

Conference Report

Collaboration a key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR & Voluntary Sustainability Standards



Designed and Hosted by **CRB** CENTRE for RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

5th **INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS** **2018**
International Dialogues and Conference
14-16 November 2018 | New Delhi, India
www.sustainabilitystandards.in | www.c4rb.org

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CONFERENCE REPORT

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The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Accord, as new global development frameworks, offer an opportunity to make a move away from the traditional regulatory model of achieving business sustainability to a collaborative one. The last few decades of scholarship, policy and practice experiences on inter-organisational collaborations and partnerships, however, highlights that addressing systemic changes through collaboration remains one of the toughest challenges¹. Some of the common challenges to effectively administer a collaborative initiative include resources (time, funding and energy), structure of engagement and pursuing a joint vision.²



As an organization pursuing its vision for ‘businesses to integrate sustainability in their core business model’, CRB strongly believes inter-organisational and multi-stakeholder collaboration is critical to pursuing and achieving sustainable development and sustainable business in India. Conscious of the above-mentioned challenges, CRB’s annual sustainability conference has experimented with the idea of presenting itself as a platform to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration – with mixed results. While on certain issues/sectors there has been greater interest among stakeholders to engage and work together, in some of the others there has been limited forward movement. One of the key factors also has been presence of and role of an active coordinator of such multi-stakeholder dialogues. CRB is currently in the process of identifying for better and more effective stakeholder engagement to highlight and pursue sustainability solutions.

CRB 5th Annual Conference 2018 was successful in mobilizing over 700 participants and nearly 50 organisations (of various kinds) to come together for this dialogue. We thank each and every participant for their continued interest in engaging on this agenda. We are however also conscious that a large number of stakeholders and organizations (therefore voices) still remain outside the walls of the Conference Room and away from Delhi. CRB will endeavour to engage them and make them active actors in this discussion. Therefore, as a follow-up CRB will endeavour to organize capsules of the annual Conference in 2-3 locations across India before the finale in Delhi from 2019. CRB would also be creating an online portal to enable stakeholders to engage and continue this discussion throughout the year, rather than limiting it to these three days.

Ríjit Sengupta

Chief Operating Officer
Centre for Responsible Business

¹ Foreword of CRB pre-Conference booklet 2018 (http://www.sustainabilitystandards.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ISS2018_Souvenir_compressed.pdf)

² <http://seas.umich.edu/ecomgt/pubs/landtrust/chapter6.pdf>

Collaboration a Key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR & Voluntary Sustainability Standards Conference Report

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Trust, the Key Ingredient for Successful and Lasting Collaboration

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) officially opened the three-day conference on **'Collaboration a Key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR & Voluntary Sustainability Standards'** with Mr. Rijit Sengupta welcoming the delegates to the annual conference, which is in its fifth year. The conference was co-organised with 47 partners, and offered 30 sessions with 144 speakers.

For the conference and its organisers, the fifth year was an important milestone. To mark it, new elements were added to make the event more diverse, engaging, liberated and inclusive. One of these was the provision of an Exhibition Area and a Networking Village, where partners could showcase their products, initiatives, services and ideas. Partners such as GIZ India, CSR Company International, Rainforest Alliance, etc availed of these platforms. The other innovation was a Q&A session with brand legend and ad guru, Mr. Prahlad Kakar.

The event convened national and international experts from different fields – all working towards sustainability. Representatives from big and small businesses, the government, civil society, academia and international agencies came together to thrash out existing and emerging challenges and learn from each other. To ensure that the carbon footprints of the conference were offset, the organisers did away with bottled water and made a passionate plea to minimize waste generation.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the focus of this event, are a global call for action to achieve a better and sustainable future for all. Signed by 193 heads of countries, the initiative is a leading example of a unified global movement towards sustainability. The first 16 goals address the issues which need critical attention, and goal number 17 paves the pathways towards achieving them.

Participants agreed that collaboration and partnerships were necessary to ensure successful achievement of the sustainable development goals. At the same time, they flagged off some of the challenges and hurdles which stood in the way of productive partnerships and associations. The first of these, according to them, was a lack of trust. Diversity and differences in style of functioning, objectives and goals of different actors fuelled this lack of trust and put roadblocks in the process of working together.

Working in silos and not sharing information, leading to duplication of work and lack of transparency, remains another key challenge. The region is also burdened by lack of adequate governing policies, low enforcement of existing policies, and archaic practices, which hampered implementation at the local level.

Agreeing that businesses are one of the most important drivers of change, the discussants spoke about understanding the SDGs to align their CSR projects, responsible business practices, and their standards (voluntary as well as mandatory) with the goals for reorienting perspectives and mindsets. Government plays a key role when it comes to welfare of community and country and needs to be involved in this from the very beginning. Civil society, academia and international agencies are all important cogs in the wheel on the path to sustainability and achievement of the SDGs.

The conference witnessed some intensive discussions and covered several important thematic areas which are often ignored in mainstream dialogues. A plethora of suggestions and recommendations were offered, best practices and impact results shared, and questions raised.

For the conference and its organisers, the fifth year was an important milestone. To mark it, new elements were added to make the event more diverse, engaging, liberated and inclusive.

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INAUGURAL DAY

14th November, 2018

5th Annual Conference on ‘Collaboration a Key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR & Voluntary Sustainability Standards’

November 14-16, 2018



Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) opened its three-day Annual Sustainability Conference 2018 entitled ‘Collaboration a Key to SDGs: Leveraging CSR & Voluntary Sustainability Standards’ with **Mr. Rijit Sengupta**, Chief Operating Officer, welcoming all delegates to the annual conference, which was in its fifth year. He thanked all the partners and the participants for extending their support. This year’s conference was being co-organised with 47 partners and offered 30 sessions with 144 speakers, which in itself is an example of multi-stakeholder collaboration, he observed. At the same time, he highlighted two critical challenges for CRB which needed to be addressed to ensure the event achieved its full potential : (i) to reach out to a wider audience, especially those who are unable to attend the conference in person, and (ii) ensure continuity of the dialogue to strengthen and achieve meaningful multi-stakeholder collaboration. He assured everyone that CRB was cognisant and working to address them.

For the conference and its organisers, the fifth year was an important milestone. To mark it, a few new elements had been added to make the event more engaging and inclusive.

- An ‘Exhibition Area’ had been introduced for partners and other interested organisations to present sustainability solutions, initiatives, services and ideas.
- A ‘Networking Village’ was developed to offer an opportunity for organisations to meet and explore partnerships and collaboration.
- The event was made ‘Carbon Neutral’ by offsetting its carbon footprint, supported by the South Pole. Further, there was no plastic bottled water and food waste was being minimised.

Like every year, national and international experts and practitioners from diverse backgrounds representing big and small businesses, government, civil society, academia, and international agencies came together to chalk out existing and emerging challenges on sustainable business and SDGs and learn from each other.

After paying tribute to Dr G D Agarwal, India’s leading environmentalist who passed away recently fighting for the cause of protecting and preserving the river Ganga, the Conference began with the Inaugural Plenary to set the stage for the next three days.

Effective Methods of Collaboration in Pursuing SDGs: What lessons for India?

Moderator: **Dr. Bimal Arora**, Honorary Chairperson, CRB and Assistant Professor, Aston Business School, Aston University, UK

Panellists: **Mr. Noor Naqschbandi**, Director, Private Sector Development, GIZ India, **Professor Dirk Matten**, Canada, Professor of Strategy and Hewlett-Packard Chair in Corporate Social Responsibility, Schulich School of Business, York University, **Ms. Saskia Loer Hansen**, Pro-Vice Chancellor (International), Aston University, UK, **Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai**, Chairperson, India Sanitation Coalition and former Country Head, HSBC India, **Mr. Kailash Satyarthi**, Nobel Laureate 2014 and Founder, Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, **Mr. Suresh Prabhu**, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Government of India, **Dr. Amita Joseph**, Director, Business Community Foundation and Governing Body Member, CRB

The inaugural session began with Dr. Bimal Arora recalling the 'vision' behind the conference. Five years ago, an urgent need was felt for a neutral and independent platform for stakeholders to discuss and identify actions for promoting sustainable business. The paucity of a platform in India focusing on sustainable and responsible business across themes and industry sectors prompted the development of the annual conference. This is not merely an event, but a platform for advancing collaborative sustainability-driven ideas and actions. He thanked all the partners and participants for joining and motivating CRB to continue to shape and develop it.

Noting the importance of India's success on the economic front, Mr. Noor Naqschbandi, representing GIZ India, reminded all about the magnitude of developmental challenges that exist – and the need for collaboration to address them. He shared the recipe for successful collaboration and spoke about two essential points: (i) trust among the actors and (ii) coherence in action.

The challenges for successful collaboration are many. Professor Dirk Matten noted that it is easy to talk about collaboration, but most actors continue to work in silos. He introduced the concept of 'tri-sector athletes', which would have stakeholders from government, business and civil society to convene and the need for these athletes to engage. Such engagement would make it possible for each stakeholder to understand the mindset of the others. He congratulated CRB for offering a platform for practising tri-sector athletics.

Agreeing that most continue to hoard information and do not share best practises, Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai opined that companies and NGOs should share best practices so they can be replicated, instead of each one trying to reinvent the wheel. This can be done through exchanges and utilising opportunities presented by such forums like the CRB annual conference. She shared some successful examples of partnerships and collaborations for a common goal. According to her, community participation and awareness are keys to the successful delivery of a solution. Referring to the financial sector, she also highlighted the urgent need for standards and guidelines to avoid channelisation of funds into wrong projects.

Mr. Suresh Prabhu highlighted the growing importance of standards in international trade and commerce. He highlighted sustainability as a critical and urgent matter and offered his full support to take the emerging ideas and suggestions from the conference forward to fruition.

Ms. Saskia Loer Hansen gave an insight into Aston University which has the core objective of making a difference for three main beneficiary groups – students, business, and professions – in the regions they operate in and in the society at large. The critical question asked by the university is how their work is relevant to society as a method of self-reflection.

Mr. Kailash Satyarthi spoke about the challenge of knitting the 4 Ps — people, planet, profit/prosperity and peace — to achieve the SDGs. He urged the group to begin with addressing issues of children. Stating that businesses are not only there to make money, but are change-makers and leaders as well, he requested business leaders to do business with compassionate intelligence.

Dr. Amita Joseph closed the inaugural session by summing up the key emerging points mentioned by the panellists. She urged the audience to make full use of this opportunity to engage and interact as equals and be sensitive and transparent to facilitate smooth collaboration. "Cooperate and collaborate when you can, resist when you must," Dr. Joseph ended her valedictory with this famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi.

This is not merely an event. This is a platform for advancing collaborative sustainability-driven ideas and actions.

Cooperation Among and Across Governments: Linking the Global Goals with the Local Challenges



Moderator: Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan, Board Member, CRB and Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources Management, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

Panellists: Mr. Marten van den Berg, Ambassador, Embassy of Netherlands, **Ms. Soyoung Park**, Deputy High Commissioner, Canadian High Commission, **Dr. Rene van Berkel**, Representative, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), Regional Office, India, **Mr. Hem Pande**, Former Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India

Calling SDGs a ‘wicked problem’, Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan began the first high-level panel by listing the contentions which make SDGs complicated. Different factors such as disagreement on issues and possible solutions, trade-offs, jurisdictions, stakeholders, regulations, implications and consequences make SDGs a ‘wicked problem’.

“SDGs are complex and interesting problems,” observed Mr. Marten van den Berg, stating that Goal Number 17 aiming at collaboration was no coincidence. Collaboration is not an easy task as different stakeholders might commit to different goals. Unpacking and breaking down SDGs at a local level to understand their relevance is the key. Understanding the local community often poses a challenge. The issue of geographic dividend, especially in India, is imposing. “If you want to go fast you go alone, but if you want to go far you go together, and we want to go far,” he asserted.

