

***Accelerating
and Reinforcing
Transformative
Change for Societal
Resilience***

8TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE

27 - 29 OCT 2021

REPORT

FOREWARD

New Frontiers for Sustainable Business post COVID

The global landscape on sustainability, sustainable business has evolved considerably in the last year and a half or so, not just driven by multilateral agencies, but also Governments, private sector, academia, Civil Society – and most importantly by a large battery of professionals from diverse backgrounds.

India has witnessed significant developments on various aspects of its sustainability agenda in this period as well, characterised by key milestones driven by the Government of India. This included the launch of the national disclosure framework for responsible business (BRSR); developments pertaining to the national action plan on business and human rights and an initiative on sustainable finance - among others. Led by the Honourable Prime Minister, India also raised its ambitions on Climate Action at the COP26 Glasgow Summit last November. A time bound commitment to net zero emissions by 2070, was at its heart. The Indian private sector hasn't been far behind in demonstrating its leadership on sustainability in the recent past not just within the country but also globally. A number of companies have embraced the Science Based Targets initiative (67 Indian companies); co-developed the Transform to Net Zero coalition; contributed significantly to the global Trillion Trees initiative through mass tree plantation in millions and so on.

CRB's eighth annual conference ***India and Sustainability Standards 2021 (ISS2021 as it is referred to)*** was organised against this background, with the theme - **Accelerating and Reinforcing Transformative Change for Societal Resilience**. It emphasised on **Transformative Change** and underlined the need to build **Societal Resilience** against future shocks like COVID especially given the lurking threats of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss.

A diverse set of stakeholders touched a number of **complex contemporary topics** over the three days of the conference, some of them are enumerated here below:

- Addressing climate risks through business commitment and action with special attention towards SMEs playing a leading role
- Reducing human-led environmental damages by adopting and promoting sustainable and circular business models, including along value chains
- Shaping business strategies and decisions-making by considering the true value of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Creating an ecosystem to nurture sustainable enterprises that foster decent work and economic opportunities, attracting sustainable finance and investments

- Addressing inequality and vulnerabilities through effective business and human rights frameworks, building on experiences of the UNGPs and the National Action Plans (NAPs)
- Fostering collaboration and cooperation across stakeholders, geographies, power and institutional structures and systems
- Examining the evolving role of technology, data and finance as enablers, thereby reducing the divide they seem to have created
- Appreciate role of Voluntary Sustainability Standards in post COVID recovery
- Build widespread awareness and understanding on application of Circularity principles
- Integrate principles of Business and Human Rights into Climate Actions

We are thankful to all the partners, speakers, delegates who joined us this year. We had 50 partner organisations, 250 speakers, 34 sessions and over 850 delegates.

Some of the **key take-aways** for CRB and our partners were:

- Emphasise on context specific solutions and adapting existing 'good practices'
- Build partnerships and collaborations to widen engagement with stakeholders
- Include unheard voices and focus on engaging the unengaged in sustainability dialogues
- Design climate actions in an inclusive and collaborative manner
- Empower and build capabilities of SMEs and Collectives

CRB celebrated our 10th anniversary on 14th November 2021, close on the heels of ISS2021. As we embark on our journey into our second decade, we are conscious that it will remain a challenging task every bit of the way, given the aspiration that CRB nurtures and our vision that 'Businesses integrate sustainability into their core practices'. We will continue to follow a centrist path and push the boundaries of sustainability, sustainable business with a wider community of stakeholders. We are constantly inspired by the work of and growing interest among a wide range of practitioners on the subject and remain optimistic of the possibilities.

I am reminded of Napoleon Hill's famous saying, "One of the most common causes of failure is the habit of quitting when one is overtaken by temporary defeat" (Think and Grow Rich). We have the guts and the stamina for this marathon – we can't afford to fail, we wouldn't.

Rijit Sengupta

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CENTRE FOR RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS**



DAY 1

27 OCTOBER 2021

8th Annual
**INDIA AND
SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS**
International Dialogues and Conference
October 27 - 29, 2021 | Online

Organised & Hosted by:
10^{year} CRB CENTRE for RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

1 Day
27 October
**Conference
Programme**

Lead Partners



0930-1130 hrs

CONFERENCE INAUGURAL SESSION
*Accelerating and Reinforcing Transformative
Change for a Resilient Society*

1130-1145 hrs | BREAK

1145-1315 hrs

HIGH LEVEL PANEL ONE
*Examining Our Willingness & Ability to Drive
Transformative Change*

1315-1400 hrs | BREAK

1400-1530 hrs

HIGH LEVEL PANEL TWO
*Enabling Business Contribution towards
a Resilient Society*

1530-1545 hrs | BREAK

1545-1645 hrs

PLENARY
*India's Taxonomy: Defining Sustainable
Economic Activities*

Co-hosts:



ACCELERATING AND REINFORCING TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE FOR SOCIETAL RESILIENCE



MR SURESH PRABHU
MEMBER OF
PARLIAMENT



**PROF JUDGE
MERVYN KING**
PROFESSOR AT
UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH AFRICA



PROF BIMAL ARORA
CHAIRPERSON, CRB



**AMBASSADOR UGO
ASTUTO**
EU DELEGATION TO
INDIA



MS SHOKO NODA
RESIDENT
REPRESENTATIVE,
UNDP INDIA



**MR JAMSHYD
GODREJ**
MD, GODREJ AND
BOYCE



MR DEEPAK ARORA
CRB BOARD
MEMBER

The inaugural session began by observing a minute's silence, remembering those who have been lost during the pandemic. This was then followed by Rijit Sengputa from CRB elaborating India's steady role in leading the way as a global leader in sustainability with the BRSR framework, Sustainable Finance Taxonomy and the NAP. He then set the context for the 3 day conference with 3 goals - first, to assess how we can make rapid progress towards SDGs. Second, to examine the processes and tools to measure how we are able to move forward and make an impact. Lastly, to ensure that there is a collaborative spirit.

He further then thanked the lead partners, the delegates and the attendees for supporting the conference as well as CRB as it turns 10. As an organisation, he said, the focus will now be first, to generate relevant knowledge and expertise across stakeholders for the business case for sustainability. Second, to facilitate an enabling environment for better business. Third, to nurture innovative collaborations. Rijit then introduced the Chief Guest, Mr Suresh Prabhu.

The Chief Guest and Member of Parliament Mr Suresh Prabhu began by stressing that the window to act is rather small and it is urgent now to act not only to deal with the climate emergency but to be prepared for future shocks. Any hope to mitigate effects of climate change, he added, depended on our ability to alter lifestyles and business models.

Prof Judge Mervyn King, in his keynote address, added to this and asserted the need for corporate governance to move away from being a mere checklist of objectives and to become more meaningful and outcome oriented focusing on the 3Ps - people, planet and prosperity.

Prof Bimal Arora, Chairperson of CRB, reiterated the dire need to act on climate change, and stated that it is no longer a future problem, but one that must be dealt with now. In this context, he underlined the scope and aspiration that CRB has towards expanding its work and ambition in its second decade.

Ambassador Ugo Astuto from the EU Delegation to India highlighted that the

frequency of extreme climate events around the world point to the drastic and rapid nature of climate change, making it an existential threat. He pointed out that there is an ever urgent need to transition towards cleaner energy systems for a greener future. He further stated that although governments must plan this transition to a greener economy, there is a role to be played by all the stakeholders who are involved in the process and

standards - to ensure that there is a uniformity in what businesses are asked to do and the thresholds they are asked to meet.

Ms Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India, began by highlighting the debilitating impact that COVID19 has had, not only on the economy but also on the efforts to meet the SDGs, with global poverty rates rising for the first time with 119 million people being pushed back into extreme poverty last year. She stressed on reimagining development towards a more inclusive, fairer, accountable and sustainable model based on collective action.

The esteemed special guest speaker, Mr Jamshyd Godrej further reiterated the need for action and for different actors to come together for the common cause of working for the planet. Business, he added,

had considerable responsibility towards people and the planet and there is a need to take swift actions. In his vote of thanks, Mr Deepak Arora, member of the CRB board, concluded by summarising some of the key points raised by the speakers and thanked all the distinguished speakers.



business must help in enabling this process. Here he said, is the need for



EXAMINING OUR WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY TO DRIVE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE



MR ARUN MAIRA
CHAIRMAN,
HELPPAGE
INTERNATIONAL



SALLY UREN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
FORUM FOR THE
FUTURE



ANSHU GUPTA
FOUNDER
DIRECTOR, GOONJ



JANEZ POTOČNIK
CO-CHAIR, THE
INTERNATIONAL
RESOURCE PANEL



O.P. AGARWAL
CEO, WRI INDIA



AMITABH BEHAR
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER, OXFAM INDIA

The first high level plenary of the day began with Rijit Sengputa setting the context for the session and providing an introduction for Mr Arun Maira. Mr Maira began by introducing the panel and asked the panel 'What is our understanding of 'Transformative Change' as embedded in the 2030 Agenda?'

Sally Uren began by saying that transformative change is catalytic change and must also spur change in other systems while also being self-sustaining. This would require thinking about the policy instruments and finance mechanisms that would be required to sustain the change, she said. She concluded by stressing the need to think differently and the need for a change in mindset for transformative change.

Dr OP Agrawal from WRI reiterated that transformative change cannot be incremental. Further, he said that the focus has been on climate negotiations which include experts who understand the nuances of climate action. However, to transform the discussions into action requires capacity building for a larger set of people and professionals who must first understand climate. Thus, there is a need to develop mechanisms that will aid in delivering on the promises made at international

conventions. Secondly, there is a greater need for coordination between the multiple agencies that are working towards the SDGs. The focus tends to be, he said, on outputs and not on outcomes. There must be convergence between the different agencies so that there is accountability for outcomes and not just outputs.

Janez Potočnik highlighted the need to focus on the drivers and pressures in a systematic way. Additionally, he used the example of cars and stated that even if a car is bought and never used, it has still contributed to air pollution due to the extraction process for the minerals used in it. Thus, there is a need to assess products at each stage and not just at the consumption stage and the emphasis must be on decarbonisation and dematerialisation. He added that the practice of encouraging consumers to pay more for responsible and sustainable purchases while not making the producers pay for the environmental impact of their products must also change. He concluded by saying that social and environmental sustainability must go hand in hand and so the focus must be to achieve all the SDGs.

Anshu Gupta began by highlighting that in

addition to being a health crisis the pandemic has brought several other crises to light which must be addressed in order to build considerable momentum towards the SDGs. In part, the failures in dealing with the pandemic across the world may be attributed to the fact that it has been a top-down as opposed to a participatory approach. This is because those who identify the problems also develop the solutions without considering the common people as stakeholders in the process. There is a need, therefore, to examine what worked during the crisis and what didn't so that lessons may be applied to the climate crisis as well. He added that there cannot be a one size fits all approach to the climate crisis and instead, solutions must be context specific and participatory.

Amitabh Behar began by saying that the SDG Agenda is extremely ambitious especially in bringing together the economic, social and environmental pillars. However, it does not weave these goals together and it has not addressed the most important aspect which is that of political will and action. Further, he added that there is a need to understand the causes of problems that persist, such as poverty and inequality. Rather than eradicating the manifestation of the problem, the divers must first be understood. Further, he said that there is a need to recognise the problems within macro economic structures that perpetuate poverty and inequality in the third world. This must be coupled with a recognition that transformative change will not be linear and will be messy.

Mr Maira then asked the panel about the role of measurements to produce desirable changes in complex systems.



Janez Potočnik began by saying that measurement is crucial because what is not measured is not acted upon. He said that the older tools to measure are not useful for advancing sustainable growth and production. Thus, the functionality of systems must be measured. Additionally, the kind of progress that is being measured must be reviewed. He further stated that the world has never been this interconnected and interdependent and this highlights the need for joint action and collaboration.

Sally Uren reiterated the need to reappraise measuring for systemic change. She said that the economy is not here to achieve a certain level of GDP but rather to serve the needs of society. Thus, GDP as a measure of progress must change and must be reevaluated. She then recommended four ways in which change can be assessed. The first is through new flows of information such as is seen with the focus on nature based solutions. The second is through new mechanisms such as green bonds which are now emerging. Third is new policy such as a taskforce for financial disclosures in the UK. Lastly, a change in mindsets and outlook is a good way to assess whether systems are changing. Thus there is a need to look beyond quantitative data and to understand qualitative changes.

Amitabh Behar reiterated Sally's emphasis on qualitative data and processes and called for dialing back the focus on qualitative measurements while ensuring collaboration from people who are impacted by

interventions. Anshu Gupta also emphasised the need for understanding the intention and purpose of measurement - whether measurements are referred to for future planning or not.

Dr OP Agrawal reiterated the points put forth by the panel and the importance of measuring outcomes rather than outputs. However, he also said that measuring outcomes is a complex task and there is a need to develop solutions so as to assess what may be done to adequately measure transformative change.

Janez Potočnik concluded by saying that there is a need to focus on the needs of society rather than the sectors and the outputs. He stated that outputs are by definition resource intensive while the outcomes are not. Thus there is a need to redefine consumption from owning to using, redefine production from mass sales to providing efficient functionality, redefine core economic incentives (taxations, subsidies, etc), integrate well being as an objective across policies, measure sustainability with a life cycle perspective, and to use innovation in

categories of economic ecosystem rather than in categories of production.

Sally Uren concluded by reiterating the need to change mindsets and narratives. Anshu Gupta also reiterated the need to treat people as stakeholders and rethinking power relations. Amitabh Behar concluded by stating that the faultlines exposed by the pandemic must be learned from. There is a need to rethink metrics and tools for measurements and to move from shareholder capitalism to stakeholder capitalism.

While concluding, the panel was asked to mention the action that people can take now. To this Janez Potočnik recommended to be the leader as opposed to waiting for leadership. Sally Uren highlighted the need for systems thinking while Dr OP Agrawal advocated for integrating local thinking into national and global thinking. Amitabh Behar and Anshu Gupta mentioned the need for humility and listening to others. With this Mr Maira thanked the panel and closed the session.



ENABLING BUSINESS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A RESILIENT SOCIETY



RAJEEV DUBEY
FORMER GROUP
PRESIDENT (HR &
CORPORATE
SERVICES) & CEO
(AFTER-MARKET
SECTOR) AND
CURRENTLY NON
-EXEC CHAIRMAN
OF MAHINDRA
INSURANCE
BROKERS LTD



KIRTI POONIA,
FOUNDER, OKHAI



EVA ZABEY
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, BUSINESS
FOR NATURE



RICHARD HOWITT
STRATEGIC ADVISOR
ON CORP RESP &
SUSTAINABILITY,
BUSINESS & HUMAN
RIGHTS



ANUP VIKAL
CHIEF FINANCIAL
OFFICER, NAYARA
ENERGY



**INKE VAN DER
SLUIJS**
DIRECTOR, MARKET
TRANSFORMATION,
ROUNDTABLE ON
SUSTAINABLE PALM
OIL (RSPO)

This high-level plenary sought to understand how businesses balance the trade-offs between competitiveness, growth and social/environmental impacts in the recovery phase while also discussing opportunities to integrate the needs and aspirations of SMEs in the recovery process. The enabling factors supporting 'business unusual' to achieve measurable positive impacts on lives, livelihoods and nature were also highlighted.

The high-level plenary began with introductions from Rijit Sengupta. Rajeev Dubey, the moderator of the panel posed questions to each of the panelists, beginning with Kirti Poonia regarding the tradeoffs in the recovery phase. Kirti stated that over the course of the pandemic, there has been a move away from competition and towards cooperation. This is because there was a level of uncertainty that encouraged competitors to strategise together on how to address the challenges posed by Covid. She added cooperation is key in the move towards sustainability as well, to share resources, insights and best practices with competitors so

as to enable collective action.

The same question was then posed to Eva Zabey who picked up from Kirti's statements and added that there needs to be a change in how we view competitiveness, growth and social impacts. Rather than viewing them as trade-offs, the interconnectedness between these three must be understood and examined. She stated further that sustainability has become a core business issue that companies need to address to remain competitive in the long run especially with the growing consumer demands for sustainability. She also emphasised the importance of rethinking what growth and success mean because every business ultimately depends on nature and there can be no business, let alone growth, on a dead planet. Hence, she stated, there is a need for a mindset change on what growth and performance mean on a finite planet. This then provides an opportunity to decouple economic growth from planetary degradation and to place people and social equity at the centre. She concluded by listing four key things that all companies can

do: assess, commit, act and advocate. Assess their impact on nature, make commitments that are science based and context specific, act to avoid negative impacts on the environment and to advocate for a change in the system and to move from voluntary to mandatory actions that can stem from policy frameworks.

Richard Howitt then addressed the key role of SMEs, which constitute 96% of businesses in Asia in the recovery process. The impact of Covid has been severe on SMEs, with the OECD estimating that 1 in 2 SMEs will not survive the debilitating effects of the pandemic. There is a need to include them within the conversation on sustainability as they are the principal actors in alleviating millions out of poverty by providing them with employment opportunities. There have, however, been certain challenges to SMEs over the pandemic which they must address; the first is regarding adapting to the situation, the second is promoting digitisation and the third is taking advantage of new market trends. The SDGs are a market opportunity, he concluded, and so SMEs must realise that they cannot continue business as usual.

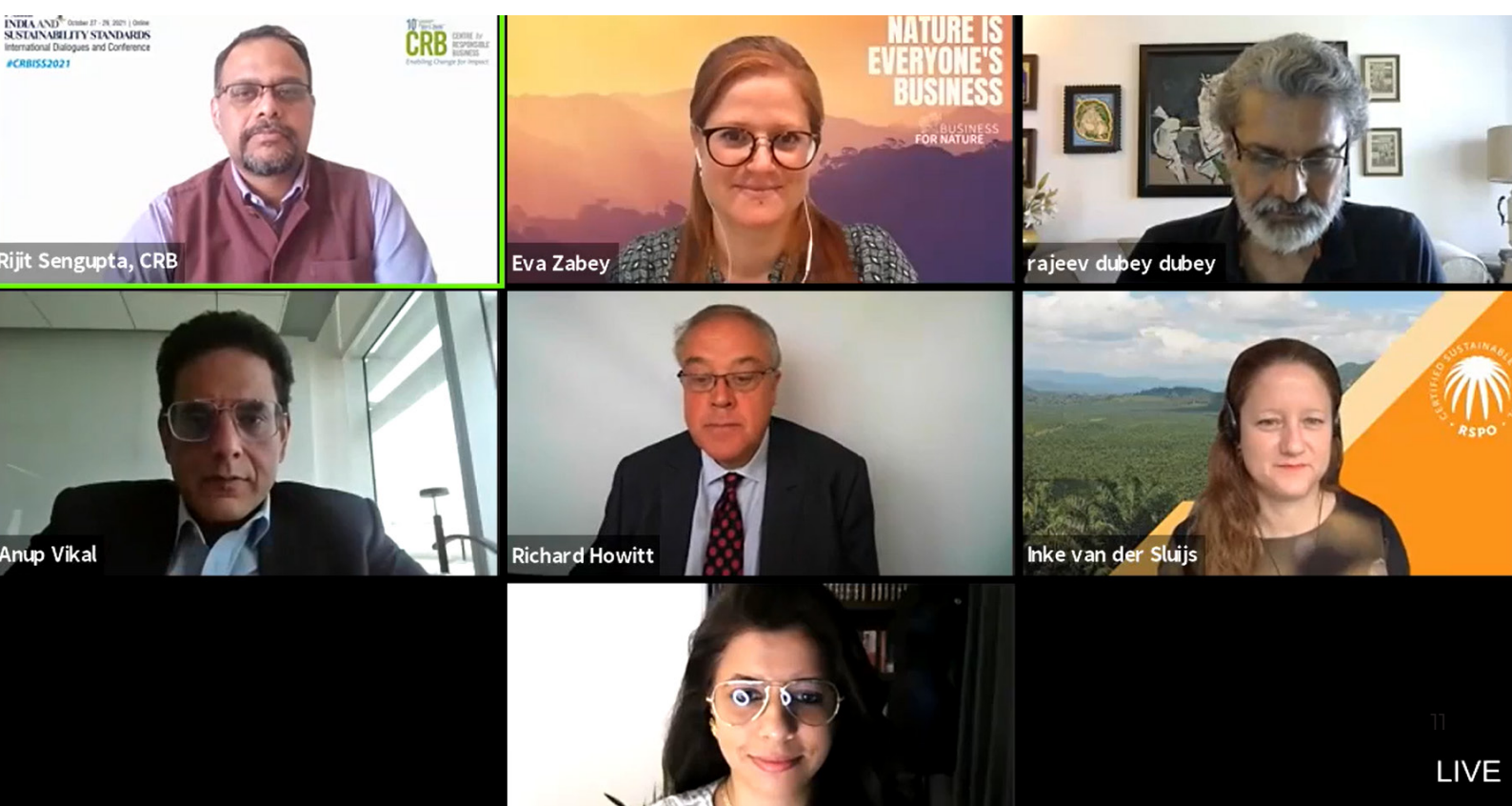
Anup Vikal added to this by stating the need to leverage India's youth to create more

entrepreneurs in SMEs. He highlighted the importance of engaging the youth in achieving the 2030 Goals. He also stressed for policy support, technical training and funding for SMEs in India.

Inke van der Sluijs from RSPO began by stating that uncertainty has provided an impetus to companies to seek more sustainable practices. The implementation of more sustainable sourcing practices, she added, has the potential to contribute to more resilient businesses and businesses with a purpose are more likely to be market leaders. She then discussed the work done by RSPO and the centrality of sustainable palm oil production.

Eva Zabey then highlighted the need for ambitious policies to drive action on biodiversity and SDGs. She stated that such policy interventions give businesses a political certainty to invest, innovate and to shift their business models. Kirti Poonia added here that there is also a key role to be played by technological interventions in accelerating sustainable growth in SMEs.

This was followed by a brief question and answer session.



INDIA'S TAXONOMY: DEFINING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES



KARANRAJ CHAUDRI
ADVISOR, SDG AND INNOVATIVE FINANCE, UNDP INDIA



NEHA KUMAR
INDIA PROGRAMME MANAGER, CLIMATE BONDS INITIATIVE



DONAL CANNON
HEAD OF REGIONAL REPRESENTATION FOR SOUTH ASIA, ECB



RIJIT SENGUPTA
CEO, CRB



HARSH SINGHAL
MANAGING DIRECTOR, CDPQ INDIA

This plenary sought to provide an overview of global taxonomy development while also assessing the objectives behind taxonomy development and how taxonomies can be used.

Devyani Hari, Director CRB began the session by providing an introduction about the session and the need for taxonomies in relation to sustainable development. She then introduced the moderator, Karanraj Chaudri from UNDP who gave a brief introduction about taxonomy and how they provide a common language and aid in tracking the flow of resources towards the achievement of the SDGs. He added that India's Ministry of Finance, earlier this year, constituted a government led taskforce on sustainable finance which is also developing a Sustainable Finance Taxonomy, encompassing both environmental and social elements in its design.

Neha Kumar then added that there is a surge in the demand for a common language between the borrower and the investor to understand the role of green bonds in sustainable development, what they are investing in and what the money is being raised for. She then distinguished between climate taxonomy (focusing on mitigation and adaptation), green taxonomy (broader than climate taxonomies) and sustainable taxonomy (which also includes the social aspects). She elaborated on the key components and elements of a taxonomy - that the definitions should be clear and have science-based thresholds and metrics.

A taxonomy may also be applied to different financial instruments such as bonds and thus must be adaptable to those different instruments. It must also be dynamic so as to be flexible enough in keeping with changes in science and knowledge.

Donal Cannon from the EIB elaborated the European Union's taxonomies and stated that the International Financial Reporting Standards provide a key example from the corporate sector. He added further that in India there is an underutilised capital pool which can be mobilised towards sustainable finance. He emphasised that there has been a steady increase in sustainable bonds, reaching \$500 billion in June this year. This highlights that there are vast numbers of investors looking to invest in sustainability. This is important because this is increasingly becoming the language of investors, regulators, auditors and rating agencies. Having a taxonomy on sustainable finance in India is key because when Indian businesses are negotiating with investors, they have to demonstrate that they understand the risks that they are facing from climate change and that they have a plan to deal with that change.

Harsh Singhal illustrated the work being done by CDPQ. He then added that if an institution wishes to invest in a carbon friendly project, they would require a reference guide which is transparent, reliable, and can be audited. This

is why a taxonomy is a useful tool. Accessing capital and creating value for stakeholders were illustrated as the key components to ensuring the success of the taxonomy.

He was followed by Rijit Sengupta who began by setting the context within which this taxonomy is needed in India - in the aftermath of Covid, the priority must be to build the economy and create jobs. In this context, the need on the ground is to understand how this capital can be available where jobs have been lost for instance in SMEs and integrating the SMEs within the conversation on sustainable finance.

Neha Kumar reiterated the need to widen

the ambit within which sustainable finance is available so as to ensure that it is a usable tool. In this context, there is a need to define whether the taxonomy would apply to the large companies while also delving into the different instruments that it can be applied to. The instruments and their usage must be wide, she added, so as to ensure that it can be applied to various activities and also cover SMEs. Donal Cannon too agreed with Rijit in the need to bring the SMEs in the discussion since every country relies on smaller enterprises for certain sectors.



DAY 2

28 OCTOBER 2021

8th Annual INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

International Dialogues and Conference
October 27 - 29, 2021 | Online

Organised & Hosted by:
10th YEAR
CRB
CENTRE for
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

Day 2 28 October Conference Programme

Lead Partners



1000-1130 hrs

Strengthening North-South Dialogue for
Co-Operation and Action on Business and Human Rights

Lead Partner
& co-host:



1130-1145 hrs | BREAK

1145-1315 hrs

Integrating Sustainable
Production and
Trade of Forest
linked Commodities

Co-host:



Collaboration as
a Lever of
Change

Co-host:



Towards a Sustainability
Framework: Nudging
FPOs and
Markets Closer

Co-hosts:



Family Friendly Policies
(FFPS): A Pathway for
Responsible
Value Chain and
Acceleration Towards SDGs

Knowledge
Partner



A Multistakeholder Dialogue
on the Elimination of Child
Labour in Indian
Readymade Garment Value
Chain

Co-host:



1315-1400 hrs | BREAK

1400-1530 hrs

India - Sustainable Palm
Oil Dialogue, 2021
Shared Responsibility for
Sustainable Palm Oil in
India

Lead partner
& co-host:



Made in India: Promoting
Growth and Resilience
through
the UN Guiding Principles on
Business and Human Rights

Lead partner
& co-host:



Roadmap for Tackling
Food Loss and Waste in
India:
Policy, Practice, and
Partnerships

Lead partner
& co-host:



Exploring Best
Practices to
Eliminate Child
Labour in
Supply Chains

Co-host:



Brick by Brick -
Exploring Inclusive &
Effective Business
Models for the Brick
Sector in India

Co-host:

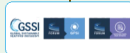


1530-1545 hrs | BREAK

1545-1715 hrs

Collaborative Approaches
for Setting Industry
Expectations in
Sustainability and Food
Safety

Co-host:



Contribution of EU
Businesses in Promoting
Sustainability
and SDGs in India:
Challenges & Opportunities

Co-host:



Multi-stakeholder
Partnerships for
Sustainable
Forest Management and
Livelihoods

Co-host:



Exploring Alternate
Livelihood Options for
Tea Plantation
Workers to Ensure a
Better Living Condition

Co-host:



Decade of Action:
2020-30
Why Should
Sustainability Standards
Engage Millennials?

Co-host:



STRENGTHENING NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE FOR CO-OPERATION AND ACTION ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.

South Asia

MODERATOR: PROF. VASANTHI SRINIVASAN, IIM BANGALORE AND GOVERNING BODY MEMBER, CRB

SPEAKERS:

- SHUBHA SEKHAR, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY, THE COCA-COLA COMPANY
- VIRAF MEHTA, MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE, NVG AND NGRBC; MEMBER ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE NAP ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS, GOI
- JOHN MORRISON, CEO, INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND BUSINESS
- MARTIN MALMROS, CEO AND CO-FOUNDER AT SNOWKAP

This session sought to examine the gaps in existing relationships between businesses and their suppliers, especially in terms of due diligence practices, supply chain transparency and disclosures. Additionally, it discussed how principles of 'shared responsibility' and 'multi-stakeholder regional collaboration' be reinforced to make supply chains more resilient to crises and disruptions.

The session began with an introduction by Nandini Sharma from CRB who set the context for the discussion. She then welcomed the session moderator, Prof Vasanthi Srinivasan, IIM Bangalore. Prof Srinivasan welcomed the panel and highlighted the importance of UNGPs in several countries across the Global South, particularly in a country like India, which with its tradition of human rights, enshrined in its constitution provides an opportunity to be able to look at the issue of Business and Human Rights in a much more holistic manner. She added that value chains have been under scrutiny for years with most of them being in Asia and Africa. She then invited Mr Viraf Mehta and asked how he viewed the National Action Plans helping in navigating the evolving relations in the context of developing countries.

Mr Viraf Mehta began by discussing the evolution

of the UNGPs especially in the context of India and in outlining to all businesses what was meant by sustainable business. He added that in India there has been a recognition that business was not just a single but rather the entire value chain ecosystem. He further added that there are human rights issues across the world. So, in India, there should not be focus on the requirements from brands in the West which would then shape the discourse on how Indian suppliers are doing. There must be an equal sense of examining human rights issues in all the countries. Lastly, a compliance driven policy would fail and there is instead a need for a new dimension of partnerships - an emphasis on capacity building and awareness and the need for introducing the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in India. NAP can provide businesses with clarity on what to expect from the state in terms of harmonisation of laws and incentivisation of human rights which is very important.

With this Prof Srinivasan handed over the discussion to Mr John Morrison who reiterated the need for NAP in India. Further, he added that the discussion is not as simple as North - South, it's more complex than that. This highlights the need for more nuanced approaches in understanding the human rights impact of business and trade. He urged a reassessment of current approaches



which can no longer be based on any neoliberal assumptions about the marketplace especially in the context of protectionist policies by countries in the Global North.

Ms Shubha Sekhar began by stressing that large businesses and Multinational Corporations are not a homogeneous group. She added that different companies have different ways of responding to the discussion of business and human rights. Further, she elaborated on the work done by Coca Cola as one of the early adopters to the human rights approach. She concluded by stating that approaches to human rights considerations in businesses must be context specific; there is a need for sharing best practices as well as highlighting to the suppliers across the value chain what is expected from them.

Prof Srinivasan asked Mr Martin Malmros about the role of technology in addressing BHR issues. He began by stating that the North side of planet Earth has to give more to the South side of planet Earth in order to make it more sustainable. Various countries still lack the capacity and resources to move towards sustainability and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and that's one of the reasons for persistent BHR issues. He continued that businesses face risks in continuing to operate without addressing the BHR issues. Technology, he added, has made it cheaper and more efficient for auditing. This

has created a tamper proof digital trail to ensure environmental standards are maintained and to improve the use of natural resources.

