CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development

20 YEARS OF CELEBRATING SUSTAINABILITY

Confederation of Indian Industry

20 GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

Reimagining Sustainability: Resilient. Regenerative. Responsible

2-3 September 2025 | New Delhi

Outcome Report

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Mission

To catalyse innovative ideas and solutions, in India, and globally, to enable business, and its stakeholders, in sustainable value creation.

Vision

Be a global leader in thought and action, to drive transformation, towards sustainable development.

Thank You Partners

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

LiFE Lifestyle for Environment

ITC Enduring Value

Godrej INDUSTRIES GROUP

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DCM SHRIRAM Growing with trust

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Contents

Shri Bhupender Yadav

Hon'ble Minister of Environment
Forest & Climate Change

Shri Nitin Gadkari

Hon'ble Minister of
Road Transport and Highways

Shri Piyush Goyal

Hon'ble Minister of
Commerce and Industry

Two Decades of CESD – A Visual Journey

Theme

Reimagining Sustainability: Resilient. Regenerative. Responsible

The world stands at a critical inflection point where intersecting crises-climate change, ecological degradation, and shifting geopolitical and trade dynamics-are challenging traditional models of growth and development.

The influence of these evolving global factors also offers a unique opportunity to countries to redefine sustainability not as a trade-off to growth, but as its foundation.

The 20th CII Global Sustainability Summit will lead a new global sustainability narrative-one that is grounded in resilience, regeneration of natural systems, and responsibility across stakeholders.

Tracks

Reimagining Growth with Sustainability as the Founding Stone

This track explored a fundamental rethinking of development and economic models-placing sustainability as the foundation of growth, and not a trade-off. It deliberated on development model wherein sustainability is inherently integrated as the bedrock of growth.

Conversations under this track looked at alternative policy frameworks and development strategies that embed sustainability into economic paradigms. Panellists shared approaches that can place sustainability as the foundation for the new world order and deliberated on scenarios that explore the systemic integration of ecological and social thresholds into macro-economic planning and national policies.

The Geo Trade Equation: Sustainability in a Fragmented Global Order

As geopolitical tensions and evolving trade regimes reshape the global economy, alter bilateral relations and realign the existing world order, there is a need to discuss the effect of these new interrelated dynamics and their subsequent influence on sustainable business practices, climate actions, resilient supply chains, and green investments. To build global resilience and foster responsible growth, the interplay of these geopolitical conditions is essential.

Sessions under this track explored trade and sustainability standards and diversifying resilient supply chains.

Future-Ready Transition for the Global South

For Global South's development strategy - safeguarding environmental concerns while prioritising economic growth is paramount. To contribute to an inclusive and equitable economy where communities have equitable access to technologies, finance, resources and livelihood opportunities, countries need to create an enabling environment.

India's unique policy architecture successfully balances developmental imperatives with ambitious sustainability goals. By sharing this model of growth with other emerging countries, India's strategies can become a blueprint for Global South's transition journey.

Deliberations under the track looked at India's role and strategic mechanisms for fostering multilateral cooperations. It also explored community-driven and industry-led solutions that have contributed to India's leadership in the Global South.

Conversations spread over two days focussed on the emerging transition drivers and focus on bridging the transition gaps by spotlighting innovative financial instruments, skilling initiatives and technology transfer strategies.

Shared Responsibility towards Nature Climate Commons

Across countries, climate change and anthropogenic activities are threatening natural ecosystems, water availability and bio-resources, and posing significant risks to planetary health, human wellbeing, economic stability and global sustainability. Each ecosystem presents a unique set of trials and prospects, necessitating design of differentiated programs & schemes and specially tailored sustainability solutions for diverse regions, communities, and age groups.

On multilateral platforms, India has continued to emphasise the role of stakeholders, traditional knowledge, nature-based solutions, and resilient models to unlock the co-benefits for biodiversity, water security, and resilience.

Through dialogues and multistakeholder panel discussions, the track focussed on integrated approaches to conserve and restore natural ecosystems while addressing climate vulnerabilities by leveraging collaborative actions that revolve around local beliefs & practices.

Through conversations and sharing of best practices, stakeholders were given an opportunity to reimagine the possibilities from the biodiversity-climate-water nexus and understand the emerging pathways for fast-tracking economic growth, social value and resource security.

Regenerative Industry & Circular Economies

Globally, natural resources are under strain due to increased level of extraction, which has grown three-fold in just half a century. With consumption level expected to increase at an unprecedented rate, a global shift towards industrial transformation and circular economy is critical. Tall needles point towards the need for a policy framework that minimises environmental harm and actively restores resources.

The track focussed on new approaches that can catalyse industrial transformation and strengthen circular economies. Conversations under the track focussed on policy innovations and circular economy models that can facilitate decoupling growth from resource depletion while enhancing competitiveness and industrial resilience.

Agenda

Day 1, Tuesday, 2 September 2025		
0830-0930 hrs	Registration	
0930-1030 hrs	Opening Plenary: Redrawing the Contours of a Sustainable World	
1100-1130 hrs	Advancing Climate Action @COP30 and Beyond	Reimagining Sustainability Over the Next Decade
1130- 1230 hrs	Special Plenary Competitive & Sustainable: Pillars of India's Trade Transformation	
1230-1330 hrs	Networking Lunch	
1330-1430 hrs	From Silos to Systems: Unleashing the Power of Energy-Water Nexus	
1430-1530 hrs	Adaptation in Action: Business Case for a Resilient Future	Revalue, Redesign, Regenerate: The Circular Economy Pathway
1530-1630 hrs	Nature-Positive Growth: Embedding Ecology into Corporate Strategy	Navigating Climate Finance in the Global South
1630-1730 hrs	Turning Barriers into Bridges for a Climate-Ready Global South	
1730-1830 hrs	Special Plenary Session Driving India Forward: Green Mobility, Infrastructure, and Innovation	
1830-1915 hrs	Integrating Sustainability in Value Chains	

Day 2, Wednesday, 3 September 2025		
1000-1100 hrs	From Ambition to Action: Building the Ecosystem for Business Sustainability	
1115-1200hrs	Building Resilience: Supply Chains for a Changing World	Rewiring Circularity in the Electronics and Technology sector
1200-1300 hrs	Future of Trade: Decoding the Sustainability Puzzle	Rooted in Change: Celebrating Two Decades of Women-Led Development
1300-1400 hrs	Networking Lunch	
1400-1500 hrs	Local Roots, Global Goals: Subnational Pathway for a Sustainable Future	Collaboratively Actioning Circularity in Plastic Packaging
1500-1545 hrs	Breathing Better: Solutions for Clean Air	NextGen Greenpreneurs: Youth-Led Startups Transforming the Green Economy
1545-1630 hrs	Resilient Urban Infrastructure	
1630-1700 hrs	Reimagining Sustainability: The Power of Purposeful Partnerships	

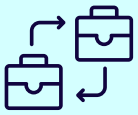
Side Events

Special Breakfast Session: Conversations & Connections

Annual Stakeholder meet for Eco Edge

Closed Door CEO Roundtable on Physical Risk in Value Chains

B2B



Roundtable: Harnessing Data & Technology for Clean Air in Cities & Industries

Exhibition

Roundtable: Financing Transition to Zero Emission Vehicular Fleets

Visual display of the CII CESD journey

CII IBBI & TNFD - Roundtable on Emerging trends in Nature-related Risk & Opportunity Management

Glimpses from the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit

Glimpses from the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit

Executive Summary

The CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit held on 2 - 3 September 2025 in New Delhi, saw dialogues under the theme 'Reimagining Sustainability: Resilient. Regenerative. Responsible'. Sessions under five tracks focussed on a forward-looking roadmap that redefines sustainability, positioning it not as a trade-off to growth but as the very foundation upon which lasting, inclusive development must be built.

Through industry-led, inclusive, and innovation-driven approaches, panellists evaluated the enablers that can position India as a global leader and solution-provider for Global South's advancement in sustainable and equitable development.

The deliberations spanning two days brought together global & national leaders, policymakers, sustainability experts, civil society and innovators to co-create a new global sustainability narrative that's grounded in economic & environmental resilience, strengthens regeneration of natural systems, and drives prosperity on shared responsibility.

The Summit coincided with the 20th anniversary celebrations of the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD). It was marked by the launch of the CII Sustainability Mascot ঘRaa by Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The mascot embodies the Centre's commitment to nurturing a new generation of responsible businesses and mindful consumers, deeply conscious of their sustainability footprints and dedicated to protecting our shared global commons.

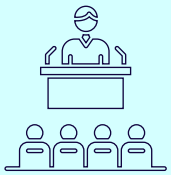
For the last two decades, CESD has been at the forefront of integrating sustainability into the core of Indian business practices and elevating sustainable practices within the collective consciousness of Industry. Launched in 2006 as a platform to promote sustainable transformation, the Institution has since grown into a comprehensive ecosystem creator for sustainable development.

By fostering deeper engagements with the Government, facilitating cross-sectoral partnerships with Industry, and enabling multi-stakeholder collaborations, CESD advances India's commitment to a cleaner, greener, and more inclusive future.

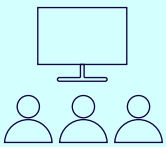
The Centre continues to play a key role in shaping India's sustainability journey and demonstrates to the world how policies and solutions from emerging economies can chart inclusive, responsible, and low-carbon growth pathways.

Summit Highlights

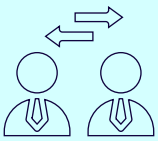
100+
Global & National Speakers



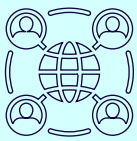
03
High-level Ministerial Plenaries



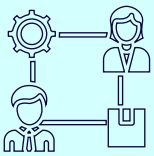
30
Interactive & Insightful Sessions



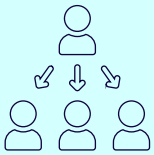
200+
B2B Meetings



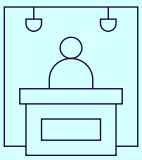
16+
Hours of Networking



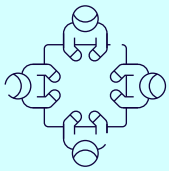
23
Value Chain Partners Awarded with Eco Edge Certificate