“Unpacking and breaking down SDGs at a local level to understand their relevance is the key.”
Mr. Marten van den Berg

Mr. Rene van Berkel reminded the audience that SDGs are owned by everyone and are not exclusive to the United Nations. If India succeeds, the world would move halfway forward in achieving the SDGs, he indicated, and that is the reason that the UN is working closely with India to assist implementation of SDGs. Enough representation from every group is needed so that all the problems are brought to the fore and addressed collectively.

All the panellists agreed upon the importance of private sector commitment in moving towards SDGs. Bringing about a change in the business mindset is key to sustainability; SDGs are good for businesses, and vice versa.

Mr. Rene van Berkel spoke about the paradox of standards – “though they are needed, it is also a conformist trap.” This was also agreed to by Mr. Hem Pande, who remarked that “standard-setting is easy, but following them through is not.” “For India, SDG is nothing new,” noted Mr. Pandey, a former Indian civil servant. Citing examples of collaboration, he spoke about the balancing act that the government does, driving economic, social and ecological development. The challenge of 80% people using a meagre 20% of resources isn’t easy. Even a slight shift in this disparity would be a considerable achievement, which can be done through innovation, collaboration and community engagement.

The launch of a project being implemented by CRB and Aston University with support from IDRC (Canada) entitled ‘Responsible business in India for an effective contribution of the private sector to the SDG’ (referred to as PROGRESS) was announced by Ms. Soyoung Park, representing the Canadian High Commission. She spoke about the importance of women’s empowerment and equality as the key focus areas of the present Canadian government. Canadian bilateral partnerships are increasingly focusing on women and gender inequality. She stressed that investing in women was not only the right but also the smart thing to do.

In her conclusion, Professor Srinivasan highlighted that innovation often leads to a lot of experimentation, but not enough replication. The plenary closed with the need for informed dialogues to translate the aspirations in real life, connect to local communities, establish governing principles and localisation of SDGs. It concluded with an overarching question: “Can pluralism in governance be the way forward?”



Creating Lasting Public and Private Sector Collaboration Models in Practice, Building Trust



Moderator: **Mr. Wolfgang Engshuber**, former Chair of the Board, UN Principles for Responsible Investment, USA

Panellists : **Mr. Douwe Jan Joustra**, Head, Circular Transformation, C&A Foundation, **Mr. Bharat Wakhlu**, Founder President, The Wakhlu Advisory and former Resident Director, Tata Group, **Mr. G. S Krishnan**, Regional President India, Novozymes South Asia Pvt Ltd. **Professor Linda Hancock**, Personal Chair in Public Policy, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Australia, **Mr. Tony Henshaw**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Group, **Dr. Jana Helbig**, German Consulate, New Delhi

Mr. Wolfgang Engshuber introduced the theme of Public Private Partnership (PPP) by reflecting on its history. The concept and practice of PPP started in the '70s, mainly in the UK, with the onset of privatisation. The UN strongly believes that the Global Goals cannot be achieved without active role of the private sector. The participation of private sector is more critical than ever before as the gap in the investment required to achieve the SDGs, and the actual investment is wide. In India, after a PPP boom of 2008-2011, there was pull-back in 2015. To increase PPP investment, trust of investors needs to be built.

Recognising the importance of the role of trust, Mr. G. S. Krishnan talked about partnering for impact. Driving the motto of finding biological solutions for better lives, he said challenges often present themselves as opportunities to provide solutions to the masses. He strongly felt that the growth of employees needs to be synchronised with the growth of an organisation. Mr. Krishnan vouched that all the (biological) solutions provided by his company contribute to SDGs in some way or the other – and this has been made possible through collaboration and partnerships.

Dr. Jana Helbig pointed out that “SMEs should not be ignored when it comes to PPP” as they are vital to every economy, particularly India. SMEs have a different approach to PPPs; policy areas need to be highlighted to ensure integration of SMEs into PPPs. Professor Linda Hancock shared several successful models of PPP. She maintained that questions around public interest need to be asked, the void in governance needs to be filled, and though there are winners and losers, innovative governance models need to be looked at.

The tendency to continue using traditional business practice needs to change. Mr. Douwe Jan Joustra emphasised on adopting new practices to make real impact. He

focused on circular economy – which presents a contemporary business model for promoting sustainability. “Change doesn’t come from intention but through actions led by businesses, with government creating the supportive conditions,” he pointed out. Mr. Jan Joustra focused on the fashion industry – and the influence it has globally to ‘do good’, through circular models. He introduced the thought that in Europe the sector is increasingly being viewed as a service industry, and not as a manufacturing one, where no one but the users are the owners of the product.

One of the reasons which makes collaboration difficult is the inability of human beings to comprehend complexity. That is what also makes SDGs a ‘wicked problem’, according to Mr. Bharat Wakhlu. According to him, there are some actions which need to be taken if SDGs are to be achieved. Development of a comprehensive matrix which will allow us to align our energies to focus on solving the complexities to achieve the SDGs is a key. There is a need for governments to rethink the way GDP is calculated, and for companies to reimagine the way profits are calculated; also, NGOs need to know what they want.

Taking this perspective further, Mr. Tony Henshaw asked: “if we follow the law, will our societies become sustainable?” Focussing on the need for tangible changes, he spoke about businesses being a leader and staying ahead of the curve. He suggested planning for the future, getting agencies to codify ‘best practices,’ followed by legislations locally. Strategic partnerships should be forged to nurture innovations to future-proof businesses.

The panel closed with a call to private players to step up and build the trust for enabling successful partnerships for sustainable and tangible impacts through innovation. Though all SDGs are important for India, given the possibilities, limitations and urgencies, the country needs to focus on specific SDGs, such as poverty reduction, clean water, and sanitation.

Though all SDGs are important for India, the country needs to focus on some of the most critical ones -- poverty reduction, clean water, and sanitation.



South Pole supported the conference to offset its Carbon footprint

How to Make Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships Work to Achieve SDGs



Moderator: **Mr. Arun Maira, Former Member**, Planning Commission, Government of India

Panellists : **Ms. Jane Hwang**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Social Accountability Initiative, **Mr. Noor Naqschbandi**, Director, Private Sector Development, GIZ India, **Ms. Vidya Rangan**, Senior Manager-Impacts, ISEAL Alliance, **Mr. Terry Nelidov**, Managing Director, Erb Institute for Global Sustainable Enterprise, University of Michigan, **Mr. Satoshi Sasaki**, Deputy Director, ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia and Country Office for India

Mr. Arun Maira opened the plenary stating that the world's fastest-growing but least utilised resource was elderly people. Societies have now begun reintegrating the elderly so that they can take charge of themselves and help the community. Mr. Maira presented a case for SDG 17 — to achieve the SDGs, people must take charge and drive local solutions. He followed this up with questions for the panellists to understand why partnerships are essential, and what are the challenges and solutions.

Ms. Jane Hwang cited the live example of the inception and evolution of CRB. She pointed out that India is a success story, with over 1,000 companies certified for SA8000 for socially responsible practices — this has been possible due to multi-stakeholder participation.

Mr. Noor Naqschbandi held up the differences in approach of aid organisations as they move from uni-directional development aid to multi-dimensional development cooperation. He also spoke about the 'Alliance for Integrity', which he led as a multi-stakeholder partnership to fight corruption.

Mr. Terry Nelidov, referring to his experience with NGOs, said that not-for-profit organisations have vision and passion, but lack resources essential to address projects adequately. A similar logic can also be extended to the private sector. Businesses and civil society need each other to achieve common goals.

Mr. Satoshi Sasaki addressed the role of partnerships by asking if ratification of any law or adoption of any policy is enough to achieve the global goals. He stressed the importance of coming together to identify the 'common goal' and work tirelessly until it has been achieved.

While introducing ISEAL Alliance, Ms. Vidya Rangan asserted that cooperation is at the root of the genesis of this organisation, which was established to explore collabora-

Lack of trust, the panellists agreed, was an important reason behind the failure of collaborations. Building trust takes time and effort, and to keep the trust, one must walk the talk

tion among sustainability standards. According to her, the ISEAL Alliance works to foster cooperation among members to increase efficiency and innovation, avoid duplication, build trust, and deepen impacts.

Mr. Maira listed four reasons which often hinder collaboration - (i) using non-systemic ways to solve a systemic issue; (ii) desire to be known for having provided a solution, (iii) individual egos; and (iv) lack of trust between stakeholders. Most of the panellists agreed that lack of trust was an important reason behind the failure of collaborations. Ms. Rangan elaborated that 'lack of trust' translates into lack of transparency, illustrating her view with the example of data sharing. Building trust takes effort and time, and to keep the trust one must walk the talk. Mr. Naqschbandi, Mr. Sasaki, and Ms. Hwang emphasised that it was essential to identify key stakeholders and to enter into collaborations in which both parties benefit.

Established perceptions needed to be broken, said Mr. Naqschbandi, to ensure that collaborations worked successfully. This will happen only when there was a change in mindsets. Mr. Nelidov pointed out that academia needs to emerge from its silos and interact with other sectors. Sharing best practices, converting interest to incentive, and coming up with innovative, and out-of-the-box ideas were also discussed for working towards better collaboration.

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE VALUE CHAINS IN INDIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO THE SDGs (PROGRESS)



Speakers: Ms. Saskia Loer Hansen, Pro Vice-Chancellor (International), Aston University, UK, Professor Pawan Budhwar, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor International (India), Aston University, Dr. Bimal Arora, Honorary Chairperson, CRB and Assistant Professor, Aston Business School, Aston University, Mr. Bouba Housseini, Program Officer, International Development Research Centre, Canada, Mr. Arun Asthana, Executive Director, Centre for Responsible Business

Project PROGRESS was launched at this 5th edition of ISS 2018 by a galaxy of expert speakers, including Dr. Bimal Arora, Ms. Saskia Loer Hansen, Professor Pawan Budhwar, Mr. Bouba Housseini, and Mr. Arun Asthana.

This three-year research project has been designed to study how international businesses source from India, especially SMEs, and how Indian companies are linked to the global value chain. The project aims to understand and analyse the actions taken by international businesses to achieve SDGs. SDG commitments often lead to changes in the traditional norms and business practices — the project will aim to understand these changes, as it has widely been accepted that the goals cannot be achieved by solely following traditional business practices.

“PROGRESS aims to understand the changes in global business practises in order to achieve the SDGs,” Dr. Bimal Arora

International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, Aston University, and CRB are partners in the project. IDRC seeks to examine global business practices and global value chains in India within the backdrop of sustainability. The project would enable Aston University and CRB to set up multi-stakeholder platforms to develop and distribute information on promotion of sustainability. Aston University would be providing research support in close collaboration with CRB.

SECOND DAY

15th November, 2018

Importance of Circular Economy Principles and Practices for Indian Business and Society

C&A Foundation



Moderator: **Mr. Douwe Jan Joustra**, Head Circular Transformation, C&A Foundation

Panelists: **Mr. Prabh Sharan Singh**, Secretary-Northern Region, Indian Chemical Council, **Ms. Deeksha Vats**, Joint President Sustainability, Aditya Birla Group, **Ms. Rachna Arora**, Deputy Team Leader, European Union- Resource Efficiency Initiative (EU-REI), GIZ, **Mr. Pradip Kalbar**, Assistant Professor, Centre for Urban Science and Engineering, IIT Bombay

The panel explored the importance of circular economy as the new business model to achieve resource efficiency and attempted to create awareness and understanding of the capabilities required by companies to become circular entrepreneurs. The panellists introduced the audience to the principles of circular economy, as well as to some examples of businesses aligning their practices inspired by this new model — notably, those that are relevant for India.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Douwe Jan Joustra introduced the importance of the circular economy and emphasised that its basic principles are not only about recyclability but also proper materials management. Hence, there is a need for resource management along with waste management. Mr. Joustra stressed upon the need for collaboration and co-responsibility of partners to further the cause of circular economy. He also cited the differences between surface economy vis-a-vis shared economy and the prospects of the latter.

- Ms. Deeksha Vats introduced the sustainability approach undertaken by the Aditya Birla Group. She mentioned that there is a need for revisiting the sustainability strategy to integrate it into mainstream operations. According to her, the principles of circular economy are the key enablers for making this transition. The circular economy provides the impetus to create new business models and make materials more accessible. She also stressed on the fact that modified technologies could be used to address the larger global problems.

