath K. Parakuni, General Secretary - Cividep India
- Rishi Singh, Associate Director - Twentyfifty
- Sebastien Porter, Representative, European Commission - DEVCO
- Shankar Venkateswaran, Co-Founder & Head – Climate Assessment & Monitoring, Ecube Climate Finance
- Swati Pandey, Counsellor - CII
- Hans-Christian Winkler, Spokesperson and Head of Public Diplomacy, German Embassy
- Pauliina Murphy, Engagement Director, WBA
- Richard Woods, EU Policy Lead, WBA
- Viraf Mehta, Adjunct Faculty - Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs
- Chandan Kumar, National Coordinator - Working People's Charter
- Suhela Khan, Country Programme Coordinator – WEmpower Asia, UN Women
- Priya Subbaraman, Chief Regulatory Officer, National Stock Exchange
- Ranjana Das, Lead Specialist - Private Sector Engagement, Oxfam India
- Neha Kumar, India Country Director - Climate Bonds Initiative
- Navneet Munot, Chief Investment Officer - SBI MF
- Sean Lees, BHR Specialist - Asia Pacific, UNDP

Frameworks such as the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct and Business Responsibility Reporting have created a conducive policy environment for change. However, policy frameworks alone do not necessarily translate into impact on ground without adequate implementation mechanisms.

With ten years remaining to achieve the SDGs and in support of the Decade of Action on Agenda 2030, this session will be the inaugural phase of this Policy CoLAB series, aimed at:

- unpacking existing and expected challenges in the implementation of these policy frameworks
- convene experts representing diverse backgrounds and experiences from private sector, central government, state government, regulators, investors, civil society, lawyers, policy experts, etc
- take a holistic view of the entire system to help predict, unpack, and define problems that need to be addressed and provide direction towards solutions

Suhela Khan, Country Programme Coordinator – WEmpower Asia, UN Women kickstarted the discussion by discussing the gender related challenges faced in the workforce related to women “Women participation in the labour force is the lowest in the world in India at 20% of which 92% are in the informal sector”

Damandeep Singh, Director – CDP India, then added to the discussion by talking about the policy landscape. “There is a haphazard approach and no consistency when it comes to policy

ENABLING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN INDIA

frameworks related to climate change. We work with companies and cities around the world and we see that there is a crying need for some policy consistency”. He then talked about how the awareness of climate change has seeped into India corporates as they are conforming to global standards.

Chandan Kumar, National Coordinator - Working People’s Charter, then chimed in with his views regarding the challenges faced by the labour force in India. “The working class has been in a fragile state in this country. The new labour codes which amend the labour laws will dismantle any security that labour force had”. He then talked about how the new labour code adversely affect the fundamental rights of the workforce viz-a-vis collective bargaining, right to association, grievance redressal etc.

Ankita Nanda, continued the discussion by talking about how the pandemic has adversely affected the workforce. She also talked about the worker wellbeing programs that organisations should invest in “The vulnerability of the labour force was amplified by the pandemic and the dissonance was magnified by the new labour code”

Ranjana Das, Lead Specialist - Private Sector Engagement, Oxfam India spoke about her perspective in working in India “Our country is great a framing laws, rules and regulations but not at implementing them”. She talked about women and gender relations in the country and the disconnect between the policy and the on-ground realities.

Priya Subbaraman, Chief Regulatory Officer, National Stock Exchange then spoke about her organization’s efforts in promoting responsible business practices by creating and implementing disclosure norms for publicly listed entities. “As a bridge between issuers and investors we need to address investor concerns. We are looking to standardize issuer reporting so it discloses appropriate information in a transparent and easy to understand manner by the investors”

Dr. Vidya Tikoo,
Senior Vice
President -
Sustainability
- Aditya Birla
Management
Corporation Pvt. Ltd. Added to the discussion by sharing her views from the standpoint of a large corporate entity. “We look at sustainable supply chains and practices in order to be a responsible corporate citizen”



■ ENABLING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FOR PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN INDIA

Shankar Venkateswaran, Co-Founder & Head – Climate Assessment & Monitoring, Ecube Climate Finance the talked about climate finance and the challenges that policy implementation create “The best example of a consistent policy in India is the auto emissions policy. We need a similar approach for policy implementation to address corporate reporting of sustainable practices”

Sebastien Porter, Representative, European Commission - DEVCO then spoke of the European perspective in policy creation and alignments. “European companies will have a better understanding of their reporting and compliance obligations in the next two years as we roll out new policy frameworks”. He then talked about the sustainable corporate governance initiatives that listed European companies are looking to comply to.