Prof Srinivasan then posed the audience's questions to the panel. She asked about the mechanics to further facilitate the global commitments for more concerted action on the ground. Is there potential to do much more in meeting the global commitments and how can countries and corporations be held accountable for more concerted action? Other questions also included the need to elaborate on the heterogeneity within the Global South rather than viewing it as a single block. This point was reiterated by John Morrison. He added that although there has been an attempt to create this block, there are too many nuances that get missed. With the European Union (EU) as well, although the EU is a powerful voice in the BHR Agenda, there are big BHR challenges that it faces as well. Hence, there is a need to create clearer incentives and clear disincentives for those who do not factor in BHR considerations across value chains.

Mr Viraf Mehta further added that there is a need to focus on the marginalised communities within this discussion of human rights and advised for a deeper understanding of a human rights-based approach. To conclude, Ms Shubha Sekhar once again reiterated the importance of and the need

for a multi stakeholder approach, multi sectoral partnerships, trainings and capacity building. She also underlined the need for sustained and concerted efforts to ensure that supply chains become increasingly sustainable over the years, rather than expecting change to occur overnight. Mr Martin Malmros concluded by stating that circularity is crucial - small circular practices across the value chain and in each position will aid in technology addressing sustainability issues. Mr Viraf Mehta concluded by highlighting the need to initiate sustainability education not just in higher education but also in schools to begin teaching students about the value of human rights and sustainable development.

The following recommendations emerged from the panel -

- The understanding of human rights issues in businesses must be context specific and so risk mechanisms must also be context specific
- There is a need for training and capacity building for stakeholders across value chains to understand what BHR means
- Leveraging existing technology in expanding the BHR Agenda and due diligence beyond tier 1 to provide cost effective and scalable models
- The Global South cannot be understood as a monolith and there is a need more nuanced approaches in understanding the human rights impact of business and trade



A MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND WAY FORWARD TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR IN THE INDIAN APPAREL AND TEXTILE VALUE CHAIN



MODERATOR: SHANKAR VENKATESWARAN, ADVISOR - SUSTAINABILITY, BUSINESS, SOCIETY
SPEAKERS:

- R. C. KESAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL AT OGTC (OKHLA GARMENT AND TEXTILE CLUSTER)
- PAWAN GUPTA, GENERAL MANAGER AT GENUS APPAREL
- ANIMESH SAXENA, MANAGING DIRECTOR AT NEETEE CLOTHING
- NIRMALA PANDEY, CHILD PROTECTION SPECIALIST AT UNICEF INDIA
- PRABHAT KUMAR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT SAVE THE CHILDREN

This session aimed to explore the current situation of child labour in AandT supply chains beyond Tier 2. It also sought to discuss tools and frameworks that can be adapted by businesses for a child labor free AandT value chain.

The session began with Alay Barah, ICCo who set the context for the discussion. He stressed on the urgent need for action in order to eliminate child labour by 2025. While some steps have been taken by industries and businesses, there are still gaps that must be addressed especially in tier 2 cities. Taking the example of Delhi, he mentioned that certain tools had been adopted in order to address and eliminate child labour. He then invited the moderator, Mr Shankar Venkateswaran to discuss the actions being taken to address child labour in the textile sector. Mr Venkateswaran began by highlighting the role of consumer movements in making sure that brands and manufacturers prevent child labour in their supply chains. He further stressed the need to engage various stakeholders especially through continuous dialogue. He then summarised the previous dialogues and their outcomes. This included a deeper understanding of the drivers of child labour and the impact of COVID and subsequent school closures on child labour.

Mr Venkateswaran then asked Mr RC Kesar, OGTC to share his understanding of the reasons that child labour is still prevalent today and potential ways to address it. Mr Kesar began by stating that there is a clear distinction between child labor and child work. If we are able to distinguish these two, he added, then we can shrink the magnitude of this issue of child labour. He then elaborated on the work done by OGTC and the work done by Global March in sensitising stakeholders and in raising awareness about child labour. Pawan Gupta, Genus Apparel also reiterated this need for training and awareness generation.

Animesh Saxena from NeeTee Clothing added here that the pressure of compliances and quality control has resulted in a drastic reduction of child labour among garment exporters. Further, there is a need to ensure that only the certified contractors or subcontractors are hired. The pressure to be certified is a key method to ensure that child labour is reduced and subsequently eliminated. This would be coupled with regular monitoring by the certifying agency, thereby ensuring that the certified contractor continues to adhere to the standards.

Nirmala Pandey from UNICEF began by elaborating on child labor and poverty are

multidimensional problems and the need to understand the linkage between the various factors to develop the right solutions. Further, she added, that the work done by UNICEF demonstrates that children migrate for labour and never return home, coupled with a large number of lost children who become engaged in labour. She also touched upon indebtedness due to the lack of access to affordable healthcare facilities which forces families to send their children into labour. Over the course of the pandemic, she stated that UNICEF conducted a study and found that 80% of the children engaged in labour were school dropouts. Two of the reasons for dropping out were first, that after class 8 the schools were too far and second, that their parents do not see the value of poor-quality education. Hence, the lack of access to facilities was emphasised by her coupled with the lack of data on the extent of child labour.

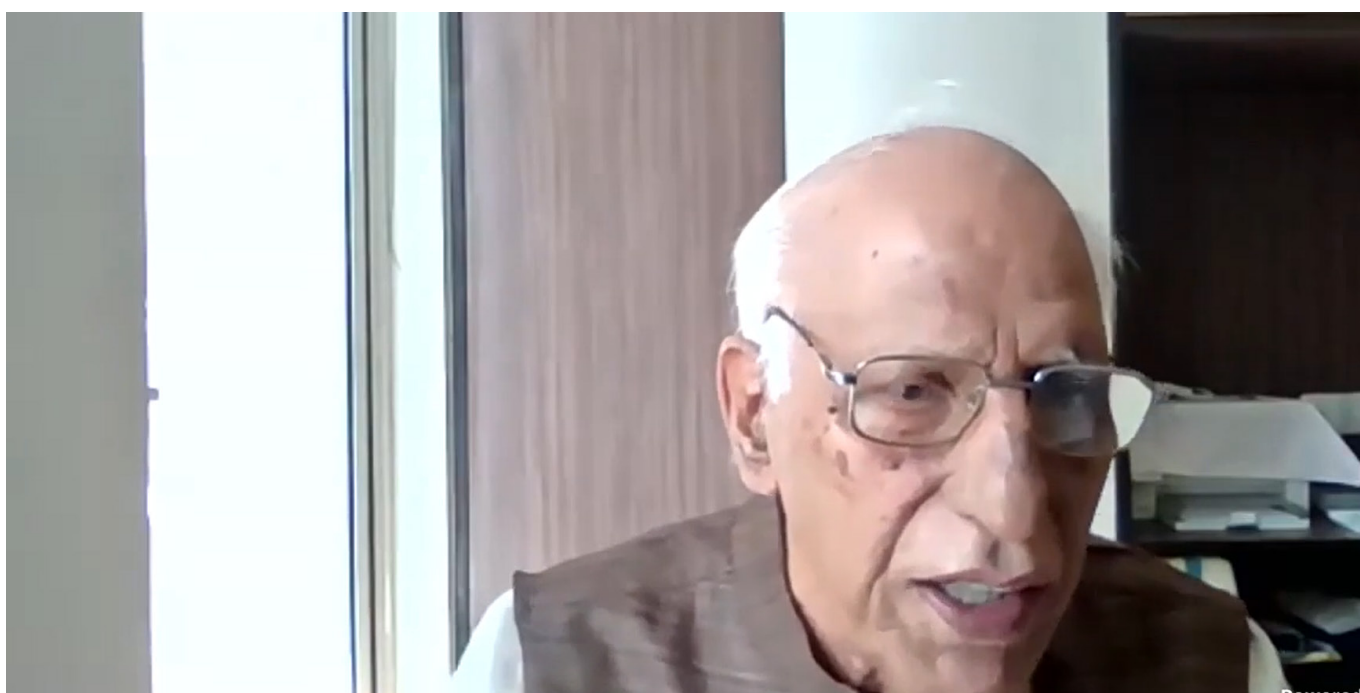
Prabhat Kumar, Save the Children, added here that although there is a decline in child labour in the big cities, it is increasingly in tier 2 and tier 3. While it is declining at the factory level, 87% of children are engaged in home-based work and it's in the informal sector. He highlighted that humanitarian shocks and disasters including COVID result in an increase in child labour.

Animesh Saxena reiterated the need for

responsible brands and the role they play in putting pressure on contractors not to employ children. Regular monitoring and partnerships with local civil society organisations were also found to be effective in his experience. Mr Kesar also added that in his experience, sensitisation of employers and manufacturers played a role in facilitating change. Mr Venkateswaran further highlighted the need for domestic industries to learn from exporters as they constitute 5 times the textile sector as the export industries. While the latter has found success in reducing child labour, the same must be encouraged among the domestic industries as well.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussion -

- Organising multi stakeholder dialogues involving brands and manufacturers to jointly understand challenges and solutions
- Working with businesses to incentivise employees to send their children to school
- Increasing consumer awareness and influencing consumer behaviour against child labour
- Incentivising responsible businesses - which do not use child labour - through regular orders, timely payments, price premiums, etc.



INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND TRADE OF FOREST LINKED COMMODITIES



MODERATOR: BHAVANA PRASAD, DIRECTOR - SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS, WWF-INDIA

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: RAJEEV KHER, FORMER JOINT SECRETARY AT MOEFCC AND FORMER COMMERCE SECRETARY AT GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SPEAKERS:

- DHEERAJ TALREJA, PRESIDENT, AAK-SOUTH ASIA
- BHAWNA YADAV, REGIONAL SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS MANAGER (SOUTH ASIA AND ASEAN), RECKITT
- SRINIVAS PRASAD, CEO, NAVABHARAT LIMITED
- RAYAPA RAJU DGS, HEAD PLANTATIONS, RADHIKA VEGETABLE OILS
- ANOOP EV, DEAN - COLLEGE OF FORESTRY, KERALA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

The aim of this session was to highlight the significant role government mechanisms play in eliminating deforestation, conversion and social risks from commodities supply chains in India and globally with a focus on edible oils (palm, soyabean). Additionally, the session deliberated on the concerted action required by both public and private actors to promote sustainability across these forest linked commodities value chains.

The session began with Rijit Sengupta setting the context for the discussion and welcoming the participation of the private sector, civil society and government officials. He began by quoting the State of the Forest Report according to which the global forest is about 1/3 of the global land area and India still features among the top 10 countries with about 22% coverage of forests and about 72 million hectares. However, he added, deforestation continues to be growing at an alarming rate.

Between 2015 and 2020 years ago, he stated, deforestation was at a rate of about 10 million hectares per year. This has clear implications on biodiversity and climate change. So, through this session, therefore, there was an attempt to try and create and discuss possible solutions to deforestation especially looking at agriculture commodities, which have forests and landscapes in the value chain.

Bhavna Prasad from WWF India added that nature and ecosystem services provide a

significant amount of financial benefit. Overall, these services are estimated to be about \$125 trillion in value. She added that there has been a significant rate of deforestation; almost 80% of Earth's original forests have already been destroyed. Whether it's significantly through agriculture, or through consumption patterns, infrastructure, forestry, or now in terms of climate change, and how it's triggering in forest fires and leading to deforestation or currents of forests, whether it was in the Amazon or in Australia and last year itself or the end this year as well. In this context, she stated, India's production and the relevance of India comes in particularly because our overall consumption patterns are increasing. Hence, she highlighted the unsustainable production practices globally as well as in India and the need for multistakeholder interventions to address this.

With this she set the stage for the discussion and introduced the keynote speaker, Mr Rajeev Kher, former Joint Secretary for MOEFCC and former Commerce Secretary and Government of India. He began by highlighting the interconnected nature of trade policies and the environment. He stated that the focus on trade policies driven by environmental concerns has been at the center stage. This is especially in the case of developing countries, he added, which, by the very nature of their development profile, have been consciously trying to keep away from the infusion of environmental concerns or environmental disciplines into trade policy or

the larger economic policy. However, he stated, it is now very difficult for a developing country to continue the pace of its economic development without keeping sustainability concerns at the center stage in its policymaking.

He elaborated his experience and how he saw that environmental considerations played little role in the policymaking process in the past and especially in trade policymaking. There is a change, however, owing to pressure from the markets and the prominence of international trade in countries such as India, the new disciplines on environment and social aspects of development have started playing a significant role now as a trade policy. While this is a step in the right direction, he stated that there is still a long way to go. This is because in the governmental system, or in the policy making establishment, the environmental or sustainability concerns have not been mainstreamed or infused in the policy making processes.

He further added that the trade policy concerns essentially pertained to the instruments of tariffs and the non-tariff ecosystem. Using the example of the trade and production policies in the context of timber, he highlighted the need for customisation of policies. He concluded by adding that there is a need to examine how sustainability concerns can be brought into trade policies by way of sustainability frameworks or a standards framework. Lastly, he announced the advance launch of the Report on the Policy Frameworks for Responsible Production and Trade of Edible Oils in India which will be officially released at the next I-SPOC meeting.

He highlighted the findings of his research as the following: first, that the production policies have definitely not kept pace with the demands of sustainability on India's natural products such as rubber and coffee. Second, the arsenal of trade policies has been very restrictive. It has used tariffs without keeping certainty in the process. Third, that standards have largely been shunned for imported products and hence the need for standards is not recognised. So, if there is to be a certain connection between trade policies and environmental principles, we will have to adopt a pathway. However, such a pathway cannot

be sudden but must begin by making such conversations central to policy making and must not be restricted to forest based commodities.

Bhavna Prasad then introduced the panel and asked Dheeraj Talreja from AAK to elaborate on the kind of policy regulatory changes that are needed to drive sustainable production and trade of these quantities. She also asked about the role of the private sector in addressing some of these. Mr Talreja picked up from Mr Kher's discussion on trade imbalances and highlighted the need to assess the financial as well as environmental aspects of trade of these commodities. He also stressed on the need for better sourcing, better operations and better solutions to move towards sustainability. He also recommended a combination of policy interventions coupled with the private sector creating the demands to aid in the move towards sustainable commodities.

Bhavna Yadav from Reckitt then reiterated the need to work towards a sustainable supply chain and in adhering to voluntary standards and actions. Using the BHR Agenda as an agenda, she highlighted the need for balancing mandatory, policy regulations with voluntary actions by businesses. The key, however, is effective implementation whether it is mandatory or voluntary. She further the need for collaboration and to learn from others' best practices. Working in silos, she added, had to come to an end in favour of collaborative solutions and multistakeholder partnerships.

Bhavna Prasad then asked how responsible supply chains can be incentivised for better sustainability outcomes. Mr Srinivas Prasad addressed this by stating that although there must be a move towards sustainability, there is an undue emphasis placed on palm oil alone. Instead, he added, that other oils and their production process must be re-evaluated as well.

Mr Rayapa Raju shared his experience of building a sustainable model while reducing waste and reusing products. He suggested that in addition to introducing policies, there is a need to introduce certifications and standards. Here, Bhavna Prasad sought to discuss the potential deforestation in the North East as well as in the

Andaman Islands. Additionally, she highlighted the need to discuss water scarcity while addressing sustainable agriculture.

Mr Anoop EV was then asked about timber production and the potential to influence policies pertaining to timber. He began by highlighting that the full impacts of international trade and global timber harvest have not been properly characterised so as to fully understand the timber harvest footprints. Further, it's crucial to identify critical nations that directly or indirectly drive global timber harvests through global supply chains, while also identifying the nations that have severe timber harvesting practices due to the current trade model. Hence, he added that the policies related to forestry sustainability should consider the carrying capacity of diverse sources, especially in developing nations, and commit to balancing international trade and forest products.

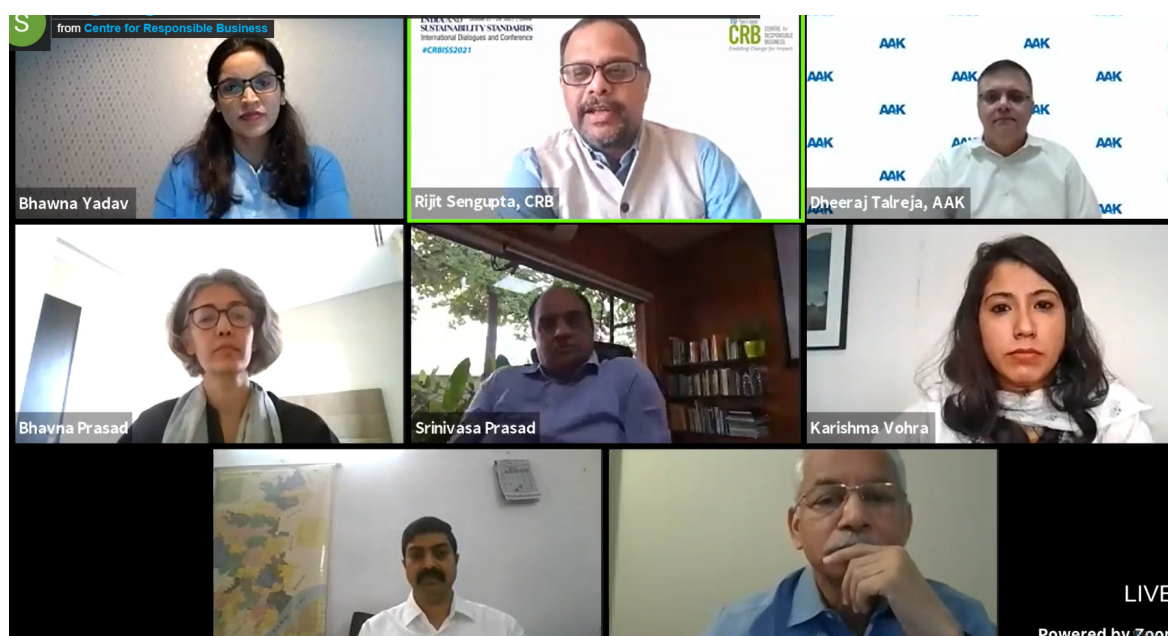
Following this, Bhavana Prasad asked the panel their thoughts on the enabling environment or enabling conditions that the government could provide for greatest sustainable imports into India. To this, Mr Srinivas Prasad replied that there is a need to better understand the barriers to effective implementation of standards in India. There needs to be a set of incentives to encourage compliance coupled with tighter regulations. Mr Talreja also added here that the social aspects of these commodities such as palm oil, rubber and timber must also be understood including concerns of labour rights

and human rights.

The conversation then moved to discussing India's production and what may be done to encourage an enabling environment for more sustainability to be integrated into the measures that have already been announced by the Indian government. Here Bhawna Yadav elaborated on the work being done by Reckitt and highlighted the value of transparency across the entire supply chain. Mr Srinivas Prasad raised the issue of third-party certifications being costly. Here Mr Talreja also added that sustainability frameworks cannot and should not be transplanted in India. Rather, they must be context specific and developed keeping in mind India's needs and current context. This would be possible through collaboration within the corporate sector actors. This will then pave the way for collaboration with the government and other stakeholders.

The following recommendations emerged from the panel -

- The strong need for collaboration within the private sector to pave the way for working together towards certifications and standard setting for forest linked commodities
- Encouraging a combination of voluntary and mandatory standards through context specific policy and regulatory frameworks
- Understanding the financial as well as non-financial impacts of sustainable cultivation of forest linked commodities



FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES (FFPS) - A PATHWAY FOR RESPONSIBLE VALUE CHAIN AND ACCELERATION TOWARDS SDGS



MODERATOR: RAJESHWARI CHANDRASHEKHAR, CHIEF OF FIELD OFFICE, MAHARASHTRA, UNICEF INDIA

SPEAKERS:

- MR. PK GOSWAMI, DIRECTOR- OCCUPATION, HEALTH AND SAFETY, LABOUR DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF DELHI
- MR. MINOR GANESHAN, SENIOR VP- HR, ADMIN, CSR, JOCKEY INDIA
- MR. RAJIV DEWAN, CEO-MA'AM ARTS, JAIPUR, INDIA
- MR. SHOYON ISLAM SHAWN, MANAGING DIRECTOR, SPARROW APPARELS, BANGLADESH
- MR. VIJAYANAND ARUNACHALAM, CEO, KNIT GALLERY, TIRUPUR, INDIA

Rajeshwari Chandrashekhkar welcomed the panellists and the participants while setting the broad context for the session. She began with the axiom that businesses directly and indirectly impact the lives of children and leave a footprint on the lives of children through their products, services, supply chains, distribution practices and environmental and social impacts in local communities. Thus, businesses play an important role in setting Family friendly policies (FFPs) which can enable families to find the right balance between caring and earning and enabling businesses to also benefit. She raised the specific issue of the Indian apparel and textile industry as India is the second largest manufacturer and exporter after China. She then set the two-fold agenda of the discussion- to understand the scope and challenges in integrating FFPs in the value chain especially in covid times and to link FFPs to the global agenda of sustainable development goals, especially those that concentrate on health and environment.

Mr PK Goswami, Director- Occupation, Health and Safety, Labour Department, Government of Delhi began by discussing the schemes implemented by the Government of India for children and working women. He highlighted certain sections of Acts and policies, specifically related to garment industries which have been put in place which includes a creche in places employing

more than 30 women, limiting the number of work hours and holidays etc. He pointed out that there was a need to maintain balance between business houses, government and supply chains, while proposing certain incentives that could be given by the government to facilitate the implementation, compliance and adoption of FFPs by giving those particular businesses preference on market related incentives, thus encouraging them to adopt FFPs. He further suggested that breast feeding rooms and creches needed to be made available in all garment industries irrespective of the number of women workers.

Minor Ganeshan, Senior VP- HR, Admin, CSR, Jockey India began by outlining the welfare policies and best practices being implemented in his company. With 15 factories, 25,000+ employees, 5000 potential employees more being added in the next few months, the company has a large number of direct employees. In addition, the 1000 showrooms, 1 lakh multi-brand showrooms also employ an additional work force. Therefore, the company has a huge scale of operations to impact society and the families of more than one lakh industries. The term family is redefined in Page industries and Jockey India, he said. The family member participates in everything, therefore in the true sense, we treat every member of the organisation as a family member, he added. Emphasising that Jockey India

considers people before business, which includes vendor partners and customers, he outlined some of the values of the company which includes treating everyone with respect and empathy, building skills and as a B2B business, ensuring a work-life balance for the employees. Amongst them, he highlighted the move to provide free canteen food for employees implemented by the business promoters two decades ago.

Mr. Shovon Islam Shawn, Managing Director, Sparrow Apparels, Bangladesh started by speaking about the changes that have taken place in the Bangladesh garment industry post the Rana Plaza crash and today, the garment industry in the country is the second largest most ethically managed in the world, which was announced this year, placing Bangladesh just behind Taiwan. Mr. Shawn employs 14,000 people in Bangladesh and 2,000 workers in Jordan, also from Bangladesh. People are my business and most of the workers in my garment factories are women, he said, adding that almost 80% of the workers are

young women. Amongst the FFPs implemented by his company, he highlighted the fact that as most women workers are migrants from villages to cities, they teach them about hygiene and nutrition including menstrual hygiene through a training programme, Her Health. In addition, there are a set of training programmes on how to be supervisors, where they work with GAP, Marks and Spencer on the programmes P.A.C.E (Personal Advancement and Career Enhancement) and GEAR (Gender Equality and Returns) The Mothers at Work programme in collaboration with UNICEF enables mothers to bring their children to work and every factory has a breast-feeding corner in the childcare facility where mothers can visit their children twice a day. Sterilised breast pumps and doctors and nurses

are also made available to them. All of this has a huge dividend as the mothers are peaceful and productive, also leading to low attrition, he said. The Sparrow group has been recognised as one of the best places to work by the Bangladesh Government. People are my biggest asset and we try to create a very relaxing environment even though the industry with its supply chain structure is very stressful, he concluded.

Mr Rajiv Dewan, CEO, Ma'am Arts, Jaipur, India spoke about initiating worker welfare policies in his company. He pointed out that his company comes under Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) with around 1000-1200 workers, which was set up around three decades ago. He said that the traditional familial attitude towards workers was being continued even today in his factory where there are several facilities for



workers, including a creche and feeding areas on each floor. In addition, monthly medical camps are organised and a free vaccination camp for workers and families for covid was also set-up. He said that while many companies are following international audit norms, the adoption has not been complete for the micro units, so he made a recommendation to UNICEF and the government to look at small and tiny supply chain units. FFPs benefit families, employees, and the society, he said, while recommending a few worker welfare policies which could be implemented amongst the smaller factories in the Jaipur cluster. This included no discrimination towards pregnant workers, timely maternity leaves to allow women to return to work, provide adequate mother-child care at the workplace, introduce paternal paid

leaves as a supplement to paid maternity leaves.

Mr. Vijayanand Arunachalam, CEO, Knit Gallery, Tirupur, spoke about the changes that came about in FFPs during covid. He said that during the pandemic, the company distributed grains and vegetables to workers, organised a special team to take care of their needs, gave support in several ways, provided the vaccination of labourers and family members.

Rajeshwari Chandrashekhar raised the issue of mental health in the context of the Covid pandemic and the ways in which FFPs can address the issue, inviting recommendations for the same. Mr. Minor Ganeshan responded by saying that even though the government had allowed them to operate their factories, they shut it down during the pandemic, paying full salary during the entire period of the lockdown. That is a great confidence boost for the employees, he said. Even though the lockdown took place in March 2020, the company had begun their covid awareness programmes for employees in February 2020. In addition, workers were trained on mental health and well-being, helplines were established, and ambulances were kept ready for any emergencies. Mr. Shovon Islam Shawn, said that it was a scary situation. His factory reopened at 60 % capacity and they took care of people who were isolated from their families, we sent them food and when vaccines were available, we were one of the first factories to get vaccinated, he added. Mr. Ganeshan also said that the company practices could be captured and shared with other industries to help promote

the safety and hygiene of employees across all industries.

Responding to a question on his learnings and recommendations, Mr. Shovon Islam Shawn said that the work is definitely not done. We are in a continuous quest to do more and more work when it comes to the employees but we believe that we have done something at least, particularly in giving employees a sense of ownership and treating them with respect, he said. He emphasised on health and nutrition, safety measures, and the care of pregnant mothers as being crucial areas for companies to concentrate on.

The following recommendations emerged from the session-

- Examination of the bare minimum that every business looks to as FFPs
- Documentation of best practices, shared in the public domain so they can be followed by companies to help promote the safety and hygiene of employees across all industries
- Recognising who are your clientele in the FFPs who need to be catered to in your business
- Ways of improving the supply chain so that it too reflects FFPs
- Need for a benchmark by a third party by which businesses measure how family friendly they are



COLLABORATION AS A LEVER OF CHANGE



MODERATOR: ANNA BISWAS, DIRECTOR AT FORUM FOR THE FUTURE, INDIA

SPEAKERS:

- VEDITA AGARWAL, INITIATIVE FOR CLIMATE ACTION
- AKASH BHALERAO, COMMUNITY MANAGER, ASHOKA GLOBALIZER
- SAKSHAM NIJHAWAN, SENIOR STRATEGIST, FORUM FOR THE FUTURE
- DR. ASHWIN NAIK, MISSION ICU
- MS. JYOTI SHARMA, FORCE GROUP OF NON-PROFITS FOR WATER AND SANITATION
- ISABEL HOFFMANN, MANAGER CAPITALS COALITION
- DR SUMAN MAJUMDAR, SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT

The aim of the session was to understand collaborative leadership and how it can work as a lever of change. Learnings from case studies of changemakers that have applied collaborative approaches towards addressing challenges were also discussed while highlighting the potential for collaboration for changemaking with respect to climate action.

The session began with Bhavya Sharma from CRB who invited Akash Bhalerao, Ashoka Globalizer to set the context for the session. Akash began by explaining the importance of collaborative leadership and elaborated on the work done by Ashoka. He added that while following a collaborative approach, the vision must be placed at the centre while aligning with other stakeholders. The potential for collaboration as a level of change was highlighted as it allows for multiple perspectives to achieve a common goal. He then discussed the different approaches to collaboration which include - communities of practice, social labs, alliances and networks.

Saksham Nijhawan, from Forum for the Future began by explaining how their understanding of collaborative leadership strives to be inclusive, multilingual and informed by ground realities. He then elaborated how Covid has encouraged people to consider how climate change will affect our lives. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for deep transformation to address the climate crisis as opposed to shallow and short-term changes. He then illustrated the work done by Forum for the Future in working with CSOs to develop a shared vision for climate

resilient action. The process began, he stated, by examining the barriers and threats to resilience. This was followed by understanding the key areas that were emerging as opportunities. One of the key areas of focus, he added, has been how to address the inequity in access to information. Collaborative leadership has the potential to do away with unhealthy competition between individuals as well as between companies. This is especially important given that there is a need for urgent and bold action which can only be achieved by harnessing various capabilities and through collaboration.

Anna Biswas then introduced the rest of the panel and invited them to share the role that collaboration plays in their work. Ms. Jyoti Sharma began by stating that although terms such as collaborative leadership are being used commonly now, it has been a part of her work for decades. That is because while working on something like water, it is difficult to work in silos. She continued that FORCE began with the P4 model which is the bedrock of all their activities. The P4 model underlines all the activities and facilitates collaboration at all levels and within communities as well. She discussed the role of the government as the enabler of such collaboration.

Dr. Ashwin Naik began by stating that earlier, opportunities used to be market opportunities but today they are social problems. This has led to a change in how organisations address the problems. Using the analogy of a movie set, he demonstrated the need to place the vision at

the centre and accordingly assemble the key stakeholders to achieve that vision.

Dr Suman Majumdar also shared his experience in aiding organisations implement their policies and practices in an efficient manner.

Isabel Hoffmann then elaborated on the work being done by Capitals Coalition to transform the way decisions are made by including natural, human and social capital into decision making.



This is pertinent because currently, value is placed on capital as being understood as money rather than recognising the value we derive from natural resources and from people. Thus, collaboration is at the heart of what the organisation seeks to achieve, she said. Only through collaboration among various stakeholders can there be lasting change.

Anna Biswas then stated that when sharing case studies, there is a tendency to highlight the successes. Instead, she added, it may be useful to also share failures and allow others to learn from them. She invited the panel to share the pitfalls and challenges they have faced in their work and how they overcame them.

Dr. Ashwin Naik responded by stating that ego is the biggest reason for a failure of collaboration. This is because stakeholders might believe that they already know the solution to the problem and a solution first approach tends to be futile. Another challenge is to encourage people to move beyond thinking about their organisations and focus on the bigger picture. The value of

communication in stating the common goal also should not be undermined. The use of inclusive language was also highlighted by him.

Ms. Jyoti Sharma added here that in her experience of attempting to build coalitions, she found that after an initial spurt, some of them would fail. The reason was a clash between the organisation's objectives and the coalition's collective objectives. The learning from this, she added, was not to come in the way of

organisational objectives and create a Secretariat which acts as the nodal point to facilitate the collaboration or coalition. Further, she stated that rather than considering the individual organisations as parts of a collective,

they must be viewed as 'co-drivers'.