- Ms. Rachna Arora reiterated the role of resource efficiency in circular economy projects and the approach taken by GIZ to address these issues. She mentioned that the Ministry of Mines in India and the NITI Aayog have a pertinent role to play in materials management and pointed out that the legislative framework for facilitating circular economy in India is inadequate. However, she also made it clear that only legislation cannot address circular economy issues and hence, there was also a need for private organisations to pitch in and make collaborative efforts with the government.

- Mr. Prabh Sharan Singh elaborated the efforts under the Responsible Care Program undertaken by Indian Chemical Council and its contribution to the circular Economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Waste management and resource management should go hand in hand.
- Use of technology in the circular economy for better resource management.
- Need for a policy-gap analysis promoting circular economy in the Indian context.

Electronic Waste Management and Sustainable Development Goals in India



Moderator: **Mr. Kalyan Bhaskar**, Faculty, XLRI University

Panellists: **Ms. Sarina Bolla**, India Programme Lead, International Finance Corporation (IFC), **Ms. Pamela Brody-Heine**, Director of Standards, Green Electronics Council, **Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee**, Director and Scientist, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, **Ms. Priti Mahesh**, Chief Programme Coordinator, Toxics Links, **Mr. Pranshu Singhal**, Founder, Karo Sambhav, **Mr. Sujeet Samaddar**, Senior Consultant, NITI Ayog, **Ms. Sunita Prasad**, Senior Manager, Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, Ericsson India

In spite of the E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016, in India recovery and recycling remain low and difficult to monitor. The session tried to unravel the business opportunities in the sector, given that e-waste production is going to rise in the future. The panellists also spoke about the gaps which make collection and recycling a problematic process.

EMERGING POINTS

- Ms. Pamela Brody-Heine spoke about Green Electronics Council: the Council's vision is to have a world where only sustainable electronic products are designed, manufactured, and purchased. Standards typically focus on outcomes; Ms. Brody-Heine spoke about creating principles which would incorporate e-waste management. She also emphasized the need for building the norms of India's informal sector which deals with e-waste.

- Introducing IFC as the private sector arm of the World Bank, Ms. Sarina Bolla laid out its twin goals – ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. The e-waste sector has serious health concerns due to unscientific mineral retrieval processes. Engagement with the sector, felt Ms. Bolla, is a challenge. One of the ways ahead has been the extended producer responsibility (EPR) targets, which enhanced the engagement of private sector.

- Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee spoke about the challenges in achieving the targets set by the E-waste Rules of 2016; lack of awareness being the primary concern. To mitigate that, the government has initiated an awareness creation drive. Initially funded entirely by the government, the programme now receives 40-60% of its funding from corporates. Lack of recycling facilities and end-to-end recycling in the country was another major challenge. Dr. Chatterjee suggested testing cost-effective locally available technology for proper and safe recycling. Establishing an 'eco-park', where the informal sector could be engaged in segregation and packaging, was another option.

- Ms. Priti Mahesh pointed out the gaps that make e-waste management a difficult task. Lack of data, lack of recycling infrastructure, gaps in regulations and lack of incentives for businesses to encourage sustainable production and consumption, all add to the challenges. She also questioned the quality of the recycled products and pointed out that these should meet a certain standard.

- Referring to SDG 8, Mr. Pranshu Singhal pointed out that people involved in the informal e-waste industry should be a part of inclusive growth. The Rules have collection targets, but no recovery targets, which is a significant gap. Mr. Singhal opined that even if a regulation is proper, there is a lack of enforcement, often because there aren't enough qualified people. Mr. Singhal believed that only if consumers handed over their e-waste for free, the sector can move towards profitable business model.

- Mr. Sujit Samaddar said that the e-waste sector should be linked to SDG 3 on good health and well-being. He felt there was a need for design rethinking and out-of-the-box solutions. New applications and technologies needed to be deployed and artificial intelligence used to identify waste sources and generate indicators for impact.

- Ms. Sunita Prasad spoke about all the initiatives undertaken by Ericsson to ensure e-waste is collected and recycled responsibly and sustainably. Finding the existing e-waste regulations confusing, Ericsson prefers working directly with consumers. One of the company's main agendas is to ensure that equipment does not go into the grey market. Ms. Prasad called for strong leadership in the government to enforce regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Engage with all stakeholders, especially the informal sector
- Create awareness about the issues associated with unscientific extraction of resources, and of the impacts related to unscientific management of e-waste.
- Enforcement of the regulation to ensure compliance by companies.
- Use technology for recycling – setting up eco-parks where e-waste can be segregated and refurbished.

Collaboration for Sustainable Landscapes



Moderator: Mr. Edward Millard, Director, Landscape and Communities Development Programme, Rainforest Alliance, UK
Panelists: Mr. Rajiv Kumar, Corporate Cane Head and Sustainability, Olam India, Dr. Anushree Bhattacharjee, Programme Officer – Forest Landscape Restoration, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Mr. Murli Dhar, Lead-Sustainable Agriculture, WWF-India

Sustainable landscape refers to managing opportunities and threats in a spatial unit for responsible and sustainable use of the land. The session attempted to understand the challenges and opportunities in achieving sustainable landscapes in India and the role of voluntary standards by citing examples of live projects supervised by the panellists. The key aspects which contribute towards a sustainable landscape are multi-stakeholder engagement across multiple sectors, collaboration across industry towards the common goal of economic development, and a robust certification system.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Edward Millard referred to live examples while talking about challenges and opportunities in a multi-dimensional set up concerning land use. Identifying common interests across sectors assists in the planning process. Mr. Millard, however, pointed out that often, it can be a huge challenge as different stakeholders have different interests and respond to different pressures. He spoke about the need for a matrix to monitor holistic achievement on the landscape through certification. Introducing the Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition recently launched in India, Mr. Millard mentioned that big businesses are choosing sustainable landscape approach in palm oil production to reduce India's footprints on Indonesian and Malaysian forests.

- Mr. Rajeev Kumar spoke about Olam's charters and policies and its eight pillars. He talked about the initiative taken by Olam in achieving sustainable landscape in sugarcane production in districts of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. The programme was aimed at improving productivity and reducing the water footprint of sugarcane farmers in collaboration with multiple partners. He mentioned that challenges are varied in different geographies and must be tackled accordingly. TATA developed its guidelines based on the global best practices. Speaking about challenges, Mr. Pathak said there is a lack of understanding of sustainability, especially when a company has various suppliers. TATA Motors is targeting to audit 200 of its old and crucial suppliers according to the exhaustive guidelines developed. Saying that sustainability is not a one-time affair, Mr. Pathak added that it is crucial to build the capacity of suppliers.

- Dr. Anushree Bhattacharjee spoke about the relevance of Bonn Challenge for voluntary pledges. The Bonn Challenge aims to bring 350 million hectares (ha) of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2030, with India

agreeing to bring 21 million ha (13 million ha by 2020 and another 8 million ha by 2030). IUCN is closely associated with the Government in documenting the progress, developing tools to monitor, and assessing the quality of restoration. Dr. Bhattacharjee highlighted a few examples of the restoration process led by IUCN, pointing to the importance of multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral involvement and modern technology.

- Mr. Murli Dhar also shared examples to highlight the challenges in the certification of voluntary standards. He emphasized the need for a collaborative approach within multiple certification systems, moving from production sustainability to landscape sustainability. It is essential to identify the commonalities in the existing standards and come up with a framework which will enable the farmers to comply with different certification.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral approach towards landscape sustainability calls for a holistic approach to consider the economic, social, and environmental needs of the local community. Collaboration among stakeholders, therefore, is key.

- Landscape certification with a robust framework and holistic approach needs to be developed; this requires mapping of key issues and indicators.

- Integration of sustainability standards in a simplified manner for wider uptake among users.

- Documentation of progress, processes, and impacts is essential.

Women in Value Chain



Moderator: **Ms. Lakshmi M Bhatia**, Director, Sustainability, **Ms. Mousumi Sarangi**, Programme Management Consultant, FWF Netherlands
 Panellists: **Ms. Aya Matsura**, Gender Specialist, International Labour Organisation (ILO), **Mr. Clement Chauvet**, Chief Skill and Business Development, UNDP, **Dr. Soma Kishore Parthasarathy**, National Facilitator, MAKAAAM, **Ms. Subhadra Gupta**, Regional Manager, South and East Asia, Fair Labor Association, **Mr. Rakesh Supkar**, Business Head, Traidcraft, **Ms. Aarti Pandya**, Program Head, Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), **Ms. Navya D'Souza**, Communications Coordinator, HomeNet South Asia, **Dr. Shikha Bhattacharjee**, Research Consultant, ILO, **Ms Pooja Widhani**, Head of CSR, Teach India (CSR of TOI), **Mr. Shashank Bibhu**, Lead Programme, Care India, **Mr. Manoj Bhatt**, Country Director, GoodWeave, **Mr. Ranjeeb Sarmah**, Head of Compliance, CSR, Plan and Administration, Marks & Spencer

The session was designed to bring the focus back to women workers in the sustainability debate. The number of women entering the work force is increasing globally, but in India the reverse trend is observed. Irrespective, they continue to remain invisible and voiceless with few concerted efforts looking at women workers' condition. The session had speakers from the forum 'Women in Value Chains', a working group consisting of organizations focused on women workers across spectrum.

The session was divided in two parts; the first providing an overview for women in workplace. The second part of the session focused on women and violence at workplace. It is recognized that collective, multi-pronged collaboration and deliberations are required to achieve long term sustainable solutions around these issues.

EMERGING POINTS

- Ms. Aya Matsura opened her presentation with a brief overview of situation of women workers in India in value chain. She presented data outlining the fact that in India, though education among women is rising, their participation in the work force is only 26% and declining. Ms. Matsura highlighted the need to recognize women as workers to achieve SDGs. If these goals are not achieved, they will struggle to move out of poverty. She talked about ILO's different initiatives for gender equality acceleration. Ms. Matsura

urged the buyers' support to ensure implementation of social protection standards to influence the supply chain positively. She added that collaboration and good relations with NGOs, Government, and workers organization is equally important.

- Mr. Clement Chauvet spoke about the UNDP project, 'Project Disha', funded by Ikea Foundation, which aims to create sustainable and scalable solutions to have an impact on skilling of the eco system. The project was backed by the idea

that empowering women economically would lead to a change in the world's decision-making process. As women tend to make decisions keeping the future in mind instead of being focused on the present, they are more likely to make future sensitive decisions. The project focused on bringing women collectives into an organized value chain, to address the issue of market accessibility. "Currently, the project is working to making the procurement process easier which makes a better business sense," added Mr. Chauvet.

- Ms. Aarti Pandya highlighted the fact that rejection of women from work has not made it to the public discourse debates. According to her, decrease in women work force along caste lines show that dalit and tribal women are the worst impacted. Ms. Pandya took the example of the brick kiln sector, the largest unregulated sector in India, which represents the largest unpaid women force, who remain invisible and voiceless.

- Mr. Rakesh Supkar spoke about their experience in two sectors – agriculture and textile. Agriculture sector has large number of women workers, both as farmers and workers. Though women constitute one third cultivators and one-half workers, their recognition as primary farmers is always alluding.

- Mr. Supkar spoke about trend of feminisation of marginal farming i.e. farmers working on less than 1 hectare of land. This trend is driven by forced migration of male workers to the city, leaving the women to tend the farms. "Lack of government schemes or access to them is one of the key issues faced by these women," added to Mr. Supkar.

- Ms Navya D'Souza also shared the challenges women work force face in the fashion industry which includes incidences of harassment and violence. Ms. Subhadra Gupta highlighted the threats faced by women workers from collective bargaining and trade unions in the apparel sector. "Currently, no union protection is available for women and there is a lack of grievance mechanisms in the sector," added Ms. Gupta.