600+
Delegates

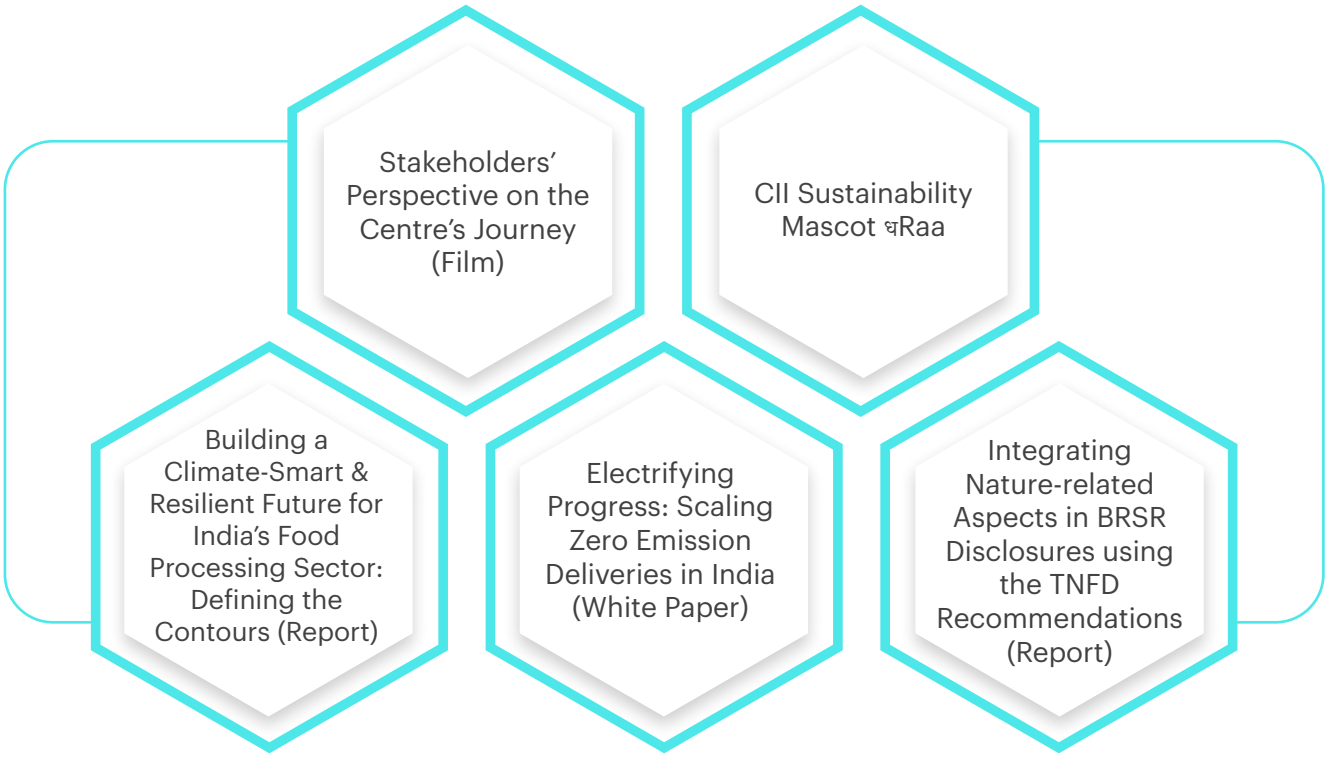


8+
Exhibitors displayed Sustainability solutions



6
Closed door Roundtables

New Initiatives and Launches



Participants' Profile

30%
Women Representation

10
Nationalities Represented

40+
Startups Represented

Insights from the Summit and Key Discussions

- Make sustainability the foundation of growth by adopting economy-wide solutions such as nature-positive actions, circular economy models, green manufacturing and encouraging behaviour change.
- Take forward Indian Industry's sustainable business practices and innovations to businesses and their stakeholders worldwide, by fostering a new corp of manufacturers, MSMEs & consumers who are aware, responsible and mindful of their sustainability footprint and respectful of our shared global commons.
- Embrace the principles of responsible competitiveness by using resources conscientiously and by nourishing and preserving them for future use.
- Develop a strategic roadmap for green products that ensures economic viability, leverages proven technologies, utilises recycled materials efficiently, and integrates marketability considerations for such products.
- Build a roadmap for carbon neutrality by 2070 through sector-specific strategies that integrates policies, technologies, skill development, and product innovation to realise the vision of a carbon-neutral India.
- Invest in R&D and innovation by harnessing solutions from startup and hackathons. Develop tools to address climate change and extreme weather challenges.
- Adopt innovative sustainable approaches to mitigate environmental impacts, enhance economic competitiveness and generate fresh opportunities for employment, livelihood and improving quality of life.
- Strengthen India's adaptive capacity by proactively reducing vulnerabilities, building resilient economies and unlock efficiency through decarbonization and pioneer circular economy solutions that balance prosperity with responsibility.
- Embed sustainability as a lifestyle choice by restoring and renewing natural systems and by practicing responsible adaptation grounded in accountability and respect for both people and the planet.
- Reimagine business models by establishing transparent and accountable mechanisms; promoting responsible, holistic and forward-looking practices across industries; fostering regeneration by reassessing manufacturing processes & supply chains and transforming consumption patterns to transition toward a regenerative economy.

Dignitaries' Speak

Sustainability should not be considered as a goal or an objective that has to be achieved. It is a lifestyle choice - an evolving commitment to be resilient by withstanding and adapting to uncertainties of an ever-changing world.

Shri Bhupender Yadav

Hon'ble Minister of Environment
Forest and Climate Change

Economy, ecology, and environment must move together as the three pillars of India's growth journey. Our aim is to make every sector sustainable, ensuring that development is aligned with both ecological balance and economic opportunity.

Shri Nitin Gadkari

Hon'ble Minister of
Road Transport and Highways

With the collective commitment and mindset, with the effort of 1.4 billion people meeting the aspirations of a young India, one of the youngest countries in the world, I'm very confident that India's future is safe, secure, resilient, and rests on the pillar of sustainability and high-quality cost competitiveness.

Shri Piyush Goyal

Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry

President Lula and Prime Minister Modi believe in multilateralism which has served developing nations in many ways. This is an important year, as countries will be deciding on their objectives for the next five years.

H.E. Ambassador André Aranha Corrêa do Lago

COP30 President and Former Brazilian Ambassador to India
Government of Brazil

Sustainability has to be embedded in corporate strategy. It is a part and parcel of every strategy, action and thought enterprises make; it cannot be just a bolt-on. Only then will we get the dramatic change that is required to solve the problems that we face.

Sanjiv Puri

Immediate Past President, CII
Chairman, CII-ITC CESD and
Chairman & MD
ITC Ltd

Corporates should take the central role in sustainability but at the same time, Government can galvanize and catalyze it. For example, for the star rated products, if these can be integrated with the GEM portal, we can create massive demand, leading to a huge push for green and sustainable products.

R Mukundan

President Designate, CII and
MD & CEO
Tata Chemicals Ltd

With continued collaboration, we will see stronger improvements. Industry's adoption of new technologies & sustainable practices will play a decisive role. Together, we do have the power to make a difference and enable actions that reinforce India's commitment to a cleaner, greener, and inclusive future.

Chandrajit Banerjee

Director General
CII

Our responsibility is clear: to bring our best ideas, forge stronger collaborations and push sustainability forward. The paths may differ, but the destination is the same - a resilient, sustainable future.

Peter Bakker

President & CEO
WBCSD

Climate risks are opportunities, such as risk management strategies, resilience for investors and product innovation. India can lead the world in innovating nature-based products such as packaging products from seaweeds.

Tony Goldner

CEO
TNFD

In South East Asia, with respect to fast expanding economies, climate-readiness must be a part of our strategy from the beginning. ASEAN region is growing in renewable energy. Through regional cooperations, we must leave no country behind.

Prof Tetsuya Watanabe

President
ERIA

Responsible sourcing is about relationships. Strong relationships help in recognizing issues, mitigating risks, and creating solutions. In supply chains, it translates to long-term partnerships between buyers & suppliers.

Linda Kromjong

President
amfori

Green growth needs green capital. India can explore a dedicated institution to provide equity for climate projects-building investor trust, mobilizing FDI, and powering sustainable infrastructure.

Shaun Kingsbury CBE

Co-Founding Partner and
Co-Chief Investment Officer
Just Climate

Investment isn't just capital — it's timing, partners, purpose, and performance. India shies away from over-committing, yet over-performs, demonstrating how strategic investment drives real development.

Dr Balakrishna Pisupati

Country Head
UNEP India

If we do good water management, practice conservation & recycling and use water optimally, it is my belief that India can get rid of its water problem. At Godrej, we are 12X water positive, and we will be Net Zero on Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2035.

Nadir Godrej

Chairman and MD
Godrej Industries Ltd and Chairman
Godrej Agrovet Ltd

We need to look at two aspects that can help in scaling adaptation efforts so that we build the necessary resilience among businesses and value chains. The first is that there has to be a business case for it. The second aspect is to build collaborations across different types of stakeholders.

S Sivakumar

Group Head- Agri & IT Businesses
ITC Ltd

Our goal is to develop solutions that are both economically viable and environmentally sustainable. Renewable energy is a prime example—it makes sense both commercially and ecologically.

Jayant Acharya

Joint MD & CEO
JSW Steel Ltd

Overview of the Deliberations

Opening Plenary – Redrawing the Contours of a Sustainable World

Panellists

Shri Bhupender Yadav
Hon'ble Minister for Environment,
Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

Sanjiv Puri
Immediate Past President, CII
Chairman, CII-ITC CESD
and Chairman & MD
ITC Limited

Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry

As the world faces critical challenges from climate change, resource depletion, and evolving trade dynamics, countries are compelled to rethink conventional growth models and realign their development priorities.

In this context, the opening session of the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit spotlighted the urgent need to place sustainability at the core of long-term economic strategy. The session "Redrawing the Contours of a Sustainable World" emphasised India's evolving sustainability landscape and brought to light the shifts needed in governance, innovation, and investment. The dialogues also focussed on collective stakeholder strategies that can help scale impactful solutions and strengthen the role of sustainability in India's economic and social fabric.

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India shared his concerns while delivering the keynote address. Talking about growing global challenges, he stressed that to regain the global growth momentum, countries need to re-engineer a new growth model that supports healthier, inclusive, and resilient growth, integrate developmental priorities, and make sustainability central to policy framework. "Countries need to make sustainability foundational to growth by embracing economy-wide solutions that encompass circular economy models, nature-positive actions, green manufacturing, and advancing behaviour change for responsible practices," he highlighted.

He pointed out that the world needs to look at India's model of growth as it is the only country that has successfully adapted sustainable growth across the policy landscape through targeted scheme implementation, infrastructure investment, local commitment and tangible achievements on multilateral commitments. With an expanding leadership in sustainability and with a growth rate of 7%, India can show to the world that economic prosperity and sustainability can go hand-in-hand.

Talking about India's robust policy framework and initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive growth such as the National Hydrogen Mission, Environment Audit Rules 2025, Green Credit Programme, and National Critical Mineral Mission, the Minister said, "India's journey toward a sustainable future is anchored on the pillars of environmental balance, economic resilience, and social equity. Under the visionary leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi, we are taking decisive steps to advance this mission. These reforms reflect India's unwavering commitment to harmonising development and environmental sustainability".

The CII Sustainability Mascot घRaa was unveiled by the Minister at the session. The mascot embodies CII's commitment to nurturing a new generation of responsible manufacturers and mindful consumers - deeply conscious of their sustainability footprints and dedicated to protecting the shared global commons.

Echoing his thoughts, Sanjiv Puri, Immediate Past President, CII, Chairman, CII-ITC CESD and Chairman & MD, ITC Ltd said that sustainability cannot be just about carbon footprints. "We have to traverse to a regenerative economy; reimagine the way supply chains are formulated; products are manufactured; the way we use the products and distribute them. We have to reimagine business models completely", he pointed, while stressing that only then can India bring about the dramatic change that is required to solve the problems that we face. He further added that it is important to realize that sustainability is everybody's business. "It has to be an inclusive process, and sustainable lifestyle is a prerequisite for sustainable growth," he said.

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII encouraged businesses to adopt ESG frameworks and highlighted the importance of capacity building, technology adoption, and policy advocacy to support India's green transition. The session concluded with a call to all stakeholders to work collectively towards a resilient and sustainable future.

Key Takeaways

- Sustainability is now central to business strategy, not just a compliance issue. Businesses must embed sustainability into their core operations through innovation, circular economy models, and regenerative practices.
- Collaboration between Government, Industry, and civil society is critical to accelerate India's green transition and meet climate goals.
- The session called for scaling up green technologies, improving climate finance mechanisms, and fostering innovation to meet sustainability targets.

https://youtu.be/mZSKJcKGMus

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII; Shri Bhupender Yadav, Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India and Sanjiv Puri, Immediate Past President, CII, Chairman, CII-ITC CESD, Chairman & Managing Director, ITC Ltd.

Special Plenary – Competitive & Sustainable: Pillars of India's Trade Transformation

Panellists

Shri Piyush Goyal
Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry
Government of India

Sanjiv Puri
Immediate Past President, CII
Chairman, CII-ITC CESD
and Chairman & MD
ITC Limited

R Mukundan
President Designate, CII, and
Managing Director & CEO
Tata Chemicals Ltd

Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry

Global trade is transforming as sustainability and climate action become central to economic progress and geopolitical influence. Nations aim to enhance climate action, build resilience, and adopt sustainable innovations that define true competitiveness.

India leads this shift, blending trade ambition with a strong commitment to circularity, climate resilience, and inclusive growth. Through bold policies, green investments, and strategic partnerships, India is forging a future where economic success and sustainability advance hand in hand. The special plenary discussed the new trade landscape and the vital synergy between sustainability, climate goals, and competitiveness.

Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industry, Government of India, Shri Piyush Goyal delivered a compelling address outlining India's strategic trade priorities, reaffirming the Government's commitment to facilitating ease of doing business, enhancing export competitiveness, and promoting sustainable manufacturing. He emphasised recent policy reforms focused on reducing carbon footprints, incentivising renewable energy adoption, and strengthening MSMEs. Shri Goyal encouraged Industry leaders to harness India's demographic dividend and technological capabilities to lead the global sustainability movement.

Speaking to a global audience, Shri Goyal highlighted India's longstanding respect for nature and its commitment to intergenerational equity. He stated that India believes in protecting natural resources to ensure they continue serving future generations. He also noted that India has a unique opportunity to lead the world in sustainability. Stressing the importance of innovation, he called for nationwide startup initiatives and hackathons to develop solutions for climate change-induced extreme weather events.