Hans-Christian Winkler, Spokesperson and Head of Public Diplomacy, German Embassy then spoke about his perspective about the policy frameworks and challenges that he saw in India relating to sustainability and responsible business practices. “German investors are conservative in their business practices and welcome long-term stability. We invest in India as it is a large end consumer market and as such welcome any policy frameworks related to labour force, environment and sustainable business governance. We are already sensitized to these In Germany”

Alok Singh, Regional Director - South Asia, Ethical Trading Initiative then spoke his organizations work related to worker welfare in the supply chain. “Supply chain is a wide a varied concept in India with players of all sizes and in different regions. This cause opacity and creates challenges in creating and implementing a standardized framework for worker welfare”

Swati Pandey, Counsellor – CII, then spoke about the micro level challenges in the supply chain. She talked about the nature of the labour force in the country and how being in the informal sector create challenges in implementation “The supply change in India is made up of MSMEs and the implementation challenge is not because of the size of the workforce but because of its composition which is informal”. She talked about how being a largely unregulated workforce issues like that of human rights, fair wages, workplace safety etc are hard to implement and monitor.

Neha Kumar, India Country Director - Climate Bonds Initiative, then talked about her experience from the standpoint of a financing institution and the challenges in terms of policy roadblocks that hinder sustainable finance. “Sustainable finance in India is facing challenges because we face asymmetric information. This hinders us from assessing business risks appropriately. Unless risks can be evaluated no investor will invest”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- This session was the inaugural phase of this Policy CoLAB series
- There was discussion on the frameworks laid down in National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct and Business Responsibility Reporting
- There was discussion on the existing and expected challenges in the implementation of policy frameworks
- Indian corporates need to step up their sustainable practice reporting
- Indian policy makers need to provide clear and consistent policies

REDUCING FOOD LOSS IN INDIA – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



MODERATOR

Dr. Ruchika Singh, Director, Sustainable Landscapes and Restoration, World Resources Institute India

PANELISTS

- Nidhi Jamwal, Deputy Managing Editor - Gaon Connection
- Kiran Thete, JNU Scholar, Centre for Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)
- Craig Hanson, Vice President of Food, Forests, Water & the Ocean - World Resources Institute
- Dr. Vikas Rawal, Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University
- S Vijay Kumar, India Country lead of FOLU and is a Distinguished Fellow in The Energy and Research Institute (TERI)
- Manoj Joshi, IAS, Additional Secretary, MoFPI
- Monika Agarwal, Researcher - WRI India
- Aruna Rangachar Pohl, Chairperson – Advisory Committee, India Foundation for Humanistic Development (IFHD)

Globally, a movement is emerging to reduce the loss of food. In 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted, including Target 12.3, which calls for halving the food loss and waste by 2030. This session discussed the synergy needed to catalyse this movement in India to achieve the SDG target.

The session brought together the representatives of the food producers, researchers, private sector, Government and non-government organisation (NGOs) to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities for reducing loss in India.

Monika Agarwal, Researcher - WRI India kickstarted the discussion by walking the panel members through the key findings on her research on literature pertaining to food loss in India. “Studies on food loss in India suffer as there are no common frameworks or standardised definitions as to what constitutes a supply chain. We do not document socio economic impact of food loss nor study how they are linked with SDGs. There are no studies on food waste”

Dr. Vikas Rawal, Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University then added his views to the discussion. “The studies and empirical fact finding on food loss and waste is in its infancy as it was described as a global challenge very recently and institutions has started making it a priority in the recent past”. He then talked about how the current state of research is patchy as it either focuses a particular commodity or a stage of production. He also added that food loss and waste data is available at a aggregate level globally and not at a country level. He also stated that “While we know a significant amount of food does not make it to the plate of the consumer, we are unable to generate accurate estimates. It is clear though that food loss is higher in developing countries and food waste is higher in the developed countries”

Craig Hanson, Vice President of Food, Forests, Water & the Ocean - World Resources Institute then added to the discussion by talking about the challenges in gathering cohesive data on food loss and waste. “Countries that have tackled food loss and waste effectively have managed to implement robust monitoring programs that track food loss and waste all the way from the farm gate to the consumer plate”

