

SDG Charter Dialogue

Internationalizing Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)

Date: 31 October 2023

Time: 2:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m. IST

EVENT SUMMARY



SDG CHARTER VIRTUAL DIALOGUE

Date: 31st October 2023 (Tuesday)
Time: 2:00 – 4:30 p.m. (IST)



Norwegian Embassy
New Delhi

Bloomberg
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ABOUT

WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship Track II initiative organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades for making 'sustainable development' a globally shared goal. The only independently convened international Summit on sustainable development and environment, based in the Global South, WSDS strives to provide long-term solutions to benefit global communities by assembling the world's most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform. Over the years, the Summit series has witnessed the participation of 56 Heads of State and Government, 126 Ministers, 13 Nobel Laureates, 1932 Business Leaders, 3023 Speakers, and 39,483 Delegates.

ACT4EARTH

Act4Earth initiative was launched at the valedictory session of the 21st edition of WSDS. Building on the discussions of WSDS, this initiative seeks to continuously engage with stakeholders through research and dialogue. Act4Earth initiative has two components: COP Compass and SDG Charter. The COP Compass will seek to inspire and mobilize leadership at all levels for inclusive transitions through ambitious and informed policies and measures, enabling paradigm shifts towards meeting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris goals through mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation. SDG Charter will seek to identify gaps and suggest ways for strengthening and mainstreaming sustainability in policy agendas for enhanced environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

SDG CHARTER DIALOGUE

Considering the recently adopted G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration at the G20 Leaders' Summit and the upcoming COP28 to be held in Dubai, it is pertinent to discuss the interface between SDGs and climate action. This dialogue will seek to engage with experts on the topics of green budgeting and sustainable lifestyles to advance an action-driven agenda on sustainable development and climate-sensitive actions.

INTERNATIONALIZING LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT (LiFE)

India's Prime Minister introduced the idea of the 'Lifestyle for the Environment – LiFE Movement' during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021. LiFE became a major pillar of the Green Development Pact of the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration. What avenues exist apart from G20 for India to internationalize LiFE? According to Mission LiFE of NITI Aayog, along with policy and regulatory measures to address environmental issues, harnessing the power of collective action led by individuals is crucial to solving complex problems. Four categories of instruments become important regarding LiFE, sustainable consumption, and Just Green transitions. These include norm evolution through internationalization, policy instruments, market instruments, and social instruments. The questions for this session include: What are the avenues for internationalizing LiFE beyond India's G20 Presidency? How can LiFE be advanced through forums such as UNFCCC COPs and United Nations General Assembly? What will lead to internalizing approaches to drive policies and practices in the areas of policy instruments, market instruments, and social instruments?

Suggested Citation

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Disclaimer

The event summary is based on an auto-generated transcript. Some edits were made on grammar and spelling. The discussion can be accessed from YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hC6MGDim1rE>.

Welcome Address

- Dr Shailly Kedia (Senior Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute)
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Framing Presentation

- Dr Shailly Kedia (Senior Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute)
 - Shivangi Raj (Project Associate, The Energy and Resources Institute)
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Panel Discussion

Chair

- Mr R R Rashmi (Distinguished Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute)

Panellists

- Dr Sabyasachi Saha (Associate Professor, Research and Information System for Developing Countries)
 - Dr Sawayamprabha Das (Associate Vice President, Development Alternatives)
 - Dr Debolina Kundu (Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs)
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Vote of Thanks

- Ms Sonali Mathur (Manager, The Energy and Resources Institute)

Message 1: It is crucial that sustainable development and environmental goals are mainstreamed, and actions are taken at all levels, including by states, markets, and individuals.

Message 2: It is important to increase awareness amongst individuals and communities regarding the kind of environment that is needed for a safe life.

Message 3: India proposed Lifestyles as a part of the agenda and then eventually socialized the idea with other G20 members through negotiations. The high-level principles display the internationalization of lifestyles.

Message 4: The cultural dimension also plays a key role. This cultural dimension includes the realities of those areas, the people, the climatic conditions, food availability, the available resources, and the ways to connect livelihood to these resources. Livelihood is a very important component.

Message 5: Responsible consumption, circular economy, living in harmony with nature, sustainable resource management, coexistence, and cooperation are important tenets that should be adopted by all the towns and cities across the country.