R Mukundan, President Designate of CII and Managing Director & CEO of Tata Chemicals Ltd, praised India's leadership in environmental transparency. He remarked that India is the only country to make environmental parameters publicly accessible, which has encouraged better performance across industries. He emphasised the need for Indian businesses to adopt global ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) standards and asserted that India's trade transformation must be driven by digitalization, decarbonization, and skill development. He also advocated for stronger collaboration between Industry and Government to build resilient supply chains and promote green technologies.

Sanjiv Puri underscored the importance of embedding sustainability into India's trade architecture. He emphasised the role of Industry in driving innovation, circularity, and inclusive growth. Puri argued that competitiveness must be redefined to include environmental stewardship and social responsibility, positioning sustainability as a core business strategy rather than a peripheral concern.

L-R: Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII; Sanjiv Puri, Immediate Past President, CII, Chairman, CII-ITC CESD, Chairman & Managing Director, ITC Ltd.; Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and R Mukundan, President Designate, CII, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Tata Chemicals Ltd.

Key Takeaways

- Transition from compliance-led to value-driven sustainability, making ESG performance a global differentiator.
- Align industrial policy with environmental goals to ensure trade growth does not harm ecological balance.
- Invest in clean technologies, digital platforms, and circular economy models to future-proof trade.
- Engage in multilateral forums to shape global sustainability standards and advocate for equitable climate finance.

Special Plenary – Driving India Forward: Green Mobility, Infrastructure, and Innovation

Panellists

Shri Nitin Gadkari
Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport and Highways
Government of India

Sanjiv Puri
Immediate Past President, CII
Chairman, CII-ITC CESD
and Chairman & MD
ITC Limited

Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry

India is at the forefront of reimagining infrastructure through sustainability and resilience. From advancing sustainable road development to promoting alternative fuels, renewable energy in transport, and circular economy principles, the country is setting ambitious benchmarks for green growth. With a strong focus on future-ready mobility solutions—including clean transport systems and low-emission technologies—India is embedding sustainability at the core of development. The vision is to build low-carbon, resource-efficient, and inclusive infrastructure systems that have the potential to serve as a global model of resilience in the face of climate challenges.

The special plenary session focused on how such transformative approaches not only mitigate environmental impacts but also enhance economic competitiveness, generate new opportunities for innovation, and improve citizens' quality of life.

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India delivered a compelling special address outlining the Government's vision for green mobility. He spoke about the transformative potential of alternative fuels such as ethanol, methanol, and bio-CNG, and reiterated the ministry's focus on expanding electric vehicle infrastructure. Shri Gadkari also stressed the importance of reducing logistics costs and improving road safety, while encouraging public-private partnerships to drive innovation and investment in sustainable transport systems.

This session, titled "Driving India Forward: Green Mobility, Infrastructure, and Innovation," brought together key voices from Government and Industry to discuss India's sustainable development roadmap, with a focus on transportation, infrastructure, and industrial innovation.

The plenary opened with remarks from Sanjiv Puri, who emphasised the critical role of industry in accelerating India's green transition. Puri highlighted the importance of integrating circular economy principles, decarbonization strategies, and digital innovation to build resilient infrastructure and foster inclusive growth.

He emphasised that sustainable progress requires cooperation, coordination, and support from Industry, particularly in addressing climate change and ensuring a clean environment. "If India aspires to be among the world's top three economies, the four pillars 'water, power, transport and communication' will play a decisive role in driving employment, reducing poverty, and ensuring inclusive development," he suggested.

The session concluded with a moderated discussion led by Chandrajit Banerjee who facilitated an engaging dialogue between the speakers and the audience. The conversation explored actionable strategies for scaling green technologies, enhancing policy frameworks, and fostering Industry-Government collaboration. The speakers agreed that India's path to net-zero emissions requires bold leadership, technological agility, and a shared commitment to sustainability across sectors.

Key Takeaways

- Green mobility is central to India's infrastructure strategy, with a strong push for alternative fuels and EV adoption.
- Industry must lead with innovation and sustainability, integrating circular economy and digital tools to future-proof operations.
- Public-private partnerships are vital for scaling green infrastructure and reducing logistics costs.
- Policy support and collaborative platforms like CII play a crucial role in aligning national goals with Industry capabilities.

https://youtu.be/tdCzO1GebLg

Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII; Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India and Sanjiv Puri, Immediate Past President, CII, Chairman, CII-ITC CESD, Chairman & Managing Director, ITC Ltd.

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Grundfos India remains committed to supporting the country's climate goals by decarbonising water and energy use and driving sustainable impact at scale.

After all, when it comes to managing the world's most precious resource, efficiency isn't just a choice — it's a responsibility.

*Source: BE and IEA

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Advancing Climate Action @ COP 30 and Beyond

Introductory Remarks

Chandrajit Banerjee
Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry

Panellists

H.E. Ambassador André Aranha Corrêa do Lago
President, COP 30 and
Former Ambassador to India

H.E. Dr Ana Toni
CEO, COP30 and
Former National Secretary for Climate Change,
Brazilian Ministry of Environment and
Climate Change

This year marks a pivotal moment for the Paris Accord, as countries and parties are set to decide on a new five-year action plan and implementation agenda. After a decade of negotiations and deliberations, COP30 is expected to move from dialogue to delivery—bringing actionable solutions to long-standing climate discussions.

The outcomes of COP28 in Dubai, documented in the Global Stocktake and subsequently amended by parties, have been consolidated into the new Action Agenda. This framework integrates cross-cutting components such as climate finance, positioning COP30 to be recognised as the 'COP of Solutions'.

Agreed upon by 198 countries, the Global Stocktake organises its priorities across six thematic axes and thirty key objectives:

- Transitioning energy, industry, and transport.
- Stewarding forests, oceans, and biodiversity.
- Transforming agriculture and food systems.
- Building resilience for cities, infrastructure, and water.
- Fostering human and social development.
- Advancing cross-cutting enablers such as finance, technology, and capacity building.

The new five-year Action Agenda seeks to consolidate progress from the Global Stocktake, strengthen coordination across existing initiatives, deepen stakeholder participation - including from the private sector - and enhance transparency and accountability in implementation.

Given that climate change influences every aspect of socio-economic life, climate action must extend beyond COP negotiations. Continuous collaboration, shared responsibility, and inclusive decision-making are essential to translate commitments into tangible outcomes.

Ana Toni, CEO, COP 30 & Former National Secretary for Climate Change, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil; André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, President, COP 30 and Former Ambassador to India, Government of Brazil and Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII

"COP30 is time for action. Our action agenda is designed to reinforce multilateralism, accelerate implementation, and connect climate action to real lives.

H.E. Dr Ana Toni

Reimagining Sustainability Over the Next Decade

Moderator

Peter Bakker
President and CEO
World Business Council for Sustainable Development

Panellists

Jayant Acharya
Joint Managing Director & CEO
JSW Steel Limited

S Sivakumar
Group Head of Agri and IT Businesses
ITC Limited

Business strategies are becoming more complex with new dynamics around geopolitics, trade, economic uncertainty, and Artificial Intelligence. The dialogue noted that sustainability has evolved from being seen as a constraint on growth to being embraced as a driver of competitiveness and resilient progress. Being the value drivers of sustainability in the evolving world scenario, business leaders need to assess physical risk posed by climate change in the supply chain as well to develop the emission reduction integrated in the corporate strategy from the supplier's point of view.

Solutions

1. Inclusivity and trusteeship across the broader value chain.
2. Responsible stewardship of water resources through effective watershed and demand-side management, combined with digital public infrastructure for efficient water use.
3. Utilising cutting-edge technology to provide farmers with real-time weather updates for immediate response.
4. Studying micro-regional impacts of weather on crop phenology
5. Developing toolkits for farmers to mitigate the challenges posed by changing weather patterns.
6. Engaging with start-ups on improving delivery mechanism to enhance farmers' accessibility.
7. Integration of hydrogen energy and Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS) technologies represents a promising path toward a sustainable future.
8. Low-carbon steel offers a viable solution to align with the sustainability-focused corporate strategy.
9. Mindful consumption, driven by energy and process efficiency, along with a shift toward renewable energy, will be central to decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors.

Jayant Acharya, Joint Managing Director & CEO, JSW Steel Limited; Peter Bakker, President and CEO, WBCSD and S Sivakumar, Group Head of Agri and IT Businesses, ITC Limited India

From Silos to Systems: Unleashing the Power of Energy–Water Nexus

Moderator

Usha Subramaniam
Country President
Grundfos

Panellists

Shombi Sharp
UN Resident Coordinator India

Rinika Grover
Global Head Sustainability and CSR
Apollo Tyres

Santosh Kumar Singh
Chief Sustainability Officer
Larsen & Toubro Limited

Gauri Jauhar
Executive Director, Global Energy Transitions & Clean Tech Consulting
S&P Global

Water and energy resources are closely interconnected, yet sustainability policies often address them separately. This session highlighted the importance of managing energy and water as an integrated system to build a resilient, low-carbon future. Discussions emphasised strategies for optimising resources, leveraging technology, and implementing policies to enhance resilience across industries, cities, and infrastructure.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** The financial challenges arise from limited funding mechanisms, high initial investment costs, and fragmented budgeting across sectors. Integrated energy–water projects often require substantial capital for infrastructure, technology adoption, and system modernisation, which can deter both public and private investment. Additionally, financial planning in the two sectors is usually conducted separately, making it difficult to allocate resources for joint initiatives.
2. **Social:** The social challenges arise primarily from lack of access, governance gaps, and limited public awareness. Rural and marginalised populations are particularly vulnerable, as they face higher risks of resource scarcity and may lack representation in decision-making.
3. **Environmental:** Underground water levels are declining and more energy is required for their extraction, creating interconnected vicious loops and referring to the water energy nexus. Water derives energy cost, and energy derives water access. Globally, 10% of freshwater usage is dedicated to the Energy sector. By 2030, India's freshwater demand will be 52 trillion litres out of which 22% will be dedicated to energy usage.
4. **Technological:** While commitments to emission reduction and net-zero targets emphasise the use of advanced technologies, it is important to recognise that these technologies are energy-intensive, and their commercial viability needs careful assessment. The rapid and unexpected growth of AI can be seen as a contributing factor to rising water and energy demands.

Solutions

1. Integrated planning of water and energy systems can reduce energy consumption by at least 30%, thereby improving performance efficiency in both buildings and industries.
2. AI models, when trained through machine learning, can detect leakages in water and energy supply systems within a defined timeframe, enabling timely interventions and resulting in significant energy and cost savings.
3. India's ambitious commitments under the Panchamrit Goals can be achieved through targeted investments, effective policy implementation, clear guidelines, and blended finance mechanisms. The industrial and private sectors can also create green jobs to attract further investments.
4. Life Cycle Cost (LCC) analysis serves as a key metric for identifying energy, water, and operational costs. Although the approach can be complex, it provides valuable insights for optimising long-term resource efficiency and sustainability.

5. Sustainable materials should be a key criterion in building design to reduce water, energy, and emission footprints. Integrating these considerations can significantly improve project planning and the bidding process.

L to R: Santosh Kumar Singh, Chief Sustainability Officer, Larsen & Toubro Limited; Gauri Jauhar, Executive Director, Global Energy Transitions & Clean Tech Consulting, S&P Global; Usha Subramaniam, Country President, Grundfos; Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator India and Rinika Grover, Global Head Sustainability and CSR, Apollo Tyres

> Water is life, but without energy it cannot flow; energy drives development, but without water it cannot exist. Truly, they are two sides of the same coin.
>
> **Shombi Sharp**

Adaptation in Action: Business Case for a Resilient Future

Moderator

S Sivakumar
Group Head - Agri & IT Businesses
ITC Limited

Panellists

Aman Hans
Resident Fellow
NITI Aayog

Ankit Todi
Chief Sustainability Officer
Mahindra Group

George M Menezes
Advisor – Sustainability
Godrej Enterprises Group

Dr Upasna Sharma
Associate Professor at the
School of Public Policy
IIT- Delhi

The session discussed the need for focused action towards building adaptive capacity and resilience for the Industry. Deliberations in the session revolved around global regulatory challenges, lack of awareness; gap in adaptation finance, the role of the private sector in solving these issues and the need to recognise business case with long-term planning. The panellists also highlighted the need for early intervention and action towards building climate resilience and how collective action and collaboration can amplify desirable impact from adaptive measures.