Isabel Hoffmann reiterated the need to have a general set of rules within a coalition without hand holding the organisations within it. She further stated that there is a plethora of frameworks and initiatives that lead to confusion and results in everyone speaking a different language which makes it difficult to find shared solutions and comparability between different sectors. One of the solutions could be benchmarking and standardisation to start working together.

Anna Biswas then asked the panel what, in their opinion, helps to keep coalitions together. Isabel Hoffmann began by illustrating the role that regional hubs play that act as the centre for the Coalition. This helps in advancing the Coalition's understanding while also expanding and advancing the network while also incorporating diverse views and being more inclusive.

Ms. Jyoti Sharma added to this by stating that there is a bell curve that determines people's

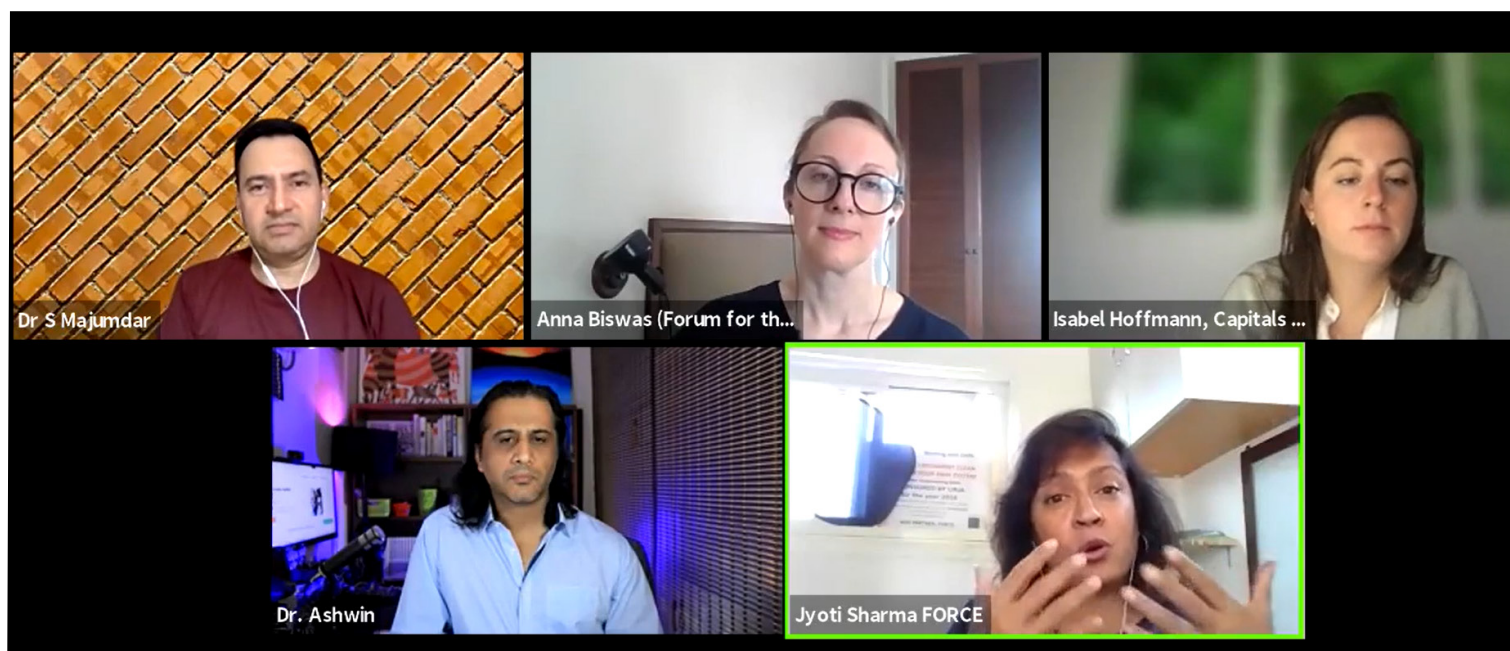
interest in working towards the collaboration's cause. Beyond that point the engagement starts to wane, probably because they feel that the problem is too big to be addressed. This means that there is a need to personalise the link between the work of a collaboration and the outcome. The narrative should also not be a doomsday narrative, she said. This would scare the smaller partners from contributing to the collaboration.

Dr Suman Majumdar added that there is a need to think beyond building back better. This is because the old way of doing things did not work and so there is a need to rethink the way forward. Second, SDG 17 lays out how to track collaboration and must take centre stage in the discussion on collaboration.

Dr. Ashwin Naik concluded the session by adding that there is a wider recognition of the need for collective action. Additionally, it is crucial to assess how conference discussions can be translated to the community level and what impact it can have on the ground.

The following recommendations emerged from the session-

- Listen to every stakeholder and person who enters a collaboration as they bring in something new and valuable.
- There is a need for purpose, governance and social capital to ensure the success of any collaboration



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON A SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK TO NUDGE FPOS AND MARKETS CLOSER



MODERATOR: SIMMI SAREEN, FOUNDER, GREEN FUNDER

SPEAKERS:

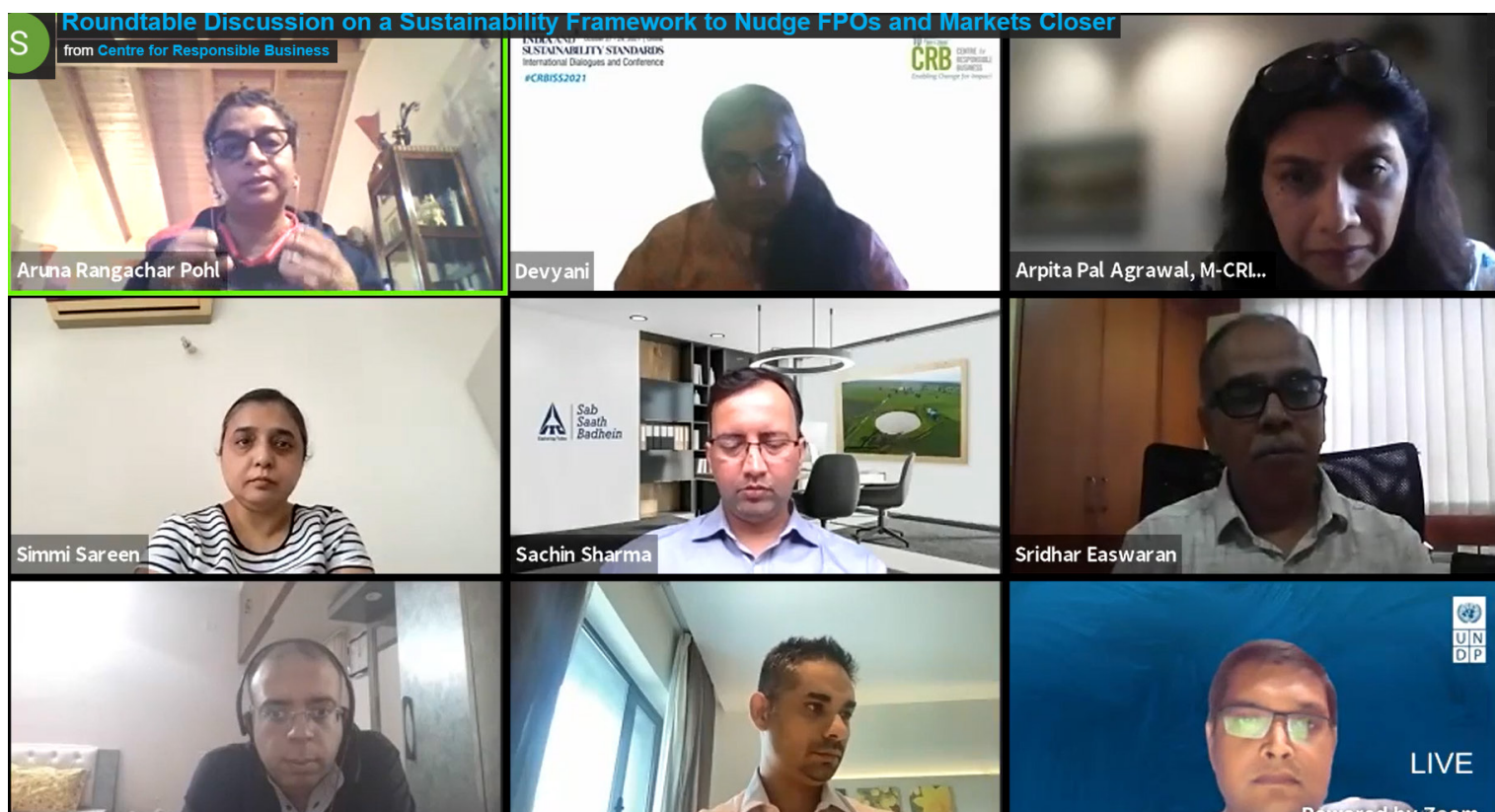
- ARPITA PAL AGARWAL, MANAGING DIRECTOR M-CRIL
- SACHIN SHARMA, VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD - CHANNEL OPERATIONS, ITC
- SRIDHAR EASWARAN, HEAD- INSTITUTION AND CAPACITY BUILDING, SAMUNNATI
- RAVI CHANDRA, ADVISOR, LIVELIHOODS AND VALUE CHAIN, UNDP
- ANIL NADIG, CO-FOUNDER TRACEX TECHNOLOGIES
- ANISH KUMAR, TRUSTEE, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FARMER PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS (NAFPO)
- ARUNA RANGACHAR POHL, CHAIRPERSON, ADVISORY COMMITTEE, INDIA FOUNDATION FOR HUMANISTIC DEVELOPMENT
- SANDEEP ROY CHOUDHURY, DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER VNV ADVISORY SERVICES
- DHEERAJ MUREJA, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT - RURAL AND DEVELOPMENT BANKING, RABOBANK
- ANIL RAWAT, ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER, NABARD

Devyani Hari from CRB set the context of the discussion and outlined some of the points for deliberation by the panelists. She was followed by Aruna Rangachar Pohl who pointed out that although all the panellists were working in the area towards the same goals and although the ideas are aligned, there needs to be a guide map which makes it easier for the mainstream and others to hook on to the same goals in a cohesive and easier way. How can sustainability become a core agenda for business and how can we nudge them closer, so they are able to address challenges and perspectives in their own manner, bringing their own resources together, she asked.

A short presentation was shared by Ritu to run through the framework development that has been done so far. She presented the development plan of the framework, stressing on the centrality of agriculture to SDGs. She also mapped the components of the FPOs to give a preliminary glimpse into the development.

Devyani then introduced the speakers and the moderator Simmi Sareen took over. Outlining the agenda for the discussion, Simmi posed a question asking how FPOs are helping develop market linkages and the role of future development in the agricultural sector.

Sachin Sharma began by charting out the journey of agriculture in the country- the positive points as well as the challenges. He elaborated on the role of FPOs, saying that as a farmer collective, they can come together and help in market linkages, drive water smart agriculture, and climate resilient agriculture. Collective farming can make a lot of changes on the ground, he said. The current capabilities of FPOs need to be built, there has to be a right framework in place so that we can translate some of these practices to be implemented and they can be executed perfectly on the ground, he added. He also mentioned their sustainability report which objectively defines ambitions in sustainability and offered to share it



with the group.

Anil Nadig spoke about the work of TradeX and the ways in which technology is enabling the achieving of sustainable goals. He said that his organisation has been building a connected supply chain and traceability network. A majority of consumers do not know where their food is coming from therefore, a very small portion of the money goes back to farmers and thus, there is no incentive for farmers to maintain a digital track of the various stages of production. He elaborated on their digital traceability platform, where the idea is to digitise, organise, connect and make the entire thing traceable and provide credibility to the claims of the product being organic etc. Technology goes hand in hand in driving sustainable goals, he concluded.

Dr. Ravi Chandra gave his thoughts on the evolving value chains in agriculture in the future, spoke about a proliferation in agri-tech institutions, market players to support farmers but this support is not translating into growth of prices for farmers, which he saw as being strange. Highlighting this problem, he said that 90% of farmers are small holders and they need to be brought together in a collective like Amul;

however, the problem lies in a lack of leadership, especially at the local level. Value chain gains are not translating into FPOs, he said, adding, along with physical and digital infrastructure, capability infrastructure needs to be built as well. He further questioned why women had not been brought to the centre and made visible since most of the work is done by women in the field, stressing the importance of doing so.

Arpita Pal Agrawal shared the challenges faced by FPOs, urging everyone to think about the incentives for MFIs to implement a framework. She said, this discussion needs to be from an ecosystem perspective and we need to keep asking, what is in it for the FPOs and its member farmers. FPOs need to be incentivised either as technical support, credit access, access to markets etc. Without this, it is challenging to have a framework in place, she said. Speaking about micro-finance specifically, she emphasised the importance of the Climate protection certification, which is a gold standard and becomes aspirational for other FPOs.

Dheeraj Mutreja spoke about sustainability and climate risk being an important part of their lending policies. It is important that smallholder

farmers adopt practices to make their farming climate resilient, he said, pointing out that one must also make sure that FPOs are sustainable as a business financially. There are many challenges faced by FPOs and we should support the ones that already exist, he added, advocating the need for a roadmap for FPOs.

Anil Rawat spoke about Nabard as being the promoting agency for FPOs and has promoted 200+ FPOs. This is a new journey for us and many ecosystems need to be put in place, he said, adding that collaboration and convergence is required for FPOs at different levels since these are farmer centric organisations, who do not have experience. Most FPOs are run by Trusts and NGOs with limited knowledge and skills, he added, saying that FPOs need incubation with agencies that are more experienced in the value chain, offering examples to elaborate how FPOs were made sustainable through collaborations.

Sachin Sharma responded to this saying that FPOs need to be viable in business, which will make them better placed in adopting sustainable practices. He highlighted the various problems in the setting up of FPOs giving examples of climate smart agriculture, and said that there are possibilities of creating FPOs with the right framework and strengthening the value chain linkages, which can address both sustainability and viability.

Sridhar Easwaran shed light on building these ecosystems, saying that finance plays an important role and that the entire framework has to be built, circling the requirements of the farmer. FPOs should be taught capacity building and we also need to think about the value add that FPOs bring, he said. FPOs face challenges in getting an institutional buyer and his organisation does the market connect for FPOs, make them financially viable in a sustainable fashion, and brings technology solutions as well. We need to align incentives, right from the top to the farmer level, he said.

Sandeep Roy Choudhury said that while his organisation provides result-based finance to farmers, they work with FPOs and partners. We

are not a big fan of direct farmer benefits, we are a fan of FPO level support so that organised financial institutions can come in with organised credit systems, he said. FPOs have become trading houses and focus should also be on building capacity for storage, warehousing, credit access etc. He stressed the centrality of data to their work.

Aneesh Kumar, NAFPO is an ecosystem body that works in capacity building. They have also been developing a database of FPOs. He spoke about the fact that although the impact of FPOs in bringing sustainability is huge, more work is needed on capacity building. It is important for FPOs to first be financially viable to bring in sustainability and for this to happen, FPOs need a lot more support. We need to invest more across the value chain, he added.

Aruna Rangachar Pohl appreciated the huge positivity in the panelists and proposed a way of looking at the situation a bit differently. FPOs are already at the stage when they are trying to raise finance so instead of saying that they first need to be financially viable, why not give them direct climate financing as an advantage in the beginning if they fulfil SDGs, she said, wondering about a situation where financial institutions having a friendlier approach to FPOs.

The following recommendations emerged from the session-

- The need for the right framework for FPOs which strengthen the value chain linkages, which can address both sustainability and viability
- Reassess how outcomes are being measured
- Need to incentivise FPOs
- Need to build leadership at the local level for farmer collectives
- Encourage incubation and training of FPOs with agencies that are more experienced in the value chain to make them financially viable

MADE IN INDIA: PROMOTING GROWTH AND RESILIENCE THROUGH THE UN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



MODERATOR: MS. NUSRAT KHAN, BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS SPECIALIST, UNDP
SPEAKERS:

- SRI G.K. SINGH, IAS, JOINT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
- MS. RENITA BHASKAR, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, HEAD OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC SECTION, DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO INDIA
- MR. AMARJEET SINGH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SECURITIES EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA
- MR. LIVIO SARANDREA, UNDP BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GLOBAL LEAD, HEAD B+HR ASIA
- MR. SANJIV PAUL, VICE PRESIDENT (SAFETY, HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY), TATA STEEL

This session aimed to increase awareness and knowledge among the private sector on the Business and Human Rights Agenda. It also sought to elaborate the business case for responsible business while unpacking the significance of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights for the Private Sector. The global experiences on NAPs on BHR and correlation with investor interest, regulation and business expectations (HRDD) were also highlighted.

Corporate Affairs gave the keynote address by setting the context for NAP in India. He added



The session began with Nandini Sharma of CRB emphasising the value of business and human rights and their centrality in the SDG Agenda. Nusrat Khan, UNDP then gave an overview of the B+HR programme, highlighting that the BHR Agenda is a pro-business agenda. She then elaborated on the need for a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and its value in India.

that human rights must be encompassed in the business philosophy and that business is not for shareholders, it is for stakeholders. He enumerated the steps taken by the government in taking forward the BHR Agenda in India and especially with the Zero Draft. He stated that there has been an international move for businesses to focus on having a purpose rather than profits. Further, he added that there is a need to evaluate businesses on non-financial

Mr Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, Ministry of

parameters. In order to do so, BRSR is a step forward and it must be a part of the business disclosure and hence the business philosophy. This must, therefore, be viewed as a business opportunity rather than compliance. Importantly, he added that the National Action Plan is in its final stages and it may be shared with the public by the end of the year. He concluded by stressing on the need for standardisation in reporting as well as the need for greater coordination and cooperation.

This key announcement was followed by Ms Renita Bhaskar who stated that the European Union strongly recognises the need for human rights considerations to be embedded in business practices. She further added that business practices have the potential to unleash significant societal change. She enumerated the EU's milestones with regard to the BHR Agenda. She then highlighted that through supply chains, there is scope to address different types of human rights violations including occupational safety and forced labour. Since the heart of most economies lies in SMEs, she concluded, there is a need to ensure that guidelines and regulations work for all the actors within the economy and not just for the bigger industries.

Mr Amarjeet Singh enumerated the steps taken by SEBI to further the BHR Agenda. He further highlighted that there is an increased recognition and awareness about the importance of sustainability issues especially during the pandemic. The key driving forces with respect to ESG issues are the investors, the regulators, and the government. This means that regulators have an increasingly important role to play in the area of disclosures. Further, he added, that BRSR has brought in a shift in disclosures which is more outcome oriented and wider in its scope than BRR. There is also an increasing acceptance as opposed to resistance of disclosures on ESG. A climate plus approach has been followed in BRSR including aspects such as human rights, employee engagement, welfare measures, social impact assessment of projects among others. This is so that the focus is on sustainable development in a more holistic manner. He concluded by

stating that the focus on outcome-oriented indicators ensures that quality issues are also addressed.

Livio Sarandrea from UNDP began by explaining what NAP is. He stated that NAPs follow from policy commitments of governments on the UNGPs. This policy commitment must follow a multistakeholder assessment of the key issues and problems, so as to ensure that the NAP is a product of collaboration and multistakeholder deliberations. NAPs must also be context specific to ensure their success and must have inputs from civil society and from the private sector. Further, NAPs should prioritise the salient issues and be a combination of mandatory and soft norms. He added that NAPs should also address environmental issues alongside the key human rights issues because these issues are interlinked and the recognition of environmental rights as human rights. Next, he stated, good NAPs must set clear targets and list out responsibilities and expectations from each party (such as from each Ministry). For NAPs to be implementable, there must be adequate resource allocation for them while also setting obligations for companies to operate responsibly abroad. This means that Indian companies should adhere to human rights even while operating in other countries. This has been followed in the case of Japan and Thailand. Lastly, for NAPs to be successful, they should speak the language that businesses understand and can follow easily.

Mr Sanjiv Paul provided a snapshot of what the BHR Agenda means for Tata Steel. He stated that people and communities have been at the core of the Tata Group and now the focus also includes considerations of sustainability. As the Group expands, he added, it is mindful and aware that there may be instances wherein human rights may be adversely affected along its supply chain. For this, a new policy has been introduced within the Group, called the Business and Human Rights Policy which is aligned with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ILO and UNGPs and will be implemented across all its companies. The Group has also introduced a Responsible Supply Chain Policy to implement fair business

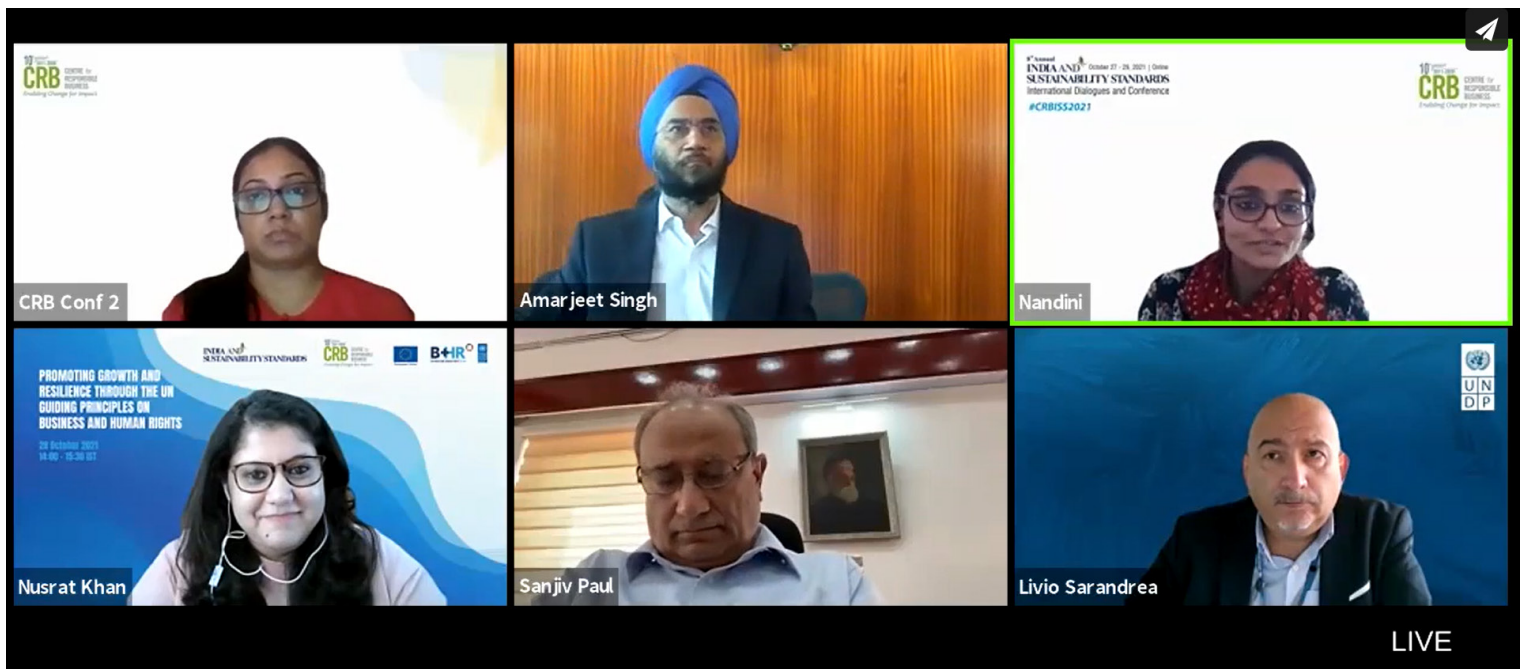
practices, health and safety and human rights across their value chains. This has entailed a due diligence of the supply chain and identifying which partners must be worked with to ensure the policy's success.

Mr Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh concluded by stating that the aim in India must be to ensure that human rights become a part of the DNA of Indian businesses. Mr Amarjeet Singh here added that BRSR requires certain indicators regarding the value chain; the first are essential such as disclosures on whether company policies on sustainability extend to their value chain partners and whether they follow the BHR format. Any assessments conducted on working conditions, discrimination, forced labour, etc must also be disclosed.

The discussion concluded with a short question and answer session.

Recommendations

- There is a need to ensure that there is a common language spoken in the consultative process. This must include the SMEs and be representative of the various regions and stakeholders
- SMEs must be supported over the course of the implementation of NAP in India
- There must be awareness and capacity building. If the rights holders do not know what rights they are entitled to, there will be limited success of the BHR Agenda



INDIA SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL DIALOGUE, 2021 - SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL IN INDIA



MODERATOR: KAMAL PRAKASH SETH, GLOBAL DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MARKET TRANSFORMATION AND COUNTRY HEAD, INDIA, ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL

SPEAKERS:

- NEHA SIMLAI, PROGRAM MANAGER, MARKETS AND SOURCEUP, IDH, THE SUSTAINABLE TRADE INITIATIVE
- MICHIEL VAN ERKEL, AGRICULTURAL COUNSELLOR FOR INDIA AND SRI LANKA, EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, NEW DELHI, INDIA
- SUDHAKAR DESAI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, EMAMI AGROTECH
- VIPIN GUPTA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LOUIS DREYFUS COMPANY INDIA
- SOUGATA NIYOGI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OIL PALM BUSINESS, CODREJ AGROVET



This session aimed to understand the perspectives of industry and thought leaders about the challenges, risks, and opportunities for increasing the production of sustainable palm oil in India. Additionally, the session discussed a potential roadmap for India to become a role model for the sustainable production of palm oil while building broader multi stakeholder consensus about the business opportunity of sourcing sustainable palm oil and the role brands and consumers can play.

The session began with Rijit Sengupta introducing Kamal Prakash Seth from RSPO. Kamal then set the context for the discussion on shared

responsibility for sustainable palm oil in India. He then introduced the first speaker, Mr Michiel Van Erkel from the Dutch Embassy. He elaborated on the steps taken by the Government of the Netherlands in building sustainable supply chains and becoming a role model for several countries by activating various stakeholders through key partnerships. This has led to cooperation between the government, business community and knowledge institutes. He stated that the key concern was not with palm oil itself but rather with how it is produced. He further highlighted that a supportive environment need not always been fostered by the government. Rather, he added, a supportive environment may also

come from the private sector and the business community.

He was followed by Neha Simlai from IDH who stated that in the Indian context, there has to be a combination of policy and market action and engagement. This would entail understanding the consumption of a country that has increased by over 230% in the last 20 years. Understanding the consumption patterns will provide insights on the demands of the consumers. This is crucial for India to become a regional leader in sustainability. She concluded by stating that there was a need to strike a balance between the demands of the consumers, the ambitions of the government and the pace of production in the country towards building sustainable supply chains.

Mr Michiel Van Erkel then addressed Kamal's question about the policy environment and the scope of technical partnerships between Indian and European stakeholders for capacity building. He elaborated on the need to highlight the business case and the economic viability of initiatives such as intercropping to smallholder farmers. This was an example of the kind of research being conducted in the Netherlands which may be shared with India and illustrates the need for collaborative thinking and knowledge sharing to address the issues of climate change and sustainability.

This was followed by Neha Simlai further highlighting the work that IDH has been doing in India. She also stated that IDH is working towards addressing questions of how India can play a stronger regional role in the way that sustainable trade gets organised in this part of the world as well as how to drive initiatives in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia and while leading the way for other South Asian countries to start demanding differently.

Mr Michiel Van Erkel concluded by stating that consumers must start demanding differently and producers must lead the way in producing more sustainably in order for there to be a long-lasting change.

This was followed by a short question and answer

session before beginning the second part of the discussion.

The second part of the session was a panel discussion. Kamal Prakash Seth introduced the panel and asked Mr Sudhakar Desai from Emami what are the biggest opportunities and benefits for increasing the domestic production of palm oil in India. Mr Desai began by stating that the biggest opportunity lies in replacing imports with production of palm oil within the country. He highlighted the tripartite agreement between farmers and the state focusing on the three important pillars of technical know-how, the capital that needs to be pumped in and the right regulatory framework. Lastly, he raised the issues of deforestation and water scarcity. Herein lies the role of the government and the businesses to ensure that palm oil is grown sustainably.

Mr Sougata Niyogi from Godrej then added that the new announcement by the government regarding palm oil has been a critical boost. Further, there is a need to ensure that there is high productivity, which is what Godrej has been working towards. He elaborated on the need for effective policy implementation and supporting the smallholder farmers.

Mr Vipin Gupta from Louis Dreyfus then also discussed the government policy, highlighting the need for long term planning with regard to policy making. There has been an increased focus on consultation with the industry in terms of what needs to be done, the possibilities, and the implementation. He cautioned that although this is a step in the right direction, it is imperative that sustainability concerns are central. This is to prevent palm oil cultivation in India from becoming unsustainable and leading to deforestation. Additionally, he stated that the rights of workers must also be protected. These are concerns that need to be factored in while implementing the policy so as to ensure its success.

Kamal then asked Mr Sudhakar Desai about the market readiness to pick up certified products and specifically palm oil. Mr Sudhakar

Desai replied that this is a concern that is both environmental and economic and thus highlights the need for shared responsibility. There is a role of industries but also to create awareness among industry members so that they are aware of the environmental concerns. The second is to do with logistics and infrastructure which means that there is a need to ensure good rural infrastructure that can support the transport and logistics pertaining to palm oil cultivation and production.

Mr Sougata Niyogi further elaborated that there is also a need for outreach and awareness generation among the farmers. This is crucial to prevent the excess use of fertilisers while also making them aware about the need for sustainable cultivation.

To conclude, Kamal asked Neha Simlai and Michiel Van Erkel for their call to action. Michiel Van Erkel replied by stating 'ask for sustainable palm oil, it is possible' while Neha Simlai stated

'if the government of India and the market can together create and build a shared narrative that could be a massive achievement for all of us'.

The following recommendations emerged from the session -

- Developing a context specific model based on shared responsibility and collaboration
- Ensuring that economic, social and environmental concerns are factored in policy implementation
- Ensuring awareness generation for the industry partners, farmers and the larger public so as to dispel the myths surrounding palm oil



BRICK BY BRICK - EXPLORING INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MODELS FOR THE BRICK KILNS SECTOR IN INDIA



EXERCISE FACILITATOR: NATASHA SAGLIA

MODERATOR: DR SANJEEV CHOPRA

SPEAKERS:

- ANKUR BISEN, SENIOR PARTNER AND HEAD (CONSUMER AND RETAIL), TECHNOPACK AND CO-AUTHOR OF THE BOOK - 'BREAKING THE MOULD'
- MOHAMMED JUNAID, IAS OFFICER
- GOKARAN GARG, VICE PRESIDENT, BRICK KILN OWNER ASSOCIATION
- DR SAUMEN MAITY, SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER, DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES
- VARUN KAPPAL, TATA TRUST
- DR DEBOLINA KUNDU, PROFESSOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF URBAN AFFAIRS (NIUA)
- S KARTHIKEYAN, PRINCIPAL COUNSELLOR, CII - INDIAN GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL
- SACHIN JOSHI, HEAD, ICISID, UNIDO

The session began with an introduction and context setting by Rijit Sengupta. He then handed over to Natasha Saglia who elaborated on the design of the roundtable which was divided into labour, ecology and business and introduced Dr Sanjeev Chopra.