- Ms. Soma Parthasarathy introduced the group to MAKAAAM, a platform to bring voices representing women's issues in the public discourse. The platform aims to reduce drudgery, get recognition for women farmers, reduce wage disparity and unequal access to credit. MAKAAAM also provides support to women in time of crisis and has undertaken advocacy initiatives around women farmers issues along with organising events and workshops to talk about these issues.

- Ms. Shikha Bhattacharjee presented an ILO study on violence faced by women in the garment industry in India. As documenting gender-based violence in the workplace is a difficult task, the methodology tried to bring out the spectrum of violence. The spectrum ranged from violence faced by women because of gender to violence which affects them disproportionately. The study also brought out the risk factors for violence and reasons which dissuade women from reporting.

- The second half of the session was represented by four Women workers: Malti (Brick kiln), Badaam (forced sanitary worker), Zarina (textile), and Najma (textile). 94% of the 26% women workforce in India is in the unorganised sector - marred with low wages, lack of employment opportunities,

lack of bargaining opportunities, and negligible support systems for women. The stories shared highlighted the issues faced by these women in the unorganised sector. From lack of bargaining power to prevalence of sexual violence, the women narrated first-hand accounts of their experience and how they were able to escape with support from NGOs and women platforms. They appealed for recognition of their work and sought advice on safeguarding for families in brick kilns sector.

- The final panel for this session looked at ongoing work being done to help women fight these issues. Mr. Manoj Bhatt gave a brief on the ongoing work by GoodWeave India towards recognition of invisible workers i.e. women and establishing their identity.

- Mr. Shashank Bibhu spoke about Care India's attempt to reduce violence and harassment and increase women participation through legal channels. "Currently, there is no international agreement or treaty which addresses these issues. However, there is a draft agreement addressing most of these issues which the Indian Government is receptive to," he added. Mr. Bibhu urged all the stakeholders to show their participation and support to build the momentum.

- Ms. Pooja Widhani spoke about role of education for women empowerment as envisaged through "Teach for India," the CSR programme of Times of India Group.

- Mr. Rajneesh Sarmah introduced the audience to the intervening steps taken by Marks & Spencer to keep its supply chain 'clean'. He emphasized the different approach his company takes to address gender issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create awareness and build capacity among women workers about their rights and equip them to be able to say no to any form of harassment.

- Recognition of women workers.

- Create a collaboration with relevant institutions and partners.

- Ensure there is no discrimination against women in recruitment and employment including future job opportunities. Address issues of discrimination against marginal communities.

- Ensure security especially against against sexual harassment.

- Continue to provide programs and projects for women workers to create opportunities for them and their future and create a set of skills to avoid dependence on others.

- Address the gaps in legislation and the implementation of law to support women workers.

- Models for rehabilitation of women in forced labour can be designed by NGOs or CSOs but should be implemented on a larger scale by bigger institutions like the Government.

India Inc. and the Water-Energy-Food Nexus



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Keynote Speaker: **Mr. Erik Boumeester**, Deputy Head, International Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water, Leiden, The Netherlands
 Moderator: **Mr. Rajeev Vijh**, Director, DIPP UNIDO International Centre for Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development
 Panellists: **Mr. Michiel Bierkens**, Economic Counsellor, The Netherlands Embassy in India, **Mr. Anindya Chowdhury**, Country Manager, Shell Inc., **Mr. Anirban Ghosh**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Mahindra Group, **Mr. Rahul Bhajekar**, Country Director, Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)

The discussions in the session focused on water as a resource, linking it with food production and energy demand. The panellists spoke about the various projects they have been associated with to work towards strengthening the water-energy-food linkages. With the primary focus on the agricultural sector, the underlying message for optimising resource use lay in transparency and collaboration, technology use, and a shift in water management and food production practices.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Michiel Bierkens introduced the audience to the apparent and pressing linkages between water, energy, and food in the background of rising population and the threat of climate change. Citing the example of partnership between India and the Netherlands, he said that showcasing solutions is not enough – action should include learning from each other, developing partnerships, and engagement between corporates and governments.

- Mr. Rajeev Vijh highlighted the lack of understanding of the water-energy-food linkages and the dearth of policies linking the three. Mr. Erik Boumeester also dwelt on the nexus, which he said was a tool to achieve sustainable development. “SDG 6 deals explicitly with water, while the other goals implicitly deal with it,” he pointed out. It was important to look at interdependencies, trade-offs, and synergies between the three elements of the nexus, he said. Social issues are part of the equation, and it was necessary to start discussions about it with the government and other stakeholders to enable a move towards common goals.

- Mr. Anindya Chowdhury spoke about engaging with school children and teachers to change existing mindsets. Having worked with 12,000 students in municipality schools in four states, he felt a better way to involve them was by asking them to develop projects. This introduces them to critical thinking and problem-solving.

- Mr. Chowdhury also spoke about private sector investment in clean energy generation. According to him, commercial investment and partnerships were sustainable and scalable solutions. He introduced the India 2022 platform, with eight

focus areas pertaining to energy. The platform seeks collaboration with companies from different specialities to contribute to a common solution.

- Mr. Rahul Bhajekar works on certification of organic products. As organic cotton contributes to 91% and 62% reduction in water and energy use respectively, GOTS encourages farmers to move to organic cotton production. Mr. Bhajekar says: “The challenge of changing mindsets and creating awareness needs to be bridged through educating the young. For this, collaboration is a must.” Mr. Bhajekar also pointed out the need to include sustainability in the performance matrix in companies.

- Mr. Anirban Ghosh cited the example of sugarcane to approach the question from a nutrition perspective. However, he also agreed that making a shift in diets was a challenge, and hence it was being tackled from an agricultural angle. Precision agriculture which reduces resource use and micro-irrigation are the two initiatives undertaken by the Mahindra Group in Maharashtra.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, identify a common goal and achieve it collectively
- Educate the new generation about the ills of traditional agricultural practices
- Unlearn and relearn agrarian practices to reduce resource use

District Mineral Foundations (DMF) as Enablers of Sustainable Development in Mining Communities



Moderator: **Mr. Rijit Sengupta**, COO, CRB

Panellists : **Mr. Prithul Kumar**, Director of Mines, Government of India, **Mr. Dhiraj Kapoor**, Social Xleration, **Mr. Ashis Dash**, CEO, SMI, Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI), **Mr. Vineet Bose**, Head-Legal, Hindustan Zinc Ltd, **Mr. Roberto F. Salazar-Córdova**, CEO, CSP INC.Tech, SCL/Latam, Peru, **Mr. Clement Chaubet**, Consultant, UNDP

This session discussed District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) as an opportunity to address some of the most challenging issues facing India's mining districts. In India, 22 states are deemed as 'mining states', accounting for 65% of the total land area. This is the first time when companies have been mandated to contribute 30% of their profits to a fund to be utilised for community development in this area.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Prithul Kumar opened the session with a brief introduction to DMF, the idea behind the scheme and its implementation. In India, the poorest of the poor live in areas most abundant in natural resources. DMF was instituted to ensure that resources that are mined also contribute to the welfare of the community. The *Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana* (PMKKK) provides the guidelines for utilisation of funds for development of mining areas; it specifies that 60% of the money has to be spent on identified high priority sectors and 40% on infrastructure. The Foundation has accumulated USD 3 billion to be spent only for the development of mining areas. Mr. Dhiraj Kumar gave a few concrete examples of the progress so far.
- Mr. Ashis Dash presented a bird's eye view of the industry's perspective on DMF. One of the demands made by mining companies is to have a representation in the implementation process. Mr. Dash, who said the scheme needed more representation of the people, felt feedback and course correction were necessary. Reiterating that communities need to take the lead, he spoke about the importance of creating a baseline to determine delivery targets. The industry is of the view that DMF should not become just any development fund, but should adhere to its agenda.
- Other speakers like Mr. Vineet Bose and Mr. Clement Chaubet emphasised the need to work with the community for successful implementation of DMF. Mr. Bose also spoke about a technology-driven assessment of environmental damages caused by mining — this, he felt, could help shape the programme design. Mr. Chaubet opined that DMF should have a holistic integrated development strategy to attain sustainable community welfare, and not just focus on identified sectoral issues. He also spoke about the importance of livelihood, entrepreneurship and skills development within

mining-affected communities. Mr. Chaubet argued that a robust monitoring framework and clear baseline, goals, and indicators are vital steps to ensure sustainable impacts.

- Mr. Roberto Salazar-Córdova put forward the example of a live project to argue the need for involving all the key stakeholders to ensure fair, just, and equitable development. He introduced the audience to the 'hexagonal dialogue' with six key stakeholders – the government, private sector, academia, NGOs, communities, and international organisations. Mr. Salazar-Córdova also stressed on using big data and artificial intelligence to facilitate this dialogue and introduced the concept of 'probability of impact', which could serve as an enabler for course correction.
- The discussions brought forth another critical issue: the lack of documentation of on-ground practices and information sharing. If done, this could help in learning from each other, and states could use it for scaling purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Communities should be involved from the very beginning in the planning and implementation of projects under DMF funds.
- Representation of all the key stakeholders to ensure sustainable long-term impact.
- Use of technology, big data and artificial intelligence to gather baseline data for programme design.
- Robust monitoring framework, clear goals and impact indicators need to be set.

Human Rights: A Critical Component in Responsible Business Practices

Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**



Moderator: **Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan**, IIM Bengaluru and CRB Board Member

Panellists: **Mr. Rajat Kumar**, Programme Manager, Digital Transformation, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, **Dr. Jana Helbig**, former Managing Director, German Centre for Industry and Trade, India, **Ms. Jane Hwang**, President and CEO, Social Accountability International, **Mr. Anil Bharadwaj**, General Secretary, Federation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Founding Board Member, CRB, **Ms. Natasha Mehta Majumdar**, Network Representative India, Amfori, **Ms. Subhadra Gupta**, CSO Engagement Manager, Fair Labour Association

Case Study Presenters:

Mr. Gopinath Govindan, Director Human Resources, CLP Power India, **Mr. Abhay Pathak**, Head-Sustainability, TATA Motors, **Mr. Gangadhar Swamy**, Field Implementation Manager, BASF Vegetable Seeds, **Mr. Kinjal Shah**, Regional Director – India and the Middle East, Responsible Jewellery Council

This session attempted to examine the challenges and opportunities for incorporating human rights in business practices by sharing case studies. 'Human rights' is a recent addition as a business practice component; however, the context and understanding of various aspects of human rights are still evolving. The panel was guided in its discussions by the UN Guidelines on Business and Human Rights.

EMERGING POINTS

- Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan initiated the discussions with her views on how human rights were incorporated as a component in business ethics. Starting from 2011, most governments have been realizing that businesses are powerful entities and their actions impact human rights. This acknowledgement has led to securing human rights at the centre of governance as per the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In India, civil society is using CSR funds to promote human rights; businesses are being held accountable for violation of rights. According to Professor Srinivasan, as protectors of human rights, governments now face the challenge of ensuring that corporate responsibility is fulfilled justly.

- As part of her address, Professor Srinivasan presented a study done across sectors to understand whether human rights are respected. A compelling way for making companies ensure human rights in their practices, she said, was to ask them about the steps taken to mitigate the negative impacts of their business decisions and actions. Mitigation could then

be done by using technology and through systems and processes, rather than by attempting to change individual behaviours.

- Dr. Jana Helbig represented the corporate sector's perspective. According to Dr. Helbig, the State has a responsibility to ensure clean business practices and enforcement of the laws. She pointed out that companies understand that they need to engage with clean supply chains, as news of malpractices would negatively affect the business. She also spoke about the need to motivate entrepreneurs to make human rights a part of their business.

- Ms. Jane Hwang elaborated on the role of the State in ensuring that the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are implemented. In India, the pre-requisites are policy coherence, public procurement, and access to remedy. She pointed out that often, it is the lack of understanding of the law and of adequate incentives which lead to violations. She said that the role of government in public procurement is

poorly understood — 30% of India's GDP comes from public procurement, which is a lifeline for many SMEs. This, if understood properly, can drive policy change for due diligence and capacity building. Speaking about the judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, she said that people in India are not aware of the process and get overwhelmed when the need arises.