Challenges

1. **Regulatory:** The primary need is quantification of cost saving which measures the benefit of investing in adaptation, using a composite tool. A comprehensive, open-access access and digital database (managed by NDMA, NIDM, MoEFCC, ISRO, IMD, etc.), will help standardise assessments and avoid risks of working in silos. These quantifications need to be in the form of Net Present Value (NPV) computation, using avoided losses as cost savings. Beyond legal guidelines and regulations, the Government needs to invest in forecasting models.

2. **Financial:** The cost of inaction far outweighs the cost incurred in building resilience. Given climate change's potential impact on the whole economy, businesses should see climate risk from an existential perspective, instead of a Return on Capital (RoC) perspective, making it a top priority.

3. **Environment:** Since 80% of all districts in the country face some kind of climate risk, core business activities will be affected by both acute and chronic risks, with both short and long-term consequences. Most impacts, like heat, are going to be sector-agnostic in their impact.

4. **Social:** The lack of awareness of specific risks in different demographics affects the quality of response. Since adaptation is often localised, vulnerability assessments are needed to guide policies aimed at scaling up action.

Solutions

1. Climate change is indeed an existential issue and needs to be recognised more broadly, including as a material risk for businesses. The focus should be on creating awareness and capacity building at various levels- in business planning, policy making at the central level and within line departments and at local government levels.

2. When disaster preparedness and response are the goal, the most vulnerable communities need to be in focus. Similarly, for industries, the equivalent are small suppliers and vendors in the value chain that deal with higher geographical/market or other economic risks from climate impacts. The natural ecosystems that we depend on need restoration and nurturing from recurrent extreme climate events.

3. For adaptation and resilience measures to be significantly scaled up, businesses, along with local government agencies and academia, need to be involved and collaboration. Climate response cannot be restricted to carbon abatement alone. More cognizance, more capacity and robust implementation are necessary components.

4. Investment in building climate resilience and adaptive capacity presents a strong business case and needs to be recognised better.

5. Environmental Impact assessments (EIA) need to include physical climate risk assessment while increasing awareness on solutions to address them.

6. While some industries have taken preventative action for their sites and key supply chain locations, variation in vulnerabilities across the country can be a hindrance. Appropriate mandates need to be enforced where necessary, to safeguard infrastructure, including retrofitting efforts. For improving adaptability, instead of a reactionary approach, consultative planning should be adopted, particularly for scaling-up, which requires local government and community involvement and insurance markets need to be developed alongside.

https://youtu.be/qqVHfDx0HxI

L to R: Ankit Todi, CSO, Mahindra Group; Aman Hans, Resident Fellow, NITI Aayog; S Sivakumar, Group Head- Agri & IT Businesses, ITC Limited; George M Menezes, Advisor - Sustainability, Godrej Enterprises Group and Dr Upasna Sharma, Associate Professor at School of Public Policy, IIT - Delhi

Revalue, Redesign, Regenerate: The Circular Economy Pathway

Moderator

Joe Phelan

Executive Director, Asia Pacific
World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

Keynote Address

Amit Verma

Director
NITI Aayog

Panellists

Rajagopal Manohar

Head of TS and Innovation
Novonesis MEIA

Narayan Devanathan

President and
Chief Strategy Officer
Dentsu South Asia

Dr Anantharaman Subramaniyan

Vice President
Head of Strategy Sustainability and CSR
Siemens Limited

With increasing dependence on finite natural resources due to a growing global population, rapid urbanisation, expanding economic activities, and growing environmental impacts attributed to production and consumption patterns, stakeholders worldwide are gradually recognising the value of adopting circular economy principles. This session explored core strategies, industry innovations, and policy frameworks that can accelerate the global transition to a circular economy, as well as in the Indian context. The discussions focused on technology, collaboration, and best practices that can enhance efficiency, minimise waste and reduce environmental impact at the point of raw material extraction. The panellists emphasised:

- Regulations set only a minimum threshold or baseline. Industry must go beyond compliance – setting higher standards, driving innovation, and addressing emerging challenges to drive circularity.
- A just transition in the context of a circular economy will involve reskilling and capacity-building, designing inclusive business models integrating the informal sector, and facilitating affordable access to materials, technology, and funding to micro, small, and medium enterprises.
- Scalable, cost-effective change requires collaboration between policymakers, industry, and consumers, enabled by different approaches.
- Important drivers of a circular economy are technology, product design, and business practices that extend product lifecycles.
- Behavior change plays a critical role in the transition to the circular economy.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** High and inconsistent tax rates on waste materials and low returns often render recycling economically unviable. While climate finance typically focuses on funding and investments aimed at addressing climate change (areas such as renewable energy, emissions reduction, or adaptation projects), it overlooks circularity practices that also have climate benefits along with direct benefits in terms of reducing waste, reusing materials, and creating closed-loop systems.

2. **Social and cultural**
   - Waste streams such as end-of-life vehicles and e-waste are difficult to manage as consumers often retain their old vehicles and electronic products due to emotional attachment or the belief that they are still usable.
   - Recycling in India is largely informal and introduces rapid mechanisation or large automated facilities, without a proper transition plan for displaced informal workers.
   - Behaviour change in the value chain i.e. awareness, intent, action, and impact, shows persistent gaps, with awareness and intent often failing to translate into sustained behavioural change.

3. **Technological:** Bio-based solutions, such as enzymes, bacteria, probiotics, and other nature-derived ingredients, offer significant potential to address sustainability and circularity challenges. The major barrier lies in scaling these solutions economically and effectively.

Solutions

1. The Government of India is considering a Goods and Services Tax (GST) revision that could rationalise rates for waste materials, simplifying compliance and strengthening circular markets. Integrating waste streams into carbon markets alongside Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can create new incentives for recycling and decarbonization.

2. Biosolutions are emerging as a transformative solution that can support decarbonization, circularity, and sustainable development. Biosolutions, biomass, and waste can be converted into valuable energy and high-value products such as ethanol and biodiesel, helping in the transition to a low-carbon economy. In agriculture, biofertilizers, biostimulants, and biopesticides can increase productivity sustainably, which can help achieve national development and decarbonization targets.

3. WBSCD is in the advanced stages of developing a global circularity protocol based on Circular Transition Indicators (CTI) to help companies measure and improve product circularity. WBCSD's Good Life 2.0 Playbook guides brands and their marketing teams in inspiring customers to live more rewarding and sustainable lives. It offers a process to map consumer sustainability aspirations and connect them to products and services through storytelling. Originally developed with a U.S. cohort, it could be adapted for India and the Global South.

https://youtu.be/ia0cmZHMUQ0

L to R: Dr Anantharaman Subramaniyan, Vice President – Head of Strategy, Sustainability, and CSR, Siemens Limited; Joe Phelan, Executive Director, Asia Pacific, WBCSD; Amit Verma, Director, NITI Aayog; Narayan Devanathan, President and Chief Strategy Officer, Dentsu South Asia and Rajagopal Manohar, Head of TS and Innovation, Novonesis MEIA

Climate resilience is largely driven by our own consumption. Reducing consumption is only possible through reuse and circularity. And that's precisely why conversation on circular economy becomes very, very important.

Amit Verma

When you design a product that is modular, it is very useful from the point of view of replacement and recycling. But modularity often requires more materials, and this is an inherent conflict. The only way you can solve these kinds of problems, especially in the space of sustainability, is using digital technologies.

Dr Anantharaman Subramaniyan

Nature-Positive Growth: Embedding Ecology into Corporate Strategy

Moderator

Madhulika Sharma
Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer
ITC Limited

Panellists

Tony Goldner
CEO
Taskforce on Nature-related
Financial Disclosures (TNFD)

Nadir Godrej
Chairman and Managing Director
Godrej Industries Limited and Chairman
Godrej Agrovet Limited

Ravi Singh
CEO & Secretary General
WWF India

The world is confronting a critical dual crisis of biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse—challenges identified by the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2025 as among the most pressing global threats. Addressing this requires a nature-positive approach, making the integration of natural capital into business strategies and financial decision-making not just desirable but a strategic imperative for long-term resilience. Strong synergies between the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework and the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) provides businesses with a practical pathway to enhance their nature-related risk assessments and disclosures. Effectively managing the interconnected nature-climate nexus and embedding natural capital considerations within financial planning empowers companies to transform ecological responsibility into sustainable business value. This session explored actionable strategies to embed nature into corporate decision-making, turning environmental stewardship into lasting competitive advantage.

Solutions

1. Indian companies can harness the domestic market, innovation, and ecosystem services by embedding nature at the heart of corporate strategy.
2. Robust nature disclosures enable Indian corporates to meet international investor and customer expectations, enhancing global competitiveness.
3. With water stress a top physical risk, watershed development offers a cost-effective, scalable conservation approach.
4. Modern tools enable rapid species inventorying and monitoring, supporting effective conservation action.

https://youtu.be/rzh-cT8tDZs

L to R: Ravi Singh, CEO & Secretary General, WWF India; Madhulika Sharma, Vice President and CSO, ITC Limited; Nadir Godrej, Chairman & MD, Godrej Industries Limited and Chairman, Godrej Agrovet Limited and Tony Goldner, CEO, TNFD

Navigating Climate Finance in the Global South

Moderator

Rajiv Ranjan Mishra
Managing Director
Apraava Energy

Panellists

Koushik Chatterjee
Executive Director & Chief Financial Officer
Tata Steel

Helge Muenkel
Chief Sustainability Officer
DBS Bank

Asitava Sen
Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer
Carbon Removal India Alliance (CRIA)

Madeline Schneider
Director of Operations
Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials (PCAF)

The session addressed the critical challenge of mobilising climate finance in developing nations. A key challenge identified was the high cost of capital and limited access to concessional funding, acting as a significant barrier. Countries in the Global South face significantly higher interest rates for renewable energy and low-carbon projects compared to developed markets. This disparity undermines their competitiveness and slows the transition to a greener economy.

There is an urgent need for innovative financing solutions in developing economies, with greater emphasis on blended finance mechanisms, carbon markets, and transition credits to bridge financing gaps and accelerate the green transition. Financial institutions can play a crucial role in this effort, especially by adopting standardised disclosure frameworks and integrating climate risk into credit decision-making. Additionally, collaboration among corporates, governments, and banks is essential to unlock affordable capital and expedite decarbonization in emerging economies.

Challenges

1. **Global Regulations**
   - Developing economies like India continue to be rated the lowest Investment-grade rating despite consistent repayment records. This inflates the cost of borrowing for developing countries compared to developed markets.
   - The absence of a consistent and predictable carbon pricing mechanism weakens investment signals and delays capital mobilisation.

2. **Financial**
   - The elevated cost of capital for renewable projects in emerging markets is 8–11%, compared to 3–4% in developed economies, making the projects less competitive.
   - Investments are lacking in the absence of government incentives, carbon pricing, or customer willingness to share costs.

3. **Social**
   - Limited willingness of consumers to pay premium prices for low-carbon products such as green steel. A lack of demand signals muted industry confidence in investing in transition technologies.
   - Concerns regarding employment and community impacts during industrial decarbonization add complexity to just transition planning.

4. **Environmental**
   - Continued reliance on coal and other hard-to-abate sectors slows down the pace of decarbonization.
   - Trust deficit in carbon markets due to doubts about the permanence and additionality of projects.
   - Early-stage carbon removal projects in India are 100% export-driven because there is no domestic market demand.

5. **Technological**
   - Carbon removal solutions such as biochar and enhanced rock weathering remain costly and lack domestic market demand.
   - Limited options for scalability and the absence of robust deployment pathways restrict mainstream adoption of innovative technologies.

Solutions

1. Robust carbon pricing mechanisms and structured government support can make decarbonization projects bankable.
2. Combining public, private, and concessional capital may be a key enabler, similar to Singapore's Financing Asia's Transition Partnership (FAST-P), which aims to reduce risk-return mismatches and attract billions in funding.
3. A standardised emissions accounting methodology for financial institutions can be foundational for credible disclosure, comparability, and scaling finance.
4. Restoring trust in carbon markets and introducing innovative instruments, such as transition credits for coal phase-outs, can become powerful tools to channel finance directly into mitigation projects.
5. Blended finance models are seen as critical for de-risking projects in the Global South.
6. Transition credits may be proposed to support the early retirement of coal plants and their replacement with renewable energy.
7. India can lead in scalable solutions such as biochar and enhanced rock weathering, which not only sequester carbon permanently but also deliver co-benefits like soil health improvement, reduced fertiliser dependence, air pollution mitigation, and rural job creation.
8. Embedding ESG assessment directly into credit risk frameworks, ensuring sustainability risks are not treated as externalities but as core business considerations
9. There is a need for dialogue and cooperation among regulators, corporations, financial institutions, and governments to create an enabling ecosystem for large-scale transition finance in the Global South.