Kiran Thete, JNU Scholar, Centre for Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

REDUCING FOOD LOSS IN INDIA – CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

(JNU) talked about his study of farm losses and its impacts. “From seed quality, to farming practices to market linkages all these affect food loss and waste in our country. These problems seem to be evergreen”

Manoj Joshi, IAS, Additional Secretary, MoFPI then added to the discussion “We are still doing macro level studies for food losses and it leads nowhere. Micro level studies like those done by my ministry for analysing post-harvest crop yields across the country need to be implemented to better understand and quantify food losses”. He then talked about the agriculture, food storage and procurement, food storage and market challenges that exist.

Aruna Rangachar Pohl, Chairperson – Advisory Committee, India Foundation for Humanistic Development (IFHD), then added her perspective on food loss in India “We need to take into account the small farmers. Somehow when conversations around food loss take place, they talk about large established value chains where big industries are involved. The small holders, on aggregate, contribute the majority of nutri-grains and cereals in the country yet get overlooked”. She also spoke about the small farmers and FPOs not having a support ecosystem even in terms of funding.

S Vijay Kumar, India Country lead of FOLU and is a Distinguished Fellow in The Energy and Research Institute (TERI), then talked about his organizations work regarding studying food loss and also concluded the panel by summarizing the points highlighted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Need for studies on food loss at an aggregate or national level even in Europe. The most comprehensive such study limited itself to regional food losses which was reliant on approximations
- Micro level studies like the ones done by the government in measuring agricultural produce are needed.
- Filling data gaps is crucial for effective policy making



POST-COVID SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP FOR MSMEs



SPEAKERS

- Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General - Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME)
- Petra Walterova, Programme Officer - Trade for Sustainable Development, ITC
- Dr. A. Raj, Senior Director, Quality Council of India
- Santiago Fernandez De Cordoba Briz, Senior Economist at UNCTAD and Coordinator of the United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards
- Anjana Seshadri, ESG Officer, Neev Fund
- Dr. Manish Pande, Director and Head, PAD Division at Quality Council of India

Small and Medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) occupy a strategic place in the economic growth of our nation and have emerged as a vibrant sector contributing significantly to employment generation, innovation, exports, and inclusive growth of the economy. The number of registered MSMEs in India in FY 2019 was estimated to be 25.13 lakhs units. These SMEs complement large industries as ancillary units in achieving sustainable and inclusive industrialization across the globe.

Despite the pivotal role that SMEs play, the sector experiences several constraints at every stage of its operations. In developing countries, most of the SMEs, the smallest of which often run by women, operate in the informal economy and lack social protection. Therefore, an economic slowdown can have devastating consequences for SMEs. Rebuilding a stronger economy and creating jobs will be key once the immediate health crisis is over. To overcome the current challenges, building awareness and understanding of sustainability in the context of SMEs is vital to promote priority setting in policy making, as well as to enable sustainable development and growth.

Strengthening networks of SMEs can directly contribute to the overall resilience of society. Recognising their relevance to economies, governments are already starting to prioritise SME support. In view of this, a sustainability roadmap for SMEs is vital for their resilient recovery.

Dr. Manish Pande, Director and Head, PAD Division at Quality Council of India started the discussion by talking about the SME sector and its role in achieving pan national sustainability. “The role of SMEs cannot be overstated in achieving sustainability as they are the backbone of the economy, employ the bulk of the labor force and directly or indirectly support the maximum number of livelihoods and households in the country”. He further talked about the role that QCI plays in the same.

Anil Bhardwaj, Secretary General - Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME), then talked about how post pandemic is it not only important to resurrect the SME sector but how to engage with them to build up sustainability efforts. He further talked and enlarged upon the importance of the SME sector to the country. “Without SMEs the SDGs are untenable”

Dr. A. Raj, Senior Director, Quality Council of India, talked about the programs undertaken by QCI to help organizations during the pandemic and post pandemic. “For the SMEs to become self-reliant it is important that they are supported to navigate the post pandemic environment and can grow sustainably”

Petra Walterova, Programme Officer - Trade for Sustainable Development, ITC took up the mantle and talked about her program which helps SMEs trade internationally and focus on sustainability. “We have ample evidence that SMEs have been negatively impacted by climate change through resource or supply scarcity. The way forward is only through achieving sustainability which is what we help SMEs with”