“ SDG is a global goal, but unfortunately, there is no mechanism available to us in terms of tracking the progress of SDGs. We cannot measure the performance of communities, individuals, or our countries. So, how can we internationalize this and make it a part of the discussions in international platforms?

Mr R R Rashmi
Distinguished Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute

“ India can use the G20 High-Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development and the G20 New Delhi Declaration to further internationalize sustainable lifestyles through international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change processes.

Dr Shailly Kedia
Senior Fellow, The Energy and Resources Institute

“ We build integrity, ethics, and value systems in the transformation process because that way, you connect to the cultural underpinnings in every society.

Dr Sabyasachi Saha
Associate Professor, Research and Information System for Developing Countries

“ We should discuss the three Rs that connect us: recovery, regeneration, and reproduction.

Dr Sawayamprabha Das
Associate Vice President and Lead – Policy and Planning, Development Alternatives

“ We are urbanizing in an unplanned manner, so we need to take cognizance of this fact and try to bring about a lifestyle for the environment in a holistic manner.

Dr Debolina Kundu
Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs

Dr Shailly Kedia, The Energy and Resources Institute

Dr Kedia emphasized that we live in a time of Polycrisis when the world is confronted by the triple challenges of planetary crises, sliding back of key sustainable development goals, and the ever-growing conflict threatening world peace. Sustainable development and environmental goals must be mainstreamed, and actions must be taken at all levels, including by states, markets, and individuals. She pointed out that through its G20 Presidency, India furthered a green development pact to promote integrated, holistic, and balanced actions. To this end, green and climate-sensitive budgeting is a policy tool that can integrate various environmental dimensions into existing schemes and programmes. She said TERI takes pride in advocating for and working on this policy innovation over the years.

Dr Kedia also spoke about the G20 High-Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development that aim to promote interlinkages between development, environment, and climate agendas. She said a key question would be how India positions itself as a champion of this cause and further internationalizes it through avenues such as UNFCCC and UNGA processes. She informed that dialogue should seek to engage with experts on green and climate-sensitive budgeting and sustainable lifestyles, with the former being a largely policy instrument and the latter involving market and social instruments. She explained that these innovations further complement policies, markets, and actions by individuals and communities.

Mr R R Rashmi, The Energy and Resources Institute

Mr Rashmi explained that the issue involved taking the idea of sustainable Lifestyles forward at domestic and international levels. He pointed out that the question is how the idea can be incorporated into the Global Goals. He said that while India is one of the countries doing well for the sustainability of Lifestyles, the world is not on the same page. All must agree on the principles. Mr Rashmi asked if the framework highlighted through the presentation for measuring sustainability in terms of Lifestyles can be used to push this idea forward. He pointed out the importance of the involvement of international bodies.

Mr Rashmi stated that though SDG is a global goal, unfortunately, no mechanism is available to track their progress. Parameters do not exist that can measure the performance of communities or individuals of a country on SDG goals. Thus, the question remains: how to devise a method for the same while internationalizing sustainable lifestyles? He said this can be a part of the discussions at international platforms like the UNFCCC in the IPCC. He emphasized the importance of increasing awareness among individuals and communities regarding the kind of environment that is required. Lastly, the biggest question is if COP 28 will talk about Sustainable Lifestyles. There are a number of agendas for COP 28, but will anyone voice the significance of sustainable lifestyles is also a point of discussion?

Dr Sabyasachi Saha, Research and Information System for Developing Countries

Dr Saha stated that lifestyles have a very strong footprint on the planet, which has made a huge impact on the environment. He added that the Prime Minister of India's articulation on the subject has made much difference. He explained that India proposed Lifestyles as a part of the agenda and eventually socialized the idea with other G20 members through negotiations. The high-level principles display the internationalization of lifestyles through the G20 and the success of India's G20 Presidency in these very difficult geopolitical times. Dr Saha explained that the perspective of the Global South in the Life agenda is very important because the unequal burden of climate change will impact the development trajectories in the Global South. Citing the recent study by the Boston Institute, he stated that out of nine planetary boundaries, five have already been breached, and at present, biosphere integrity is at stake. Dr Saha opined that the Indian G20 presidency was a turning point in the discussion on accelerating SDGs. It has taken up issues of financing, the resource flows, issues from development to agriculture to health and how additional resources can be mobilized for a new action plan on the SDGs.