L to R: Madeline Schneider, Director of Operations, PCAF; Koushik Chatterjee, Executive Director & Chief Financial Officer, Tata Steel; Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Managing Director, Apraava Energy; Helge Muenkel, Chief Sustainability Officer, DBS Bank and Asitava Sen, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, CRIA

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Turning Barriers into Bridges for a Climate – Ready Global South

Moderator

Prabodha Acharya
Chief Sustainability Officer
JSW Group

Panellists

Tetsuya Watanabe
President
Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

Prajna Khanna
CSO and Vice President
Prosus

Tracy Wyman
Chief Impact Officer
Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi)

Dr Ashok Menon
Director Global Sustainability Operations and Technology
Sabic

Transitioning to a low-carbon economy is a global priority, with several Global South countries making significant progress toward this goal. However, these countries face complex and diverse challenges in identifying and scaling the key enablers and overcoming barriers necessary for a realistic, science-aligned transition. This session examined these multifaceted hurdles including regulatory, financial, social, environmental, and technological dimensions and explored innovative financing options alongside technology and policy solutions tailored to the unique contexts of emerging markets. The discussion also emphasised the importance of regional cooperation, capacity building, and collaboration to support inclusive, equitable, and effective decarbonization pathways aligned with global climate goals.

Beyond direct emissions mitigation, the discourse emphasised the broader environmental gains achievable through digitally enabled circular economy models and targeted last-mile emission reductions. Initiatives around shared renewable infrastructure and diverse energy portfolios—including solar, hydro, biomass, hydrogen, and ammonia offer viable pathways, supported by pilot projects demonstrating scalable solutions.

Panellists underscored the imperative for scalable, adaptable, and context-specific technology solutions tailored to ASEAN's unique energy transition challenges. Priorities include grid modernisation, expansion of regional power trade, and integration of advanced technologies such as carbon capture, battery storage, and small modular reactors. Collaborative pilot initiatives led by regional think tanks and the ASEAN Secretariat play a critical role in bridging technology gaps.

Challenges

1. **Global Regulations:** Panellists highlighted the intricate challenges faced by multinational corporations navigating disparate regulatory frameworks, particularly when aligning stringent export standards such as those enforced in Europe and UK. ASEAN's fragmented energy landscape underscores the urgent need for cohesive regional cooperation mechanisms to enhance system resilience and integration.

2. **Financial:** Affordability remains a critical barrier for sustainability adoption, especially within MSMEs and the informal economy. Renewable energy projects in ASEAN incur capital costs up to 80% higher than those in developed markets, driven by elevated risk premiums and segmented credit markets. Addressing this requires sophisticated financial instruments including layered concessional financing, risk guarantees, and shared-risk models to unlock private sector investment at a scale.

3. **Data and Target-Setting Complexity:** For Indian enterprises, establishing ambitious science-based targets remains complicated by incomplete data, particularly regarding Scope 3 emissions, and uncertain decarbonization pathways. Given the rapidly evolving landscape, companies are encouraged to set provisional targets with transparency and adaptability, fostering continuous innovation and iterative learning.

Solutions

1. ASEAN's power integration initiatives such as the 200MW Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore grid expansion represent critical, albeit incremental, advances toward enhancing regional energy resilience and scaling renewable energy deployment.

2. Leading companies such as Sabic are pioneering comprehensive innovations, including advanced PET bottle recycling technologies that elevate material value for export, establishing Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) Centers of Excellence, and integrating science-based target frameworks within MSME supply chains.

3. Financing approaches highlight blended finance mechanisms and transition credits, with a strong push for local currency funding to mitigate investor risks and extend concessional finance benefits to smaller enterprises.

4. Material science innovations and industrial advancements play a pivotal role in carbon footprint reduction. The use of recycled content in plastics markedly lowers emissions, benefiting producers and downstream customers alike. Technologies such as renewable feedstocks and automated carbon footprint analysis of vast product ranges are being actively deployed.

https://youtu.be/ejqxBBDXLX8

L to R: Prajna Khanna, CSO and Vice President, Prosus; Tetsuya Watanabe, President, ERIA; Prabodha Acharya, Chief Sustainability Officer, JSW Group; Tracy Wyman, Chief Impact Officer, SBTi and Dr Ashok Menon, Director Global Sustainability Operations and Technology, Sabic

Integrating climate readiness into the core of growth strategies from the outset is imperative. The expansion of renewable energy within ASEAN hinges on strengthened regional collaboration, prioritizing pilot initiatives rather than awaiting fully mature global solutions.

Tetsuya Watanabe

While aligning with the Paris Agreement remains a global ambition, effective implementation must be grounded in the unique market conditions and infrastructural vulnerabilities, particularly within the Global South.

Tracy Wyman

Setting bold targets without fully defined pathways is essential; ambitious companies can then present clear transition plans to secure the necessary financial support for execution.

Prajna Khanna

Materials innovation is pivotal—incorporating recycled content directly lowers product carbon footprints and mitigates downstream emissions. Investment in R&D around sustainable materials offers a readily accessible opportunity for corporate climate action.

Dr Ashok Menon

Integrating Sustainability in Value Chains

Panellists

C K Mishra (IAS)
Former Environment Secretary
Government of India

Rajiv Ranjan Mishra
Managing Director
Apraava Energy

Ajay Bhatt
Head of Corporate Product and
Sustainability Strategies
Škoda Auto Volkswagen India

Conversations in the session emphasised the critical importance of embedding sustainability across value chains to build resilient and future-ready businesses. The need for businesses to move beyond cost-driven approaches was highlighted. A resilient, future-ready system was described as essential for long-term survival. While many companies had reported reductions in emissions, it was pointed out that nearly 90% of environmental impact lies outside company operations in the broader value chain. Though the costs of sustainable technologies were acknowledged, they were framed as long-term investments offering returns through green capital, enhanced productivity, and greater market access.

C.K. Mishra highlighted how global recognition of the environmental crisis had been delayed, with many decision-makers ignoring early scientific warnings. It was only after experiencing extreme climate events that meaningful action began, he pointed out. Today, with over 90% of major global companies reporting on sustainability metrics and 75% of executives prioritising sustainability, it has become a new currency of credibility in global trade.

Rajiv Ranjan emphasised the significance of the Eco Edge program, commending its role in enabling companies to measure and enhance sustainability performance beyond their internal operations. He highlighted that Eco Edge's true value lies in providing actionable guidance for continuous improvement, rather than a one-time win/lose evaluation. He further highlighted a critical insight that most environmental and social footprints reside within the supply chain, an area often overlooked when companies focus solely on their direct operations.

Ajay Bhatt highlighted that ŠKODA Volkswagen has been an early participant in the Eco Edge program, demonstrating its commitment to supply chain sustainability. The company's engagement with value chain partners expanded from 15 in 2023 to 49 in 2024, with 49 partners currently onboard. He appreciated Eco Edge's ability to provide a gap report based on disclosed data from value chain partners, which helps identify areas for improvement. He also underscored the need for collective action for advancing ESG performance.

3rd Eco Edge Felicitation Ceremony

1. Held at the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit, the felicitation ceremony recognised the outstanding efforts of ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India, Apraava Energy, and their value chain partners in integrating sustainability into their operations.

2. The certificates were presented by Chief Guest C.K. Mishra (IAS), Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, in the presence of Seema Arora, Deputy Director General, CII. Ajay Bhatt, Head of Corporate, Product, and Sustainability Strategy at ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India, and Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Managing Director of Apraava Energy, accepted the certificates on behalf of their respective organisations and extended encouragement to their value chain partners.

3. ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India and Apraava Energy were honoured with the "Progressive" certificate, recognising their consistent efforts and leadership in advancing sustainability within their operations and across their supply chains.

4. The Eco Edge Program features three maturity levels of certification: Emerging, Progressive, and Trailblazer. A total of 23 value chain partners

(VCPs) were recognised under the Eco Edge Program—15 from ŠKODA AUTO Volkswagen India and 8 from Apraava Energy. Among these, 6 companies received the "Emerging" certificate for making notable initial strides in embedding sustainability, while 17 companies were awarded the "Progressive" certificate for demonstrating sustained commitment and progress in sustainable practices.

Award Recipients

1. **Emerging Category:** DHL Supply Chain India Ltd., Cerence Services India LLP, Gabriel India Ltd, Sinhal Udyog Ltd., Renom Energy Services Ltd. and Sterlite Power Transmission Limited.

2. **Progressive Category:** Ceat Limited, HP Pelzer Automotive Pvt. Ltd., Gestamp Automotive India Ltd., Allcargo Supply Chain, Capgemini Technology Services India Limited, Tata Ficosa Automotive Systems Ltd., SKH M Automotive,Tenneco Clean Air India Pvt. Ltd, MRF Limited, Hirotec India Ltd., Asahi India Glass Ltd, Powercon Ventures India Ltd., CG Power and Industrial Solutions Limited, Mahindra Teqo and Vestas Wind Technology Ltd.

The ceremony showcased the collective efforts of sourcing companies and their VCPs dedicated to responsible business practices.

Awardees at the 3rd Eco-Edge Felicitation Ceremony

From Ambition to Action: Building the Ecosystem for Business Sustainability

Moderator

Rajat Gupta
Senior Partner
McKinsey & Company

Panellists

Shaun Kingsbury CBE
Co-Founding Partner and
Co-Chief Investment Officer
Just Climate

Rajnish Kumar
Independent Board Member and
Former Chairman
State Bank of India (SBI)

Prof Amit Garg
National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)
Chair in Environment Social & Corporate Governance IIM, Ahmedabad

The session addressed the regulatory and financial challenges in India's green transition, including gaps in current reporting frameworks and a critical shortage of risk-bearing equity capital. Discussions centered on the need for a specialised green financing institution to fill this gap, strategies to attract foreign investment, and solutions for providing flexible capital for large-scale projects that fall outside traditional funding buckets.

Challenges

1. **Financial**
   - Need for enhanced understanding and underwriting of risks, and provision of risk capital.
   - Funding gaps exist because many climate projects are too large or asset-heavy for venture.
   - To take up investments in the private sector, there is a need to find equity capital and other capital streams which can take risks.

2. **Social**
   - 75% of India's 2050 infrastructure, steel plants, transport systems, and housing are yet to be built, presenting both risk and opportunity.

3. **Technological**
   - Adoption of technology is at a nascent stage or partially done or is not yet explored (e.g., CCS & some elements of textile recycling & separation, where are blended fabrics which are to be separated).
   - Technologies need some time and innovation to get ready
   - Technology is ready, but the outcome is substantially more expensive than the alternatives (e.g. green hydrogen, green steel, green aluminium)
   - Overcoming technological complexities requires regulatory support, continued R&D support, industrial scaling, and financing to manage high upfront capital costs.

4. **Regulatory**
   - BRSR requires companies to provide information on 140 indicators. However, only 40 indicators may come out to be essential for all companies.
   - Absence of a clear carbon pricing indication in the current carbon trading scheme makes it difficult to attract investments.

A key outcome was the proposal for a long-term national plan and the harmonisation of climate-related policies to provide regulatory clarity, creating investor confidence and a clear path toward India's net-zero targets. During the dialogue, it was highlighted that a major capability issuZ assessing projects appropriately and matching providers of capital with creators of projects, with potential solutions shared. It was emphasised that appropriate project creation, particularly in early-stage infra-VC mode, requires support in the right way with the right sets of instruments.

Solutions

1. Opportunity exists to create a green financing institution in India to provide equity capital on a fully commercial basis, filling gaps and providing confidence for foreign direct investors through flexible capital.
2. Disclosures of climate risks need to be mandated with transparent reporting of investment portfolios, including risks and sectoral exposure.
3. Harmonise Indian BRSR with frameworks like TNFD and ISSB, focusing on essential indicators for India and to put forth the absent global south perspective globally
4. A green financing institution for India should be different from existing commercial banks and financial bodies like NABFID, REC, PFC, etc. and should focus on building capacity with 300-400 high-quality professionals skilled in project appraisal and risk assessment beyond traditional commercial banking. The green financing institution should prepare risk mitigation packages, participate in risk sharing, and reduce high-risk premiums to lower funding costs.
5. The green financing institution should have a think tank, act as a conduit for mobilising international transition capital in foreign currency, ideally based in GIFT City, and operate with government support but without direct ownership to maintain credibility and operational freedom. It should also serve as a comprehensive repository and registry of all green projects in the country to enable effective capital planning and democratize capital distribution, with a clear mandate tailored to India's massive energy needs and net-zero targets.