POST-COVID SUSTAINABILITY ROADMAP FOR MSMEs

Santiago Fernandez De Cordoba Briz, Senior Economist at UNCTAD and Coordinator of the United Nations Forum on Sustainability Standards, talked about the rate of adoption of voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) by SMEs. “Regardless of size, all companies are hit adversely by the pandemic. The difference is that SMEs do not have the deep pockets and may struggle to survive in the post pandemic world.” VSS adoption is important milestone on the post pandemic roadmap and SMEs need to integrate these standards if they need to success in the post pandemic world.

Anjana Seshadri, SBI, talked about the financial ecosystem supporting sustainability through ESG finance. She further highlighted the various financial lending products targeted towards companies that are focused on ESG.

The panel concluded by summarizing the ecosystem and its elements that can support SMEs in achieving sustainability in a post pandemic world.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- MSMEs are the biggest part of Industry and collectively employ majority of the workforce in India. Without MSMEs pursuing sustainability, these SDGs will never be achieved
- Rebuilding a stronger economy and creating jobs will be key once the immediate health crisis is over.
- Building awareness and understanding of sustainability in the context of SMEs is vital to promote priority setting in policy making.

■ **ROLE OF DATA AND DIGITIZATION IN BETTER
PREPARING FOR UNCERTAINTY**



MODERATOR Vivek Singh, Programme Manager, Centre for Responsible Business

PANELISTS

- Girish Ramachandran, President - Tata Consultancy Services Asia Pacific
- Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor - ITU Regional Office, Asia-Pacific & ITU (United Nations), Bangkok Metropolitan Area
- Jatin Chaurasia, CEO, Sumeru Marketing/President, Sumeru Inc
- Shashank Dubey, Head of Analytics & Principal - Tredence
- Dr. Debapriya Dutta, Advisor - Department of Science & Technology Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India
- Deepak Maheshwari, Senior Visiting Fellow at ICRIER

Risks and uncertainties have increased in the world today, owing to systemic issues such as the climate crisis, resource constraints, geopolitical tensions - which has played out in different ways touching peoples' lives and livelihoods. Both governments and businesses must innovate, and utilize the latest solutions available to collect, record and analyze data in real time, thereby helping in taking decisions that can enable them to survive and progress. Such solutions should also be equitable in access, so that the benefits of digitization aren't restricted to people on the basis of their economic/social conditions or geographic location. This session will explore the role of data analytics, digital infrastructure and their equitable access in promoting long-term sustainability (reducing risks) in an uncertain world.

Girish Ramachandran, President - Tata Consultancy Services Asia Pacific, kick started the session. He spoke of the importance of data and digitization particularly in the face of Covid. "What Covid has taught us is the need for business resilience in the face of uncertainty. While we had plans for state outage, country outage, nobody had foreseen a global outage." He outlined the key elements to create a complete digital and data driven infrastructure namely connectivity, collaboration, cloud and cyber security i.e. digital spine. "While a seamless customer experience is provided by the private sector government needs to build a digital spine as a national infrastructure" he said.

Sameer Sharma, Senior Advisor - ITU Regional Office, Asia-Pacific & ITU (United Nations), Bangkok Metropolitan Area then spoke from the perspective of the UN "Covid has forced us to restructure and reimagine the very structure of societies, how countries cooperate and how we address the common good". He emphasized the shift to data-based governance and providing a digital delivery system for services.

Dr. Debapriya Dutta, Advisor - Department of Science & Technology Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India further added his viewpoints "While earlier data was considered as a currency the Covid situation has made it into blood flow without which we can function" he said. He emphasized a shift in priorities in the post pandemic world where there are now 3 critical areas of focus i.e. data infrastructure, services on demand and digital empowerment of citizens. Furthermore, he added, governance is going to shift to a digital medium.

Shashank Dubey, Head of Analytics & Principal – Tredence talked about how corporates are using the data they own. "Business approach to solve problems has changed over the years. For the past few years, we see that complexity has increased so much that a fundamental approach to crafting a solution to a problem has changed. We have evolved from maximizing output to sense and respond".

■ **ROLE OF DATA AND DIGITIZATION IN BETTER PREPARING FOR UNCERTAINTY**

He further added that while the data spine is there these are enabling platforms. Platforms are not solutions rather platforms provide the basis for solutions. This solution building is the need of the hour.