Dr Chopra highlighted human dignity as the central focus while examining the practices in the brick kiln sector. He stated that there is a lack of concrete data and evidence on the practices in this sector and the information that is available, tends to be through secondary sources. Thus, the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy asked the officers to visit at least one brick kiln in their respective districts and assist in the Academy's academic research. The aim was to study whether the legislations were being implemented and whether there is awareness about the various policies that are relevant to the sector. He further highlighted that there may be language barriers in these kilns especially since they employ migrant labour.

Mr Ankur Bisen then reiterated that there has been a need to delve deeper into the issues facing the brick kiln sector and that has been the aim of the book *Breaking the Mould*. The first point pertained to the extent of informality in this sector which employs 23 million people in 1.5 lakh brick kilns. Annually, 2 crore trucks full of

agricultural soil are excavated and used by this industry. None of this, he added, is managed by any one company and there is no account of who all fall within the tax bracket in this sector or how many are paid the minimum wage. The book, he stated, highlights the extent to which India's urbanisation depends on this large informal sector. He then elaborated on the issues that may arise from this informality. There is a need to examine the issues through the lenses of labour, ecology and business.

While discussing labour, he reiterated the need to focus on dignity of labour as Dr Chopra has also mentioned. The exploitation that persists in this sector despite the existence of labour laws is appalling. He added that there is paucity of data with regard to the number of people in this sector who are paid minimum wage. In addition to this, child labour goes unchecked in this sector, as entire families tend to work at the brick kiln. Health and security concerns also arise since the workers live near the kiln itself and there is little distinction between their home and the kiln. The fumes that are emitted from the kiln are inhaled by the workers and their families, further adding to health concerns.

While discussing ecology, Mr Bisen stated that India's brick kilns contribute 9% of the world's black carbon emissions. The technology that

is used in these kilns is also outdated thus contributing to air and water pollution. The raw material used for bricks is also that which can be diverted to agrarian use. He added that while principles of circular economy have been implemented in various sectors and regions, this is one sector in India in which different raw materials have not been used. Across the world, there have been innovations in the design and materials used for bricks, but this has not been the case in India.

While discussing business model and finance, there is a need for policy change in order to improve this sector. He then elaborated on what these improvements may look like. This would include a move towards formalisation of the sector and making it a sustainable business

up and most of these were pregnant women. He added that approximately 77% of the deliveries are institutional deliveries while the remaining deliveries are on the brick kilns itself. He also discussed the issue of children's education and the large number of child labourers in this sector. He concluded by mentioning the interventions carried out by Tata Trusts in providing child care facilities on site as well as facilitating sensitisation of brick kiln owners and families to pull children out of labour.

Natasha Saglia then invited Dr Debolina Kundu, NIUA to share her research on the sector. Dr Kundu reiterated the need for brick kiln owners to be sensitised while also implementing the existing policies for the workers of these kilns. She stressed on the need to encourage

education of children on these kilns rather than being employed as labour. There is also a need to assess whether these workers are registered with the Census, with the state level agencies as well as whether labour inspections take place at the brick kilns.

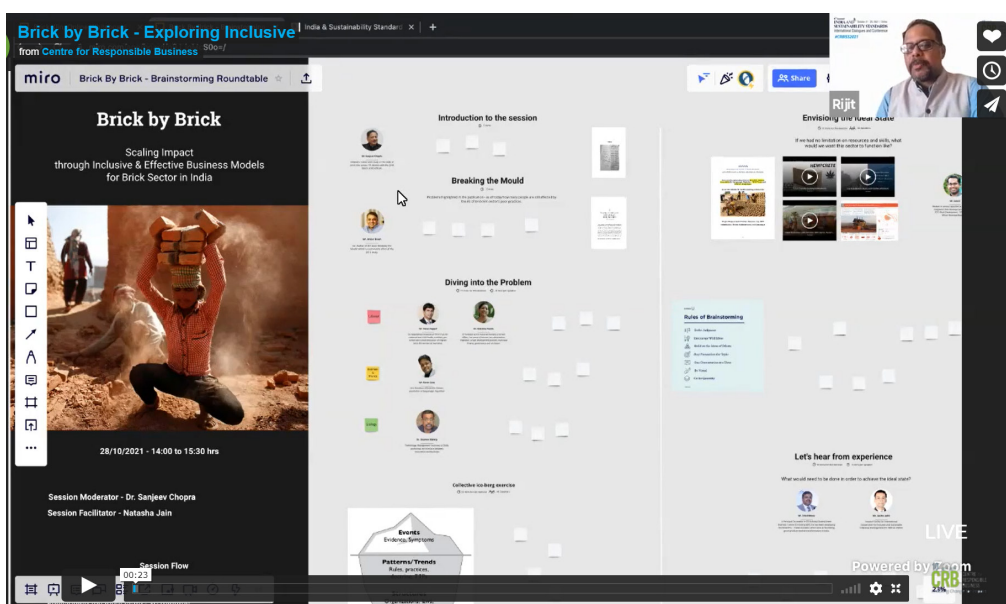
Mr Gokaran Garg from Brick Kiln Owner Association provided the perspective of the brick kiln owners. He stated that there was a lack of fair compensation and minimum wages being paid to the

which is compliant to laws. He concluded by stating that there is unanimity in the need to strengthen the implementation of laws in this sector.

Natasha Saglia then invited Mr Varun Kappal from Tata Trust who began by discussing his experience in Ganganagar. He stated that issues of early childhood education, child nutrition, and schooling have been the key issues on the brick kilns. Women's health and nutrition is another key issue. He then added that the work done by Tata Trust revealed that 76% of the women on these sites have not received any health check-

labourers at the brick kilns. However, he added that there have been a lot of changes over the years. For instance, separate washrooms are provided for men and women, water pipelines have been laid and regular health check-ups have been introduced. There is a recognition that the industry cannot survive without the workers and so there is a need to address their basic health requirements. He refuted the claim that children work as labour rather than going to school.

Mr Mohammed Junaid further discussed the Tata Trust interventions and shared the



recurring costs that were incurred to ensure its upkeep. Further illustrating the work done in Ganganagar, he added that brick kiln owners must contribute to the upkeep of day care centres. There may be scope to utilise the CSR funds of companies along with the funds available through various government schemes such as ICDS to encourage the maintenance of such centres. Anganwadis may also be mapped with brick kilns to ensure that the children at the sites receive the benefits of the government policies. Here Dr Chopra suggested that a working paper may be developed based on the insights from this session.

Dr Saumen Maity, Development Alternatives was asked how we might enable owners to upgrade eco conscious products and socially responsible manufacturing products. He highlighted that although there is technology available to transform the brick kiln industry to becoming eco-friendly, there is a need to generate awareness and disseminate knowledge.

Mr Sachin Joshi, UNIDO added here that the economics must work rather than going from one pilot to the other. He stated that the uptake of pilots is not mainstream in this sector because there is a need for the market to create a demand for more sustainable practices in this sector. For instance, the private sector and construction companies can push for procuring

bricks from suppliers who comply with the existing legislations and are socially compliant. He concluded that there are systemic challenges which require systemic solutions and political interventions are crucial for reforming this sector.

Rijit Sengupta urged the need to look at the brick industry as a part of the wider construction value chain. Further, he added, that the Government of India is working towards developing a taxonomy on sustainable finance and the potential to provide funds for just transition. Hence, there is a need to adopt a systems approach for solutions.

Natasha Saglia concluded by providing a brief summary of the key points discussed.

The following recommendations emerged from the session -

- There is a need to assess how existing government schemes can be linked with the brick kilns to ensure that the labourers in the sector benefit from them
- Viewing brick kilns as part of a larger value chain and adopting a systems approach to find solutions
- Creating a demand for more sustainable practices in the brick kilns through the private sector and construction companies

from Centre for Responsible Business

Brick By Brick - Brainstorming Roundtable

Problems highlighted in the publication - as of today how many people are still affected by the ills of brick kiln sector's poor practices.

brick kiln sector size - big informal sector

33 million people associated to the sector

2.5 lakh-clay bricks

top soil excavated for brick kiln

labour - dignity of labour

minimum wages

family workers

get one persons wage

health

Black carbon emissions

raw material

circular economy

change of baseline for business

what does better business look like?

sustainable, formal, compliant

start rating systems for eco-bricks

Diving into the Problem

15 mins for the exercise 3 mins per speaker

Studying the industry and informal labour: Brick kilns in India

Ankur Bisen

LIVE

Powered by Zoom

EXPLORING BEST PRACTICES TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS



MODERATOR: SILVIA MERA, DIRECTOR - APPAREL PROGRAM AT GOODWEAVE INTERNATIONAL
SPEAKERS:

- GEETANJALI MASTER, PARTNERSHIPS SPECIALIST – PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR AT UNICEF
- MARCO DUBBELT, OFFICER IN CHARGE AT GLOBAL MARCH AGAINST CHILD LABOUR
- SAURABH GUPTA, MANAGING PARTNER AT DEVGIRI
- SIMON GOFF, FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR AT FLOOR STORY

The aim of the session was to delineate the challenges and priorities in mitigating child labour in supply chains as well as discuss the best practices, relevant mechanisms, tools, and frameworks that can be adopted by businesses and other stakeholders for a child-labour-free value chain.

The session began with Vivek Singh from CRB setting the context and introducing the moderator, Silvia Mera, GoodWeave International. She stated that the discussion on child labour is critical for any conversation on responsible business especially since 2021 is the UN designated year for the elimination of child labour. However, according to UNICEF and ILO, child labour around the world is on the rise. This means that progress towards eliminating child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years. She added that UNICEF and ILO that 9 million more children could enter the labour market by 2022. This has in part, been due to Covid, schools closing. In India, for instance, only 8% of the rural children had access to online education. She continued, that against this context, it is imperative to continue working towards eliminating this practice. However, in many cases, child labour is hard to identify. Children are often employed across the global supply chain and may be excluded from traditional audit frameworks such as children working in informal sectors. Prior to Covid, however, there has been a steady

reduction in the number of children in labour. Between 2000 and 2016, there was a reduction of 94 million children in labour. Hence, there is a need to share and replicate best practices. With this she introduced the panel.

Simon Goff from Floor Story began by stating that it is difficult for small businesses to have an oversight over the entire supply chain and the factories they use. There is a demand from the customers to have no child labour in the products they purchase and this is coupled with a recognition by the company itself that there is no child labour or forced labour across the supply chain.

Saurabh Gupta from Devgiri brought in the suppliers' perspective. He stated that one of the biggest challenges in ensuring a child labour free supply chain is monitoring. Given the fragmented and extensive nature of the supply chain, this takes a lot of resources. Secondly, he added that it is important to assess how important this goal is for the stakeholders, whether they are aware of the consequences and impact of having child labour in supply chain. He also stated that if the business for the suppliers is sporadic and unpredictable, they lack commitment and do not feel the pressure to comply with the standards. However, when there is regular business, the suppliers are forced to adhere to the demands placed on them. He further added that the consumers who must demand that their products are not

produced using child labour. However, there may be times when ensuring this drives up the cost and herein lies the need to educate consumers. He also stated that companies and factories need to reform how they treat their staff and labour. This is because workers don't want to work in poor conditions. Lastly, supply chain traceability was highlighted as the most integral part of the value chain. He concluded by stating that things are slowly changing and that within 3 to 5 years, there would be no child labour in the textile and handloom sectors.

Silvia Mera then asked Geetanjali Master about the role that public private partnerships can play in eliminating child labour. To this Geetanjali Master responded that every stakeholder in the ecosystem is crucial and so collaborative engagement is key. Further, she added, there is a need to map the various actors so as to determine what is the role that each of them can play to ensure that the collective outcome is much better for the child.

Marco Dubbelt from Global March Against Child Labour then shared some of the best practices

across sectors in preventing child labour. He began by stating that while there must be a move towards formalisation, the role of trade unions in eliminating child labour in the formal sector must be



Geetanjali Master from UNICEF began by reiterating the need to strengthen the system of monitoring child labour and rescuing children. This may be done by working with diverse stakeholders to have an integrated management information system. She highlighted the importance of rescuing children because once they are rescued, they are identified as being in need of care and protection. She also stressed the role of the Child Working Committee and their role in setting up child rehabilitation plans. She then discussed a case study from UNICEF's work and how the initiative by the Uttar Pradesh government called Naya Savera coupled with inputs from civil society helped in developing an individual care plan. Thus, the case study highlighted that rehabilitation must take place with a system strengthening process. The aim must be to strengthen the existing system and engage them with other stakeholders.

highlighted. Secondly, trade unions also play a role in ensuring that formal workers receive a fair wage. This is crucial since poverty is one of the drivers of child labour. Hence, there is a need for governments to engage with trade unions in order to eliminate child labour. He also highlighted the need for transparency and adopting the ILO's child labour monitoring system since it is monitored along with the community. He also discussed the need for basic social protection to prevent children from becoming employed as labour. Companies can help link children with existing schemes such as Mid-Day Meals so as to ensure that their basic nutritional needs are met. He concluded by advocating for an area-based approach which is not sector specific but engages the community and various stakeholders. This approach, he contended, has found success in the case of Mica mining in India.

Geetanjali Master then addressed an audience question on protections for child labourers. She stated that skilling the youth is crucial especially since there is an increase in investments to skill the youth. Within this, there is a possibility to also teach them about their rights and entitlements. This would aid in making them aware about what they can demand.

Saurabh Gupta and Simon Goff concluded by stressing that consumers must understand that price is directly related to how the product is made and so demanding cheaper products will result in companies adopting unsustainable practices. Consumers must demand transparency and awareness is the only way this will happen.

The following recommendations emerged from the session -

- Moving towards formalisation so as to ensure greater accountability and data on the children employed across value chains
- Adopting community-based approaches to monitor child labour
- There is a need for awareness generation, both among the youth and the employers. The youth must be aware of their rights and employers must be aware of the safe working conditions

COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES FOR SETTING INDUSTRY EXPECTATIONS IN SUSTAINABILITY AND FOOD SAFETY



MODERATOR: DEVYANI HARI, CRB

SPEAKERS:

- THOMAS VAN HAAREN, SENIOR MANAGER AT SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN INITIATIVE | SSCI
- MARIE-CLAUDE QUENTIN, SENIOR TECHNICAL MANAGER AT GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY INITIATIVE (GFSI)
- EVA VAN HEUKELOM, TECHNICAL MANAGER AT GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INITIATIVE
- DR. HITESH BHATT, DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION AT RETAILERS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

The aim of this session was to become familiar with the current industry practices pertaining to collaboration on key pre-competitive issues. Additionally, the session sought to comprehend the current benchmarking tools available to companies while also identifying the drivers of change affecting the industry.

The session began with introductions and context setting from Devyani Hari from CRB. She then handed over to Thomas Van Haaren from SSCI. He began with a short explanation of what benchmarking is and what are some of the common themes in benchmarking. He elaborated on the work done by SSCI with multiple stakeholders. He highlighted the need for collaborative consultation in developing benchmarks while also explaining that benchmarking helps in assessing whether the standards and expectations are being met. He then set up the benchmarking landscape with Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) focused on benchmarking food safety, Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative or SSCI focused on benchmarking social sustainability and Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative or GSSI focused on environmental issues. All three follow the

same operational management levels and have common expectations. The steps taken by them are as follows - self assessment, desktop review, office visit, public consultation and monitoring of continued alignment. He concluded by stating that a collaborative approach and public consultations are the key components to ensure continued alignment.

Devyani then introduced Marie-Claude Quentin, GFSI. She began by mentioning the interlinkages between the work done by GFSI and SSCI. The aim of GFSI, she continued, is to strengthen and harmonise food systems so they are able to feed the rising population and develop markets to deliver safe food. Further, she highlighted the importance of food safety and traced the history of GFSI. She added that the priorities are benchmarking and harmonisation, capacity building and public private partnerships and illustrated the GFSI benchmarking requirements. She concluded by highlighting that stakeholder engagement in the food safety domain requires intense effort to identify the right people and inculcate the right culture and mindset around the topic.

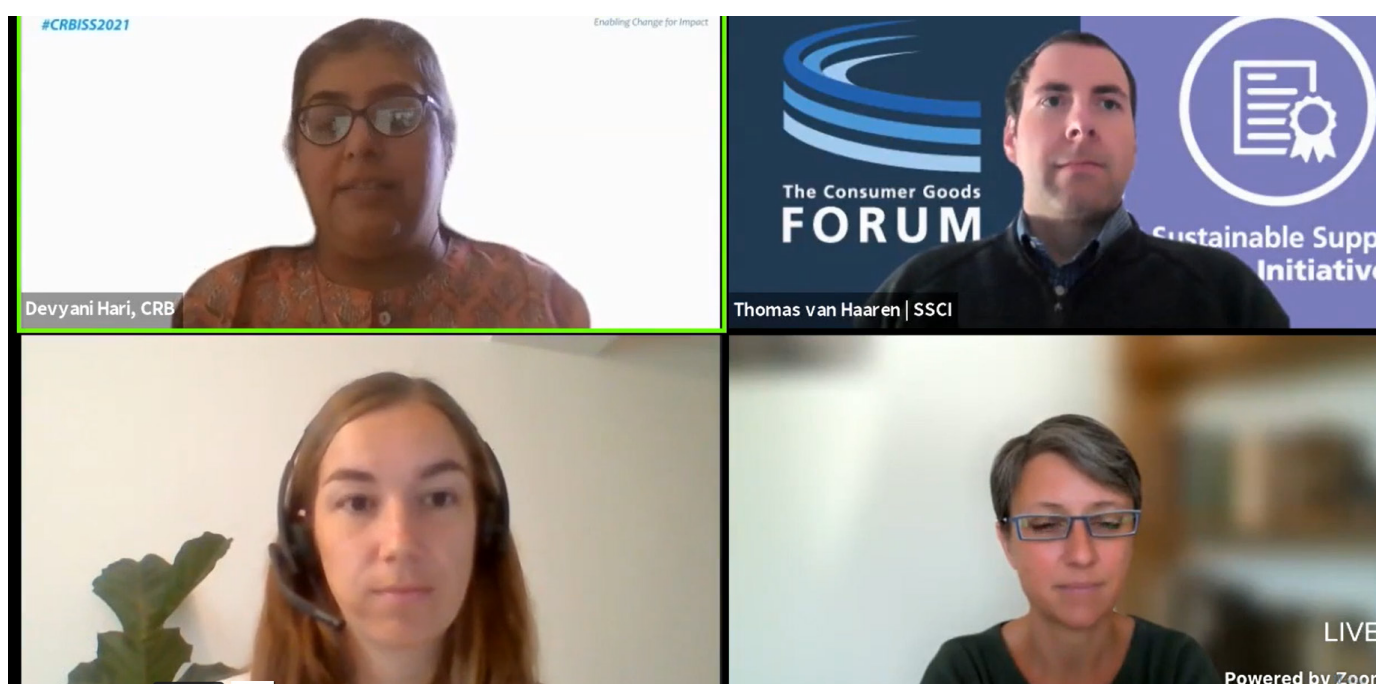
Eva Van Heukelom from GSSI began by giving an introduction about the work done by GSSI, which is best understood as a global network of leaders collaborating to amplify and build clarity, confidence and choice in seafood sustainability. She further explained the context specific approaches for different regions, ensuring that sustainability in seafood is not approached with a one size fits all solution. She then elaborated on the Global Benchmarking Tool which has been at the core of GSSI's work since 2015. She explained the tool in some detail with its four components- governance of seafood certification schemes, operational management of seafood certification schemes, aquaculture certification standards and fisheries certification standards. She concluded by stating that the framework itself is also continually monitored and updated to ensure that it includes the learnings from using the tool and that it stays relevant.

Thomas Van Haaren began by explaining the focus of the Consumer Goods Forum for a collaborative approach on issues such as plastic use, forced labour, etc. He then elaborated on the work being done by SSCI in addressing issues across the value chain. He illustrated the components of SSCI's work and how it is working towards becoming the benchmark of

choice designed for third party sustainability standards and in providing clear guidance on credible standards to meet industry expectations. He highlighted the need for consistency in benchmark development to measure things over time and assess how things have evolved. He concluded by stressing the importance of embracing digital technology and tools for aspects such as digital audits while also engaging with key industry experts and stakeholders to better understand the diversity of workers' voice and corresponding grievance redressal mechanisms.

Lastly, Dr Hitesh Bhatt brought in the perspective of retailers and the need to communicate with consumers so as to create demand for sustainable brands. Certifications and stands aid in raising brands' profile. He stressed on the need for inclusive value chains and including considerations of gender inclusion among retailers' goals as well. He also reiterated the need for context and region-specific approaches. He further highlighted the need for businesses to incorporate sustainability concerns in order to meet the 2030 Agenda.

The discussion concluded with a short question and answer session.



MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOODS



MODERATOR: DR. ASHWINI CHHATRE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC POLICY, CHAIR-IRB; EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-BIPP, ISB

SPEAKERS:

- KUNAL SHEKHAR, PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST- WOOD AND FIBRE SOURCES, BILT GRAPHIC PAPER PRODUCTS LIMITED
- KANIKA PAL, SOUTH ASIA HEAD - COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS, UNILEVER
- ASHISH SARAF, PRESIDENT, MANORAMA INDUSTRIES

Ashwini Chhatre began the session by laying out the central problem in developing the forest economy. More than 200 million people in India depend on forests for a significant part of their income, he said, highlighting that there is a worrisome correlation between poverty and forests.

The idea of a forest economy looks at the fact that forests are already part of the industry value-chains, which is why people get income from selling forest products. The solution is to use these value chains to build partnerships between industry and communities, industry and civil society and multi-way partnerships that ensure that benefits are retained at the local level. Although industries are keen to build these partnerships, they are difficult to forge and sustain. He outlined the fact that there are experiments going on that allow us to think about creating and replicating such partnerships and spoke about the need for poverty alleviation while also protecting our forests.

Kunal Shekhar talked about Community Forests Rights (CFR) being implemented in 2010-11, where his company had an agreement with the Government of Maharashtra for bamboo but as the agreement was not extended, they had to talk directly with the community, which brought lots of challenges.

Ashish Saraf began by speaking about a huge potential of opportunities in forest produce. His company sells various forest produce in its 18,000 collection centres where sustainable ways are followed along with fair trade practices. There is a very big opportunity but there is no coordination, he said.

Kanika Pal said that it is important to see the causality to see what can make forest economy sustainable and identify who the different players are who have an important role to play to bring systemic change.

Kunal Shekhar said that the community has several perspectives and the forest resource of value to industry may not be valuable to the community. He shared a case study to examine three kinds of supply chains- social, industrial and commercial- and the different kinds of relationships that are built with the community within these.

Responding to a question on lessons and design principles based on their experience, Ashish Saraf stressed on the need for a robust system mentioning Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), SAF, the need to identify products especially as they face pressure to buy certain products by the community.

The moderator mentioned knowledge gaps and the fact that even basic knowledge about forests is still the responsibility of the government. I think we need to control this ourselves, he said, asking how necessary knowledge can be made usable and actionable that industries can use to scale up their opportunities. He outlined the three areas where there are gaps in knowledge—simple inventory, the value chains which are siloed, and the lack of availability of simple technologies. We are at a point where we know what we don't know, he said, asking the panellists to reflect on the role that industry can play in addressing these.

Kanika Pal said, I think industry has a huge role to play and with the emerging changes in the CSR and ESG norms there is a lot of good news that is coming in. She stressed the need to make value chains directly related to the industry sustainable and drew attention to the work that needs to be done in the community outside. We start with the GAP analysis in all of these sub-sector studies and The Institute of Livelihood Research and Training (ILRT) has helped us produce studies that are actionable, she added. She gave the example of ways in which the mahua flower is collected in Chhindwara highlighting ways in which the labour involved in the collection of the flower can be brought down. She also informed the panel about the case studies of Dr. Uma Shankar Sharma, making a case for the need for knowledge transfer, need for understanding about how the potential of the value chain can be maximised for the community and help the community look at the sustainability of that value chain for their growth and well-being.

Ashwini Saraf spoke about the work done by Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) pointing out that in India there is no plantation that is RSPO certified but his company is RSPO certified and their other produce is also certified under Fair Trade. Stressing the need for systematised working, he advocated the setting up of a platform of existing industries doing business in the

forest in a sustainable way.

Responding to knowledge sharing, especially with respect to community, Kunal Shekhar offered an example related to sustainable harvesting and how industry can play a part by involving government institutions and local NGOs. Picking up on the problems with inventory, he spoke about the forest working plan continuing since British times. I am not sure when they are making the forest plan, how much inventory they are taking, he said. We need to see what this working plan has done to the Indian forests, he added.

Ashwini Chhatre responded by saying that the failure of the government, particularly the forest department, is in not being able to convert the working plan, which was designed for timber extraction and adapt it to the new economy.

Kanika Pal elaborated on the role of the ESG, saying, ESG presents a good opportunity which makes CSR a sub-sector of it, so it's more about how the profit is made and the responsibility of the company in its functioning. The companies need to reflect and draw those values within their functioning, which will be enabled by the ESG, she said. She stressed that investing in these practices yields huge returns for companies, thus making a business case as well.

Responding to a question on communities becoming the owners of the forests, Kunal Shekhar pointed out the benefits of this move which makes decision making quicker. For any supply chain, visibility is very important, he said, adding that even during the pandemic, the supply chain which was with the community stayed active. Working with the community gives the guarantee of supply, he concluded.

Ashish Saraf added that this move has drastically changed the forest economy. This has been a milestone decision of the government which has opened up huge

opportunities, he said, adding that it has been a historical decision in the best interest of the industry and the forest dwellers.

Kanika Pal added that the idea behind ownership boils down to the economics of it. Communities know what they have to do and need a bit of hand holding with changing technology, a little bit of marketing and value-addition. The money needs to come into their hands, she said. There is no point in communities in having ownership if they still cannot make decisions that will translate into economic benefit for them, she added.

Responding to a question about gaps and the proposition of roundtable on sustainable forest produce with a focus on women, Saraf said that the forest economy is run by women, it is of women, by women, for women and women are the key decision makers in the forest. It is mostly women who are the hard-working lot but of course one needs to see how more money and opportunities can be given to them. Kanika Pal responded by saying that empowerment ultimately means if women can make decisions and have a say in where the money is utilised in her own home. There is a lot of work to be done, she concluded. Kunal Shekhar shared an example

to show that decision making is still not in the hands of women.

Chhatre summarised that while gender issues are some of the hardest to solve, external actors especially those that bring income have the potential to change these traditional systems that can become more favourable for women.

The following recommendations emerged from the session:

- Roundtable on sustainable forest produce that starts from India led by women
- Knowledge transfer to maximise the potential of the value chain for the community
- The adoption of ESG and sustainable practices in harmony with the community which also translates into profits for companies
- Knowledge transfer on actionable steps that industries can use to scale up their opportunities
- Setting up of a platform of existing industries doing business in the forest in a sustainable way



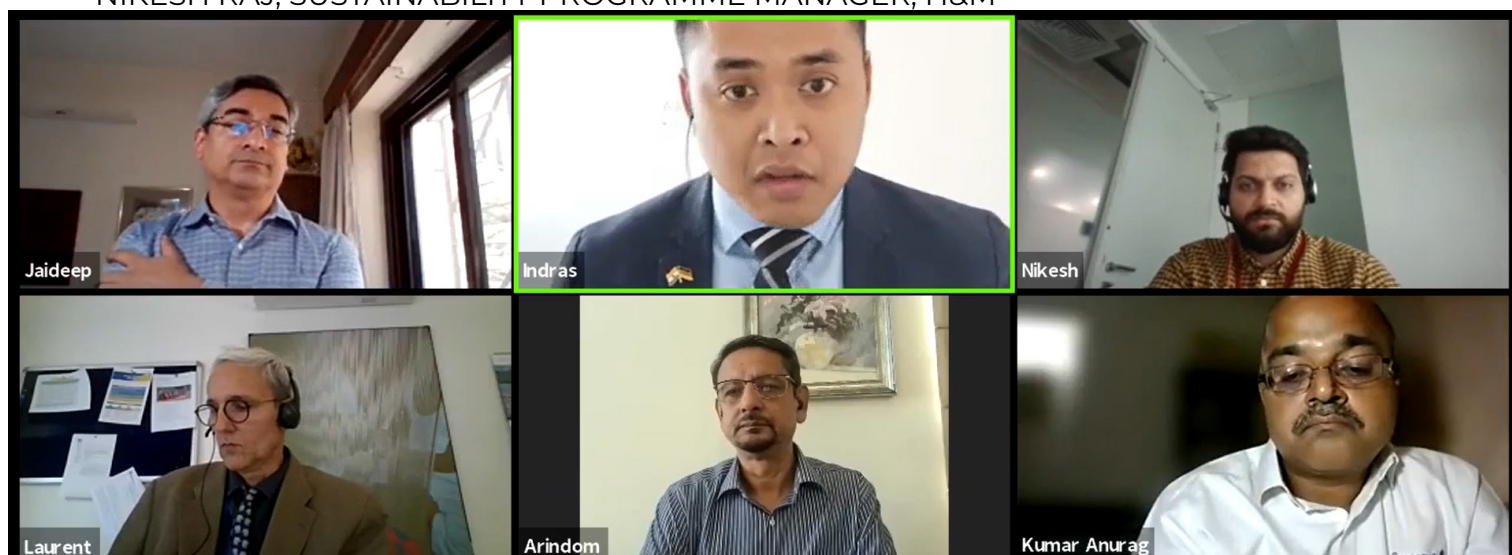
CONTRIBUTION OF EU BUSINESSES IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY AND SDGS IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



MODERATOR: ARINDOM DUTTA, RABO BANK

SPEAKERS:

- MR. DANIEL HACHEZ, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, HEAD OF COOPERATION, DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO BHUTAN, CHINA, INDIA, MALAYSIA, MONGOLIA, THAILAND
- MR LAURENT LE DANOIS, TEAM LEADER, INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, EU DELEGATION TO INDIA AND BHUTAN
- INDRAS GHOSH, ACTING HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS, INDO-GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
- JAIDEEP GOKHALE, VICE PRESIDENT, SUSTAINABILITY FOR ASIA PACIFIC, TETRA PAK
- AMAR JOSHI, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, INDO-ITALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
- KUMAR ANURAG PRATAP, VICE PRESIDENT AND CSR LEAD, CAPGEMINI
- NIKESH RAJ, SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMME MANAGER, H&M



Rijit Sengupta set the context for the discussion. Mr Laurent Le Danois began by appreciating the work of CRB and the findings which will be shared in a report, to shed light on the contribution of EU businesses to sustainability in India. It's about the EU and India contributing to businesses locally, nationally, and globally, he said.