- Mr. Gopinath Govindan agreed that businesses recognise the fact that they have an impact on human rights. To ensure a viable solution, he emphasised that companies should not be defensive about their image as money-making entities and should not shy away from participating in a meaningful dialogue.

- Speaking about the 'corporate responsibility to respect', Mr. Anil Bharadwaj took up the case of SMEs, where this responsibility is compromised. He pointed out that failed proprietorships and partnerships in businesses were leading to large numbers of suicides among SME owners and employees. India's insolvency and bankruptcy codes are not updated. Lack of space for street businesses in urban planning leaves SMEs with a cruel choice to either follow the law and suffer or bribe the authorities and endure the hardships. Mr. Bharadwaj said that the remedy lay in reforms: differentiation has to be made between goods and services, and there has to be flexibility in addressing human rights issues in small businesses.

- Agreeing with Mr. Bharadwaj, Mr. Rajat Kumar highlighted the example of the European Union's latest data protection law, which gives micro and small enterprises some relaxation. Lessons can be taken from this legislation as human rights are at centre of the discourse.

- Ms. Natasha Mehta Majumdar and Ms. Subhadra Gupta spoke about the issue of victims' access to remedy, elaborating on the meaning of grievances and on steps taken to expand the understanding. Saying that SDGs were inseparable from human rights, they felt it was important to have forums to discuss and strengthen grievance redressing mechanisms and to bring the voices of labourers to the forefront. Ms. Majumdar focused on the message of 'right change, right education, and right information' through capacity building workshops. Ms. Gupta spoke about 'safeguard mechanisms' followed by the Fair Labour Association, which includes third party investigations. She emphasised the role of the State, panchayats, and non-State actors for addressing issues of labour rights, freedom of collective appreciation, bargaining, and legitimacy.

The second panel presented case studies reflecting on crucial initiatives in business and human rights.

- Mr. Kinjal Shah took the example of the International Standards on Responsible Business Practices for the diamond, gold, and platinum group metals sector in the Indian context. The jewellery business, most of which is informal, does not have any security. The adoption of the standards by the industry had been slow and was only made possible through meetings and workshops. The Responsible Jewellery Council also worked towards enhancing awareness among employees, with the hope of encouraging them to demand employees' state insurance benefits from local governments. "We also undertook steps to initiate voluntary standards and harmonised them with other standards so that companies don't face the double burden of audit," he said. For successful adoption of standards, it is essential to provide incentives, concluded Mr. Shah.

- Mr. Gangadhar Swamy highlighted the challenges in manual pollination; as it is a labour-intensive process, companies outsource manual pollination to local farmers who employ child labour on their patches of land to grow the species. A programme initiated by BASF Seeds has been successful in bringing down child labour engagement from 15% to 0.1%. The programme also monitored and provided certification to farmers. Incentive schemes were designed to ensure no child labour was engaged; in the case of non-compliance, agreements were cancelled.

- Mr. Gopinath Govindan highlighted the gaps in the power sector — the low engagement of contractual labour, lack of skill development training, and absence of clarity on terms of employment or understanding of processes like provident fund or grievance redressal mechanisms. To overcome these gaps, CLP Power organized structured conversations with contract staff to bridge their knowledge along with partnering with social enterprise initiatives to drive change, and using volunteers to bridge the gaps between corporates and beneficiaries.

- Mr. Abhay Pathak spoke about implementing the sustainability guidelines of TATA Motors in its supply chains. Targeting the initial 200 key suppliers, the company has organised workshops, developed monitoring and reporting frameworks, and set targets. According to Mr. Pathak, the company aims to reach the lowest supplier in the chain and meet SDG 8 — a decent workplace — for all.

- Professor Srinivasan closed the panel by raising a range of questions: from defining human rights in India to how the standards will be made and implemented, from whether there will be an instrument governing trade to will human rights issues end up as merely a game of standards. Another pertinent question that came up was that as human rights are at the core of CRB, how can CRB assist?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enforcement of legislation and incentivising them.
- Reforms in the existing legislation — there should be separate laws for SMEs.
- Build knowledge about the redressal mechanisms through workshops and discussion forums.
- Call for action to strengthen the human rights component in business practices.

Deforestation and Sustainable Supply Chain in India



Moderator: **Ms. Vidya Rangan**, Senior Manager – Impacts, ISEAL Alliance

Panellists: **Mr. Edward Millard**, Director, Landscapes and Communities Programme Development, Rainforest Alliance, UK
Mr. Palash Srivastava, South Pole, **Mr. Sanket Bhale**, Associate Director-Sustainable Business, WWF-India,
Mr. Vaibhav Aggarwal, Project Leader: New Business South Asia, IKEA Services India Private Limited

The panellists in this session discussed the burgeoning problem of deforestation, the local and global challenges, and how these trigger deforestation elsewhere (as in the case of India's palm oil imports). The solutions offered included raising consumer awareness, changing business practices and mapping the supply chain.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Sanket Bhale placed India at the core of the deforestation problem by highlighting the palm oil case. India is the biggest importer of palm oil produced by Indonesia and Malaysia – it is thus contributing to the felling of rain forests in these countries. One of the main challenges highlighted by Mr. Bhale was the fact that 80% of the imported palm oil remains untraceable – no one knows where it ends up. Mr. Bhale pointed out that the low visibility of the commodity leads to a lack of awareness among consumers and hence, a low demand for certified palm oil. Tracking use of imported palm oil, standards to incentivise firms, and awareness campaigns were some of the steps recommended by Mr. Bhale.
- Mr. Vaibhav Aggarwal spoke about the measures Ikea has taken to reduce deforestation, especially in the Indian context. Ikea consumes 1% of the world's commercially available wood, which translates into a huge footprint. Ikea tries to ensure that no wood is sourced illegally, local wood-based materials are used and the entire supply chain – from harvest to sales – is mapped. According to Mr. Aggarwal, the involvement of government is essential for making sustainable forest management a success in India.
- Mr. Edward Millard opined that businesses – and not consumers – drive change in markets. He introduced the 'Sustainable Palm Oil Initiative' which aspires to influence the Indian market and encourage companies to purchase certified palm oil. This is done by imparting knowledge – ensuring that businesses understand the realities around palm oil. To create a movement, he urged that companies should be provided support. He also recommended using technology to map the supply chain and maintaining sustainable practices to ensure the forest economy does not collapse.

- The South Pole is a carbon asset management company and helps firms understand where deforestation is happening in its value chain. Mr. Palash Srivastava, who represented the company, spoke about his role in assisting clients to achieve deforestation-free supply chains and marketing their achievements. He also pointed out how financial institutions can provide incentives to companies which are working towards deforestation-free supply chains. Mr. Srivastava stressed the need for advocacy to ensure an active role of the banking sector and the need for policies to allow proper investments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organise consumer awareness campaigns to create a demand for deforestation-free supply chains.
- Collaborate to make policies to prevent deforestation in supply chains.
- Interact with companies – create forums to share best practices and ensure that businesses understand the ground realities around their supply chains and their impacts on forests.
- Map supply chains using technology.
- Advocate to encourage the financial sector to provide incentives for driving companies towards deforestation-free supply chains.

Creating Shared Value: How Sustainability Standards can learn from Interoperability on Water Stewardship in the Agriculture Sector



Moderator: **Mr. Ashish Bharadwaj**, India Coordinator, Alliance for Water Stewardship

Panelists: **Mr. Rajeev Baruah**, Country Director, Better Cotton Initiative, **Mr. Udit Khare**, Impacts Associate Manager, ISEAL Alliance, **Mr. Litul Baruah**, Analytics Officer, C&A Foundation, **Mr. Joseph Woznaik**, Head, Trade for Sustainable Development, ITC

Interoperability, a term coined in 2017, refers to the degree at which different organisations or systems can work together to achieve a common goal. 'Operate, collaborate and integrate' is central to interoperability; the session tried to explore the mechanisms of this system. It raised the question that if organisations undertake joint research or plug-in-play, can they be recognised, harmonised or merged and work as a single system?

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Rajeev Baruah referred to interoperability as incorporation of water stewardship beyond the conventional farm level in BCI's revised standards. According to him, the core of Alliance for Water Stewardship(AWS) principles has found its way into Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), which is to be implemented. He talked about the pilot projects with AWS in the broader area of water conservation, where BCI is seeking to assist farmers in optimising their resource use.

- Mr. Udit Khare reflected on how the ISEAL Alliance implemented the concept of interoperability to achieve sustainability standards. Its Innovation Fund encourages member organisations working with voluntary standards across sectors to come together and apply for a grant to work together on a project.

- Mr. Joseph Woznaik spoke about the sustainability map, a portal which lists the most robust voluntary standards followed across the world. According to him, while interoperability is possible from a criteria perspective, operationalising it is a challenge. As it involves a variety of partners, commitment, and compromise, some stakeholders stand to lose

- Mr. Litul Baruah provided a glimpse of a project undertaken by C&A Foundation and its outcomes. The micro-irrigation scheme by Gujarat government provided 40-50% cost of drip irrigation, benefitting large farmers; smaller farmers could not afford the balance amount. C&A Foundation with its partner

Agha Khan Foundation, set up a revolving fund to enable small and marginal farmers to avail the subsidy. According to Mr. Baruah, government is an important partner in ensuring the success of any project.

- Responding to the question if interoperability at its best would bring optimisation of the system and not its regeneration, Mr. Woznaik advised against treating standards as a silver bullet to solve all difficulties. The application needs to be made through multiple lenses — just the lens of a standard would not suffice in solving the issues. Standards are not a solution, but a framework and platform to move towards solutions, he said.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Simplification of standards and processes
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration for a common goal — making a database organisations, working on different aspects.
- Identification of common areas and scope for collaboration.
- Exploration of synergies between ISEAL and EWS synergies across standards and interoperability

How a brand can be built based on its sustainability performance



Celebspeak with Prahlad Kakar, Ace Brand and Ad Guru

A new feature of the conference was an interactive session with ad guru, Prahlad Kakar, Chairman and Founder of the Prahlad Kakar School of Branding and Entrepreneurship and Founder, ReefWatch Marine Conservation, an organisation working towards conservation of coral reefs in Lakshadweep. Citing the life-changing example of scuba diving where he says he ‘met’ the ocean, Kakar spoke about training people whose voices are critical towards conservation of rich undersea resources.

Sceptical of the current sustainability practices, Kakar views the relationship between consumers and multinational companies as a ‘connection of dreams’ — dreams shown and nurtured by the branding and advertising sector that resonate with consumers. According to him, consumer literacy is a powerful weapon to break this ‘façade’, and social media could play a key role in it.

Prahlad Kakar opined that employees should be provided incentives so that they view CSR as an opportunity, and not a threat. Once they have been given ownership, their pride would reflect in their voluntary work. In his opinion, the developmental model being followed by India was flawed. “It is pertinent that we think what is good for us. To preserve the immense diversity that India has, we need to stop following countries which have already destroyed their diversity,” he observed. Agreeing that contradictions are a part of all that he believes in, he clarified that he was still a learner. Professionally, he has stopped associating with corporate entities that do not meet his principles.

Prahlad Kakar briefly touched upon his School of Branding and Entrepreneurship and talked about his efforts to help youngsters to aim big, work with passion and commitment, and create inspiring work. He concluded the session by saying that “society needs to be made more value-based and not money-based and through this change, one will create something which cannot be taken away.”

“To preserve the immense diversity that India has, we need to stop following countries which have already destroyed their diversity.”

Mr. Prahlad Kakar

CONCLUDING DAY

16th November, 2018

Better decisions for a better world: Business, the SDGs and Executive Decision making



Moderator: **Dr. Bimal Arora**, Honorary Chairperson, CRB and Assistant Professor, Aston University, UK

Panelists: **Professor Dirk Matten**, Professor of Strategy, Hewlett-Packard Chair in Corporate Social Responsibility, Associate Dean Research, Schulich School of Business, University of York, Canada, **Professor Joe Árvai**, Faculty Director, Erb Institute, University of Michigan, USA, **Mr. Bouba Housseini**, Program Officer, IDRC, Canada, **Ms. Dipanwita Chakraborty**, Regional Director (Asia Pacific), Corporate Responsibility, Cargill India

The session explored the process of decision-making for a better world by using examples of business decisions and their impact on the achievement of SDGs. Using practical case studies, the panelists suggested approaches for leveraging executive decision-making to contribute to the SDGs. The panel focused on some of the caveats and limitations unique to management culture in India and possibilities for further research in the Indian context.