L to R: Amit Garg, NIIF Chair in Environment, Social & Corporate Governance, IIM Ahmedabad; Shaun Kingsbury, Co-Founding Partner and Co-Chief Investment Officer, Just Climate; Rajat Gupta, Senior Partner, McKinsey & Company and Rajnish Kumar, Independent Board Member and Former Chairman, SBI

The key thing that I learned was that money comes in risk buckets. Those buckets are not typically in the right format to fund many of the climate issues because you can't decarbonize energy and you can't decarbonize steel with an app. For example, you have to build real steel plants, you have to build wind turbines, you have to build solar facilities and the ticket sizes are too big for venture capital. These projects are typically too asset heavy for growth capital

Shaun Kingsbury CBE

If we are talking about this scale for green finance, this institution, its job should be to assess the risk properly, not like a commercial banker. Commercial bankers' skills have always been useful in assessing the working capital finance. So, can we have an institution which has Government support but not ownership? It should be supported by multilateral institutions, supported by banks and supported by all the institutions which we have in the country.

Rajnish Kumar

Building Resilience: Supply Chains for a Changing World

Moderator

Anjalli Ravi Kumar
Chief Sustainability Officer
Eternal Limited

Keynote Speaker

Rohit Kansal
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Textiles
Government of India

Panellists

Sreekumar Sivaramakrishnan
Chief Sustainability Principal and
Head of Sustainability Business
SAP Asia Pacific

Linda Kromjong
President
Amfori

Col (Dr) Bharat Sharma
Executive Director
Powercon Group of Companies

Abhinav Mathur
Advisor to the Board
Attero Recycling

Supply chain resilience is crucial for economic stability amid the ongoing challenges of geopolitical uncertainty, environmental pressures, and evolving trade dynamics. This session convened industry leaders, supply chain partners, and policymakers to share actionable insights on strategies for strengthening resilience, promoting sustainable growth, and maintaining long-term competitiveness in unpredictable global markets.

The Indian textile sector is making progress through cluster-level knowledge sharing, peer learning, and horizontal sustainability. Replicating successful models is critical as 80% of textile output comes from clusters, of which 70-80% are MSMEs. Deliberations explored how manufacturers can play a pivotal role in enabling value chain partners in the textile sector to meet rising standards and improve overall performance.

The panel highlighted key approaches, ranging from strategic diversification, digital adoption, and collaborative innovation to proactive risk management, that are essential for weathering disruptions and ensuring supply chains remain adaptive, transparent, and future-ready. Discussions focused on practical strategies to enhance supply chain resilience and approaches to secure competitiveness in increasingly volatile conditions.

Comprehensive adoption of digital technologies such as blockchain for cotton traceability and AI for demand forecasting is transforming transparency, risk management, and responsiveness in global supply chains.

Solutions

1. **Resilience Beyond Response:** Resilience in supply chains must become a continuous, integrated process - built into planning, product and market diversification, ongoing innovation, and digital adoption.

2. **Supply Chain Sustainability and Social Inclusion:** True resilience means supply chains are not only resource-efficient, but also environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive. This includes worker safety, fair treatment, and adapting to new global ESG and traceability standards.

3. **Creating a Circular Economy:** Several organisations in the Indian Industry are prioritising EPR, waste minimisation, and lifecycle analysis. They are forging innovative collaborations focused on recycling, resale, and remanufacturing, with traceable recycled metals setting new standards. Closing the materials loop reduces dependence on geopolitically sensitive supply chains, enhances self-reliance, and lessens environmental impact.

L to R: Abhinav Mathur, Advisor to the Board, Attero Recycling; Bharat Sharma, Executive Director, Powercon Ventures India Pvt Limited; Anjalli Ravi Kumar, Chief Sustainability Officer, Eternal Limited; Rohit Kansal, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India; Linda Kromjong, President, amfori and Sreekumar Sivaramakrishnan, Chief Sustainability Principal and Head of Sustainability Business, SAP Asia Pacific

> Resilience cannot be static. It must become a part of planning and design for supply chains—adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable by purpose.

Rohit Kansal

> Long-term buyer-supplier relationships and collaboration—supported by data and transparency—are key to managing risk and sustaining business through disruptions.

Linda Kromjong

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years of dedication to science

~10%
of turnover is re-invested in R&D

~40
R&D and application centers

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Rewiring Circularity in the Electronics and Technology Sector

Moderator

Dr Nandini Kumar
Principal Consultant
CESD

Keynote Speaker

Dr Sandip Chatterjee
Senior Advisor, Sustainable Electronics Recycling International (SERI)
Adjunct Professor IIT-Mandi and
Former Senior Director & Group Coordinator
Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India

Hitesh Sharma
South Asia Lead – Sustainable Impact
HP Inc

Pratyush Sinha
Vice President – Special Projects
Lohum

Lalit Joshi
Senior Programme Manager
Microsoft

Today, globally, recycling is often positioned as a cornerstone of the circular economy. This session aimed to challenge this narrative by emphasising that true circularity goes far beyond recycling. It involves designing products, including electronics, with the intent to minimise resource extraction and reduce environmental impact from the outset. The discussion explored how businesses can view circularity not merely as a regulatory obligation but as a strategic opportunity for innovation, value creation, and long-term competitiveness. The session highlighted the role of voluntary action by businesses in driving systemic change and fostering a more resilient, resource-efficient circular economy.

Challenges

1. **Social & Environmental**

   - While recycling remains a critical component of circularity, it should not be the sole focus. One of the most pressing challenges is the sourcing of e-waste, which is largely dominated by the informal sector.
   - Recyclers and manufacturers have limited visibility on how e-waste is handled once it leaves consumers' homes, raising concerns about safety and environmental impact.

2. **Technological**

   As the adoption of electronic devices continues to grow, the volume of data being generated is increasing exponentially. This trend brings to light a critical consideration in end-of-life management: the protection of personal and sensitive data stored on these devices. It is not only individual devices that require attention, but also large-scale data infrastructure, such as servers, which often house vast amounts of user information.

   In the context of circularity, data security must be integrated into the lifecycle strategy of electronic products. Whether dealing with personal gadgets or enterprise-level servers, secure data destruction is essential to prevent potential data breaches. This aspect is often overlooked but is fundamental to building trust and ensuring compliance with data protection regulations of the country, such as Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025.

Solutions

1. Innovation must begin at design stage, especially given that the global shortage of rare-earth elements is essential for electronics manufacturing. Adopting a circular economy mindset can help address these challenges in a way that aligns environmental responsibility with business viability.

2. Companies must move beyond traditional recycling models and explore more circular strategies such as repair and refurbishment. These practices can substantially extend the lifespan of electronic products, potentially up to eight to ten years, while also creating viable business opportunities. Designing products with circularity in mind, where devices can seamlessly return to manufacturers for reuse or refurbishment, is essential. Such models must be both economically feasible and operationally desirable for manufacturers.

3. Training and equipping informal workers is crucial, as they play a vital role in the electronics value chain but often lack the necessary skills and resources to manage hazardous materials safely.

4. Many components within consumer and commercial electronics devices remain functional and can be reused in their existing form. With appropriate security protocols in place, these components can be recovered and reintegrated into new systems, supporting both circularity and efficiency. Incorporating data security into circularity frameworks not only mitigates risk but also improves the viability of reuse and refurbishment models, contributing to a more responsible electronics ecosystem.

5. It is essential to recognise the limitations of finite resources in the manufacturing of electronics, such as rare earths, as this awareness supports the transition towards circularity. Manufacturers should also explore other advanced circular materials that are reprocessed for use in high-value industrial applications.

6. Electronics manufacturers should establish clear targets for the use of circular materials, including recycled, reused, and refurbished components. Tracking year-on-year progress against these targets is critical. Additionally, collaboration across industries can enhance access to circular materials and foster innovation in sustainable sourcing.

7. Transparent and real-time visibility into the end-of-life management of electronic products is vital for both manufacturers and recyclers. This can be facilitated by assigning a unique digital identity to each product, enabling open-source access to lifecycle data, and ensuring accountability throughout the process.

8. Hardware and software companies should jointly initiate pilot programs to test devices and components. These efforts can help define and promote standardised procedures for recycling, reuse, and refurbishment, contributing to more consistent and sustainable end-of-life practices across the industry.

https://youtu.be/sQ7QGh8PRWg

L to R: Pratyush Sinha, Vice President – Special Projects, Lohum; Hitesh Sharma, South Asia Lead – Sustainable Impact, HP Inc.; Nandini Kumar, Principal Consultant, CESD; Sandip Chatterjee, Senior Advisor, SERI, Adjunct Professor, IIT-Mandi and Former Senior Director & Group Coordinator, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India and Lalit Joshi, Senior Programme Manager, Microsoft

Formatting or resetting devices does not guarantee complete data removal. On average, approximately 80% of data may remain on devices, memory cards, and hard drives after consumers delete it. To enable safe and responsible circularity in electronics, it is necessary to develop and adopt standardised protocols for data destruction.

Sandip Chatterjee

Until and unless we put an ambitious calling of going net-zero on the value chain, there is limited visibility for companies like us to embed sustainability in what we design.

Hitesh Sharma

Future of Trade: Decoding the Sustainability Puzzle

Moderator

Sumanta Chaudhuri

Principal Advisor - International Trade Policy
CII

Panellists

Dr Mohan Kumar

Dean
Strategic and International Initiatives, O P Jindal Global University, Former Ambassador of India to Bahrain & France Government of India

Dr Anup Wadhawan

Director
GSK Board, Senior Fellow, Ashoka University, ISAAC Centre for Public Policy & Former Commerce Secretary Government of India

Panellists

J S Deepak

Group Director
Bharti Enterprises Former Ambassador of India to the WTO
Former Secretary, Telecom
Government of India

Rajeev Kher

Distinguished Fellow, RIS &
Former Commerce Secretary and Chairman
Star Health Insurance

Jatinder Singh

Head of Sustainability Sales
SAP India

India faces significant challenges in balancing rapid economic growth with global sustainability demands. Complex and evolving regulations, especially around ESG standards and climate commitments, place heavy pressure on industries, particularly MSMEs. Financial constraints, social awareness gaps, environmental concerns, and underutilised technology further complicate this transition. To address these issues, India aims to leverage its G20 leadership to promote fair, inclusive sustainability policies aligned with international agreements. By fostering collaboration between Government, Industry, and global partners, and leveraging innovation and digital tools, India seeks to lead sustainable development while ensuring equitable growth and market access for all.

Challenges

1. **Global Regulations:** India is engaging with a rapidly evolving regulatory environment, harmonizing global trade and sustainability priorities, advancing ESG standards, and strengthening climate commitments through bilateral and multilateral partnerships. MSMEs are especially vulnerable to these regulations. Disputes over the legality of non-tariff and economic measures, along with the need for clear and industry-aligned domestic climate policies, increase regulatory pressure. Additionally, recent geopolitical changes and the varying interests of developed countries influence global economic systems, making India's progress more challenging.

2. **Social:** Making trade and industry more environmentally and socially responsible means changing how people think and act. Industry, governments, and consumers need to be more aware and willing to adapt. Additionally, the long-lasting effects of colonialism and the uneven development after World War II create additional social and economic challenges, making this shift even more difficult. Balancing economic growth and environment protection is key to stability.

3. **Environmental:** India faces the challenge of meeting its growing energy demands while protecting the environment. Despite a heavy reliance on coal, the country is making significant investments in renewable energy. At the same time, there is an urgent need to cut carbon emissions, and improve environmental transparency in supply chains. India needs coordinated policies that support organisations affected by these changes.

4. **Technological:** Digital technologies and telecom infrastructure are not being fully used to support ESG tracking, certification, and sustainable trade, especially in remote and underserved areas. While systems to unify sustainability standards are developing, they are still in early stages and need further improvement.

Solutions

1. The Government of India should strategically leverage its recent G20 presidency and leadership within the Global South to advance a fair and inclusive global sustainability agenda. This entails embedding ESG criteria and climate goals firmly into business and trade frameworks, making sustainability a central pillar of economic development. India's national policies already align with key international agreements such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, emphasising binding trade and climate commitments. It is important to maintain a constructive distinction between climate objectives and broader political considerations to ensure collective support for advancing sustainable transitions.