Rijit spoke of there being several opportunities and synergies to explore at the level of practice and policy. The moderator Arindom Dutta laid out the context of the panel discussion.

Speaking about the effect of the EU mandatory supply chain due diligence legislation and other EU initiatives on trade in India and EU, Indras spoke about business outlook and regulatory

developments as being the indicators of how these things would impact India and EU. There is a lot of eagerness to implement supply chain due diligence, he said, adding that from the industry side, there is an appetite from India to be more responsible. He stressed that while the goals of the two countries were aligned, they were both at different phases in reaching it. He said, should the current development continue, the EU mandatory due diligence will have a positive impact on trade and investment in India, stressing for there to be an atmosphere of collaboration.

Anurag Pratap Kumar laid out some of the practical challenges, saying that while collaboration was key for SDGs, effort needs to

be put in to bring about that collaboration. You need to align your heart with the head in a more synchronised manner, he said, explaining that while the will for collaboration is there, the ground reality is quite different. The business competitive spirit comes in the SDGs as well, even though SDGs are about much more than business, he added.

Nikesh Raj spoke about sustainability at HandM outlining what all their sustainability policy covers, while stressing on collaboration being key. He added that it is important to also co-create and find multiple solutions. Instead of creating something from scratch, collaboration methods and a creative approach to collaboration will enable everyone to find solutions more easily, he said. We visualise a common platform between Indian brands and EU brands in India where they can openly speak about the challenges faced and try to solve it with a single voice, he added.

Jaideep Gokhale began by saying that there is a tremendous opportunity to collaborate with different players of the value chain. He advocated knowledge sharing between businesses. We are really driving circularity and recycling and we want to promote that, so we can advise companies in that area, position and we would welcome learnings in another area, he said and offered examples of how this is being done and mentioned Kraftsamla, and work being done specifically in the area of gender.

Indras Ghosh responded to a question on learnings from EU companies, reiterating the need for collaboration. He said that companies tend to see compliance as a burden instead of seeing it from a business-resilience perspective. We need to commit to a long-term collaboration to achieve the goal for sustainable supply chains systematically, which also pushes the agenda on every level of the organisation to multi-stakeholder effort, he said. He pointed out the need for collaboration with workers, taking care of suppliers, encouraging greater participation of women, protecting and promoting inclusivity amongst vulnerable groups, and suggested some ways in which these can be achieved.

Nikesh then offered examples from the apparel industry to explain the ways in which fashion brands are collaborating on certain social causes, admitting that while there are lots of opportunities, there is need to be more flexible and look at what other industry players are doing in this field to explore other ways of engagement. He also proposed the need for just one or two platforms with multiple stakeholders instead of a proliferation of them, which would be useful for handling issues and creating a cohesive vision.

Responding to a question, Jaideep took the example of the current fire-fighting approach that businesses have towards natural calamities. He proposed the setting up of a common corpus across businesses with a clear SOP that outlines first response, needs of relief agencies etc, and assesses which organisations can provide which of the things on it. This would enable better preparedness and quick response through collaboration. He also gave examples about how the private and development sectors can come together to create synergies that benefit both.

Anurag gave examples of ways in which companies came together during covid for relief efforts. The challenge is to identify the sweet spot, finding areas where both partners are committed and developing it with a programme plan. Building partnerships require patience, and sustainability and CSR helps you go beyond mere transactions, he said.

Arindom pointed out that despite being a pandemic, covid enabled self-reliance, a quick adoption of technology and a greater focus on sustainability in societies. He said that the EU and CRB are looking at setting up an EU platform to get businesses together to work on CSR, business, and sustainability.

Jaideep said that such a platform will especially benefit small businesses, bringing about higher CSR visibility, creating a marketplace and offering the role that his company could help.

Anurag said that such a platform would be authentic, ethical, and outlined what is needed in such a platform. What we are seeking is a

platform where we could create a design without worrying about who is going to steal it, he said. He also outlined the role that CRB and EU could play in such a project, emphasising the need for regular dialogues. Nikesh echoed the need for a clear commitment and transparency in said platform.

Indras too, emphasised the need to do away with duplication of work and inefficient collaboration, and have a uniform approach in ASG, human rights due diligence. We need to share our best practices, he said. Speaking about the proposed platform, he proffered that they can support CSR programmes where it is most needed highlighting states like Bihar and Jharkhand where it is needed most.

Taking up an audience question on waste colonialism, Jaideep said that waste coming in from other countries will begin to change as countries are now adopting waste recycling and on-shore recycling. However, he spoke about waste businesses looking out for high quality imports in the sector. We want to improve the infrastructure here, he said, highlighting the role of the government and municipality etc.

Addressing another audience question, Anurag said that the proposed EU platform should address practical concerns and not offer utopian visions. Nikesh shared an example of his work in Myanmar to offer thoughts on the platform. It's not a listening platform, it's an engagement platform, he said. Indras said that the platform should not be one for endless ideas exchange, stressing the need for concrete deliverables and timelines.

Arindom answered a question on financial

institutions, stressing that these institutions need to insist on the businesses being resilient and climate proof in India to drive the goals as well.

Laurent gave his concluding remarks, sharing his experience of productive dialogue, stressing the need for expertise sharing. I am very enthusiastic about this platform, he said, adding the need to



adopt and promote best practices, making sure that it is not theory. He added the need to make something along the lines of the EU Chamber of Commerce, which is a player that is useful. The CSR and sustainability platform needs to think about what it can add, he said.

The following recommendations emerged from the session:

- Setting up of limited, focused collaborative platforms with multiple stakeholders to focus on and create a cohesive vision
- Best practice exchange amongst businesses
- Setting up of a common corpus across businesses with a clear SOP
- Need for a transparent, authentic, ethical space instead of platforms with vested interests
- Organise regular dialogues like this panel discussion to avoid feeling like loners in these spaces

EXPLORING ALTERNATE LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS FOR TEA PLANTATION WORKERS TO ENSURE A BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS



ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
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A movement
to end
discrimination

MODERATOR: ASHOK BATRA, CONSULTANT-MARKETS TRANSFORMATION, RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

SPEAKERS:

- ARIJIT RAHA, SECRETARY GENERAL AND CEO, INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION
- PRABHAT BEZBORUAH, CHAIRMAN, TEA BOARD OF INDIA
- RAKESH SUPKAR, BUSINESS HEAD-INDIA, TRADCRAFT SERVICES INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
- RANJANA DAS, LEAD SPECIALIST - PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT, OXFAM INDIA
- DR JB EKKA, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, TEA TRIBES, ASSAM



Ranjana Das laid the context for the discussion mentioning that Oxfam had undertaken a study with around 4,900 plantation workers to understand a probable living wage, which was found to be Rs. 884 and the study was in response to the conversation held last year. She addressed questions from the previous discussion in the context of the pandemic, asking, what are some of the alternative livelihood options and is there a way for stakeholders to come together to make it possible?

Dr Ekka pointed out that although there are several government schemes for tea workers, there are many universal government schemes that do not reach the plantation workers, suggesting that the managers at tea plantations can help workers avail these schemes. Some schemes mentioned were Orunodoi scheme, food security card, old age pension and widow pension scheme, MGNREGA, wage compensation scheme for pregnant women etc. The demand for the schemes has to come from the workers, he said. Speaking about alternative livelihoods options he

suggested skill development where skilling is provided free of cost by the government and placements are also available.

Prabhat Bezboruah said that alternative livelihoods for North India tea workers is imperative. Pointing out the labour surplus in Assam in comparison with South India, he shared statistics to show that it is not economically viable to pay workers higher wages as the current price of tea cannot support the worker cost. The whole commodity economy and particularly the plantation economy is caught in a time warp and unless you can eject out of that orbit, you are not going to be able to do right by your workers, he said. He pointed out that the factory small tea growers' sector will replace the organised sector if things continue the way they are. That sector does not have any social responsibilities and the workers are worse off there, he said. Assam must industrialise and create job opportunities for our workers, he said. He suggested that tea gardens can think of other businesses like tourism, warehouses etc. and workers can be encouraged to take up small scale farming like mushroom farming, pisciculture, poultry culture etc. to supplement incomes.

Rakesh Supkar spoke about the work of his organisation and said that they researched the socio-economic vulnerabilities of tea garden communities. Discussing the findings of the report, he said, the number of workers in tea gardens is high and not viable, especially in light of the stagnation of the tea business. The labour cost covers a very high cost of the production of tea and to be more profitable, businesses must look at ways to reduce the proportion of labour cost in the overall cost of production, which can only happen by increasing efficiency, possibly through mechanisation, he said. He highlighted the issue of climate change which will strongly affect tea gardens in the future, bringing productivity and consequently labour, down. He also mentioned the demographic of the workers, saying that as most of them

are adivasis or tribals, it is important that the tea garden workers are treated equally and the work in tea gardens should be an aspiration, not a compulsion. He spoke about the importance of skilling the workers, offering recommendations for these skilling programmes and highlighted the issues of gender and the situation of casual workers, who are the most vulnerable. He highlighted certain occupations that workers could take up as alternative livelihoods with the support of local authorities and the tea garden management, both in and outside the gardens. He also discussed the issue of identity and dignity of youth in these communities, which needs to be cultivated to inculcate confidence in them.

Arijit Raha spoke about the transition in the tea industry in the past two years, wherein 50 % of the output comes from the formal sector and the other half from the STGs. Unless there is an institutionalised mechanism which takes forward initiatives for at least a decade, we will not really be able to change the course of things to come, he said. He also urged for there to be a distinction between the workers and the dependents of the workers, and the latter to be looked at. He gave the example of the Chai project, which looked at skilling. The youth living at the tea estates need to be channelised and made productive, he said. He shared his findings from working in this area, saying that if you can bring one member from a family into the mainstream, the fortune of the entire family changes. You need to look at institutional mechanisms to examine the issues holistically and resolve these issues, he said. He also shared two models which use skilling for alternative livelihoods and are working well in the plantations.

Addressing a question of land rights, Arijit Raha said that the tea plantation land is leasehold land, and there has been a lot of advocacy with the government to allow different activities on that land. He spoke about the nutritional aspect as well, highlighting certain projects that look at this aspect. You need a vehicle to

move this at the speed that it needs to and that cannot happen with industry alone, he added. He also spoke about the challenges in NGOs coming in to address these concerns. Responding to a question on permanent and casual workers and them being able to find the time for alternative occupations, he said, you need to look at the youth who are illiterate and who do not want to work on the gardens, mentioning certain vocations that they can take up.

Ranjana Das concluded the session.

The following recommendations emerged from

the session:

- Industrialisation of the tea gardens, along the lines of what has taken place in South India
- Tea gardens can think of other businesses like tourism, warehouses
- Need for skilling programmes for workers
- Independent agency working closely with the industry and the government to look at taking forward initiatives



DECADE OF ACTION 2020- 30: WHY SHOULD SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS ENGAGE MILLENNIALS?



VSS COLLABORATION INDIA

MODERATORS:

- KAMAL PRAKASH SETH, GLOBAL DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MARKET TRANSFORMATION, RSPO
- MADHURI NANDA, DIRECTOR – SOUTH ASIA, RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

SPEAKERS:

- WIOLETA BURDZY SETH, FOUNDING AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER, YFS INDIA ALLIANCE
- SRISTHI TAMANNA, YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE
- AASHISH BEERGI, FOUNDER, MASH PROJECT FOUNDATION
- PADMA PARIJA, YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE
- PUNYASLOKA PANDA, FOUNDER, BLUEYARD EDUCATION
- PAULINE LARAVOIRE, CO-FOUNDER AT Y-EAST
- ABHISHEK MAZUMDAR, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO - THE LOGICAL INDIA

The aim of this session was to highlight the need and best-case practices for sustainability standards to engage millennials while also discussing some of the projects led by civil society organizations to engage millennials for climate action. The role of media in promoting sustainable lifestyle was also outlined.

The session began with an introduction and context setting by Bhavya Sharma from CRB. She then handed over the discussion to Wioleta Burdzy Seth, Yfs India Alliance. She stated that youth have the potential to be the catalyst in leading responsible production and consumption and play a significant role in promoting sustainable lifestyles. She stressed that there is an increasing understanding that climate change will deepen inequalities and a lack of action will only further



exacerbate this. She added that sudden change would not be possible but incremental changes can lead to sustainable changes in consumption and production practices. A quick audience poll was conducted to assess how people find out about sustainable products. The majority listed the media (television and internet) as the key avenues through which they found out about sustainable products. Following this Wioleta

handed over to Kamal Prakash Seth from RSPO to moderate the first fireside chat.

Kamal Prakash Seth began by highlighting the uniqueness of the session in engaging youth representatives on issues of sustainability standards.

Aashish Beergi, from the MASH Project Foundation began by introducing his work and was followed by Sristhi Tamanna, who introduced her work through the RSPO Youth Fellowship. She elaborated on the campaign she had designed on sustainable palm oil and the lack of information available on this subject. Aashish Beergi then added that while youth around the world are motivated to act towards the SDGs, the youth in India require guidance and support systems. The youth in India have untapped potential and there is more spirit of entrepreneurship.

Sristhi Tamanna then added that in India, while there are many who talk about sustainability, they may not always practice it. Thus, there is a need, she stated, for swift and urgent action for better impact. She also emphasised that the youth is more aware of the products they are using as compared to previous generations.

In discussing his own experience of participating in climate protests, Aashish Beergi said that youth activism has come a long way over the past decade. This is in part due to the variety of information that is easily available now. He concluded by saying that anyone who is passionate about working in the field of sustainability, must engage with organisations in this field even as a volunteer and to join local communities and engage with the work they do such as YfS clubs.

Aashish Beergi concluded the fireside chat by stating that it is imperative to engage the youth in sustainability standards. He said that while the youth are passionate about fighting climate change, they feel that they are far from the decision-making centre. However, there are avenues for them to engage such as through MASH, ISS and YfS. The first step has to be to raise awareness about the standards and also make

them more standardised to make it easier for non-technical audiences to understand them.

Kamal Prakash Seth then handed over to Madhuri Nanda from Rainforest Alliance to moderate the next fireside chat. She reiterated the need for awareness generation and the need for sustainable consumption especially among the youth. Padma Parija then shared her experience of working as a volunteer with YfS and combining her passion for poetry with advocacy for sustainable development. She also reiterated Srishti's point about the youth being more aware of their consumption patterns and how sustainable brands are.

Punyasloka Panda, Blueyard Education also shared his experience with YfS and stated that youth's energy must be harnessed to implement solutions for sustainability. He further added that there is a need to create youth groups that focus on solutions. He highlighted that the youth should be taught about issues of sustainability in school itself so as to encourage them to join groups such as YfS and work with sustainability organisations. While awareness about standards is important, it may not be taught separately but rather as a part of this education. Additionally, millennials may also be engaged in the discussion on sustainability through two types of products - what they wear and what they eat. This is where, he stated, is the majority of the awareness among the youth and must be built upon further. While there is awareness about the sustainable brands, he added, people also need to be made aware about reducing their consumption. Buying from eco-friendly brands would not be as effective as reducing consumption, he said.

Padma Parija, in her concluding remarks stated that there are three things to look out for while grocery shopping - which brand to opt for, whether it has a certification, whether to buy in bulk or not. These considerations aided in her understanding of sustainability standards. She also stressed on buying from local sources as opposed to buying things online since it adds to the carbon footprint.

While concluding, Kamal Prakash Seth asked the viewers to ask their favourite brands for transparency - whether the products are sustainable or not- which can be done through certifications. This will drive the demand for sustainable products and encourage businesses to take action for sustainable production.

Pauline Laravoire, Co-Founder at Y-East concluded the session by summarising the discussions and the four aspects that were brought out in the session. First, that everyone is together in the environmental, social and economic ecosystem and so there is a recognition that everyone will be affected by climate change. Second, conscious choices are crucial to promote sustainable consumption and drive sustainable production. The choices of the youth, she added, influence their careers, their voting patterns and all their decisions to accelerate the transition towards sustainability. Third, she reiterated the need for simple and engaging communication to reach people who are not already aware about sustainability issues. Fourth, she emphasised on the youth's potential to act as a catalyst for change

Lastly, Abhishek Mazumdar, from The Logical Indian began by discussing the work he has been

doing to engage with the youth. He reiterated that consumers must drive the push towards sustainable practices. He highlighted the need to redesign supply chains and practices to be more sustainable. However, this would only be possible through the demand by consumers. He concluded by stating that this consumer demand will also drive a shift in the media and advertisements. He added that the discussion on social media has the potential to make the conversation on sustainability more mainstream and engage a wider audience. Strategic partnerships between sustainability organisations and media organisations were also highlighted by him.

The following recommendations emerged from the session:

- A need to spread awareness among consumers about sustainable and unsustainable products so that they can demand sustainable consumption and production practices
- Incorporating sustainability in school education make the youth aware about issues of sustainability



DAY 3

29 OCTOBER 2021



Organised & Hosted by:

10th year
2011-2020

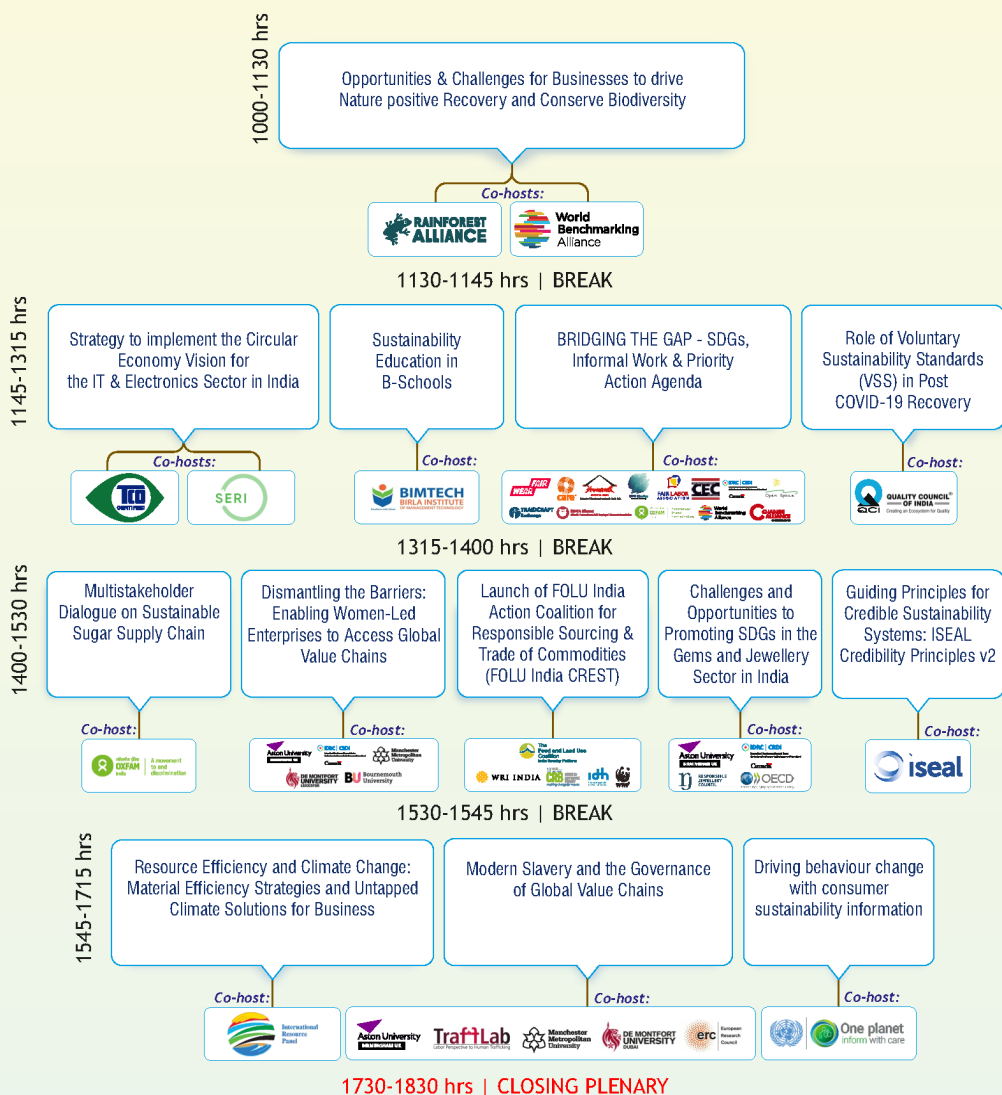
CRB CENTRE for
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS

Enabling Change for Impact

3rd Day 29 October

Conference Programme

– Lead Partners



1730-1830 hrs | CLOSING PLENARY

Imagining Inclusive Circular Fashion Futures Workshop

October 26th 2021
Time: 02:30 PM - 05:00 PM



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BUSINESSES TO DRIVE NATURE POSITIVE RECOVERY AND CONSERVE BIODIVERSITY



MODERATOR: DR. MADHURI NANDA, DIRECTOR - SOUTH ASIA, RAINFOREST ALLIANCE

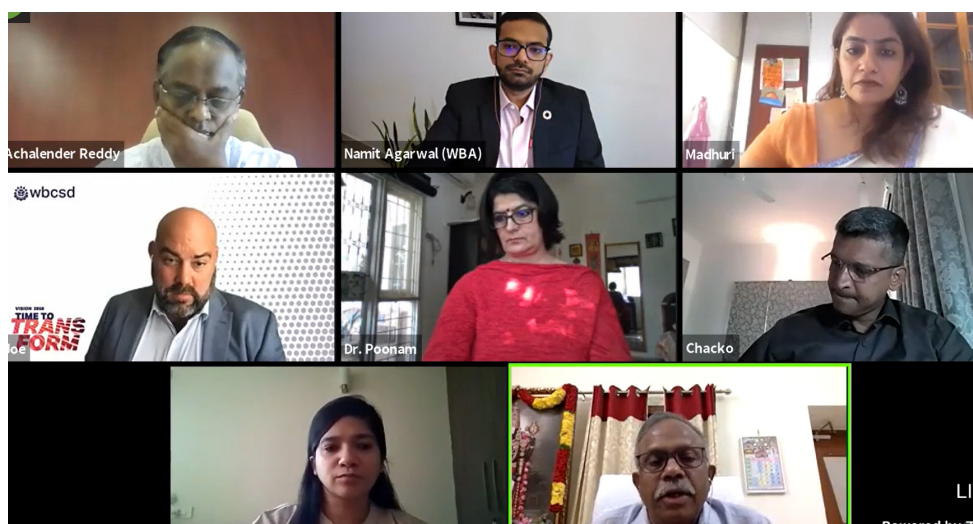
SPEAKERS:

- VIJAY KUMAR THALLAM, ADVISOR TO THE ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNMENT ON AGRICULTURE; CO-VICE CHAIRMAN, RYSS
- CHACKO P. THOMAS, MD AND CEO, TATA COFFEE
- DR S. KERKETTA, DIRECTOR, MOEFCC
- DR. C ACHAL REDDY, DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN PUBLIC SYSTEMS
- DR. POONAM PANDEY, GIZ
- BHAVYA SHARMA, ROBECO
- JOE PHELAN, WBCSD
- NAMIT AGARWAL, ASIA PUBLIC POLICY LEAD, WORLD BENCHMARKING ALLIANCE

The aim of this session was to share learnings from 'good practices' on sustainable agriculture across commodities that have worked and possibilities for scaling out and replication. The session also sought to discuss and underline opportunities for businesses to collaborate with other key stakeholders to contribute towards biodiversity and nature as well as highlight policy and institutional gaps at the national and sub-national level.

The session began with Dr Madhuri Nanda from

Rainforest Alliance who stressed the importance of biodiversity and the need for a 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. The key pillars in this, she said, are biodiversity, conservation and a reduction of land degradation. She then highlighted the potential for scale through collaboration with various stakeholders. The role of policy and institutional mechanisms in conservation of biodiversity was also mentioned by her. She then introduced Mr Vijay Kumar Thallam.



Mr Thallam began by saying that although we are in a crisis, there is also an opportunity to reset the world. Thus, climate change, biodiversity and land degradation must be tackled together. He discussed his project in Andhra Pradesh and they key to tackle these three issues together by understanding the root causes. His project began by addressing farmers' distress which in itself was linked

with multiple other factors such as health, water quality, etc. Hence, the project seeks to mimic nature and solutions found in nature. He also addressed the challenge of scaling up the project which were addressed through government support, women self-help groups and farmer to farmer extension system. Government programmes usually support such projects for 2 to 3 years, but supporting them for 6 to 8 years ensures their longevity and success. The role of collaborations to help disseminate the work done by the project was also highlighted. He concluded by saying that business can play a role by supporting such programmes as a part of the value chain process and in partnerships with communities and governments to capitalise such initiatives.

Mr Chacko Thomas from Tata Coffee then gave an introduction about the work done by Tata Coffee in following 12 out of the 17 SDGs. One of the steps that have been taken include earmarking 200 hectares of plantation land for conservation and to preserve the biodiversity of the ecosystem. He also illustrated that owing to climate change and disturbances in the rainfall pattern, there has been an impact on the coffee yield. This has prompted them to invest in natural restoration of the hydrological balance through rainwater harvesting to meet the irrigation needs of all their plantations. He also touched upon man animal conflict in the plantations which are being addressed by a dedicated wildlife cell.

Joe Phelan from WBCSD began by stating that businesses in India appear to be in action mode when it comes to acting on biodiversity and conservation. He reiterated the importance of standard setting and highlighted the Science Based Targets for Nature which is still being developed. Second, he mentioned the role of the Taskforce for Nature Related Financial Disclosures in asking companies to highlight their plan in scenarios where there is no nature loss. Using the India Water Tool as an example, he said tools must be developed with businesses and governments coming together.

Dr. S. Kerketta began by highlighting the gap

in terms of data availability. The role of local communities has to be highlighted in working with businesses in conserving biodiversity, he said. He further added that there is a need to build relationships with businesses in order to engage them to act on biodiversity. This would be linked with SDGs 8, 9 and 15. He then explained the work being done by BIOFIN - the Biodiversity Financial Initiative which is a tool to assess the financial needs and develop a Biodiversity Finance Plan. He concluded by stressing the need to bridge business and biodiversity by enhancing awareness and capacity building within organisations, assessing biodiversity risks and opportunities, and setting context specific targets for biodiversity management.

Mr Achalender Reddy began by stating that business and biodiversity may be bridged through access and benefit sharing or ABS. He also added that although voluntary standards have existed, there is a shift towards legally binding standards as well with regard to biodiversity through the Nagoya Protocol. He urged for the better implementation of this Protocol and ABS.

Dr Poonam Pandey from GIZ highlighted the role of businesses in sustainable use of biodiversity. She added that businesses should address biodiversity to avoid risks and to take advantage of opportunities to access new markets in keeping with changing demands. She gave the example of her experience with the Spices Board of India and the lack of awareness about biodiversity. Thus, she suggested information sharing and awareness generation on biodiversity for business partners. Following this, successful pilots may be taken further and scaled up.

Lastly, Bhavya Sharma began by stating investor risks in the context of biodiversity loss. She then highlighted the role of policy in driving changes. However, she also underlined the power of intersections - we must push for better collaborations and governance to operationalise the tools that we have for conserving biodiversity.

Namit Agarwal from WBA summarised

the session by reiterating the value of data, collaborations and scale. He also mentioned that WBA is in the process of developing a benchmark to assess some of the leading global companies on how they are contributing towards nature and biodiversity. Being a systems issue, there is a need for a multi stakeholder transformative change.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- There is a need to bridge business and biodiversity by enhancing awareness and

capacity building within organisations, assessing biodiversity risks and opportunities, and setting context specific targets for biodiversity management

- Collaboration must be encouraged between businesses and governments to develop tools
- There is a need for better collaborations and governance to operationalise the tools that we have for conserving biodiversity



ROLE OF VOLUNTARY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS (VSS) IN POST COVID19 RECOVERY



VSS COLLABORATION INDIA

MODERATOR: PROF BIMAL ARORA

SPEAKERS:

- SANTIAGO FERNANDEZ DE CORDOBA SENIOR ECONOMIST AT UNCTAD AT COORDINATOR - UNFSS
- DR. RENE VAN BERKEL, UNIDO REPRESENTATIVE AND HEAD AT REGIONAL OFFICE IN INDIA
- JOSEPH WOZNIAK, MANAGER AT INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE
- VIDYA RANGAN, SENIOR MANAGER AT ISEAL
- RAJIV NATH, FORUM COORDINATOR AT ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN MEDICAL DEVICE INDUSTRY

The aim of the session was to draw lessons for India from global experiences of VSS Organisations' contribution to SDGs. The session also discussed perspectives of VSS Organisations on synergies with policies and Government programmes/initiatives in India.

Rijit Sengupta from CRB set the context for the session and picked up from last year's ISS session on VSS. He then introduced Dr Manish Pande from QCI. Dr Pande began by discussing the impact of Covid on supply chains and the subsequent disruptions. He then defined VSS as focusing not only on the products and process but also on the people and communities involved. He added that the post COVID economy has to focus on creating decent jobs and on building sustainable livelihoods and societal resilience. He then highlighted the objectives of the session and introduced the



panel.

Prof Bimal Arora began by discussing the need for dialogue on VSS between the Global North and the South. He asked Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba to elaborate on the role of VSS in making trade more sustainable. Santiago Fernandez de Cordoba first mentioned that global trade has undergone drastic changes due to globalisation in terms of the volume of goods as well as the way supply chains function. The pandemic has disrupted the way supply chains

had been operating and this has highlighted the fragility of global supply chains. During the rebuilding process, VSS can help in making the recovery more sustainable by unlocking new markets and supporting economic growth through a sustainable international trade. He then mentioned a report called Better Trade for Sustainable Development: The Role of VSS. The report identifies three impacts of how VSS can improve trade relations. First is the improvement of profit and power sharing between firms and developed countries and producers in developing countries. The second pertains to the reconciliation of international trade with environmental sustainability. Lastly, with regard to social sustainability, the reconciliation of international trade with human rights and labour rights. These are also the three pillars of VSS. He then elaborated on the challenges highlighted by his research. These include the cost of certifications especially for small businesses and producers in the developing world. The second is the lack of incentives and the final is the governance gap. This means that producers in developing countries may work within a regulatory context that is not aligned with VSS. He concluded by saying that VSS presents an opportunity to upscale the three pillars of sustainability. However, the challenges faced by the SMEs and small producers must also be addressed while implementing VSS.

Dr. Rene Van Berkel from UNIDO picked up from here and said that 50-55% of MSMEs witnessed a decline in profits during the pandemic while 55-60% have laid off staff. MSMEs have also suffered through a period of extreme uncertainty and unpredictability with shifts in the market. He then elaborated on the support that UNIDO provided these MSMEs. An instance of this was setting up an online portal with a roadmap on how small businesses can try and recover through business continuity and new growth areas. This was also used as an opportunity to strengthen areas where MSMEs have traditionally been weak such as occupational health and safety, environmental issues and business continuity planning which are all linked with VSS. There has been a move towards more resilience and towards circularity,

he said. SMEs are also a very diverse group in India but they have been reluctant to incorporate VSS which is a lost opportunity and remains more of a checklist exercise as it is viewed as something that is imposed upon them.