EMERGING POINTS

- Professor Joe Árvai highlighted some of the natural biases in decision-making and suggested techniques to help executives recognise and counter these biases. Being fundamentally ruled by emotions, leaders tend to make irrational decisions in complex situations. The Erb Institute focuses on teaching students about business intelligence for undertaking decisions based on the triple bottom line systems analysis approach. “Most businesses are poised to make a radical change but cannot implement them due to lack of investments and focus on improving decision-making intelligence,” said Professor Árvai.

- Mr. Bouba Housseini appreciated the systems approach and emphasised the need for creating models to make changes under challenging situations. According to him, most businesses consider CSR and sustainability as a ‘constraint’, which needed to change. Sustainability needs to become an objective function ingrained in corporate philosophy. IDRC, Mr. Housseini pointed out, supports and encourages studies that help generate data for companies to understand how sustainability is suitable for their businesses.

- Ms. Dipanwita Chakraborty emphasised the need for collective consciousness among all players, including businesses, communities, and other stakeholders, for a productive and better dialogue. Ms. Chakraborty views her CSR team as an internal ‘activist’ which can disrupt normal processes within the organisation to bring about transformational change. According to her, change takes time; one must be patient and appreciate the smaller changes as they happen.

- “Bad decisions are made by good people,” Professor Dirk Matten reminded the audience: sometimes, people who are ‘good’ in their personal capacities, can be ‘bad’ decision-makers in their professional lives. There is a need to make change and improve the conversation, he felt. Issues around environment must be framed in connection with business, the impact of a decision should be properly vetted, and good managers trained to marry financial and environmental safeguarding.

- Dr. Bimal Arora concluded the session by questioning the availability of social capital within organisations to collaborate with other organisations or with other stakeholders for better decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design capacity building and training programs for leaders to enable intelligent decision-making for achieving the SDGs.
- Set sustainability targets and revised role definitions to integrate sensitivity towards the environment and society as a measure of strength of leadership.
- Ensure exposure for the leaders on the impacts of their decisions.

Future-Proofing CSR in India: A Forward-Looking Approach



Moderator: **Mr. Sudhir Sinha**, Founder Director, CSR Satyagraha

Panelists: **Dr. Jatinder Singh**, Director, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, **Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran**, Former Chief, Tata Sustainability Group, **Mr. Sita Ram Gupta**, Executive Director and Head – CSR, Lupin Pharma, **Mr. Jitendra Routray**, Head-CSR, ReNew Power Ltd, **Mr. N.N. Sharma**, Chairperson, Centre for Sustainability and CSR, BIMTECH

This session attempted to analyse the current trends in CSR to enable future predictions. Each panellist presented their view on what corporates should do to minimize socio-economic inequality and maximize their contribution to SDGs. The session revolved around the ideas of bringing SMEs within the ambit of CSR, collaborating with companies with similar expertise, and innovating and arresting the negative trends in CSR practices. The session highlighted the role SDGs can play in defining the operational strategy of businesses. CSR Satyagraha was introduced as a watch-dog to point out irresponsible CSR practices.

EMERGING POINTS

- Dr. Jatinder Singh emphasised the need to bring SMEs within the ambit of CSR. SMEs provide 40% employment and are responsible for 44% output. Dr. Singh proposed to create awareness among SMEs and motivate them to embrace social responsibility. To reduce inequality, corporates need to invest in innovative CSR projects. Saying the opposite of poverty is not wealth, but education, employment and skills, Dr. Singh highlighted the need to include the youth in the supply change.
- Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran spoke about how businesses should be built so that they deliver optimally on all the SDGs. He presented a methodology piloted in India to deliver SDGs which shaped businesses.
- Mr. Venkateswaran pointed out that lack of innovation is due to limited understanding of sustainability. He hoped that Business Sustainability 3.0 would deliver on SDGs and measure the impact on sustainability.
- Mr. Sita Ram Gupta urged corporates to reduce social inequality and increase income mobility in the light of India's poor standing in Human Development Index. He was of the view that corporate innovation can convert problems into opportunities.
- Mr. Jitendra Routray rejected the current practice of CSR projects for being transactional. He spoke about driving long term impact and emphasized that corporates should design their CSR projects to create lasting impact.
- A successful multi-stakeholder collaboration will have long term social impact. Corporates with similar area of expertise can drive a larger and more sustainable impact by coming together, said Mr Routray.

- For Mr. N. N. Sharma, future-proofing means to be relevant, dynamic, and healthy in future. Regional imbalance of CSR funds, high focus on branding, and lack of review of non-compliance were some impediments pointed out by Mr. Sharma. Citing four committees to look at the CSR sector, he hoped that the negative trends get arrested.

- Mr. Sudhir Sinha posed the question "Is CSR dying?" According to him, Section 135 of Companies Act has sent the sustainability agenda on a backfoot. The two tools – The Act and National Guidelines on Business Responsibility have offered corporates a choice of non-compliance. Talking about CSR Satyagraha, which is driven by Gandhian principles, he highlighted the need for community participation, use of local resources, and social investment. CSR Satyagraha points out the irresponsible practices and is against commercialisation, marketisation, and glamorisation of CSR.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Dovetail CSR policies to include SMEs.
- Design innovative CSR projects to reduce social inequality, increase income mobility, create long term impact, and achieve the SDGs.
- Arrest current negative practices in CSR.
- Encourage multi-stakeholder collaboration to create long term impact.
- Use SDGs as a guide for their operations. As a part of CSR strategy, adopt at least three districts from the list of 117 Aspirational District.

Promoting Responsible Business Practices in Small Tea Plantations and the Supply Chain: Finding Solutions through Multi-Actor Working Groups

Civic Engagement Alliance



Innovative Change Collaborative
Services Pvt. Ltd



Save the
Children



Moderator: **Mr. Bidyananda Barkakoty**, Board Member, Tea Board of India

Participants: **Mr. Arun Asthana**, Executive Director, CRB, **Ms. Nirjumoni Dutta Beharali**, ICCSPL, **Ms. Madhumita Purkayastha**, Save the Children, **Mr. Ravi Agarwal**, National Thematic Manager – Child Protection, Innovative Change Collaborative Services Primate Limited (ICCSPL), **Mr. Rajen Bohra**, President, All India Small Tea Growers Association (AISTGA), **Mr. Ashok Batra**, Consultant – Markets, Rainforest Alliance, **Mr. Edward Millard**, Director, Landscapes and Communities Development Programme, Rainforest Alliance, UK **Mr. Rupam Das**, Save the Children, **Mr. Vikram Singh**, Regional Manager, Ethical Tea Partnership

Though the tea business continues to grow and remains alluring, the state of small tea growers and workers remains poor. Their condition usually does not feature in national-level discussions. This round table was an attempt to discuss the underlying issues and introduce responsible business practices in the tea sector. The session was co-hosted by Civic Engagement Alliance, Innovative Change Collaborative Services Pvt. Ltd., and Save the Children.

EMERGING POINTS

- Ms. Nirjumoni Dutta Beharali, reiterating the objectives of the round table, spoke about her organisation's work with small tea growers. Working with the people at the base of the community, her organisation has been engaged with capacity building and awareness creation. She believed that the key to driving development lies in an exchange of good practices, aligning the interests of stakeholders, and in putting forth the agenda of responsible business in this sector. She believed that this forum could be used for agreeing on specific actions by different stakeholders.
- Ms. Madhumita highlighted the role of Save the Children, which works on child rights. Looking at practices including those of tea growers from the perspective of protecting the rights of children, she mentioned some of the issues plaguing the sector. Tea gardens, being usually cut off from cities, remain alienated from the rest of the society. She urged the participants at the table to recognise the issues to find solutions. Concerns of child labour, lack of basic amenities, failure of government schemes to percolate down to the people, no access to ICDS or Anganwadi centres, problems

connected to land rights, and scarcity of marketing infrastructure for their products were some of the challenges which she listed.

- Mr. Ravi Agarwal re-emphasised some of the issues mentioned by Ms. Madhumita. He played a video showing child exploitation and abuse. India's north-east is a region that has always faced isolation; Mr. Agarwal's organisation works closely with the government in this region on issues of child rights in the supply chain, wages, and women's empowerment among small tea growers. According to him, awareness at all levels — government, private sector, community and NGOs — is the key to working towards solutions. Speaking about reforms, Mr. Agarwal emphasised the need to engage with the government and companies and the necessity to address the issues and challenges faced by small tea growers. An example was shared from the stone mining industry, which is taking adequate and successful steps to remove child labour from its supply chain.

- Mr. Bidyananda Barkakoty expressed his concerns related to wages and empowerment. He clarified that there are two types of payments — cash and kind, and the NGOs working in the sector need to factor that in. He highlighted the issue of shortage of workers in the sector and the fact that 50% of the labour force consists of women. He also spoke about the business of organic tea, which is a big challenge, especially in Assam. Highlighting the need for better facilities, he spoke about his initiative to extend the Employee State Insurance Act to small tea growers as an option. Mr. Barkakoty also

spoke about fixing a base price for tea which consumers can be charged — this can then enable the government and industry to effect a hike in minimum wages for the workers.

- Mr. Rajen Bohra highlighted that to save the children from exploitation, they should be empowered — physically, mentally, financially, and educationally.

- Sharing his experience from Kenya, Mr Edward spoke about how to get an export entry point for small tea growers, which could also be beneficial for big plantations. Working towards building a marketing strategy for these growers, seeking public investment, and sharing best practices can help mainstream the small tea-growing segment, he said.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Plantation Labour Act (PLA) should be amended to ensure that development in this sector is at the same pace as in others.
- Reforms in the sector are needed to eliminate child labour from the supply chain; awareness creation in all stakeholders is necessary.
- Fix a minimum base cost price to ensure a decent minimum wage for workers.
- Extend the Employee State Insurance Act as an option for the small tea sector.

Climate Smart Agriculture: Ramping up Agroforestry in India



Rabobank



Moderator: **Mr. Murli Dhar**, Lead-Sustainable Agriculture, WWF-India

Panellists: **Mr. Vijay Vardhan Vasireddy**, Operations Manager, ITC, **Dr. T.R. Manoharan**, Senior Advisor, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), **Mr. Rajeev Ahal**, Director – Natural Resource Management, GIZ, **Mr. Soumitri Das**, Forestry Specialist, USAID-India, **Ms. Teenal Sethi**, Senior Director, Rabobank, **Mr. Vaibhav Aggarwal**, Project Leader-New Business South Asia, IKEA Services India Private Limited

The session explored the challenges and opportunities in agroforestry in India, following the notification of the National Agroforestry Policy 2014 by Government of India. The policy recognizes the potential of agroforestry to meet the nutritional, fuel, timber, fibre, and ecological security needs of India and suggests CSR and private funds for its development.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Murli Dhar initiated the discussion by explaining India's position as a wood-deficit country with increasing demand and its dependence on imports. One of the challenges faced by the sector is the unwillingness of the small land holding farmers to lock their land for long term as proposed in agroforestry models, as the returns are delayed and uncertain, thus affecting their livelihood.

- Mr. Vijay Vardhan Reddy shared the successful case of agroforestry models that his company has implemented in its supply chain with a strong commitment to triple bottom line. With a clear decision to not depend on forest resources, the company strengthened its R&D efforts to put up demonstration projects for big farmers to encourage farm forestry on their land. The company's nursery provided the farmers with the saplings of Eucalyptus and Casuarina. Mr. Reddy also said that 70% area included farmlands of tribal community farmers in Andhra Pradesh who were provided loans to start block plantation.