2. India should build investor confidence by tailoring domestic climate policies to address industry-specific concerns without hindering economic growth. Among Indian Industry, particularly among MSMEs, sustainability is increasingly recognised as a competitive advantage. Encouraging supply chain transparency and responsible practices requires collaboration among businesses, governments, and civil society, supported by clear standards and digital tools for streamlined compliance.

3. Transitioning to sustainable trade and meeting ESG standards requires significant investment in renewable energy, carbon reduction, and transparent supply chains. MSMEs face the challenge of securing inadequate funding as compliance costs increase. Effective subsidies and financial support linked directly to climate goals are essential and must remain free from influence. Providing MSMEs with guidance on ESG requirements and promoting green innovation can help smoothen this transition and support India's sustainable development.

https://youtu.be/4AM8Q1sEJ_k

L to R: Jatinder Singh, Head of Sustainability Sales, SAP India; Rajeev Kher, RIS & Former Commerce Secretary; Dr Mohan Kumar, Dean, Strategic and International Initiatives, O.P. Jindal Global University, Former Ambassador of India to Bahrain & France; J.S. Deepak, Group Director, Bharti Enterprises, Former Ambassador of India to the WTO, Former Secretary Telecom; Dr Anup Wadhawan, Director, GSK Board, Senior Fellow, Ashoka University, ISAAC Centre for Public Policy & Former Commerce Secretary; Sumanta Chaudhuri, Principal Advisor- International Trade Policy, CII

India should not be taking action simply because of CBAM or due to pressure from other countries. Our steps toward sustainability and decarbonisation must come from a clear understanding that these efforts are in our long-term national interest.

Dr Mohan Kumar

The multilayered nature of India's demographic landscape reveals how globalisation is influencing the mindset of the younger generation, increasingly embedding principles of sustainability in their values and thinking. As global ideas and practices flow across borders, they are being adapted and internalised by India's youth—shaping a more environmentally conscious and socially responsible outlook that aligns with both global trends and local realities.

Rajeev Kher

Climate change, and the urgency it demands, has accelerated the integration of non-trade issues into the global trade framework in increasingly binding ways. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is a clear example of this shift, where environmental concerns are no longer peripheral, but central to trade policy and regulation.

Dr Anup Wadhawan

Sustainability should be viewed not merely as a matter of regulatory compliance or a mandated obligation, but as a deeply ingrained cultural ethos. It must become an integral part of how we think, produce, consume, and live, embedded in everyday decision-making across sectors and society.

Jatinder Singh

Rooted in Change: Celebrating Two Decades of Women – Led Development

Moderator

Kaveree Bamzai
Independent Journalist

Panellists

Sadhana Deshmukh
Founder
Sadhana Home Foods and Guru Soya Products
Maharashtra

Saraswathi M
Founder
SABALA and Leader Millet Sisters Network
Andhra Pradesh

Varsha Patil
Co-Founder
Vidyoday Muktangan Parivar Foundation
Maharashtra

Mana Mandlekar
Founder
Tinka Samajik Sanstha
Madhya Pradesh

The session highlighted how women leaders from grassroots have been catalysts of inclusive and sustainable development over the last two decades. Each speaker shared journeys that began in their local contexts but grew into models of social transformation across food security, education, sports, and entrepreneurship. Through their stories, the panellists underlined that local action could shift systems and that when women lead, the benefits ripple through families, markets, and public services.

The session explored how women-led initiatives can scale with the right policy, market, and institutional support. The discussion highlighted strong grassroots solutions. The work of the speakers demonstrated that innovation often emerges from resilience in the face of scarcity, and that sustainability means building solutions grounded, accessible to communities, and designed to last. The panel explored how women-led initiatives can scale with policy, market, and institutional support, reinforcing the idea that local courage fuels collective progress.

Speaking at the session, Sadhana Deshmukh showed how confidence-building, collective effort, and value addition can bring women into farming and agro-processing even in drought-affected regions. Varsha Patil shared how the activity-based science learning model improves engagement for rural and migrant children and helps teachers and parents see STEM as achievable. Mana Mandlekar highlighted how the peer-trainer approach in karate and self-defence has enabled tens of thousands of girls to step into public spaces with confidence and to challenge stereotypes, showing how sports can transform gender perceptions beyond safety.

Saraswathi M shared how reviving climate-resilient millets with over a thousand women farmers is strengthening food security and incomes through collective action and FPOs. These models emphasise inclusivity, sustainability, and scalability. They highlight the need for supportive policy frameworks, financial backing, and institutional partnerships to ensure that grassroots innovation is recognised, resourced, and replicated at scale.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** Access to credit, working capital and markets remains difficult for women working at the grassroots, particularly in remote regions, drought-prone areas or underserved districts. Long-term funding is needed to sustain and scale models such as millet farming or STEM-based rural education.

2. **Social:** Deeply entrenched gender stereotypes make it challenging for women to step into farming, entrepreneurship, and even sports. Persuading families and communities to accept women as entrepreneurs, farmers, or karate trainers involves shifting long-standing social norms and requires patient trust-building.

3. **Environmental:** Climate change has intensified droughts, reduced crop viability, and made traditional farming unsustainable. Women leaders highlighted the need for resilient practices like millet farming and diversified agro-processing enterprises adapted to climate variability that stresses livelihoods.

4. **Technological:** Farmers often lack exposure to modern tech tools that can help enhance productivity and growth.

https://youtu.be/ZxWkrSYJ5ac

L to R: Saraswathi M, Founder, SABALA and Leader Millet Sisters Network Andhra Pradesh; Sadhana Deshmukh, Founder, Sadhana Home Foods and Guru Soya Products Maharashtra; Kaveree Bamzai, Independent Journalist; Varsha Patil, Co-Founder, Vidyoday Muktangan Parivar Foundation Maharashtra and Mana Mandlekar, Founder, Tinka Samajik Sanstha Madhya Pradesh

> For years, women were told farming was not their space. The turning point was when they saw that income could change hands and transform lives if they stepped in.
>
> **Sadhana Deshmukh**

Local Roots, Global Goals: Subnational Pathway for a Sustainable Future

Moderator

Shikhar Jain
Executive Director
CESD

Panellists

Arun Nanda
Former Chairman
Mahindra Holiday & Resorts and Trustee
Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi)

Nagaraja Gargeshwari
Chairman
CII Mysuru Region and President & Whole Time Director
Automotive Axles Limited

Dhruvi Shah
Executive Trustee & CEO
Axis Bank Foundation

Vineeta Hariharan
Public Policy Exponent and
Former Chief of External Missions
Ministry of MSME

To achieve the national goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047, there is a need for balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development across all regions. The session brought together leaders from Industry and communities to understand how local governments, urban local bodies and communities can drive bottom-up transformation aligned with global goals. The panel emphasised that subnational actors are uniquely positioned to scale local innovation, foster stakeholder engagement, and offer proven models for a resilient, sustainable future.

Genuine progress comes when sustainability becomes part of the organisation's culture, and not just compliance, said Arun Nanda. He highlighted SBTi's exponential adoption, noting over 220% growth in new corporate commitments in 18 months—propelled by boardroom ambition and societal responsibility, not regulatory pressure.

Panellists shared that true transformation, especially for small enterprises, needs policy incentives—not just compliance reports. Performance-linked tax breaks, soft loans, or green ratings (akin to IGBC for buildings) can drive voluntary adoption, motivate frontrunners and encourage laggards to follow suit. All panelists reinforced the need for enabling, mapping, and capacitating local bodies (Panchayats, District Industry Centres) to mentor MSMEs and mobilise Government schemes, with strong and continuous state-local-center policy feedback loops. Green ratings, cluster-based solutions, and mapping of needs and challenges are keys to empowering the last mile.

Solutions

1. Community-led development (similar to Axis Bank Foundation and Mann Deshi Foundation initiatives), must prioritise risk-adjusted reward models for farmers, workers, and other high-stake participants, ensuring supply chain sustainability benefits are widely shared.
2. Practical capacity building, technical know-how, and best practice exchange are critical to sustainable local supply chain transformation, cascading benefits from tier-one to tier-three suppliers.
3. Encourage voluntary adoption through incentives, peer motivation, and recognition enabling companies to move sustainability up from the bottom, not just top-down.
4. Establish green rating systems for MSMEs, mirroring IGBC standards, and attach policy incentives (financial and regulatory) to real environmental performance rather than paperwork.
5. Local bodies should proactively map, benchmark, and track MSME readiness/gaps and equitably deliver support in finance, technology, and skills.
6. Leadership means investing in green innovation, even if ROI materialises over a longer period.

https://youtu.be/kIR7lAgYgtA

L to R: Arun Nanda, Former Chairman, Mahindra Holiday & Resorts and Trustee, SBTi; Nagaraja Gargeshwari, Chairman, CII Mysuru Region and President & Whole Time Director, Automotive Axles Limited; Vineeta Hariharan, Public Policy Exponent, Former Chief of External Missions, Ministry of MSME; Dhruvi Shah, Executive Trustee & CEO, Axis Bank Foundation and Shikhar Jain, Executive Director, CII CESD

Sustainability must become part of a company's DNA, it can no longer be just a compliance function.

Arun Nanda

True policy shift is awareness first, incentives next and then compliance.

Nagaraja Gargeshwari

Local economic development cells and green MSME ratings would transform bottom-up implementation.

Vineeta Hariharan

Collaboratively Actioning Circularity in Plastic Packaging

Moderator

Utsav Dixit
Co-chair
CII-India Plastics Pact, and Chief Sustainability and Growth Officer
ALPLA India Private Limited

Panellists

Pratibha Priya Dewett
Chief Sustainability Officer
Lucro Plastecyle

Punit Singhal
Director - Food Grade rPET Resin Division
JB Ecotex Private Limited

Sreemoyee Bhattacharyya
Chair, CII-India Plastics Pact Collaborative Action Group on Understanding Citizen Behaviour and Lead – Sustainability
Marico India Private Limited

Swaroop KVR
Head-Waste Management Alliances and EPR
Srichakra Polyplast

In any country, conscious consumerism is largely guided by four A's: accessibility, affordability, awareness, and adaptability. For any organisation, brand, recycler, or a company influencing consumer choices, it is essential to integrate these four elements when engaging with consumers to guide them towards making responsible choices for the future.

Since India is a cost-sensitive market, recycled materials must be cost-competitive with virgin materials to ensure adoption and market growth. For flexible packaging, advanced recycling and decontamination technologies exist, however, the main bottleneck remains in the collection of post-consumer flexible plastics. Improved collection systems are expected to enhance flexible plastics recycling efficiency and output quality.

CII-India Plastics Pact focuses on addressing the barriers to circularity in the plastic packaging sector through four ambitious time-bound targets. The session brought together stakeholders who drive action within the CII-IPP to share success stories, challenges, and solutions, demonstrating how the Pact supports businesses in approaching their EPR obligations.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** Flexible packaging, such as polypropylene (PP) and PE films, accounts for 70–80% of India's consumer market. However, their collection is a challenge due to lower weight, lack of segregation at source, and limited incentives for waste pickers, making them unattractive to collect compared to rigids, which already has a more established collection and recycling ecosystem.

2. **Social and Environmental:**
   - Citizens are concerned about environmental issues but high environmental awareness does not translate into action due to accessibility, affordability, and transparency of options provided to citizens.
   - Unlike western countries, where buyers are willing to pay a premium for recycled material, in India, cost remains a critical factor. There is lack of willingness to pay more than the price of virgin material. Therefore, economic sustainability is essential to achieve strong sales and enable business growth.

3. **Technological:**
   - The EPR for plastic packaging in India mandates packaging producers and brand owners to use 30% recycled plastic in rigid packaging from FY 2025-26, with targets increasing to 60% by FY 2028-29. This requirement will significantly boost demand for recycled plastic granules. However, the technical limitations of mechanical recycling need to be considered, as repeated recycling leads to thermal degradation of polymer chains, making it difficult to maintain packaging quality.
   - For flexible packaging in India, high variability in input material and contamination levels across regions makes recycling processes complex and inconsistent.

Solutions

1. The Pact signatories have collaboratively developed design guidance documents for PET beverage bottles, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) non-food rigid containers, and flexible packaging. Taking into consideration the unique challenges and ground realities of India, these documents provide technical and design-related recommendations which, if adopted, aim to improve recyclers' yield and quality of the final product and will help brands meet the EPR targets. This contextualised approach is crucial for making meaningful progress in India.