Joseph Wozniak, ITC began by describing the work being done by ITC in providing technical assistance to improve sustainable market access. He added that when it comes to the growth of sustainability standards in key commodities, there has been a plateauing in terms of certifications. This may be attributed to the fact that in the Global North demand for sustainable goods and commodities has become mainstream but has now reached a saturation point. The aim now must be to enhance awareness in developing countries where the vast amount of consumer demand is going to be going forward. One of the ways to do this would be by highlighting the business case for implementing VSS so that companies no longer view this as a checklist exercise but rather invest in it. Public policy must also incentivise sustainable consumption in developing countries for creating an impact.

Vidya Rangan from ISEAL began by giving an overview of the work being done by the organisation. She said that COVID has brought to the fore the structural imbalances that have always existed in the way trade and supply chains are structured and has exacerbated them. The pandemic has also ushered in a sense of urgency in implementing the standards that have been discussed over the years. Over the past two decades, sustainability standards have done three key things: first, they provide a template and a list of what good practices look like. A framework, a definition and a comprehensive of what 'good' looks like has been provided. Second, has been the building of a business case for adopting this framework. However, for SMEs the business case has not been convincing. Thus, sustainability standards must communicate the business case for all types of enterprises. Lastly, sustainability standards must encourage multi sector and multi stakeholder dialogue. She then recommended three things for governments to do in order to build on sustainability standards. The first

is to recognise and understand sustainability standards to inform various government departments and to incorporate them into public policy. Second, is for governments to be dynamic and consider the role they can play in creating systems change. Thirdly, governments must raise the bar and must work with sustainability standards.

Rajiv Nath began with a presentation, highlighting that manufacturers showcase conformity to standards through certifications. However, he asked whether these standards are helping trade or if instead they act as barriers for trade. He stated that they may sometimes become technical barriers to enter a market and become a challenge for small manufacturers. He then shared his experience with the Indian National Standards Strategy and reiterated the need for helping small manufacturers become a part of the discussion on Standards so that they understand the importance of implementing them.

This was followed by a short question and answer session and concluded with Prof Bimal Arora summarising the key takeaways as working collaboratively and building a better business case for standards.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- Sustainability standards must communicate how they can be integrated into public policy and also communicate a business case for enterprises of all sizes across the supply chain
- Governments must recognise and understand sustainability standards to inform various government departments and to incorporate them into public policy
- Governments must also be dynamic and consider the role they can play in creating systems change



BRIDGING THE GAP - SDGS, INFORMAL WORK AND PRIORITY ACTION AGENDA



MODERATOR: LAKSHMI BHATIA

SPEAKERS:

- NAMIT AGARWAL, ASIA PUBLIC POLICY LEAD, WORLD BENCHMARKING ALLIANCE
- GARIMA DHIMAN, PROGRAMME MANAGER, BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS, TRAIDCRAFT SERVICES INDIA PVT. LTD.
- KRATIKA CHOUBEY, BUSINESS ASSOCIATE, BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS, TRAIDCRAFT SERVICES INDIA PVT. LTD.
- MS. JILPA SHETH, PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT - GEMS AND JEWELLERY
- BHARTI BIRLA, PROJECT MANAGER - SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS AT ILO
- NAVYA D'SOUZA, REGIONAL COORDINATOR, HOMENET SOUTH ASIA
- RAPHEL JOSE, EXPERT - SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY
- SUBHADRA GUPTA, REGIONAL MANAGER, SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA, FAIR LABOUR ASSOCIATION



This session was a part of the Women in Value Chains Working Group and aimed at exploring the existing good practices and experiences of

engaging with workers in the informal sector. The session also sought to develop an action agenda that delivers on the SDG commitments while

focusing on the informal sector.

The session began with Ms Lakshmi Bhatia introducing the Women in Value Chains Working Group (WiVC), the work done thus far and the space of informality and informal workers with a focus on the apparel and agri supply chain. This year's session World Benchmarking Alliance along with CRB conducted research on the importance and impact of SDGs for the informal economy and informal workers. Hence, the discussion aimed at examining how the human rights agenda may be inclusive for sectors where the workforce was still hidden.

Amit Kumar, the keynote speaker from UNDP, began by highlighting the importance of the Decade of Action in the context of Covid and the setbacks to the Development Agenda during the pandemic. Several SDG gains were reversed and this will have implications for the Development Agenda. He then stated that while all the SDGs are crucial for the informal workforce, the most important are SDGs 8 and 10. The solutions to addressing the issues of the informal workforce must be realistic and scalable, he added, since widening inequalities and jobless growth continue to be key challenges in India where an estimated 75% to 90% of the workforce consists of informal workers. He further stated that India has one of the lowest female workforce participation rates in the world and this has been steadily declining over the years especially since the onset of the pandemic. Covid's impact has also been felt in a shift in the workforce with formal workers being employed as casual or informal workers. The reverse migration in India with the onset of the pandemic helped in shedding a light on the plight of informal workers and brought them to the discussion in mainstream media. Although laws exist to protect these workers, the key focus must be on the implementation of such measures, he added. He then explained the work being done by UNDP in addressing issues of inequality and poverty to leave no one behind by adopting a 'whole system approach'. He also stressed upon UNDP's role in encouraging women in the workplace especially in the managerial roles which is now scalable and may

be replicated across value chains.

Namit Agarwal from WBA then followed the discussion by reiterating the need for solutions to be scalable and not confined to a small part of the informal sector. He stressed on the need to identify the bottlenecks that hinder effective policy implementation through the Policy CoLab rather than recommending new policies. He also emphasised on the need to concentrate on the most vulnerable informal sector workers as opposed to treating the entire informal workforce as a homogenous monolith.

There were two case studies presented during this session; first from the apparel sector (Hidden Homeworkers Project) to operationalise SDGs at the grassroots and second from the gems and jewellery sector.

Garima Dhiman and Kratika Choubey from Traidcraft began by elaborating the work done by Traidcraft and the Hidden Homeworkers Project. They then discussed who homeworkers are and what their specific issues are as informal workers. The project addresses SDGs 1, 5 and 8. Some of the key interventions of the project include engaging with global brands in the apparel sector to raise awareness on the issues faced by homeworkers. They added that the project also seeks to link homeworkers with organisations that can facilitate access to social safety nets, financial literacy and other skill development. Through the project thus far, over 80 brands have been engaged with over 2500 homeworkers receiving training for their rights.

Jhilpa Sheth from the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council then shared her case study about the sector. She introduced the work done by the Council. The focus has been on SDGs 3, 4 and 9. Under SDG 3, one of the key initiatives launched by the Council is the Group Mediclaim Scheme 'Swasthya Ratna' for workers of the members and 'Swasthya Kosh' for workers in the informal sector. These initiatives have reached over 950 companies and benefited 1.93 lakh families. Under SDG 4, the Council has decided to cover the school fees of those who cannot

afford to do so for their children. Training and skill development have also been key areas of focus with more than 1000 artisans trained thus far.

Bharti Birla from the ILO then talked about the interlinkages between SDG 8 and the other SDGs. She also stressed on the need for informed and effective laws and policies, empowering workers and dialogue and action.

Navya D'Souza from HomeNet South Asia began with a snapshot of home-based workers in South Asia and in India. She also discussed that the work done by women in global value chains has dwindled over the course of the pandemic, with a focus on local markets which in turn has impacted their income.

Subhadra Gupta elaborated on the need to focus on intervention and implementation to assess the alignment with SDGs. Transparency in the value chain and in mapping the value chain were crucial aspects highlighted by her.

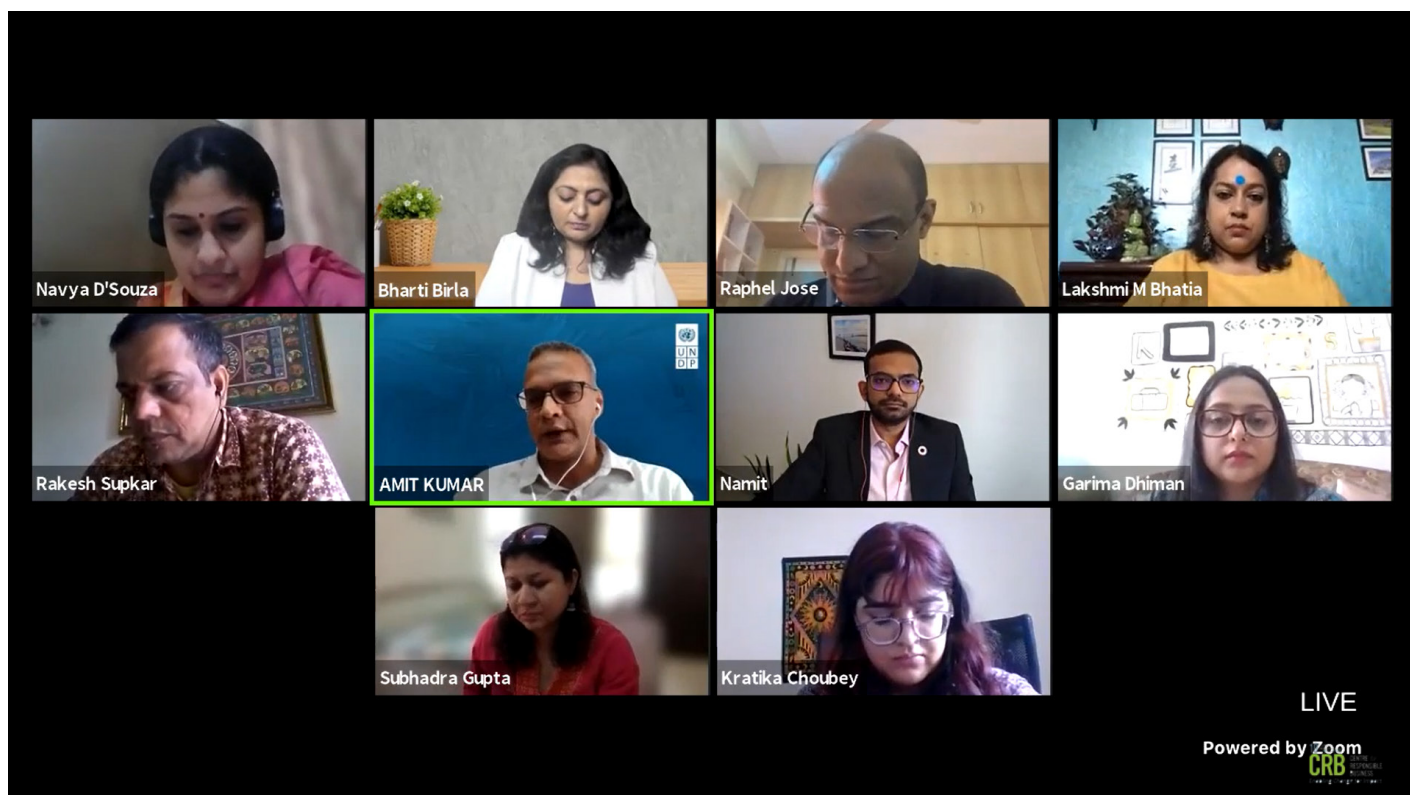
Raphael Jose stated the need for building sustainability into the brands and supply chains.

He added that the supply chain is organised as enterprises and workers and so it must work for both those components. He also reiterated the need for transparency within the value chain since very little is known by the enterprise and the workers they employ.

Lastly, Rakesh Supkar summarised the discussion.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- Businesses need to be proactive in providing measures such as safe working conditions, timely wages, etc. since this does not require a new policy framework and can be adopted and implemented easily
- SMEs must view their workforce as an investment and must adopt a human rights lens
- Large businesses can influence the supply chain practices and must be proactive in leading the change by leveraging their position



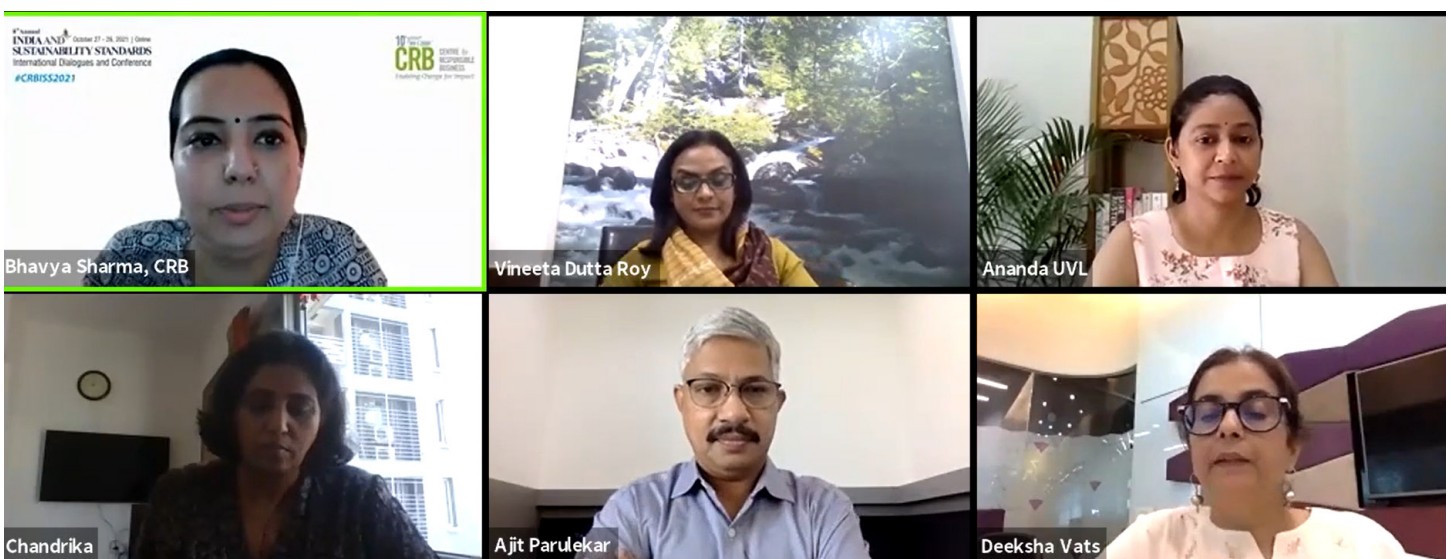
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION IN B-SCHOOLS



MODERATOR: DR VINEETA DUTTA ROY, BIMTECH

SPEAKERS:

- DEEKSHA VATS, GROUP CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER AT ADITYA BIRLA GROUP
- CHANDRIKA PARMAR, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT SPIJMR
- AJIT PARULEKAR, DIRECTOR AT GOA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
- DEEPAK ARORA, VICE PRESIDENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT NAYARA ENERGY
- ANANDA UVL, HEAD, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT EAST-WEST SEED INDIA



The session began with Bhavya Sharma from CRB giving an introduction about BIMTECH and the session. This discussion on sustainability in education began six years ago at ISS, she said, with the aim of linking academics with the conversation on sustainability. She then handed over the discussion to Dr Vineeta Dutta Roy from BIMTECH who set the context for the session. She said that there is an expectation from leaders to respond to the climate crisis and to act urgently. From businesses, there is an expectation of innovation to grow financially but also sustainably. It is also important, she added, to have a sustainability mindset to ensure real and lasting change. B-Schools are crucial in this context because they shape the future corporate leaders to address sustainability challenges.

Dr Sunil Rai began by stating that there is a considerable effort to ensure that all the new infrastructure is in keeping with sustainability standards and environmental regulations with

an emphasis on conserving and regenerating all power and water supply in the university. This has also been extended to encourage faculty members to car pool and use public transportation. Thirdly, he stated the importance of social monitoring. Using the example of conserving electricity and switching off the lights, he said that if someone failed to do so, they would be given warnings and four warnings would result in a penalty. This process involves all the students as well as the faculty to inculcate responsible behaviour. He further added that there is a move towards teaching students life skills in addition to their core degree subjects to allow for more holistic learning. He also discussed some of the community initiatives taken by the university and some of the key research projects such as efforts to convert plastic to petrol. He concluded by recommending the need to sensitise the youth towards other people as well as towards the environment.

Ms Deeksha Vats began by saying that the discussion on issues of sustainability has evolved tremendously. Over the pandemic there was a fear that sustainability might get pushed to the sideline due to the focus on Covid. However, there has been a recognition that there is an urgency to act on climate change. In fact, the swiftness with which the world has responded to the pandemic, has instilled hope that the same may be possible for climate action. She further highlighted the importance of assessing sustainability as a whole rather than a focus only on climate action. She also discussed the way Aditya Birla Group has imbibed this thinking in their projects and in ensuring that their initiatives address sustainability. She also mentioned the importance of the circular economy as an enabler in helping businesses think about reducing waste as well as decarbonisation. In addition to this, she stressed that Aditya Birla Group has also been working to address concerns of its employees, suppliers and communities especially over the course of the pandemic.

Ajit Parulekar began by saying that there has been a marked shift towards engaging the Indian youth in conversations on sustainability. This also means that teachers and academics need to focus on how students can be taught these issues while integrating them with all the subjects that are taught to them as opposed to as separate subjects. Although mechanisms such as using renewable energy sources and reducing our carbon footprint have been incorporated, he added, these only negate the negative impacts. There must also be steps taken for positive impacts such as increasing biodiversity. Lastly, he added that there is a need to move beyond the university campus and set up centres to engage with and sensitise the wider youth of the country. These conversations must also take place globally and the use of social media for dissemination of best practices must be encouraged.

Deepak Arora reiterated the need to focus on social and environmental sustainability and not just climate action. The need for individual transformation cannot be underscored in this. In the ESG space, the most significant transformation that has occurred has been

in making sustainability more mainstream in businesses. This is found in the fact that conversations around sustainability are no longer restricted to those working on CSR. Thirdly, the financial sector also appreciates the value of investing in sustainability and has been a big trigger in making sustainability a business issue. Thus, there is a need for students to understand the diversity and magnitude of stakeholders across the supply chain and should have sectoral conversations to facilitate a deeper understanding of the issues.

Chandrika Parmar also reiterated the need for sustainability to be inculcated as a life skill among the youth. She added that in B-Schools there is an emphasis on considerations of growth, productivity and efficiency which take precedence over everything else. Thus, there is a need to delink the misnomer that economic growth means environmental degradation. She also recommended the inclusion of key concepts such as justice and inclusivity in what the students are taught.

Ananda Uvl said that although there have been technological advancements in several sectors, this has not resulted in simultaneous end of persistent supply chain issues such as child labour and human rights. Thus, there is a need to understand the multi stakeholder issues and gain in depth understanding the supply chain issues.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- Conversations around sustainability must not focus solely on environmental sustainability but must also include social sustainability
- Students must be taught to delink the misnomer that economic growth means environmental degradation
- There is a need for adopting a sustainability mindset and teach students sustainability as a life skill
- In addition to a theoretical understanding of sustainability, students must also be exposed to and encouraged to develop their practical knowledge of supply chain issues

STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY VISION FOR THE IT AND ELECTRONICS SECTOR IN INDIA



SPEAKERS:

- CLARE HOBBY, DIRECTOR, PURCHASER ENGAGEMENT, GLOBAL AT TCO DEVELOPMENT
- COREY DEHMEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT SERI
- DR. SANDIP CHATTERJEE, SCIENTIST F AT ELECTRONICS MATERIALS AND COMPONENTS DIVISION (EMCD)
- GEORGE PAUL, CEO AT MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION FOR IT
- PRASANNA NARASIMAIAH, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR AT APPLIED MATERIALS (BENGALURU)
- A L N RAO, CEO AT EXIGO RECYCLING PRIVATE LIMITED

Devyani Hari from CRB set the context for the session and handed over the discussion to Clare Hobby. Clare began by introducing the work being done by TCO Development, the certification for IT hardware. Corey Dehmay then also gave an overview of SERI's work and mission in working on circularity.

Dr. Sandip Chatterjee then shared the action plan on circular economy in e-waste management in India. He began by highlighting the importance of a circular approach in India in generating employment, protecting the environment, and the scope to improve resource efficiency. He also mentioned that there has been an increase in awareness about the need for a circular

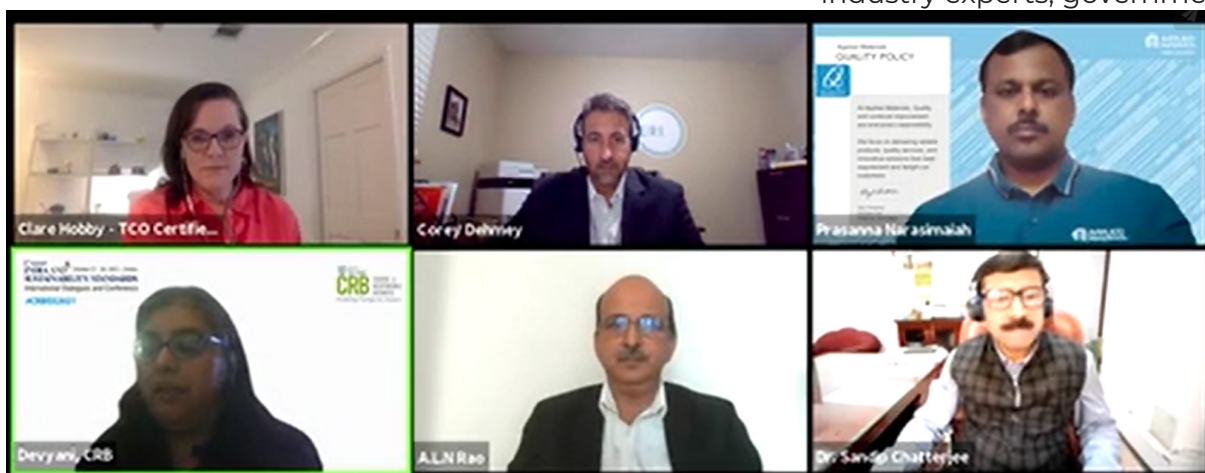
a downstream but also an upstream approach incorporating circularity considerations at the design stage itself. He then discussed the Niti Ayog policy on circularity which encompassed 11 sectors including the electronics sector as well as the global scenario with regards to circularity with initiatives such as the Right to Repair, recycling standards R2, etc. He went to discuss the social, economic and environmental advantages of a circular economy and the opportunity provided by the National Electronics Policy, 2019 to integrate principles of circularity in the electronics sector in India. He then elaborated on the Circular Economy Action Plan developed as a result of extensive stakeholder consultations with industry experts, government as well as research

organisations. These consultations have highlighted that the reason for the waste management being in the informal sector is because it tends to offer a better price but is laden with issues of compliance and regulation.

Some of the key

approach and thus there is a need for a policy shift to enable resource efficiency and proper waste management. This would mean not just

recommendations in the Action Plan include a need for raising public awareness, encouraging green public procurement, training the workers



in the informal sector and moving towards formalisation, as well as implementing circular economy standards among others. He also discussed some of the research undertaken by the Ministry in promoting recycling technology. He then introduced Mr. George Paul.

Mr George Paul began by saying that all the major producers in India are signatories to the Extended Producer Responsibility or EPR and as a part of this, there is a fairly robust collection mechanism that has been set up. The discussion in India has evolved from that of safe recycling to one on a circular economy framework. He stated that the key area of importance is ensuring that the waste material is properly recycled and does not go to landfills. There is a need to assess how to maximise what goes back into the circular path. However, most of the subcomponents used in electronics cannot be reused because reusing certain parts would cast doubt on the reliability of the end product. Thus, the material that is collected should be incorporated in the secondary supply at the mineral stage or compound stage. This means building the recycler ecosystem by creating a demand for more recycled products.

Corey Dehmey was asked about R2 in India. He began by stressing the importance of prolonging the life of products and promoting reuse. The R2 certification, he said, has always taken a lifecycle approach to reuse where possible followed by recovery of materials. However, being just circular isn't enough, there is a need to also be sustainable. One of the concerns that arises is data security because the devices cannot be reused without erasing the data from them. To address the various concerns, there is a need for standards and to ensure that the standards are being met, certifications must be used. In the Indian context, he said R2 requires the reuse and recycling and thus has the circularity approach built in it. Like other certifications, R2 helps recyclers gain access to the market and access to better supply from manufacturers because it creates a harmonised approach that people can rely on.

Clare Hobby described TCO Certified as moving further upstream from refurbishment and deals

with new products. It consists of 3 main parts - criteria for social and environmental responsibility, a system of mandatory verification, and ongoing monitoring and holding industry accountable for compliance. Since 80 to 90% of a products' emissions are at the manufacturing stage, there is a dire need to make products last longer and approach the first use cycle differently. So, there is a move by TCO to focus on product design and how they can set criteria that influences product design so that these products are usable for a longer first life but also for a second life, for refurbishment and safer recycling at the end-of-life stage.

Prasanna Narasimaiah reiterated the need to consider sustainability from the stage of engineering of products. He described the framework being used by Applied Materials - 1x, 10x and 10,000 x. 1x is the impact of Applied Materials on global sustainability. 100x is the industry impact including Applied Materials' producers and suppliers. 10,000x is how their technology is used to advance sustainability on a global scale.

Mr A L N Rao added that producers must join hands with the recyclers to ensure that the circular economy approach is a success. All the stakeholders must be involved in the process to establish trust.

Mr George Paul further added that India should follow global developments so that it meets international standards and recognise that it has little control over product design since these decisions are not taken in India for most producers. He also added that there is a lack of market acceptance of electronic products that may have a longer life because consumers are not ready to pay for that level of design and material investment. In order to change this, there must be a global consensus for products that will last longer and this he highlighted was a challenge keeping in mind how rapidly technology changes.

Corey Dehmey added that consumers must drive what manufacturers make. He also said that there is a need to change the terminologies that are used. For instance, e-waste should not be in the vocabulary because in a circular economy, there

is no waste. Clare Hobby reiterated the need for green public procurement. She further stated that there is a need to purchase intentionally and to consider circularity in discussions with vendors and suppliers.

The session concluded with a short summary from Dr. Sandip Chatterjee and had the following recommendations

- In India, there is a need for raising public awareness, encouraging green public procurement, training the workers in

the informal sector and moving towards formalisation of the recycling sector

- Producers and recyclers must work together to ensure that there is trust between the stakeholders coupled with incentives for producers so as to incorporate circularity principles at the design stage
- Policy support such as implementing the Right to Repair in India



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTING SDGS IN THE GEMS AND JEWELLERY SECTOR IN INDIA



MODERATOR: MS. IRIS VAN DER VEKEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL

SPEAKERS:

- MR. MANUJ GOYAL, DIRECTOR, PINKCITY JEWELHOUSE PRIVATE LIMITED
- MR. PINAKIN DAVE, DGM, PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, BSE
- MS. NISHTASHRI SRINIVASAN, WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR, EMERALD JEWEL INDUSTRY INDIA LTD.
- RASHAD ABELSON, LEGAL EXPERT, OECD CENTRE FOR RBC
- KINJAL SHAH, INDIA - MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT LEAD, RESPONSIBLE JEWELLERY COUNCIL
- KAMLESH VYAS, MANAGING DIRECTOR GROUP MARS (MARS JEWELS, HOSUR AND RAMS JEWELS, MUMBAI)

The aim of this session was to highlight the impact of Covid 19 pandemic on the sector and to discuss growth pathways for the sector by better aligning to SDGs. The session also identified priority areas that require interventions in public policy, business strategies and ecosystem services (financing, skilling, logistics etc.) while highlighting collaborations amongst various stakeholders to facilitate more action on SDGs.

Devyani Hari from CRB began by setting the context for the session, highlighting the need to imbed sustainability in businesses and supply chains. She then introduced Rashad Abelson to begin the discussion.

Rashad Abelson from the OECD began with an introduction about the OECD which although works towards meeting all the SDGs, focuses specifically on SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work) and SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). The standard he discussed during the session was the OECD due diligence for responsible mineral supply chains. This standard, he added, was developed in consultation with governments, civil society and

other stakeholders. The approach recommended is not the typical compliance approach because the objective was to promote responsible investments and engagement in mining communities. He then also laid out the business case for companies to adopt this standard and said that there is increasing scrutiny from governments and consumer pressure. Industry associations' audits may also limit market access, thereby acting as a further incentive to adopt due diligence. He also listed the positive aspects of due diligence for companies as it reduces operational, legal and market risks while at the same time facilitates participation in the global value chain. He concluded by saying that although efforts have been made to incorporate due diligence in some supply chains, there is a need for more detailed reporting on the risks encountered and how they have been mitigated.

Kinjal Shah from RJC gave a brief introduction about RJC and its aim to develop global leaders on sustainable practices. He then explained RJC's code of practices - responsible supply chain and due diligence, labour rights and working conditions, health and safety and responsible

mining - which address and relate to all the SDGs. Following this, he shared the 2030 road map of RJC based on the principles of members first, partnerships for impact and advocacy for positive change. These all contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

Iris Van Der Veken also added here that RJC is working closely with experts to build an ESG framework and metrics to report on progress to aid in making the various understand how they can show progress. This progress may be through education and collective action.

Manuj Goyal from Pink City Jewelhouse stressed on the need to move on from doing no harm to doing good. He described how initially the focus was on social audits but following a push from the customers, steps were taken to join RJC. This has allowed them to better understand the supply chain as well as how they can incorporate more sustainable practices.

Nishtrashi Srinivasan highlighted the importance of creating value by being socially compliant and focusing on sustainability. She stated one of the benefits associated with sustainable practices as the respect that her organisation has gained over the years in this sector. She concluded by saying that MSMEs must also be informed through small initiatives to facilitate piecemeal changes.

Pinkain Dave reiterated the need for collaboration among the various stakeholders to build

solutions. He then discussed the two indices SMP BSE Green X and Carbon X. The latter consists of top 25% stocks with the minimum carbon footprint. He also discussed that the BSE would be launching India's green stock exchange.

Mr Kamlesh Vyas explained that in the gold industry which he represents, there is a predominance of migrant workers. Thus, he began by providing his employees with basic living conditions and healthcare facilities. This benefits both the employee and the employer as the employees no longer have to worry about finding accommodation and can be more productive at work. He also stressed on the importance of inter sectoral learnings as well as sharing best practices.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- There is a need for bigger brands to engage with SMEs on the principles of RJC
- There must also be capacity building for SMEs coupled with knowledge sharing of best practices within the sector as well as across sectors
- Smaller associations affiliated with the RJC may act as stepping stones for SMEs to incorporate sustainable practices and make incremental changes before joining the RJC



DISMANTLING THE BARRIERS: ENABLING WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES TO ACCESS GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS



MODERATOR: PROF BIMAL ARORA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: MS. ANNA ROY, SENIOR ADVISER, NITI AAYOG

SPEAKERS:

- PROF BIMAL ARORA
- PROF NICK THEODORAKOPOULOS
- DR MILI SHRIVASTAVA
- DIVYA JYOTI
- PINKY MAHESHWARI
- JULIA KARST, IDRC
- MRINALINI VENKATACHALAM, WECONNECT INTERNATIONAL
- KRITHIKA RAM
- DIBYA SINGH FROM UNDP
- GIRIDHAR RAO
- EROSHAN ALAGARETNAM
- PREETI SYAL, WECONNECT INTERNATIONAL

This panel sought to initiate a conversation at the policy and practice level to promote inclusive and diverse supply chains to encourage women-led businesses.