- Ikea is heavily import dependent for wood, although it has set its targets to source the wood sustainably in coming years. Mr. Vaibhav Aggarwal pointed out that Ikea is in initial years of agroforestry, with 80% of land under crop cultivation and 20% under tree cover on farming land. Ikea knows that integration of commonalities among voluntary standards along with strong market linkages is needed to cater to low cost model. As the demand for Ikea products is huge, India can be engaged as a credible local supply chain actor.

- Dr. Manoharan shared that for voluntary standards to exhibit synergies with local conditions for successful implementation, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is in the process of developing India-specific standard. This is expected to bring down the cost and improve local adaptability, thus improving the credible supply in the market.

- Mr. Soumitri Das spoke about the linkages between forestry and its impact on climate change. With India's target to have

33% forest cover, the country needs more successful agroforestry models. Mr. Das mentioned some successful initiatives in a multi-stakeholder setting, with funding from the private sector and technical support from USAID, that have resulted in improved land and water management. Mr. Das explained that small and medium farmers need financing support from banks or other NBFCs for investing in the agroforestry space.

- Mr. Rajeev Ahal highlighted the need to define forests more clearly. Farmers prefer horticulture over cereal crops as it provides them more livelihood security. However, short-term tree crop varieties could be a viable solution as the farmers need more risk-free land management. Mr. Ahal emphasized the utilization of unused common public spaces. He opined that financing needs should be integrated to include vegetables and forests for short term goals.

- Ms. Teenal Sethi shared the fund, one billion dollar, created with UNEP to be allocated towards climate smart agriculture. With a focus on development finance, Rabobank intends to fund projects upstream at farm level to mitigate risks faced by small farmers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Successful models should be captured for experience sharing.
- Promotion of effective dialogue and availability of adequate integrated financing to support short-term needs of the farmers through horticulture or vegetables and long-term through forest produce.
- Presence of financial institutions willing to experiment with the available agroforestry models as well as private companies willing to build credible supply chain.
- Awareness and training for farmers and building their trust needs to be developed before substantial progress could be made with all the stakeholders collaborating in this domain.

Creating a Child Friendly Supply Chain



Moderator: **Ms. Angela Solano Doncel**, Global March Against Child Labour

Participants: **Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury**, Programme Manager, Gender Justice and Human Rights, C&A Foundation, **Mr. Insaf Nizam**, Specialist, ILO, **Dr. Geeta Sekhon**, Global Consultant, United Nations, **Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi**, Project Manager; Terres Des Hommes, **Ms. Gazal Malik**, Policy Research Officer, Global March Against Child Labour, **Mr. Manoj Bhatt**, Country Director and Managing Trustee GoodWeave International, **Dr. Bimal Arora**, Honorary Chairperson CRB and Faculty Member, Aston Business School, UK, **Mr. R.C. Kesar**, Director General, OGTC (Okhla Garment and Textile Clusters), **Mr. Raphel Jose**, Social Compliance Manager, Superdry, **Ms. Sonia**, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA)

The session discussed the issue of child labour in supply chains. The panellists agreed that there existed a risk of child labour in the supply chain, the root cause being invisibility. Companies need to include human rights compliance in their business practices in order to create change. A partnership and commitment from stakeholders were seen as crucial component to prevent child labour in the supply chain.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury began his presentation with a social experiment to check how many in the audience can guarantee that clothes worn by them were not made by child labour. The experiment showed that 230-billion-dollar apparel sector is not designed for easy traceability. “We are not asking the questions who makes my clothes? No one wants to know and all we want to know is how to get the cheapest clothing,” added Mr Roy Chowdhury. He opined that the idea ‘sustainability is expensive’ needs to change. According to him there are no incentives for businesses to look beyond their work-

place to ensure human rights standards are maintained. “The Government, which is one of the largest procurers, do not make any reference to human rights in its tenders,” added Mr. Roy Chowdhury.

- Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi, shared stories of child labour and trafficking in the textile sector through the gender lens. Accepting that girls are often exploited in the factories is the first step towards problem resolution. Gender dimension comes in, when equality principles are not followed referring

to the gap in wages, opportunities, bargaining power etc. He insisted on adding gender specific question in tool kits and questionnaires to identify and address the issues. "Trafficking is closely associated with child labour, as they are most vulnerable and poverty plays an important role," added Mr. Ponpandi.

- Dr. Geeta Sekhon, discussing the report by Global March against Child Labour, stated that gender component is important in due diligence. Citing the example of garment industry, she shared that women's contribution remains unrecognised. Dr. Sekhon talked about the lessons learnt from due diligence and how the focus on child labour and trafficking can help address other issues of labour violations.

- Ms. Gazal Malik, resonated Dr. Sekhon's opinion of picking child labour as a possible vantage point. She shared the outcomes of a case study by three Dutch companies which applied the lens of child labour in the supply chain in the spices sector. "Though no cases of child labour were found in turmeric production, there were other issues. Women were paid less than minimum wages in the sector," she added.

- Mr. Manoj Bhatt stressed on the need of lifestyle change to make a sustainable change. A typical supply chain has a known part and a huge unknown part which exists due to many reasons. Invisibility is the major problem of informal and unorganised sector. Mr. Bhatt insisted on carrying due diligence to document the complete supply chain. Building partnership and trust instead of a business relationship and conducting frequent random inspections and visits gives the real picture of the ground level realities. He emphasised that all rescue action should be remediation focussed. Mr Bhatt also agreed that picking child labour as a possible vantage point will enable addressing other labour issues.

- Dr. Bimal Arora and Mr. Marco Dubbelt talked about the toolkit or guidelines developed for buyers, suppliers and other stakeholder who might be involved in removing issues of child labour. The toolkit also has a business case to understand why one should follow the guidelines.

- Mr. Insaf Nizam opined that child labour is not only a labour issue, but also Human Rights, Child Rights issues, development issue and much more. He linked the issue of child labour to all the 17 SDGs and opined that this issues cannot be approached from one aspect. He vouched for working with stakeholders and forging partnerships to fill the gaps.

- Mr. R.C. Kesar said that garment industry is focussed on input and output. As a representative of garment exporters and a civil society partner, OGTC contributes towards removing social evils. Some of the initiatives highlighted by Mr Kesar were the annual conferences at OGTC which gives child labour prominence to ensure eradication of child labour and sensitising about child labour especially in tier 3 and tier 4 companies.

- According to Mr. Raphel Jose, the main challenge in eradicating child labour is that it does not manifest in a set pattern. Tracing the history, Mr. Jose said that child labour was rampant and traceable, until the international brands came together and started demanding that its supply chain be devoid of child labour. That saw the shifting of child labour to

different tiers of the supply chain instead of eradicating it, as the socio-economic reality of India does not allow for complete eradication. "Children continue to work in hidden supply chains," maintained Mr. Jose.

Sonia recounted her experience of hidden child labour in the garment sector. According to her, children work in home-based set ups instead of factories and hence remain invisible. Advising parents on importance of education and issues of child labour, collaborating with trade unions, creating awareness of the child labour laws among the implementors, were some of the interventions taken by BBA to stop child labour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create more transparency and visibility throughout the whole supply chain and take responsibility for all tiers.
- Be mindful of including the gender component within the human rights aspects in due diligence procedures.
- Include the voices of children and women to understand how they view their rights being implemented.
- Companies should go beyond compliance; Government should give incentives to enable this.

Leveraging Social Responsibility to Manage Strategic Risks



Moderator: **Ms. Jyotsna Belliappa**, Head – Strategic Alliance, The CSR Company International

Panellists: **Ms. Prajakta Moni**, Principal, BlueSky CSR Company, **Mr. Murari K Singh**, VP-Operations, Orient Craft Ltd, **Mr. Avijit Kumar**, Charities Aid Foundation

The session discussed key factors needed for understanding and incorporation while designing a company's CSR interventions. The panellists addressed the issues surrounding identification and integration of relevant stakeholders, prioritisation of interventions, and measurement of impact created by the sustainability efforts of companies. The panel recommended the adoption of international standards such as ISO 26000 and GRI to help companies develop holistic CSR policies.

EMERGING POINTS

- According to Ms. Jyotsna Belliappa, "philanthropy is a subset of social responsibility and is optional; social responsibility is something we must do." All decisions should be viewed from the perspective of social, environmental, and economic implications. Stakeholders should be reintroduced as those who influence our decisions and vice-versa. Recognising the power dynamics of this relationship will help prioritising the decisions; dialogue is the key to delivery. Ms. Belliappa closed her presentation saying that as "one size fits all" is not possible, every CSR project must define the standards and best practices it will follow.

- Following this logic, a toolkit as per ISO 26000 has been developed to map the relevant stakeholders for each company. Ms. Prajakta Mony showed how to use the toolkit and the benefits of using it. ISO 26000 attempts to bring in an element of objectivity; the toolkit would help in documenting the stakeholders and their demands, problem areas, and action all in one place. This will enable companies or programme leads to identify consumer issues relevant to the industry, drive action based on discussions, and monitor and measure their CSR interventions.

- Orient Craft Pvt. Ltd. has been implementing ISO 26000 for four years. Mr. Murari Singh shared his experiences with ISO 26000; the standards resulted in the embedding of social responsibility in the management process and strategic decision making. It also helped the company to prioritise its activities based on the needs and measure and follow up action and impact for sustainable results. The company has now started to view its CSR not as expenditure but as an investment. "The guidelines should be viewed as a framework to enhance the business value," concluded Mr. Singh.

- Mr. Avijit Kumar introduced the upcoming standards which would enable better implementation of Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. Defined by a committee set up by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the standards are a guidance framework to plan and implement CSR projects for a sustainable impact. Equipped with a star rating system and certification, the CSR will be assessed on five principles with 12 parameters — some being non-negotiable, some aspirational. Saying the standards are already in the public domain, Mr. Kumar hoped that companies falling out of the 2% criteria would also adopt some of these standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stakeholder engagement at all levels is crucial. This is contingent on identification of all relevant stakeholders and understanding the power dynamics for meaningful dialogues, which would drive appropriate decisions.

- Standards should be treated as guides to help design CSR projects.

- Standards should also influence core business values and management decisions.

Responsible Sourcing and Implications on Communities



Moderator: **Mr. Thangaperumal Ponpandi**, Country Manager – India, Terres des Hommes

Panelists: **Mr. Vijay Jain**, India Coordinator, Responsible Mica Initiative, **Ms. Jyotsna Bhatnagar**, Private Sector Partnerships Officer, UN World Food Programme India, **Mr. Abhay Pathak**, Head Sustainability, Tata Motors

This session discussed the challenges in the sustainable sourcing of mica such as workers' conditions, child labour, and skill development. The discussions also touched upon various actions being taken by companies to ensure clean, legal, and responsible sourcing, not just by large players but also by small vendors and suppliers. The panellists also spoke about how companies need to be responsible towards communities.. The session was co-hosted by Terres des Hommes (TDH) and Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI).

EMERGING POINTS

- Offering a snapshot behind the session, Mr. Ponpandi spoke about the collaborative work of Terres des Hommes (TDH) and Responsible Mica Initiative (RMI) in Jharkhand and Bihar, the maximum mica producing states. The two states also have the highest percentage of child labour in the mica industry; India accounts for 25% of the 22,000 child labourers in the global mica industry. The key focus of TDH is to address the issue of child protection. Mr. Vijay Jain added that RMI has a broader vision and is working to ensure 100% legal sourcing of mica. He spoke about micro-level family-based plans, advocacy campaigns with Government about mining leases, and efforts to improve the working condition of workers. Mr. Jain invited the participants to collaborate and join hands with RMI in helping them achieve these objectives.

- Ms. Jyotsna Bhatnagar highlighted that companies should take responsibility for the communities where they operate. Companies need not only source responsibly, but also be cognizant of the indirect supply chain to ensure clean sourcing. It is imperative to skill the communities to help them match the pace of development which companies introduce. Only when a community is appropriately skilled – not just for company's needs, but also for sustainable development – will the economy will get a boost.