Jatin Chaurasia, CEO, Sumeru Marketing/President, Sumeru Inc, added his voice to the debate by putting focus on digital transformation and how it is important to use the existing IT infrastructure, data and technology to complete digital transformation. He further said that “As a note of caution, despite completing digital transformations companies were laid low by the pandemic. Resilience is equally important”

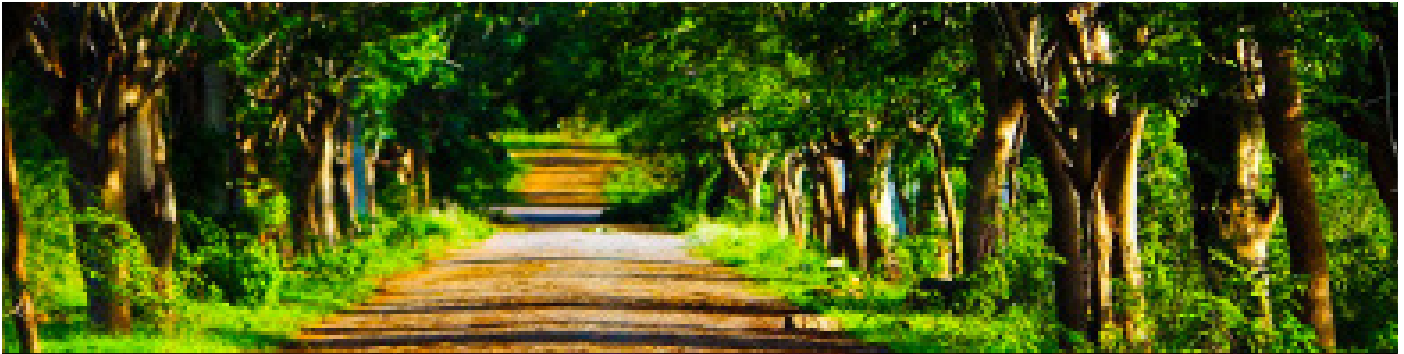
The next speaker was Deepak Maheshwari, Senior Visiting Fellow at ICRIER, who spoke of the intersection of public policy and digitization. He talked about the challenge of a national policy and where IT infrastructure fits into it given demarcation of areas of responsibility between state and center under our constitution. “We have multiple regulators and often IT policy is not cohesive as it is not covered under the either the list of subjects where the center is responsible or the state is responsible. It is like navigating a highway with contradictory signage”

The panel concluded by summarizing the key points raised by the panelists

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for a digital architecture that addresses the current realities of working from home. It should encompass the 4 Cs: Connectivity, Cloud, Cyber Security & Collaboration
- A digital spine for public service and governance needs to be created
- A comprehensive and cohesive policy is needed as IT infrastructure is currently covered by multiple agencies some pan national and some state level and often their guidelines contradict each other



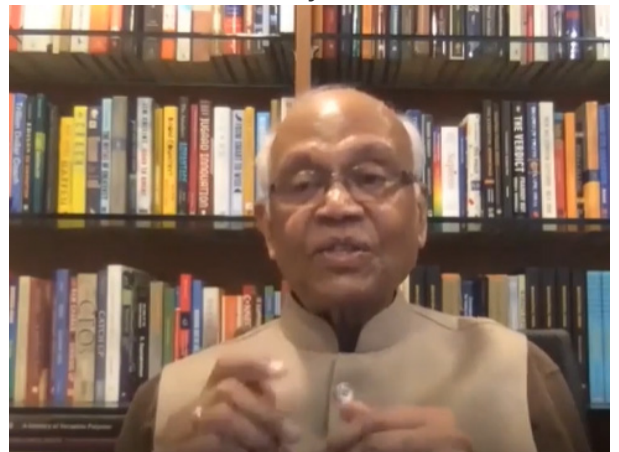


PANELISTS

- **DR. RAGHUNATH ANANT MASHELKAR**, *Indian National Research Professor, National Chemical Laboratory (NCL)*
- **DR. RAM KUMAR MISHRA**, *Senior Professor, Director and ONGC Subir Raha Chair Professor - IPE, Hyderabad*
- **KAMAL PRAKASH SETH**, *Country Head – India, RSPO*
- **FRANK HOFFMANN**, *Regional Project Manager - Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)*
- **RIJIT SENGUPTA**, *CEO, Centre for Responsible Business*
- **NANDINI SHARMA**, *Director, Centre for Responsible Business*
- **DEVYANI HARI**, *Director, Centre for Responsible Business*
- **RAMAKRISHNA NIDUMOLU**, *Professor, Indian School of Business*
- **ARJAN DE HAAN**, *Director, Inclusive Economies - IDRC Canada*

Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business started the closing session by thanking all the participants. He highlighted the aim of this session namely that of reflection on the issues highlighted and issues that need to be highlighted going forward as part of future conversations. “We will be releasing an output note that highlights paths to a sustainable inclusive recovery”

The session played a recorded video by Dr. Mashelkar formerly head of CSIR. He highlighted the ten tenets of a resilient business “Adaptability, Agility, Resilient Thinking, Scenario Based Thinking, Creating a Purpose driven organization, platformization, digital readiness, ability to foster self-disruption, climate consciousness and autonomous innovation”. He then went on to point out why sustainability is innovation’s new frontier from the standpoint of organizations.



Arjan de Haan, Director, Inclusive Economies - IDRC Canada, then took up the discussion by showcasing what IDRC does in terms of promoting sustainability around the world through investments, grants and programs. “We need to learn from the pandemic and how it has affected the status quo particularly in the case of vulnerable economic groups especially the informal workers” he added. He reiterated the need for systems based thinking to address this concern.

Ramakrishna Nidumolu, Professor, Indian School of Business, furthered the discussion by sharing his views on what corporate leaders need to do in order to build sustainable businesses. “Sustainable enterprises need sustainable leadership. Leaders need to reinvent their thinking to incorporate sustainability into thought leadership, enterprise strategy and innovation” he said. He further added that sustainability should not be an objective but drive strategy and growth from the get go.

Dr. Ram Kumar Mishra, Senior Professor, Director and ONGC Subir Raha Chair Professor - IPE, Hyderabad, then added his viewpoints. “We need to think beyond western approaches that treat

◆ 30th October | Closing Panel

business as separate from societies. This reductionism does not help. We need a holistic way of thinking". He then went on to highlight the virtues of a holistic philosophy and that India had a holistic philosophy. He also iterated as to why sustainability fails when it comes to businesses "The business of business is business not sustainability"

Frank Hoffmann, Regional Project Manager - Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), then took the discussion forward by talking about the challenges faced during the pandemic "The pandemic accelerated certain negative trends particularly related to responsible businesses and vulnerability of economic groups. It has also thrown up challenges that we do not yet know how to address". He then spoke on the challenges faced going forward in building responsible businesses.

Kamal Prakash Seth, Country Head – India, then added his points to the discussion. He talked about a potential blueprint on how to achieve a more sustainable future, a sustainable business and a sustainable India. He said "It is not our business or someone else's business to achieve sustainability, rather it's a shared responsibility"

Devyani Hari, Director, Centre for Responsible Business then covered and summarized what the various spoke about. She then spoke about the journey of CRB in putting the conference together.

Nandini Sharma, Director, Centre for Responsible Business concluded the session by once again thanking the CRB team, the participants and the partners.

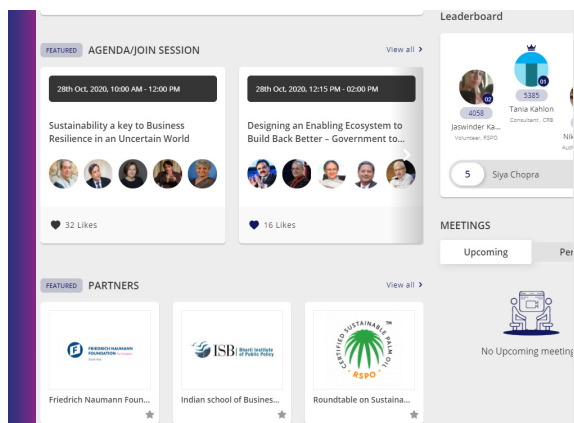
SUMMARY

Across all the conversations in the various sessions certain points were brought forth common to all aspects of sustainability and how to achieve it, namely:

- The requirement for a systems-based level of thinking in order to promote a holistic manner of achieving sustainability that takes into account and empowers all relevant stakeholders
- The need to balance both the supply and demand side as far as building sustainable businesses is concerned
- Coming up with unorthodox models of intervention recognizing the reality that some interventions can be scaled and some cannot
- To look at communities not just as mute beneficiaries in a business supply chain but as economic actors that need to be brought to the mainstream in the value chains
- Digital tools and IT infrastructure should aid in promoting sustainability but should be used in a way that it empowers stakeholders and bridges the digital divide
- The need to innovate in order to design interventions that address the most pressing and critical sustainability challenges



ISS 2020 Virtual Platform | Highlights

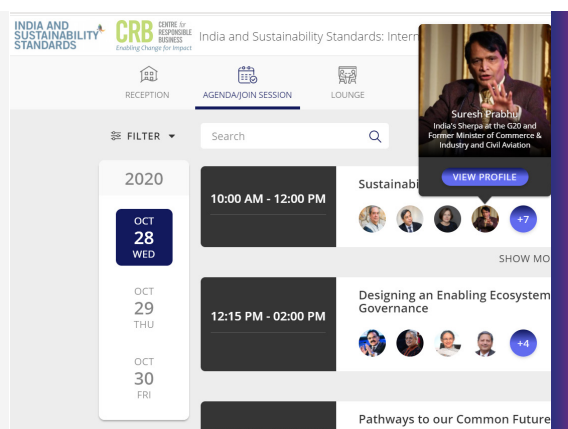


The Seventh India and Sustainability Standards: International Dialogues and Conference (ISS) this year sought to discuss adaptation and resilience in light of the pandemic. There was no better to showcase such resilience than hosting the conference on a virtual platform that brought together key stakeholders from across the world.

The event platform created by the CRB team allowed for the smooth running of ISS, 2020. It ensured ease of use, active engagement with the participants and organizers and proved to be a successful platform for the virtual conference

The platform consisted of the live sessions, an event feed, the networking lounge and details about the speakers and partners. The event feed was updated during the conference and consisted of key highlights from each session. It allowed members to upload photos from the sessions as well as interact with the CRB team.

The networking lounge allowed audience members to interact on a one-on-one basis with the speakers and network in-between sessions and after the day's sessions were over. This provided a different albeit a viable alternative to networking in person.



One of the key features that allowed for engagement between speakers and the audience was the 'chat' feature which was active during each session. It was used by audience members to ask questions and participate in polls.

Another novel way of interacting and engaging with the wider audience and attendees was the option to send messages on the platform itself. This was an important tool in communicating on an individual basis with the CRB team and the speakers.

The platform as a whole consisted of various aspects that sought to ensure that audience participation and interaction were not compromised on a virtual platform. It succeeded in allowing for meaningful discussions and networking with the speakers. The recorded videos of each session have been saved on the platform so that others may view them even after the conference is over.

◆ LAUNCH UPDATES

CRB ISS 2020 CONFERENCE SOUVENIR

CRB ISS2020 Conference Souvenir was launched during the inaugural session of the conference. [Read the report here.](#)

VSS COLLABORATION INDIA

This is an initiative of Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) for Sustainability Standards organisations operating in India to be better informed about each other's initiatives and explore opportunities to collaborate. [Read more about the initiative here](#)

YOUTH COLLABORATION - YOUTH FOR SUSTAINABILITY (YFS) INDIA ALLIANCE

The Youth for Sustainability (YFS) India alliance will bring together like-minded youth-focused and multi-stakeholder organizations and build consensus for individual, civil society, corporate and government policy actions. The Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) has joined the movement as a Member. [Read more about the alliance here.](#)

BUSINESS GUIDE ON HOW TO TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

Moving to sustainable palm oil is not an overnight process. Once the intent and 'why' are clear, a sustainable sourcing policy needs to be developed and implemented.

It requires a series of activities and initiatives to socialise and implement the policy together with internal and external stakeholders. [Read more in the Business Guide here.](#)

CRB & ISB PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

CRB & ISB announced the start of a project that the organizations will collaborate on. This project will focus on developin a plan for identifying, fostering and promoting a responsible forest economy. For more information please email nandini@c4rb.in

SEWA BOOK LAUNCH

A book (collection of speeches by Ela Bhatt, Founder, SEWA) was launched during the conference.

ISS 2020 SESSION
RECORDINGS CAN BE
VIEWED HERE

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Thank You.