The session began with Prof Bimal Arora setting the context for the session and highlighting the need to understand and delve into the discussion about enabling women led enterprises in the global value chains. This is because despite a policy push to include more women in the workforce, the focus has not been on global value chains. With this, he introduced the panel.

Ms Anna Roy from Niti Ayog gave the keynote and stated that there are two issues to discuss. First, is how India integrates with the global value chain. Second, is women entrepreneurship within that. She mentioned that gender-based biases persist in entrepreneurship across the world and not just in India. She then discussed the initiatives under

the Women Entrepreneurship Platform and the value of networking for building ecosystems. She further added that due to the information asymmetry information is not always available to the targeted beneficiaries and this is where the WEP tries to bridge the gap. One of the things the WEP has succeeded in doing, she added, is to map out approximately 60 Government of India schemes which referred to some form or the other two women entrepreneurship. The next step is to do the same for state level schemes and make the information easily available. She also stated that entrepreneurs need to be aware of this platform so that a community of women entrepreneurs can be created who can help each other.

Prof Nick Theodorakopoulos then explained the work done by him regarding women entrepreneurship. He stated that in India there are between 13.5 and 15.7 million women

owned businesses, representing 20% of the total stock of businesses. While large in absolute numbers though, the vast majority of these are single person enterprises, providing direct and employment for an estimated 22 to 27 million people. He emphasised that measures to close the gender gap could lead to approximately 6.8% increase in the country's GDP. Further, he added that benchmarks from high performing countries provide a good yardstick for India to accelerate women led business. What is needed is growth both in the quantity and the quality of these businesses. Through this, he said, there is potential to create 150 to 170 million jobs, which is more than 25% of the new jobs required for the entire working age population from now until 2030. Hence, women-led business specifically

female entrepreneurs must be expanded. In order to address these barriers, there is a need for coordinated efforts across different nations in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, to provide an enabling and joined policy framework, equal access to finance, expansion of mentorship and networking channels, capacity building, and finally, cultural change. For this to happen within the array of stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem to act, which include national and state governments, the voluntary sector, financial institutions, community, other private enterprises, settling multinationals or education institutions and the media.

Citing research from the UK and the US, Prof Nick Theodorakopoulos illustrated the strides



made in promoting and encouraging women entrepreneurship in those countries over the years. He added that in the US, for instance, the institutional framework in its country had a lot to do with the extent to which an organization as a buyer engages with the concept of gender sensitive procurement. The institutional framework encompasses rules and regulations,

remains critical to move towards gender equality, harness the economic potential of women and achieve the sustainable development goals by 2030. He further highlighted the key barriers that must be overcome. First, is the lack of finance which impacts nearly every entrepreneur manifest much more acutely for women, but just in India, everywhere. Second, is exclusion from networks, both formal and informal. There are also severe inhibiting cultural constraints which manifest in different ways, including denial of social permission to work enterprise, lack of family support, and strong gender biases. Third, there is a need to raise the ambition of solo women entrepreneurs. Lastly, the pool of

industry and organizational norms and lastly, the local culture. He concluded by stating that for multinationals and any large organisations engaging with gender sensitive procurement gives access to knowledge of local markets, and types of consumers access to enable innovative suppliers that will go beyond the call of duty to win and keep their customers, depending on government procurement regulations. The role of the government cannot be ignored in this as it may even facilitate access to public sector contracts by engaging gender sensitive procurement multinationals and large firms in general.

Next, Prof Bimal Arora asked the panel how women led entrepreneurs can start thinking about accessing value chains, locally and internationally. To this Rama Kanneganti from WeConnect reiterated the role of women entrepreneurs in helping create jobs and provide employment. She also added that there is a need for capacity building programmes for organisations to understand the role and value of working with women entrepreneurs. She further stated that there are several schemes such as PMEGP and the provision of rent subsidy for women and business which must be utilised by women. However, the lack of awareness among women entrepreneurs acts as a barrier in accessing funds and government schemes. She said that women also need to be made aware of the kinds of skills that they would require to succeed as entrepreneurs such as financial literacy, logistical management and latest technologies, certification, branding, etc.

Pinky Maheshwari shared her perspective as the owner of a start-up. She began by describing her journey in the start-up ecosystem and the paucity of women owned start-ups. She then stated that there is a need for mentoring for women entrepreneurs coupled with the right infrastructure including incubation centres and mentors, networking. She concluded by saying that perhaps the biggest barriers for women entrepreneurs are cultural and social and the lack of encouragement that women receive. Shikha Shah, owner of AltMat shared her experience next. She reiterated the cultural and social barriers and the opposition she faced while starting her own business.

Next, Julia Karst from GIZ also discussed the work being done by the project on promoting women entrepreneurship in India. She reiterated the need for policy support for women entrepreneurs while also highlighting the need to stimulate a debate around women entrepreneurs and the potential of women entrepreneurs in the economy. She also stated that there is a need to provide information about schemes about available support opportunities to women entrepreneurs,

so that the information reaches the right target group coupled with training for the policymakers, but more importantly, also service providers like financial institutions, incubators, business development institutions to be more gender sensitive.

Mrinalini Venkatachalam from WeConnect International followed Julia. She began by explaining the work done by WeConnect and how they work towards putting more money in the hands of women business owners through supplier diversity. She highlighted the importance of collaboration rather than working in silos. She also reiterated the need for training for women entrepreneurs in areas such as procurement processes coupled with the need to train organisations and businesses so that they support these entrepreneurs. She concluded by saying that there is a misconception that women led businesses are too small and not competent. Thus, the perception must change and this can be done through awareness and training.

Krithika Ram emphasised the need to share the business case for women led businesses with larger organisations. She also stated that there is a need for a support system for women who own small and medium enterprises to help them grow and expand. Support may be provided in several ways, one of which could be access to affordable childcare. This would help women balance their personal and professional responsibilities.

Giridhar Rao then stated that from his experience, women led enterprises tend to balance considerations of sustainability. He said that in such organisations there tend to be lower instances of child labour, owing to the fact that women are more sensitive to these issues and understand them better. However, buyers, he reiterated, need to be made aware of the benefits of supporting women led enterprises.

Dibya Singh from UNDP added here that from her research, it has been highlighted that rural women tend to either be self-employed or employed in the informal sector. However, there

is a lack of women in managerial roles. She also shared her experience of conducting capacity building workshops for rural women and training them to build their leadership and business skills.

This was followed by a short question and answer session with Preeti Syal answering a question on funding for women led enterprises. She stated that while there definitely is a gap between the women-led enterprises that get funded versus those led by men, there is a need for more research to understand the barriers to entry. Eroshan Alagaretnam also said that there is a lack of awareness about the benefits of gender in the sourcing as well as what is meant by inclusive supply chains. Thus, he reiterated the need to train organisations and institutions on being more inclusive.

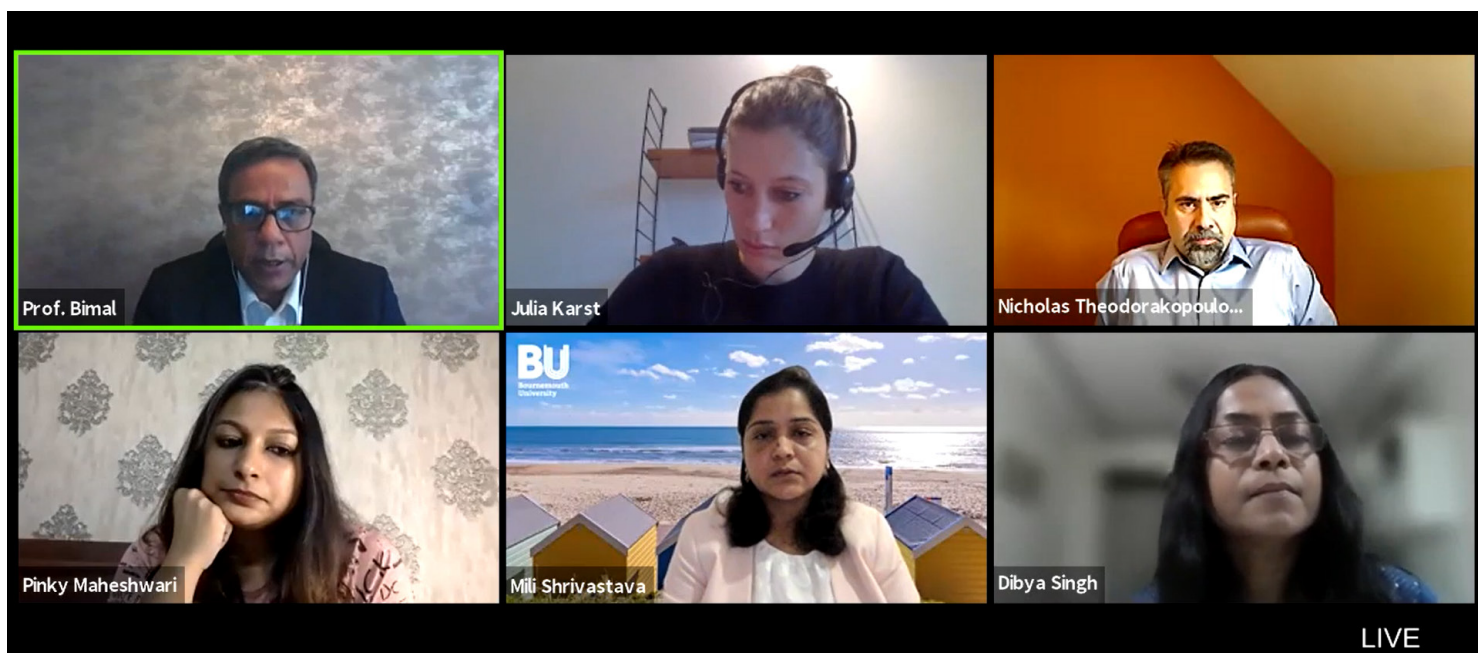
The session ended with concluding remarks from Millie Shrivastav and Divya Jyoti.

The following recommendations flowed from the session-

- There is a need to stimulate a debate around women entrepreneurs and the potential of

women entrepreneurs in the economy

- There must also be training for the policymakers and service providers like financial institutions, incubators, business development institutions to be more gender sensitive and inclusive
- There is a need to provide information about schemes about available support opportunities to women entrepreneurs, so that the information reaches the right target group
- Women must also be equipped with the right skills to succeed as entrepreneurs such as financial literacy, knowledge of latest technological developments as well as certifications
- Creating networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs so that they can learn from each other and support each other



LAUNCH OF FOLU INDIA ACTION COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE SOURCING AND TRADE OF COMMODITIES (FOLU INDIA-CREST)



MODERATOR: AJAY VIR JAKHAR, CHAIRMAN, BHARAT KISAN SAMAJ

SPEAKERS:

- HIS EXCELLENCY HANS BRATTSKAR
- MS. JYOTSNA SITLING, IFS
- PROF ARPITA MUKHERJEE, ICRIER
- MR. HEM KUMAR PANDE, FORMER SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
- MR. RAMESH ABHISHEK, FORMER SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Dr KM Jayahari set the context for the session and welcomed the panel and handed over to Mr S Vijay Kumar. Mr Kumar began by giving an introduction about the work being done by FOLU India and the transitions that need to be ushered in to ensure that food security is addressed and that sustainable agricultural practices are incorporated. These transitions, he continued, require agricultural production systems to be sustainable while also ensuring that this produce is equitably distributed among the population. In this context, FOLU seeks to supplement the agricultural framework with transforming the part of the food system that relies on trade. Thus, there is a need to not only look at agricultural production but also ensure that the imports are produced sustainably. This complex task requires multi stakeholder knowledge systems



and mechanisms that ensure the assessment of these issues in a holistic manner. He then elaborated on CREST, an action coalition and its aim to link the various stakeholders to facilitate sustainable production and consumption and that the domestic production systems are aligned to ensure that the imports and exports are sustainably and responsibly produced.

Dr KM Jayahari then described the work being

carried out by FOLU and the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue which focused on policy, smallholder engagements and traceability and transparency in India. He also highlighted the need to have more dialogues with producers in the Global South to create a better understanding on production, trade and consumption of commodities so as to reduce deforestation in supply chains. Some of the key recommendations that followed from FACT pertained to identifying domestic production and addressing policy and institutional challenges in strengthening commodity export in supply chains. These included a livelihood centric approach to agriculture to increase farm income through export and other means; applying credible sustainability principles in production to enable sustainable public procurement; the need for knowledge investment for technology adoption and the need for the private sector to pay attention to small holder farmers.

He then handed over to Rijit Sengupta from CRB who reiterated the need to be cognizant of the challenges of this initiative given the complexity of the issues involved in responsible sourcing and trade. He also highlighted the importance of not missing the forest for the trees and having a broad, systems approach to identify the different elements to advance the agenda of the Coalition.

Neha Simlai from IDH began by stressing on the Coalition's potential to build alignment between civil society, market actors and policy stakeholders along with the finance sector on how India can tackle global sustainability issues of deforestation with nature-based solutions.

Dr. Ruchika Singh from WRI India reiterated the complexity of the issues that the Coalition is trying to solve. Karishma Vohra from WWF-India highlighted the role that the Coalition can play in increasing the uptake of sustainably produced and sourced commodities globally and the Indian market.

Dr Jayahari then handed over to His Excellency Hans Battsar to launch CREST. Through this Coalition, he stated, there is potential to address

some of the biggest challenges of our lifetime. Trade has historically been a major cause of nature loss, deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions all over the world. Moving into the first decade of the Paris Accord, this has to change and therein lies the necessity for a Coalition such as this. He said that there is a need to use land more efficiently without increasing deforestation while also encouraging incentives to develop degraded land. He concluded by stressing on the need for sustainable palm oil and other forest linked commodities in India and the scope for CREST to influence knowledge-based decision making.

Mr Ajay Vir Jhakar then began the session as the Moderator who highlighted the need to develop a just transition as opposed to focusing merely on objectives. He asked the panelists for their suggestions on what the immediate areas of action should be for CREST. He then asked Dr Arpita Mukherjee if as a buyer, India can pursue sustainable sourcing as a part of its import strategy and as a producer. She began by stating that thus far, India has not paid much attention to sustainable purchases. The first step has to be to ensure uniform standards for imports and for home grown products as this would be useful while signing trade agreements with the EU, US, etc. Simultaneously, there is also a need for awareness building and consensus building coupled with traceability and monitoring.

Mr Hem Kumar Pande began by highlighting the importance of tackling food waste and suggested that as a priority area for the Coalition. He commended the Biodiversity Act in India and underlined its potential for impact even though it is in its infancy and must be better implemented. He concluded by calling for an end to the indiscriminate use of natural resources and thus CREST must advocate for proper implementation of India's Biodiversity Act.

Mr Ramesh Abhishek began by stating that although sustainable sourcing is not mandatory, there is a need for an agreement on the role of the private sector in sustainable sourcing. This may flow from a multi stakeholder discussion

with private sector actors making it a part of their responsible business reporting. Using the example of government mechanisms to check whether the private sector is following affirmative action, he added that a similar mechanism may be implemented by the Ministry of Environment to assess the progress made regarding established sustainable practices. This would help by making the demands on the private sector more specific and concrete while also adding moral pressure on them to adopt some of these practices.

Ms Jyotsna Sitling used the example of Kerala in rebuilding the value chain by placing biodiversity at the centre. However, she also raised the point that certifications can either make agriculture more remunerative or make it more cumbersome. This is because if there are costs associated with certifications, who will bear them? She added that there is a need to develop value chains for responsible land use. This must be context specific, based on an understanding of which type of land use activity would be suitable where and for whom. Thus, building and mapping the value chain with the community would also be very important.

Dr Mukherjee then stated that India needs to collaborate regionally and leverage on regional strength as well. She gave the hypothetical

example of Sri Lanka and India collaborating on tea and learning from ASEAN in building collaborative approaches rather than competition within the region. Next, she said that certifications are expensive because India does not have a consolidated system to handle the changes that are required such as demands for organic products or the need for sustainable business practices. There is thus, a requirement for a nodal agency such as the USDA and the government must support the certification costs. She concluded by recommending the need for an advisory sustainable development chapter drafting by CREST following the Charter to help the government as it heads to various trade negotiations.

Towards the end of the session the following recommendations were made-

- There is a need for pro poor public private partnerships to improve the management of India's biodiversity
- The government should ask the private sector to follow sustainable sourcing practices while also raising awareness about responsible sourcing which must result in a policy. This is because standards can be imposed on imports only when those are first met within the country

FOLU India

FOLU India Vision

The vision of FOLU India is a nutritionally secure, healthy and prosperous India, which is sustainably managing its food and land use systems, supported by a productive, efficient and inclusive economy.

Core Partners

Fable India Lead

Action Coalition Partners

Logos displayed include: CEEW 10 YEARS, teri, WRI INDIA, CRB, WWF, idh the sustainable trade initiative, and others.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CREDIBLE SUSTAINABILITY SYSTEMS - ISEAL CREDIBILITY PRINCIPLES V2



MODERATOR: JOSHUA WICKERHAM, MEMBERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, ISEAL

SPEAKERS:

- CAITLIN PEELING, SENIOR MANAGER, MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES, ISEAL
- RAJESH BHUYAN, DIRECTOR, TRUSTEA
- JOANNA CYMBALISTA, QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMPLIANCE MANAGER, IKEA SOUTH ASIA
- JASMER DHINGRA, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER, IDH, THE SUSTAINABLE TRADE INITIATIVE
- ASHISH BHARDWAJ, INDIA COORDINATOR, ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

Caitlin Peeling set the context of the discussion and talked about the work being done by ISEAL, focusing on the credibility principles. She went through a presentation, saying that we are looking more at market-based tools and strategies for sustainable systems in version 2 of the credibility principles. She elaborated on the various people who can use the principles to identify systems that can be effective in delivering sustainability objectives. She spoke about the idea of collaboration, reliability and shared a few of the principles for credible sustainability systems.

The moderator Joshua Wickerham invited the panellists to introduce themselves and their work. Ashish Bhardwaj spoke about the work that AWS has been doing for sustainable water management and the standards for social, economic and environment benefits. He spoke about their certified members and said, membership is at the heart of governance.

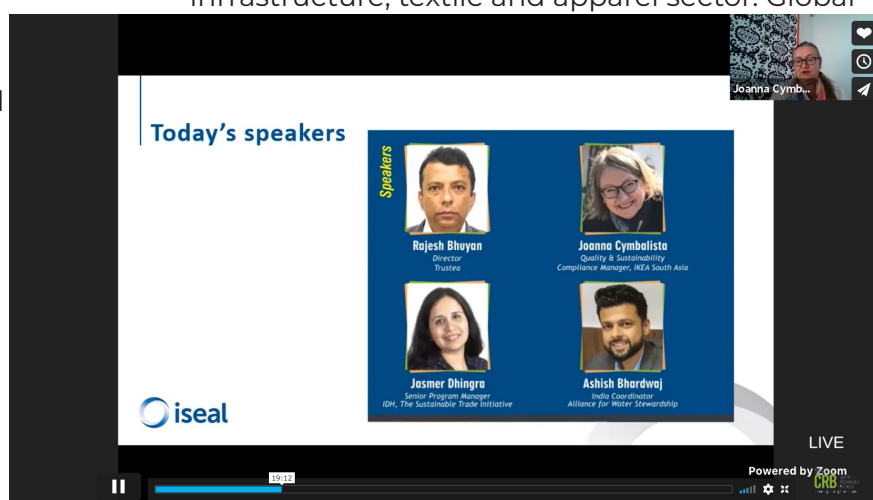
Rajesh Bhuyan spoke about his organisation and its work in sustainability. He expressed his desire to be part of global solutions for taking forth the goals of sustainability. We have found that a multi-stakeholder approach has been very useful in achieving sustainability goals, he said.

Joanna Cymbalista spoke about IKEA's sustainability commitment which is seen in their

sustainability strategy. Every business decision is based on sustainability and principles laid out by IKEA, she said.

Jasmer Dhingra shared IDH's work with business, financiers, governments, and civil society to realise sustainable trade, looking to prototype models and bring them to scale. She spoke about the work done in Madhya Pradesh and their work with women in tea estates in particular.

Ashish Bhardwaj responded to a question about collaborative work in the Indian context and transparency, he talked about ways in which collaborations are created within their four priority sectors of agricultural supply chain, information and technology, food and infrastructure, textile and apparel sector. Global



collaboration is coupled with context driven, place-based national action with brands and

other stakeholders, along national level, he said, describing how collaborations work at the smaller catchment levels. He also pointed out why collaboration is key, offering the example of a successful collaboration at the catchment area. He also talked about working with other sustainability standards to help improve and strengthen systems further. The organisation encourages transparency and accountability, further providing opportunities for collaboration, he added.

Rajesh Bhuyan spoke about operationalising multi-stakeholder engagement by giving details about the Trustea programme. It is managed by an autonomous independent legal organisation and in order to achieve that, they built in a multi-stakeholder governance body, which has the right to set course and give direction. He discussed the pros and cons of such a management set-up, emphasising that the definition of a stakeholder is very important in such a situation. However, overall, the approach has been a positive move for the organisation.

Discussing the sustainability standards followed at IKEA, Joanna said that being resourceful and sustainable is part of the company's DNA since its inception. They have adapted to the changing situations, while keeping their culture intact. Our sustainability agenda is part of our integral business operations, working with the whole supply chain, she said. She spoke about IWAY and ways in which the company looks at challenges, giving an example of working through covid. She mentioned honesty and transparency as being key to building trust in long-term relationships.

Jasmer Dhingra spoke about value-creation, mentioning their partnership with BCI, where they work with farmers. Value-creation for us means that the value must be looked at every actor across the supply chain, she said, which is complex in the case of cotton. She shared their findings, especially in the context of small farmers. She outlined the key barriers, challenges, and the ways in which they overcame them, creating a fine balance between supply and demand.

Responding to a question on the situation during

covid, Joanna Cymbalista spoke about how they responded to the covid crisis, mentioning that most of their partners put a lot more effort in supporting the workforce at the time.

Ashish Bhardwaj shed light on the goal of continuous improvement, saying that we regularly improve our standard system and the results of the framework of AWS standard is also monitored and improved. There are also different standards for certification which keep getting improved. Rajesh Bhuyan shared his thoughts on measurable progress saying that the strategy is to improve, stabilise and then move higher. This is built into their assessment system which allows companies time to ease into the system, he said. The end goal of the programme is to have more and more sustainable practices, he added.

Joanna addressed the question of continual improvement by saying, our approach is from ambitions to actions. We are always looking at ways of adding value to the business, she said. She gave an example of them moving from physical to virtual space which was a part of this outlook. She mentioned their concern of improving working conditions and creating job opportunities for women, where they work with social entrepreneurs. The company is also working to improve the safety of drivers, she added.

Jasmer Dhingra discussed credibility principles in jurisdiction, and shared an online link to their early work in the area. She mentioned that this has been made in collaboration with various partners, also mentioning their objectives.

Joshua Wickerham addressed a question on sustainability standards and legislation, saying that while regulation can set the floor, sustainability standards can help businesses meet that goal and go beyond it. He also said that governments are increasingly paying attention to sustainability standards.

Ashish then responded to a question, outlining the work that the government is doing in rejuvenating rivers and groundwater in India.

Joanna also mentioned that the company is constantly looking for more sustainable

solutions for furniture material. Ashish Bhardwaj summed up by emphasising collaboration on the sustainability standard to make the systems more efficient, cost-effective and more impactful. Rajesh Bhuyan highlighted the need to embed interoperability into our systems and think about how to make collaborations work at the ground intervention level.

Joshua highlighted the findings on interoperability that have been included in the ISEAL report. Jasmer Dhingra mentioned the need to think of systems to increase the work that

is being done across the board.

The key recommendations were:

- Collaboration on the sustainability standard to make the systems more efficient, cost-effective and more impactful
- Need to make collaborations work at the ground intervention level
- Thoughts on ways to increase impact to reach more people and sustainability standards
- A systems approach is required to increase the work that is being done across the board



MULTI STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON SUSTAINABLE SUGAR SUPPLY CHAIN



ऑक्सफैम इंडिया
OXFAM
India

A movement
to end
discrimination

MODERATOR: PRASHANT PASTORE, GENERAL MANAGER, SOLIDARIDAD NETWORK

SPEAKERS:

- RANU BHOGAL, DIRECTOR POLICY, RESEARCH AND CAMPAIGNS, OXFAM INDIA
- SEEMA KULKARNI, NATIONAL FACILITATION TEAM MEMBER, MAKAAAM AND SENIOR FELLOW SOPPECOM
- RAJIV KUMAR, VICE-PRESIDENT, DHAMPUR BIO-ORGANICS LIMITED
- RITU BARUAH, INDIA PROGRAM MANAGER, BONSUCCRO
- AJIT CHOUGULE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WISMA

Shreya Majumdar from CRB introduced the session and set up the context for the discussion. The moderator Prashant Pastore discussed the scope of the session saying that along with sustainability one needs to also think about human rights and labour issues.

Ranu Bhogal talked about Oxfam's work in the sustainable sugar supply chain sector which was prompted by the need to better assess the situation on the ground. Highlighting the organisation's work in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, she said that it is very important to collectivise the people who are lowest in the supply chain and to have engagement and dialogue with other players like sugar mill associations, mill owners, companies procuring sugar etc. She highlighted the issues plaguing the sector, which is also highly political in nature and ranged from labour issues to gender.

This was followed by Seema Kulkarni outlining the concern of her organisation which is primarily with the issue of women sugarcane cutters, especially with single women compelled to look for partnerships with either men or other women to work, which comes with a set of other issues.

Rajiv Kumar then talked about achieving profitability while keeping sustainability as a concern, earmarking the fact that the sugar industry has come a long way in sustainability.

Ritu Baruah also elaborated on Bonsucro's role in looking for solutions, addressing the issues and challenges. "In our new strategy, Bonsucro

is emphasising on being a platform for change, where we look for partnerships to achieve the goals set out," she said.

Ajit Chougule said that from January onwards the sugar market had been looking up, which in turn has helped sugar mills improve their economy. He further discussed the ethanol blending programme that has been ramped up. He spoke about the various schemes by the state government including the welfare board corporation for labourers, the grassroot level work in the area of gender, and sugar schools instituted at the sugar mill level etc.

Addressing the critical challenges within and outside the system, the moderator raised the situation of the small holder farmers. Offering the example of Maharashtra, Seema Kulkarni spoke of the challenges faced by small hold farmers and cane cutters. The entire political economy of sugarcane is around how sugar mills have the kind of produce that is required, she said, raising the question of choice in cultivation. She highlighted questions of marketable produce, saying that food crops are not being grown and access to markets is not provided for crops other than sugarcane, suggesting ways in which ecological agriculture could be explored.

Ranu Bhogal then shared the findings of the study in Uttar Pradesh, pointing out some of the problems faced by small farmers. Unfair weighing practices, inability to sell cane crop on time, helplessness in a buyer's market, lack of

awareness of rights, need for policy intervention to substitute labour costs, lack of land titles for women were some of the problems highlighted. The report also highlighted the need for sustainable farming practices.

Here Rajiv Kumar made a distinction between tropical and subtropical India to point out problems faced in the latter region, especially Uttar Pradesh. The policy of the government is not in favour of small growers, he said, pointing out various issues that need to be taken care of, including their dependency on large growers. Speaking about sustainability, he said that global warming had further hampered the condition of small farmers. However, in tropical India, small holders are owning their own small harvesting units, sharing their profitability and burdens, he said.

Ritu Baruah spoke about the investment of intent, time, effort, energy that is necessary in achieving sustainability roles. We are looking

Shedding light on Maharashtra's history of cooperative sugar mills, Ajit Chougule said that the private and cooperative sugar mills are in 50:50 ratio now in the State. The fragmentation of land due to the burden of over population is exacerbating issues, he said, highlighting the challenges faced by them. As a sugarcane grower himself, he pointed out the different issues and suggested solutions for it. Corporate farming, consolidated farming, farmers producer companies, promotion of mechanical harvesters through government incentives, drip-irrigation, were some of the solutions that were spoken about.

Seema Kulkarni said that an unidentified employer makes it almost impossible for labourers to receive social security benefits. She elaborated on the solutions for cane cutters and labourers indicating that the sugarcane welfare board needs to become an Act, adding the need for social security, credit facilities, and definite

schemes for insuring accidental health coverage most importantly for women. She highlighted the problem of violence against women, saying that safe housing, safe transportation for them is key. All this will be possible when the structure of work changes, she said.

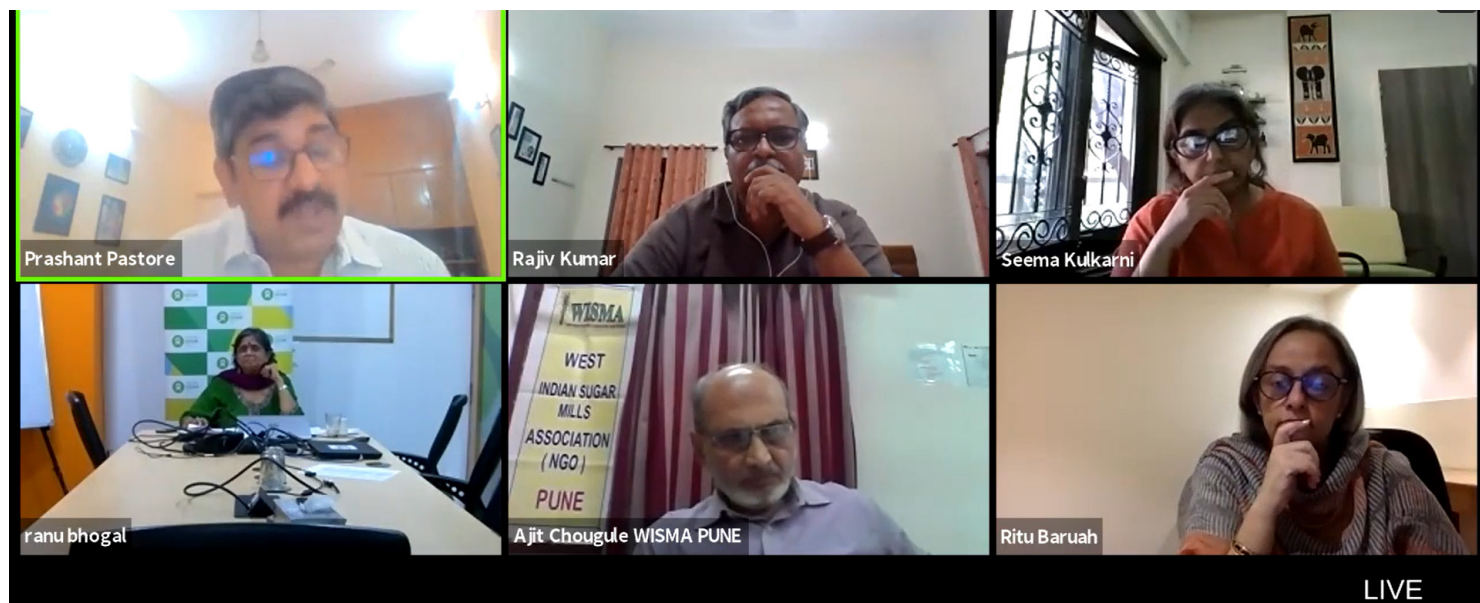
Speaking about due diligence as being the way forward Ritu Baruah said that sustainability

for relevant partnerships. It's not possible to do it alone, she said, emphasising on training and education. She shared inputs from a business case study, speaking about the challenges on the ground and stressing that there is a need for people to understand the opportunities with following sustainable practices. She said that the digitalisation of Bonsucro's standard was being done, so hopefully, free access to that would be available to small farmers in the future.

standards are becoming the norm and there is growing awareness for them to be adopted and followed. Rajiv Kumar added that a separate model is needed for due diligence in sub-tropical India, while in tropical India, since most of the labour is controlled by factories, they need to be audited.