- Mr. Abhay Pathak spoke about the steps taken by Tata Motors to integrate sustainability in their supply chain. Tata developed its guidelines based on the global best practices. Speaking about challenges, Mr. Pathak said there is a lack of understanding of sustainability, especially when a company has various suppliers. Tata Motors is targeting to audit 200

of its old and crucial suppliers according to the exhaustive guidelines developed. Saying that sustainability is not a one-time affair, Mr. Pathak added that it is crucial to build the capacity of suppliers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Multi-stakeholder collaboration is the key to drive sustainable practices in supply chain. Remove child labour and ensure 100% legal and responsible sourcing by awareness building, advocacy campaigns, and influencing decision-makers.
- Build awareness and develop capacity of suppliers. Incentivise them to follow clean and responsible practices.
- Work towards consumer awareness about the circular economy. Policies for vehicles scrapping will ensure infrastructure for large scale recycling of cars.

Sustainability Education in B-Schools – the Way Forward



Moderator: **Ms. Sangeeta Mansur**, Associate, CRB

Panellists: **Professor Peter Lund-Thomsen**, Professor of Corporate Social Responsibility in Developing Countries, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, **Professor Linda Hancock**, Personal Chair in Public Policy, Deakin University, Australia, **Professor Ashish Aggarwal**, Chairman, Centre for Business Sustainability, IIM Lucknow

The session started with a reflection on the gap in the institutionalisation of sustainability as a subject in B-schools in India. One of the aspects highlighted was the lack of placements following a degree in business sustainability. Post-integration issues were also discussed, and questions were raised about the integration of sustainability practices within management strategies.

EMERGING POINTS

- Ms. Sangeeta Mansur set the stage by introducing the session as part of a peer-based platform where fellow professionals come together to inspire and share experiences. Sustainability education can be a movement, but it needs champions — therefore, said Ms. Mansur, there was a need for coming together and for a continued conversation. Collaboration is the key to learn from each other and engage informally.

- Professor Peter Thomson's focus was on 'post-integration crisis'. He spoke about how the integration of sustainability into academics can raise questions of ethical dilemma with an example of his university. One of their main donors was allegedly involved in a scam, which posed the difficult question — if their association should be broken. He agreed that aligning the interests of all the players in a supply chain is a difficult task, and can lead to termination of a fully functional partnership. It is essential to educate students about supply chains and how they work — collaborative programmes to understand the different ends of a supply chain could be helpful, he felt.

- Professor Linda Hancock spoke about integrating sustainability at a pan-university level and as a para-academic action, referring to two main projects where she had undertaken a sustainability audit for students and staff. She conducted travel pattern surveys, held intervention activities to minimise carbon footprints, educated everyone about emissions, published reports, and attempted to achieve sustainability via transportation. She also cited the example of setting up a

solar farm in the university. To get people involved, it is crucial to convince the top management, Professor Hancock opined.

- Professor Ashish Aggarwal, representing India's first IIM to have initiated an MBA course in business sustainability, spoke about post-integration challenges from the perspective of employment. He highlighted the dilemma faced by students when they join companies, as most companies consider sustainability as a stand-alone aspect which is not integrated with their business strategy; neither do they provide any platforms to innovate or contribute. He questioned the industry's preparedness to incorporate sustainability in their business models and, pondered about the moral implications of having such a programme, resonating Professor Thomson's view.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate and partner with institutions teaching business sustainability so that students can understand both ends of the supply chain.
- Ensure support from top management while driving sustainability projects within the university.
- Increase interaction and engagement with industry to introduce it to the benefits of sustainability practices.

Create Value and Reap Benefits of Doing Good – A Workshop on Aligning CSR with SDGs, NDCs and Help Develop More Responsible Brands

Moderator: **Mr. Pattabiraman Subramaniam**, Senior Program Manager, European Union

Panellists : **Mr. Arun Asthana**, Executive Director, CRB, **Mr. Anuj Bhatia**, Head, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), India Office, **Mr. Roberto F Salazar-Córdova**, Chief Executive Officer, CSP Inc. Tech, SCL/LATAM, **Mr. Shailendra Hegde**, Senior Vice President, Piramal Swasthya, **Ms. Arushi Nishank**, Convenor, Namami Gange Foundation, **Professor Dirk Matten**, Professor of Strategy, Hewlett-Packard Chair in Corporate Social Responsibility, Associate Dean Research, Schulich School of Business, York University, Canada

The session focused on live examples of CSR projects in India and Latin America contributing to SDGs. Understanding the complexities of SDGs is crucial to designing and implementing CSR projects. The session also stressed on the need for a louder Indian voice in the global discourse to recount the Indian success stories.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Arun Ashthana called on all those related to CSR to move on to the next level. Underlining that CSR creates social development and brand value, he suggested that there should be a course correction on how CSR is pushed. CSR should be topped up by sustainable business practices and should be viewed as a social investment.

- Mr. Anuj Bhatia shared his learnings from the field and highlighted the complexities involved. There is a lack of understanding of SDGs, preventing its integration in CSR strategy. According to Mr. Bhatia, impact measurement, focus on data to bring SDGs and CSR together, understanding capacities, breaking silos, and forging partnerships are some of the solutions for aligning CSR to SDGs.

- Mr. Roberto Salazar-Córdova offered four business cases from Latin America to solve ground-level issues by aligning to the SDGs and Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. According to him, there is a business case where value is created, and social good is done, thus making CSR alignment with SDGs possible. As achieving the NDCs requires work on a bigger scale, it can be done through cross partnerships, opined Mr. Salazar-Córdova.

- Mr. Shailendra Hegde started by saying that corporates are not all about making money; they also strive to achieve more. According to him, CSR partners and organisations should use their pool as risk capital to innovate, pilot, and create a platform that can be scaled up by the government. Mr. Hegde presented the example of Piramal Swasthya's programme on improving tribal maternal and child health using technology and creating scalable models. He also highlighted the role of district administrations in achieving SDGs.

- Ms. Arushi Nishank talked about scaling up CSR activities to tackle environmental issues faced by India. A task like cleaning the Ganga — huge as it is in volume — needs a multi-stakeholder engagement. She highlighted CSR programmes which are making meaningful social and environmental contribution. Pointing to the needs of measurement and feedback, aware-

ness building and partnerships, Ms. Nishank said she was happy that many organisations were using technology to contribute towards social schemes announced by the government.

- According to Professor Dirk Matten, creating value and reaping benefits of doing good in today's world is a collaborative agenda. According to him, the Indian economy is a great example to learn from, and there should be active Indian representation at global level. Professor Matten asserted the need for regulations in the business world, as it cannot be left to voluntary business intentions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- CSR should be topped up with responsible business practices to achieve SDGs.

- Understand SDGs before trying to align CSR to them.

- Arrest current negative practices in CSR.

- CSR should be used to create models which can be scaled up by the government.

- Share Indian success stories on social investments .

Making Effective and Trustworthy Sustainability Claims



Moderator: **Mr. Rijit Sengupta**, COO, CRB

Panellists: **Ms. Naomi Scott-Mearns**, Co-Lead of Consumer Information Programme, One Planet Network, **Mr. Naresh Tyagi**, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd., **Mr. Abhay Pathak**, Head –Sustainability, Tata Motors

One Planet, part of the advisory committee on consumer information has developed **Guidelines on Product Sustainability Information**. The guidelines aim to help supply chain actors, companies, and other stakeholders to make trustworthy and competent claims on how sustainable their products are. Launched in October 2017 at the World Economic Forum, it was inaugurated regionally at the CRB conference last year. The session brought together panellists from One Planet and the two Indian companies which road-tested the guidelines to share their experience.

EMERGING POINTS

- Ms. Naomi Scott-Mearns introduced One Planet as part of consumer information programme to achieve SDG 12: responsible consumption and production. The Guidelines on Product Sustainability Information were developed through a multi-stakeholder approach, inclusive of consumer perspectives to help traverse through a maze of claims and understand which are real and which are not. The guidelines are a roadmap to understand and communicate with those who are interested in knowing what sustainability looks like. They include five fundamental principles which companies must meet followed by five aspirational principles. She hopes that adopting them would lead to behaviour change and long-term impact on sustainability.

- Mr. Naresh Tyagi, representing Aditya Birla Textiles, said that the company wants to be seen as a benchmark of sustainability in the industry. He spoke about the need for embedding sustainability in business practices to mitigate risks and future-proofing business. As part of the road test, the company applied the guidelines to its product 'earth chinos.' Its life cycle has been given full transparency in the value chain and all information about the product is made accessible through NFC and bar codes. Though consumers appreciate the extra effort, the willingness to pay extra remains a sticking point, said Mr Tyagi.

- Tata Motors was the second Indian company which road-tested the consumer information guidelines. Mr. Abhay Pathak spoke about leveraging the Guidelines on Product Sustainability Information beyond Tata Motors' own comprehensive guidelines. They applied the Guidelines to support the claim "cutting edge battery technology reduces emissions by 30%". While applying them, a lot of questions popped up. It was realised that the correct information follows the logic of "improving fuel efficiency by 30% carbon is actually reducing 30% emissions." Agreeing that increasing consumer information will be beneficial, Mr. Pathak said the Guidelines helped in increasing transparency and enhanced information accuracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The products need to be cost-effective for people to adapt.
- Creating awareness among customers is important to achieve sustainable development.

Tackling Modern Slavery in India through Innovation, Collaboration and Best Practices



THOMSON REUTERS
FOUNDATION



Moderator: **Ms. Trishna Mohan Kripalani**, Legal Programme Manager for South Asia, TrustLaw, Thomson Reuters Foundation

Panellists: **Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury**, Programme Manager, Gender Justice and Human Rights, C&A Foundation, **Mr. Nishikant Jha**, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Shakti Vahini, **Dr. Tina Kuriakose**, Research and Development Specialist, International Justice Mission, **Mr. Rishi Sher Singh**, Associate Director, Twentyfifty Ltd., **Ms. Parvathi Madappa**, Programme Officer, Civedep India, Workers' Rights and Corporate Accountability

The session examined the term 'modern slavery' and discussed trafficking from various perspectives. The speakers felt migrants were more vulnerable to exploitation. Lack of enforcement of law and investigations and companies' low interest in the supply chain were the concerns that needed to be tackled to make India free from any form of slavery.

EMERGING POINTS

- Mr. Anindit Roy Chowdhury described the collaboration of Thomson Reuters Foundation with grassroots journalists to ensure accurate reporting of trafficking. The Foundation uses media to generate news from the ground, providing content to advocacy; vernacular journalists are trained to develop the stories.
- Mr. Nishikant Jha highlighted the need for proper investigation with strong prosecution to address human trafficking. Lack of resources prevents investigators from building the case from source to destination. Another issue plaguing proper prosecution is the lack of reflection of the relevant legal sections in the FIR. Mr. Jha hoped that the new anti-trafficking bill which is awaiting approval in the Rajya Sabha might be able to plug these gaps.
- Dr. Tina Kuriakose agreed with Mr. Jha that the slack in legal enforcement has increased crimes of forced labour. In India, stories of forced labour are not limited to non-payment but extend to infringement of human rights. Dr. Kuriakose warned that "if companies are investing without looking at the impacts, if enforcement of laws is not being examined, then we are giving with one hand through activities like CSR but taking back with the other."
- Ms. Parvathi Madappa narrated a story about the exploitation of migrants who end up in overcrowded and dingy hostels booked by their employers. Slavery — which can be described

using different words with same meaning — is the trap which these migrants fall into. Ms. Madappa urged that it was our collective responsibility to work together to abolish it.

- Mr. Rishi Sher Singh brought forth a new dimension of local businesses and supply chains. Recounting that there are shades of grey in modern slavery, he said that it remains hidden in the supply chain, which goes undetected during audits. He also referred to 'production-torture,' the torture faced of any kind during the production cycle of a product. Flouting of regulations and lack of information about the violation is another challenge. As a solution, he offered a cultural shift in companies' working style: incorporate good practices and follow due diligence for supply chain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate and link expertise to tackle the mammoth issue of modern-day slavery.
- Proper Law enforcement and investigation can help mitigate human trafficking.
- Be mindful of supply chains and ensure no violation of human rights takes place.

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