Dr Saha pointed out that the Indian G20 presidency was also quite effective in suggesting an action-oriented and solution-centric approach, which could be an entry point for strengthening the way for change. He provided examples of how digital technologies or low-cost financing could act as a lever of change. Coming to the G20 outcomes, he opined that the set of nine high-level principles on lifestyles for sustainable development needs to be absorbed as part of the functioning of international institutions, including international financial institutions. Dr Saha concluded by reflecting on the Indian Presidency of G20, through which India could deliver on integrating the development and the climate agenda together. India talked about local communities, local governments, and traditional knowledge systems apart from financing and international cooperation. According to Dr Saha, lifestyle is a generic sustainable development nobody objects to but is the centrality of systemic change. Hence, one needs to put the agency on the individual while enabling the individual systems to be reformed. Lastly, he spoke about the importance of upholding integrity, ethics, and value systems in the transformation process as it would help connect to every society's cultural underpinnings.

Dr Sawayamprabha Das, Development Alternatives

Dr Das began by emphasizing the importance of G20 9 High-Level Principles on Sustainable Lifestyles and the work that went behind getting the G7 countries and emerging economies to agree on a common agenda. She spoke about ancient wisdom and traditional knowledge that had been the framework for growth for many centuries, and gradually, the Industrial Revolution and shifts in consumption and production patterns led to an unsustainable and fast-moving culture. Dr Das explained the 3 Rs—recovery, regeneration, and reproduction should be paid attention to, which can bind people with the well-being of nature. An integrated and ecosystem-based approach also connects with a social dimension, leading to nudging actions at various levels, shifting mindsets, and shifting behaviours. She said political boundaries do not bind the environment; every action is interconnected and has global implications.

Livelihood is a very important component, and one needs to consider the results of imposing restrictive actions for sustainable development on the common masses. She gave an example of the shifting of technologies, which bores a lot of costs and would be easier for corporates or big companies but not for micro, small and medium enterprises. The strategy should be supported through policies, technology, and finances. Further, Dr Das informed that the Prime Minister of India, through the G20 Presidency, emphasized countries that have historically had lower emissions and sustainable lifestyles than many others cannot be pushed as aggressively as those countries that have had higher emissions and unsustainable lifestyles. Thus, the question is how to take care of those historical responsibilities of the West, which has enjoyed growth and development and is now putting pressure on emerging market economies to shift their practices. Dr Das opined that all of it is linked to the demand and supply side. The focus should not only be on the demand but also on what the people are asking for. The task is for parents, teachers, and mentors to nurture the next generation into making decisions that are sustainable in their workplace, home, markets, and elsewhere.

Dr Debolina Kundu, National Institute of Urban Affairs

Dr Kundu gave an informative presentation on Internationalizing LiFE. She said that India is urbanizing in an unplanned manner. Thus, it is important to take cognizance of this fact and try to bring about a lifestyle for the environment in a holistic manner. Dr Kundu stressed that most things pertain to the urban landscape because we are urbanizing. The Mission LiFE aims to encourage individuals to adopt a lifestyle that focuses on adopting simple acts in their daily lives, which impacts climate change. The mission also calls out to the global population to adopt environment-friendly behaviours, to be self-sustainable, and to focus on both sustainable consumption and sustainable production, which decides the product's shelf life. Further, she spoke about the concept of pro-planet people, a social network approach to engage communities and individuals to share a common commitment to adopt and promote environment-friendly lifestyles. She believed that this needs to be scaled across the globe.

The practices of sustainable lifestyles need to be implemented in the informal settlements, which need planning as, in India, most of the cities do not have a master plan. She said that the basic principles of life in

our cities and the motto of India's G20 Presidency, 'One Planet One Future', summarized the essence of life and pro-planet people while aiming for global wellness. Dr Kundu concluded by saying that one needs to focus on individual behaviours, co-create globally, and learn from the local good practices and local cultures. She added that LiFE is there in every aspect, whether rural or urban. These actions are linked with the efforts of every individual, and one needs to bring in behavioural change if India strives to become a place from where other countries can learn.