Offering his views on improving the condition of the workers, Ajit Chougule mentioned government schemes. However, there is a need





for proper coordination and streamlining of these schemes, he added. Speaking about the need for greater transparency, Ritu Baruah said that the system is reflective of credibility and transparency. It has to be a very systematic approach, she added, talking about the importance of the intervention of organisations like Bonsucro.

Ranu Bhogal said that labour codes must be kept in mind while working and peg them in the provisions made by the government, reiterating her hope for a collaborative effort to be made in this direction to find a way forward.

The following recommendations emerged from the session:

- Common policy where industry can play a role and partners can address the issues
- Need for crop diversification so farmers can focus on food crops and sustainable agriculture
- Need for livelihood opportunities as a substitute for sugarcane cutting
- A separate model for due diligence for following sustainability standards
- Need for proper coordination and streamlining of government schemes
- Need to look at labour from the supply chain perspective

MODERN SLAVERY AND THE GOVERNANCE OF GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS



MODERATOR: SHILPI BANERJEE

SPEAKERS:

- PROF DEV NATHAN, VISITING PROFESSOR AT INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
- MS CHINMAYI NAIK, WORKING PEOPLE'S CHARTER
- DR. IOANNIS KAMPOURAKIS, POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER AT ERASMUS SCHOOL OF LAW, ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM
- PROF BIMAL ARORA, CHAIRMAN, MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, HONORARY CHAIRPERSON, CRB

This session sought to discuss and foster a better understanding of the role of law, regulation, governance and policies in the organisation and operation of global value chains (GVCs), as reflected in due diligence and related legislations. It also explored the complexities of modern slavery in GVCs through diverse case studies that reveal dynamics and limitations of GVC governance.

The session began with a brief introduction from Prof Bimal Arora who set the context for the IDRC, Aston Business School and ERC funded project on modern slavery and the gap between developed and developing countries when it comes to understanding modern slavery in GVCs.

Shilpi Banerjee then elaborated on the structure and aim of the edited book to be published on modern slavery in GVCs. She described modern slavery as an umbrella term encompassing various forms of bonded labour in value chains both local and global. The book, she said, would include details about laws and governance mechanisms to understand the legislations

governing GVCs, as well as several actors that are impacted by low governance of GVCs.

She then introduced Dr. Ioannis Kampourakis, one of the contributors to the book. Ioannis began by discussing transparency regulations with regard to GVCs. Through his chapter in the book, he seeks to understand why the move towards transparency in the Global North has taken the form of disclosures and whether this is enough. He added that transparency legislation does not include top-down mandates but rather seeks to become impactful by triggering market and civil society oversight over supply chain practices. The lack of regulation often also renders such legislation toothless and selective while the language may not be easy for consumers to understand.

Prof Dev Nathan then addressed the issue of child labour in value chains. He said that there is a need to go beyond the value chain in order to address this issue. This is because while such an approach would address the demand for child labour in GVCs, it would address the root cause

and its supply. There is also a need to understand the two kinds of child labour - child labour as a wage earner and child labour as unpaid family worker. This means that there is a need for 2 different kinds of policies to address these. Then there is also a category for children who are not in school and not in labour but rather contribute to care work at home. These children get left out of the data that is collected on child labour. He concluded by reiterating that there is a need to move beyond private regulations even for child labour because private regulations only work when there is a threat from a buyer. This has meant that child labour has moved out of the factory and moved in locations that are more difficult to monitor. He said, therefore, there is a need to understand the reason for child labour. The key reason is that adult wages are not sufficient to meet the household needs. Thus, the

first step is to increase adults' wages.

Ms Chinmayi Naik then made a presentation about her book chapter on mathadi or head loaders in Maharashtra. She said that head loaders are classified as informal workers and are employed across the supply chain. There is a need to protect these unorganised workers. One of the key concerns for these labourers is that of health and safety. She also recommended the codification of the four labour laws.

The session concluded with a short question and answer session.



SERIES FROM CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Development Trajectories in Global Value Chains

SERIES EDITORS: Stephanie Barrientos (University of Manchester, UK), Gary Gereffi (Duke University, USA), Dev Nathan, PhD (Indic GVC Studies, India; Duke GVC Centre, USA), John Pickles (University of North Carolina, USA)

Global Value Chains and Development <i>Rebuilding the Continent of 21st Century</i> Gary Gereffi ISBN: 9781108472387 Hb Price: £30.00	Development with Global Value Chains <i>Upgrading and Innovation in Asia</i> Edited by Dev Nathan, Prabhu Tewari, Ganesh Sankar ISBN: 9781107104633 Hb Price: £20.00	Making Cars in the New India <i>Industry, Policy, and Informality</i> Tom Barnes ISBN: 9781108431792 Pb Price: £18.00
Labour in Global Value Chains in Asia Edited by Dev Nathan, Prabhu Tewari, Ganesh Sankar ISBN: 9781107107460 Hb Price: £25.00	The Sweatshop Regime <i>Labouring Service, Exploitation, and Gendered Moral in India</i> Alessandro Mezzadri ISBN: 9781107138922 Hb Price: £25.00	The Intangible Economy <i>How Digital Data, Intellectual Property, and Innovation</i> Edited by Dev Nathan, Prabhu Tewari, Ganesh Sankar ISBN: 9781108431792 Pb Price: £18.00

For submissions, please write to Anvesha Rana at arana@cambridge.org. Available on **amazon**.

Modern Slavery and the Governance of Global Value Chains (Edited Collection)

Prof. Bimal Arora

Proposed for the Cambridge University Press Book Series: Development Trajectories in Global Value Chains (Eds. Stephanie Barrientos, Gary Gereffi, Dev Nathan, and John Pickles)

Proposed by: Hila Shamir, TraffLab (ERC) and Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law (Israel); Bimal Arora, PROGRESS Project (IDRC) and Manchester Metropolitan (UK); and Shilpi Banerjee, De Montfort University(UAE) and PROGRESS Project (IDRC).

LIVE

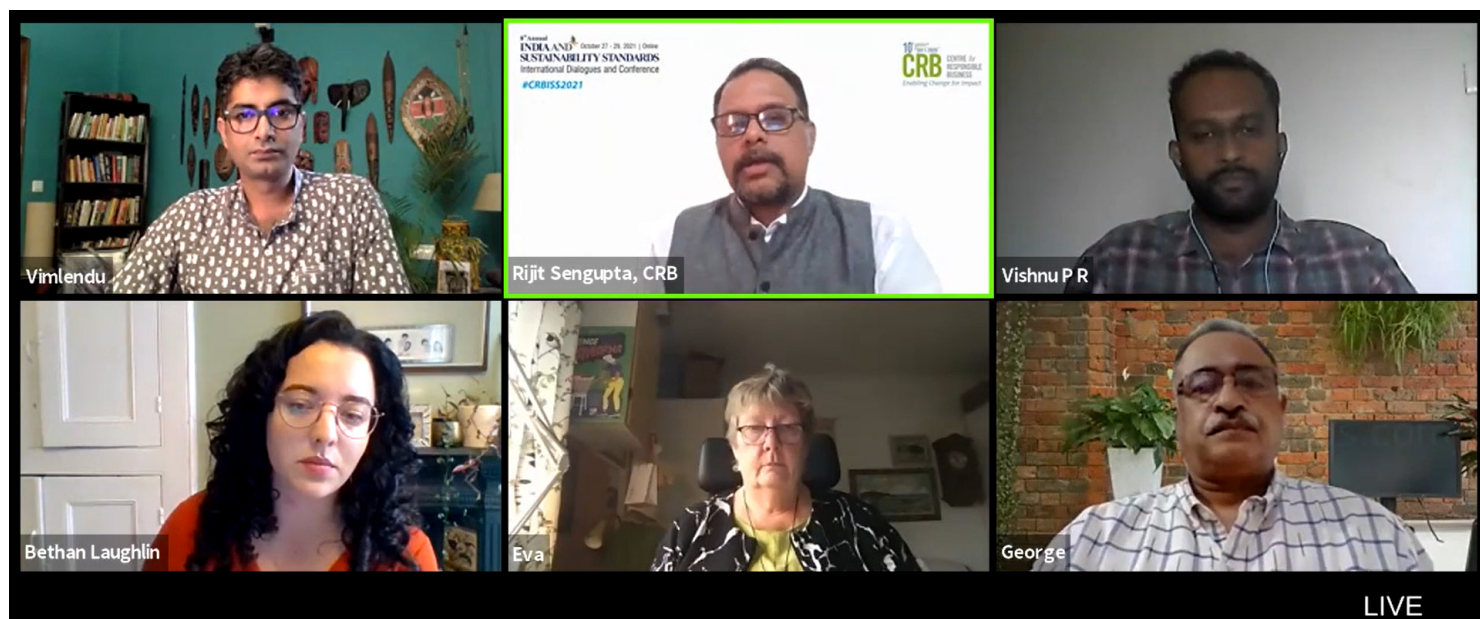
DRIVING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE WITH CONSUMER SUSTAINABILITY INFORMATION



MODERATOR: BETHAN LAUGHLIN, SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION LEAD AT ONE PLANET NETWORK

SPEAKERS:

- EVA EIDERSTRÖM, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ECOLABELLING AND GREEN CONSUMPTION, THE SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
- VIMLENDU JHA, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SWECHHA
- VISHNU PR, CEO, CHANGE CAN CHANGE CLIMATE CHANGE FOUNDATION
- GEORGE CHERIYAN, DIRECTOR, CUTS INTERNATIONAL



Bethan Laughlin from the One Planet Network set the context for the session and introduced the One Planet Network and was followed by a short introduction of the panel.

Eva Eiderström began by discussing that consumer knowledge may or may not play a role in influencing behaviour. For instance, knowledge of science influences changes but this is not a drastic change. Understanding the human impact on the environment also leads to a certain amount of change, she added. However, the strongest change stems from an understanding

of how consumers can mitigate the impact of climate change. This then means that there is a need to invest in the tools that would make this knowledge more accessible. She also discussed Eco Labelling as a tool to simplify the decision by combining complex issues and providing a predefined value judgement on what constitutes a 'good choice'. However, this would be contingent upon consumers looking for this label and being aware of the label. Thus, it is important to tell consumers what the problem is while also equipping them with solutions.

George Cheriyan added here that most of the initiatives to engage with consumers in India have not succeeded and there is a lack of consumer demand. He reiterated Eva's point of generating awareness among consumers to make such labels and standards effective. This was further reiterated by Vishnu PR as well.

Vimlendu Jha added here that firstly there is a lack of awareness but this is also coupled with an inaction on the part of consumers. Though there may be an intention to buy sustainable products, consumers may not always go ahead and buy them. Thus, there is a huge information - intention - action gap, when it comes to sustainable consumption in India. Further, a big percentage of products are completely unlabelled or sold raw, thereby circumventing any standards and labelling requirements.

Bethan Laughlin then asked the panel about the barriers to consumers and how businesses can be encouraged to produce sustainable goods.

George Cheriyan and Vishnu PR highlighted one of the key barriers as being language. They added that in a multilingual country like India,

the language of providing consumer information becomes very important and is usually English. However, given the varied literacy levels and the multitude of languages spoken, this acts as a barrier. Eva Eiderström added here that barriers may be context and country specific. Hence, while sustainability information must always be based on facts and be reliable, it has to be packaged differently for different kinds of consumers. Vimlendu Jha added here that consumers may not read labels to assess whether a product is sustainable or not because price becomes the primary driver for most consumers. Second, he stated, the link between sustainable choices and its impact on the environment is often missing in consumer information. Lastly, he said that there may be an over reliance on data while communicating with consumers which does not motivate consumers to act. This is because the plethora of information has not led to consumer action. Eva Eiderström stressed the importance of policy making to be more proactive to encourage sustainable consumption. This is because if there is a disconnect between policies and what scientists and NGOs ask of consumers, consumers may not consider the crisis as being as pressing as



it is. George Cheriyan also discussed through his research it has been found that only high-income consumers are willing to pay for green products. This brings in an economic barrier to sustainable consumption especially in developing countries.

Bethan Laughlin then asked the panel about ways to track and measure the effectiveness of consumer information in driving behaviour change.

Vimlendu Jha began by stating that assessing industry numbers was one way of tracking the effectiveness and to study consumer behaviour. He also linked with George Cheriyan's point about the economic barriers and said that green consumption in developing countries becomes aspirational consumption and the onus, therefore, must be on those who can afford to make these changes in their lives. George Cheriyan stated that the measurement must be based on the reliability, clarity, transparency and accessibility of consumer information. Eva Eiderström also added that behaviour change takes time and so measurement must be over a period of time. She took the example of recycling and said that it has become a norm in Sweden and so the discussion on sustainable consumption has moved forward. Thus, change and progress can only be measured over a span of years and through incremental changes. She gave another example of the demand for organic food in Sweden. While there has been a lack of trust in supermarket labels, consumers have encouraged local farmers to produce organic food, thus triggering a different supply chain altogether.

The next question that was posed to the panel was to discuss the shifts in consumer patterns in India towards sustainability.

George Cheriyan began by discussing the increasing consciousness among Indian consumers towards purchasing more sustainable products. The frequency of extreme weather events have played a role in making consumers more aware and in making them more environmentally conscious. However, he also cautioned against greenwashing and the

potential for certain brands to capitalise on increased consumer awareness without actually being sustainable products.

The final question sought to understand how consumer information can influence a strong repair culture and prompt responsible business practices.

George Cheriyan stated that repair has been a part of Indian culture and the consumer instinct is to repair as opposed to purchasing newer products. There is a need to encourage that as opposed to encouraging consumerism. This was reiterated by Vimlendu Jha as well and stated that repairing products must make economic and environmental sense in order for it to be adopted and sustained among consumers. However, this must be balanced with using products that are in keeping with new technological advancements which make products more sustainable.

Towards the end of the session the following recommendations were made-

- The government must take the lead to incentivise producers to adopt sustainable practices while also adding the environmental costs to products. There must be incentives for good behaviour and penalties for unsustainable practices
- Taxing carbon emissions such as in Sweden must be implemented in other parts of the world. This must be in parallel with consumer awareness campaigns

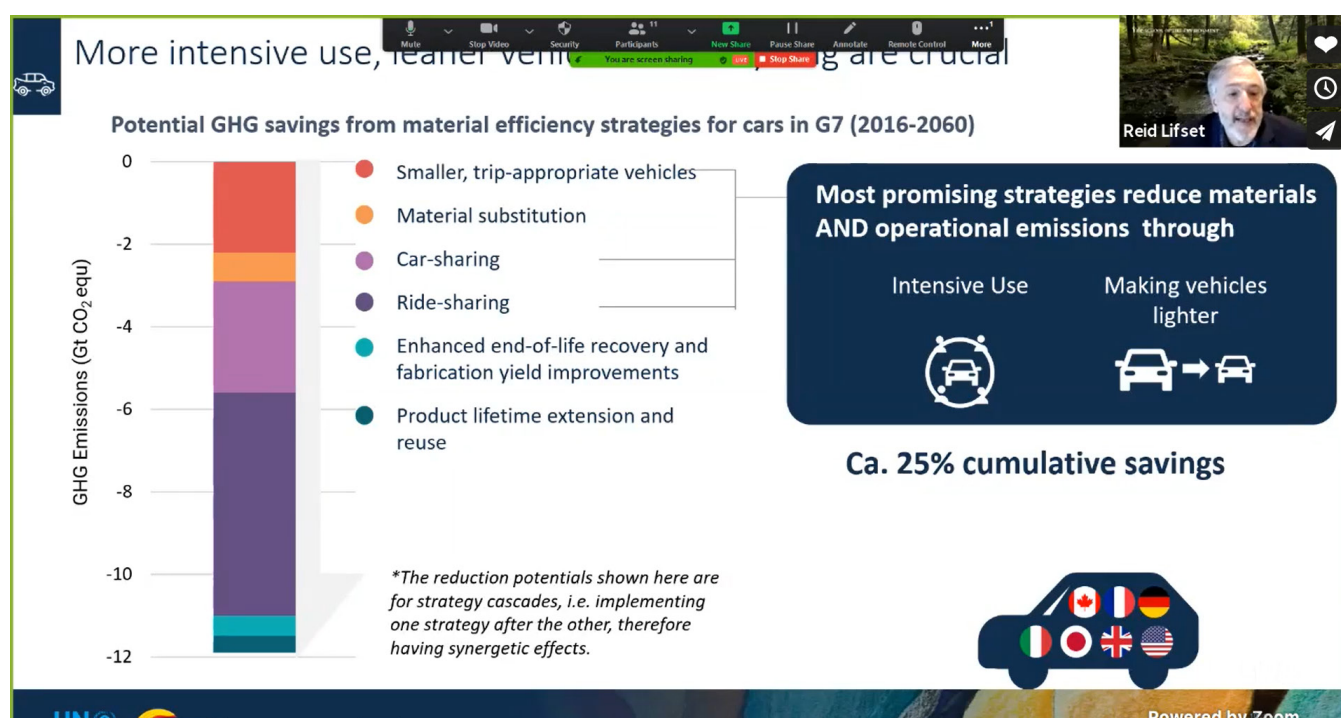
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE - MATERIAL EFFICIENCY STRATEGIES AND UNTAPPED CLIMATE SOLUTIONS FOR BUSINESS



International
Resource
Panel

SPEAKERS:

- RENE VAN BERKEL, UNIDO REPRESENTATIVE AND HEAD, REGIONAL OFFICE IN INDIA
- NAMITA VIKAS, FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, AUCTUSESG LLP
- EDGAR HERTWICH, INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE PANEL MEMBER, LEAD AUTHOR OF THE RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT
- REID LIFSET, INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE PANEL MEMBER, LEAD AUTHOR OF THE RESOURCE EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT
- MERLYN VAN VOORE, HEAD, SECRETARIAT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE PANEL
- PRASHANT K BANERJEE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT SOCIETY OF INDIAN AUTOMOBILE MANUFACTURERS (SIAM)
- ANCHAL AGARWAL, MAHINDRA LIFESPACES



Devyani Hari from CRB set the context for the discussion and Dr. Reid Lifset began by talking about the work of IRP and discussed the report on Resource Efficiency and Climate Change, as well as a separate report on implications for business leaders which was made by them. He began by outlining the modelling implications for business leaders with respect to the material efficiency scenario and the strategies for

improving efficiency in residential housing and mobility. However, comprehensive science-based guidelines have been added to strategies in this report. He shared slides from the report to exhibit statistics to support the efficacy of strategies in reducing material related emissions. The report examined the specific case of India and China and looked at the implications of material efficiency strategies for business, suggesting

business opportunities that would come up in the altered scenario. It also identified gaps in current policy in incentivising material efficiency.

Merlyn Van Voore invited Rene Van Berkel to speak about his reactions to the report on material use efficiency in the context of climate. Rene Van Berkel said that the report provides a quantitative picture of the potential of climate benefit through material and resource efficiency, especially in the case of cars and homes. We need all forms of innovation for climate action, he said, adding that material efficiency needs to be anchored in people and society. He emphasised that there is still opportunity for pre-material efficiency in countries that are still industrialising and gave a word of caution for material efficiency in the housing sector. He also spoke about the willingness of businesses to adopt material efficiency strategies, saying that it can only happen if businesses are allocating money, management, and technical resources to transform and redesign cars and homes. He also offered some ways that would encourage sustainability coming into these sectors.

Namita Vikas spoke about the topic from the point of view of finance. She said that circular finance is emerging as a solution to provide capital for projects that entails material efficiency. But while finance is being offered to these projects, she spoke about how financial institutions are looking to minimise their risk during the transition. She pointed out certain financial barriers like limited specialised financial options, immature markets, high interest and insurance rates. She also offered certain solutions that have emerged, sharing examples of sustainability linked loans, revolving credit facilities etc. She offered examples of European banks to illuminate ways in which financing material efficiency within mobility was being done in innovative ways. She summed up by talking about supply chain financing and the innovative models being used in that space.

Prashant K Banerjee said that zero emission and zero waste are the two pillars of sustainability.

He mentioned the RRR concept in India and emerging regulations in the automobile industry. He focussed on new technology vehicle support systems and mentioned the hesitancy of banks towards new technology in the sector. Speaking about India's climate commitment and making the link between sustainability and climate pollution, he said that the focus on local pollution mitigation is more and that new technology options are being adopted, especially for public transportation.

Anchal Agarwal spoke about the commitment and interventions by Mahindra Lifespaces in the realm of sustainability in the real estate sector. She spoke about how sustainability was being integrated in the nascent stage of projects itself and there is transparency in projects to enable sustainable goals. She highlighted ways in which materials were being recycled so very little ends up in the landfill and shared the tracking of sustainability goals through a monthly sustainability maturity assessment. This attitude percolates down to the vendors as well. She shared different strategies adopted by the company to achieve their goals.

Reid Lifset said that the supply chain and pre-material efficiency is an angle that their report did not incorporate so that would be an interesting insight. Dr. Edgar Hertwich said that India's case was very different from that of G7 countries, with a need for expanding housing for large parts of the population. Speaking about the report, he said that large companies have a big role to play in setting examples in the real estate sector as there is a trickle-down effect to smaller companies.

Dr. Edgar responded to a question on the recent push for electric vehicles in India, saying that we may see larger adoption of electric vehicles and that the report may have underestimated the rate of its adoption.

Addressing a question on electricity generation from coal in India in the context of electric cars, Prashant Banerjee talked about the increased use of solar energy and a very clear target of the

power industry to adopt renewable energy. There is a clear policy intervention to move towards renewable energy, he said.

Speaking about the focus on quality of life while considering building materials, Anchal Agarwal spoke about their adoption of sensitive design which takes into account all parameters, including wellness. She gave examples of projects where sustainability was being factored in at every stage, even within compact housing, keeping in mind the material, climate, location, air quality etc. She urged the need for passive technology and broke the myth that green buildings are expensive to construct.

Namita Vikas spoke about ESG investing and the impact on green finance, saying that the type of ESG investing is key. In the current scenario, the lack of uniform guidelines can lead to green washing, she said. She said that there is emerging taxonomy and guidelines, even in India and it is essential to get a standard clarification in the market. There is a need to have guidelines to avoid misrepresentation and misreporting, she said, adding that it is important for funds to disclose the carbon footprint of portfolio holding companies and not just the companies they are investing in. She also urged for a global approach to bring consistency in taxonomy.

Rene Van Berkel spoke about the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and said that there is lots to be done in the sustainability sphere, suggesting that there is need for support and innovation. He gave examples of ways in which certain strategies can be adapted by SMEs, pointing to the need for institutional and a mindset change.

The following recommendations emerged from the session:

- Faster approvals for innovative, sustainable techniques being adopted
- Risk sharing and incentives offered to companies investing in innovations to bring about sustainability
- Need for public finance to create cohesion and move the transport industry in a particular direction
- Viability gap funding for public vehicles in the case of India for adopting electrification of vehicles
- Need for clarification in the market about taxonomy and guidelines, and the need to get a standard understanding



CLOSING PLENARY



DR ASHOK KHOSLA
DEVELOPMENT
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DR MEERA MITRA
CRB GOVERNING
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KAMAL SETH
COUNTRY HEAD,
INDIA, DEP. DIR.
MARKET TRANS,
ROUNDTABLE
ON SUSTAINABLE
PALM OIL (RSPO)

The Closing Plenary began with Devyani Hari from CRB thanking the partners, speakers and participants and by providing a summary of the three-day conference. She then introduced Dr Ashok Khosla who elaborated on the Hydropower Sustainability Standard. He highlighted the importance of hydropower which is currently the largest renewable energy resource. He also stressed on the need for standards while implementing hydropower projects which must be backed by a certification process. In this regard shared the Hydropower Sustainability Assurance System with how-to guides on hydropower resettlement, power sharing, erosion and sedimentation. Thus, this assurance system is geared towards certification and assessment.

Dr Meera Mitra was then asked to share her thoughts on CRB's upcoming tenth anniversary. She began by saying the CRB has shown a trajectory of tremendous growth over the years. She also discussed the role that Prof Bimal Arora has played in taking the organisation forward.

She highlighted the pivotal role of platforms and conferences such as ISS in fostering a spirit of dialogue and collaboration in working towards the 2030 Agenda. She reiterated the need to place people at the centre of all discussions on sustainability and the need to include those in the informal sector. She also encouraged CRB to consider moving towards linking the organised and unorganised sector. She concluded by saying that the government has taken swift actions over the course of the pandemic and this instils encouragement that even though the task of climate action is big, it is not impossible.

Farhad Vania began by tracing the history of CRB and its inception at GIZ. He also commended the increasing nuance and maturity that has come in the ISS themes each year. He also appreciated the multisectoral and diverse participation at ISS and the body of knowledge that has been created as a result of this annual conference, both for India as well as for those who want to do business with

India. He further stressed on the need for urgent action towards achieving the SDG Agenda and for CRB to examine its role for the next decade. He recommended a weaving of the narrative across the eight ISS conferences. In addition to this, he said that there is a need to look back at the lessons both positive and negative, that standards work. Further, there must be greater uptake of standards not just by those who can afford it but by everyone who needs it. Additionally, there is a need to engage with sceptics and bring standards into the mainstream discourse. He concluded by saying that he would like CRB to be the leader in all matters related to sustainability and standards.

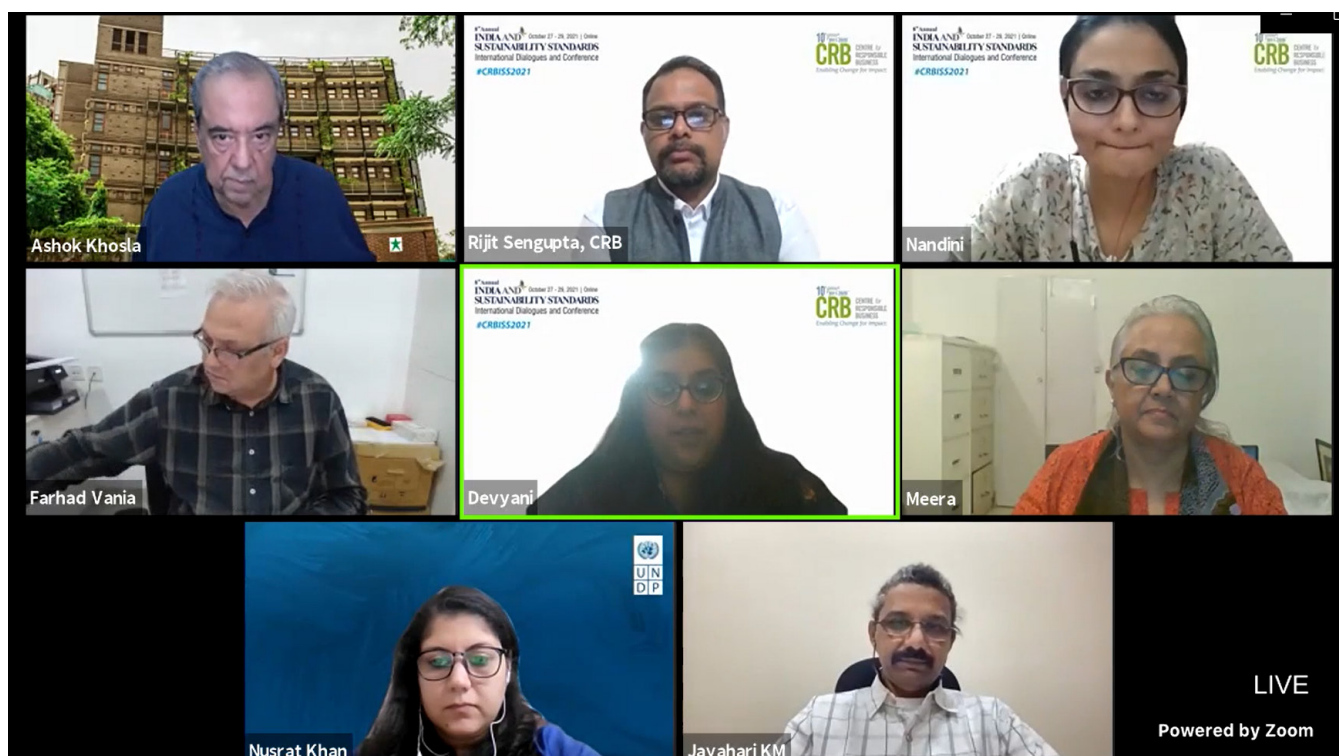
Nusrat Khan began by congratulating CRB for a successful conference and praised the wide variety of issues that were discussed and the focus on business and human rights. She also appreciated the opportunity to engage with a wider audience and especially with the business community through ISS. She highlighted the need to re-examine development as the country rebuilds after Covid and stressed on the need to place people at the center. One of the key ways to do this, she said, was by encouraging businesses to be more responsible towards the environment and the community. She concluded by saying that there is a need for a rights-based approach

and responsible business practices coupled with promoting economic development.

Dr. Jayahari began by saying that while working towards sustainability, the aim should not be to reinvent the wheel but rather to customise it. Thus, there is a need for knowledge sharing and collaboration because context specific interventions will yield success as opposed to a one size fits all approach. He suggested a further understanding of how CRB can promote the customisation of wheels, by identifying the overlaps that were found between the work of various organisations over the years and how that can be materialised into cooperation and collaboration which customises the wheel.

Kamal Seth began by commending the partnership between RSPO and CRB. He reiterated the need for conversations around sustainability to be inclusive and to include the marginalised. Nature is often missing from the discussions, he said and it must be given a voice.

The session ended with Nandini Sharma closing the session and the conference.





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