2. The Pact is working on understanding citizens' behaviours, for which it commissioned Nielsen IQ to carry out a consumer behaviour survey. Based on findings from the survey, CII-IPP is in the process of conducting a consumer awareness campaign on waste segregation at source using targeted messaging to increase awareness and encourage sustainable behaviour. It is working collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to adopt uniform messaging that encourages citizens to take up sustainable behaviours (waste segregation, refill, packaging reuse).

3. There is a need for a standard and trusted source of information for consumers of all age groups looking for basic information on plastics or wanting to learn how to reduce plastic pollution. To address this, the Pact is developing the Clear on Plastics© campaign, which aims to provide clear, simple, and scientifically accurate information on plastics to citizens.

4. JB Ecotex is developing chemical recycling in India, where the cost of chemically recycled PET is only 25–30% higher than that of virgin resin, compared to around 200% higher in Europe and the US.

5. Lucro addresses the challenge of flexible packaging by managing its complete waste cycle, from collecting the material, recycling it, and converting it into new packaging. They are also working on advanced technologies for de-inking and deodorising post-consumer flexible plastics.

6. To address the lack of transparency in product information, including packaging, and help consumers understand the sustainability impact of their purchase, Marico developed a Product Sustainability Index. This index maps the ESG footprint of products and communicates it clearly to consumers. Many brands are now taking similar steps, clearly articulating their purpose and the positive impact they create, which is exactly what consumers are seeking today.

https://youtu.be/ZSUCRCILFXA

L to R: Punit Singhal, Director - Food Grade rPET Resin Division, JB Ecotex Private Limited; Pratibha Priya Dewett, CSO, Lucro Plastecyle; Utsav Dixit, Co-chair, CII-IPP and Chief Sustainability and Growth Officer, ALPLA India Private Limited; Sreemoyee Bhattacharyya, Chair, CII-IPP Collaborative Action Group on Understanding Citizen Behaviour & Lead – Sustainability, Marico India Private Limited and Swaroop KVR, Head - Waste Management, Alliances and EPR, Srichakra Polyplast

"I think the key strength of the India Plastics Pact is its ability to bring together the entire plastics ecosystem. I can't think of any other platform like this, where waste management organizations, recyclers of different materials, manufacturers, converters, and brands can come together to discuss challenges related to any packaging.

Sreemoyee Bhattacharyya

SUSTAINABILITY IN THOUGHT AND DEED

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Learn more about
our sustainability initiatives

Scan to explore DCM Shriram Ltd.'s
Sustainability Report 2024-25

DCM SHRIRAM
Growing with trust

Breathing Better: Solutions for Clean Air

Moderator

Sunil Desai
Co-Chair
CII Cleaner Air Better Life and MD
Richfield Engineering

Panellists

Harsh Vardhan Bansal
Co-founder
Unity Group

Rahul Kapoor
Managing Director
Camfil

K.K. Sharma
Whole Time Director-EHS
DCM Shriram

Ronak Sutaria
Founder and CEO
Respire Living Sciences

The session convened leaders from real estate, industry, air-quality data science as well as solution providers to chart practical pathways for improving both outdoor and indoor air quality. Speakers emphasised the need for integrated action across construction norms, industrial sustainability, data governance, and citizen behaviour.

The central theme of the deliberations was the need to shift from reactive, seasonal responses to year-round, systemic solutions supported by transparent data and consistent regulatory frameworks. In line with this, the panellists also stressed the need for improved construction practices, strengthened indoor air quality standards, reliable monitoring networks, and a stronger push for circular economy practices within industry.

The discussion reinforced that air quality management is not a siloed responsibility but a shared mandate requiring aligned policies, reliable monitoring systems, and industry-led innovation. Key recommendations at the session included scaling dust-control measures at construction sites; adopting high-efficiency filtration systems indoors and embedding ESG considerations at the capex stage of industrial projects.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** Scaling new technologies such as low-cost monitors, high-efficiency filters, or dust-suppression systems requires predictable demand, which is not possible due to evolving regulatory mandates & incentives. Additionally, procurement continues to be based on short-term & low-cost choices, instead of focussing on life cycle focused options, hindering long-term performance.

2. **Social:** Compliance gaps in construction practices, material handling, and industrial housekeeping persist due to limited awareness and lack of training on basic dust-control measures such as sprinkling, wheel washing, or covering stored materials.

3. **Environmental & Public Health:** Dense urban corridors face compounding impacts of vehicular emissions, dust, and poor ventilation, creating year-round health risks. Seasonal spikes in pollution result in reactive measures (e.g., construction shutdowns), rather than continuous mitigation or prevention.

4. **Technological & Data Integrity:** Significant public investments in monitoring networks have not translated into actionable insights due to inconsistent data quality, limited spatial coverage, and absence of standards for low-cost sensors. Fragmented data systems restrict the use of real-time information for localised interventions or public communication. There is a pressing need for affordable, accurate, near-reference sensors and strong regulatory oversight.

Solutions

1. **Enabling Better Construction Practices:** Proven dust-control measures such as sprinklers, wind barriers, wheel-wash systems, and anti-smog guns should be standardised and monitored consistently. Material storage must be covered, and dust-prone activities more tightly regulated. Integrating green cover (e.g., Miyawaki plantations and native species) within developments can improve micro-climates and long-term resilience. Regulators should incentivise sustainable construction by offering higher FAR, reduced approval timelines, or property tax rebates for net-zero or 5-star green buildings.

2. **Using Reliable and Scalable Air-Quality Data:**

   Improving sensor accuracy, expanding monitoring networks beyond urban cores, and establishing certification protocols for data quality can enable evidence-based regulation. Reliable, regulated data can support hyperlocal interventions, influence health insurance and real estate valuations, and strengthen public awareness. Larger spatial and temporal coverage, supported by authenticated data streams is critical for building trust and enabling policy action.

3. **Promoting Life Cycle Thinking and Behavioural Change:**

   Decisions based on total cost of ownership rather than upfront price can accelerate the shift to high-efficiency filters (BIS-certified ISO 16890) and clean industrial technologies. Consumers must be made aware of the health and economic benefits of superior indoor filtration. Early education and school-level awareness programmes can help build long-term behavioural commitment to cleaner air.

4. **Wholistic Industrial Initiatives:** Integrate ESG assessments at the CapEx stage to embed pollution control into project design from the outset. Promote circular economy models such as ethanol from molasses; Compressed Biogas (CBG) from waste and bio-composting to address agricultural and industrial emissions. Scale adoption of renewable energy, EV-based transport, and afforestation initiatives. Implement measures at workplace that reduce emissions, noise, and occupational health risks simultaneously.

L to R: Harsh Vardhan Bansal, Co-founder, Unity Group; Mr Sunil Desai, Co-Chair – CII Cleaner Air, Better Life and MD, Richfield Engineering; Ronak Sutaria, Founder & CEO, Respire Living Sciences; K.K. Sharma, Whole Time Director-EHS, DCM Shriram and Rahul Kapoor, MD, Camfil

> Circular economy models, CBG, ethanol, farmer training are transforming Industry's environmental footprint and reducing emissions at scale.

K. K. Sharma

> We need accurate, accessible, and regulated air-quality data. Without reliable information, neither policy nor public behaviour can shift meaningfully.

Ronak Sutaria

NextGen Greenpreneurs: Youth-Led Startups Transforming the Green Economy

Moderator

Rhea Singhal
Founder
Ecoware

Panellists

Ravi Kaushik
Founder and CEO
Airth

Sameer Kelkar
CEO and R&D Head
Grind Master Machine

Sukhmeet Singh
Co-founder
A2P Energy

The session brought together pioneering entrepreneurs to discuss how youth-led startups are driving the green economy. The conversation delved into the 'how' of their journeys, exploring how they identify green opportunities and build scalable businesses that address pressing sustainability challenges like crop residue burning, industrial re-manufacturing and indoor air pollution.

The deliberation highlighted the critical need for affordable, cost-competitive, sustainable solutions and the importance of simplifying frameworks such for ESG and carbon credits for wider adoption, especially by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). A central theme was the dual challenge of achieving scalability while navigating entrenched fossil fuel supply chains and complex market value chains.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** A significant challenge for sustainable startups is the high capital expenditure (capex) required for scaling green technologies, such as setting up biofuel boilers. Startups have to compete with heavily subsidised and established organisations that are already benefitting from cost-effective supply chain.
2. **Social:** There is a persistent perception, particularly in India, that remanufactured or reconditioned products are inferior to new ones, as they come from a "workshop" rather than a systematic manufacturing process. Another challenge is that consumers prioritise cost over sustainability, with buyers looking at the price tag before checking the environmental credentials of a product.
3. **Environmental:** The ongoing issue of agricultural biomass burning persists due to a lack of economically viable choices for farmers to manage crop residue. Furthermore, the scale of afforestation does not match the rate of deforestation, indicating a gap in ground-level environmental restoration efforts.
4. **Technological:** A key challenge lies in integrating new, clean technologies into existing infrastructure, such as upgrading conventional air conditioners to deliver clean air, and developing localised solutions for biomass conversion that are both technically and economically feasible.

Solutions

1. There is a need for simplifying ESG and carbon credit mechanisms for SMEs.
2. Industry-led solutions are gaining traction, with companies such as Maruti Suzuki and Cummins proactively supporting sustainable innovations and opting for remanufactured machines.
3. There is a lot of focus on creating circular economy models, such as converting agricultural and local organic waste into biofuel for industrial processes, thereby reducing carbon footprints.
4. The private sector is also innovating to make clean tech more affordable, developing solutions that deliver air purification at a fraction of the traditional cost and finding ways to use reject water from industries for outdoor air purification.

L to R: Ravi Kaushik, Founder & CEO, Airth; Rhea Singhal, Founder, Ecoware; Sukhmeet Singh, Co-founder, A2P Energy and Sameer Kelkar, CEO and R&D Head, Grind Master Machine

https://youtu.be/dU45MR3u6GE

"I believe that youth-based startups in the remanufacturing space can generate a lot of jobs. Remanufacturing is much more demanding in terms of engineering and skills, because we need to make remanufactured products with all the technological upgrades that happened in the past 10 to 15 years, making the products as good as new with the warranty of a new product.

Sameer Kelkar

Resilient Urban Infrastructure

Moderator

Nitin Seth
CEO
New Mobility
Reliance Industries Ltd

Panellists

Shekhar Singh (IAS)
Municipal Commissioner
Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

Debolina Kundu
Director
National Institute of Urban Affairs

Rajeev Agarwal
CEO
BitChem

Gaurav Mathur
Lead Business Development Manager
Commercial Building Services
Grundfos

The session brought together municipal leadership, policy experts, industry innovators, and technology providers to discuss strategies for building climate-resilient and sustainable cities. Speakers emphasised the need to integrate urban planning, technology, financing, and citizen engagement to address challenges such as flooding, air pollution, encroachment, and infrastructure durability. The discussion highlighted the role of collaborative governance, data-driven decision-making, and industry partnerships beyond Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in driving systemic change. A key takeaway was the importance of localised adaptation of global best practices, supported by innovative financing mechanisms such as municipal bonds, to strengthen urban resilience in rapidly urbanising Indian cities.

Challenges

1. **Financial:** Municipalities face persistent funding gaps for infrastructure upgrades. While schemes exist, their utilisation is often hampered by delayed disbursements and limited capacity to leverage alternative instruments such as municipal bonds or blended finance. At the same time, scaling resilient infrastructure technologies without predictable demand and financing models.
2. **Social:** Rapid urbanisation is outpacing institutional capacities, leading to issues of informal development, limited citizen participation, and behavioural inertia. There is also limited awareness and participation of citizens in climate and mobility initiatives, which affects the long-term sustainability of interventions.
3. **Environmental:** Rising extreme weather events, frequent flooding, and worsening air quality are putting increasing stress on urban infrastructure. India's cities face dual challenges of climate adaptation and mitigation.
4. **Technological:** Although tools like GIS, AI-based flood and traffic management, and durable road construction technologies exist, their adoption remains limited due to fragmented data systems, lack of interoperability, and insufficient capacity-building at the municipal level.

Solutions

1. The session emphasised the need for a holistic and integrated approach to building resilient urban infrastructure. A key solution discussed was the mainstreaming of resilience into urban planning frameworks, starting from the Master Plan stage. Embedding climate resilience considerations into statutory planning instruments, supported by GIS-based mapping and data integration, can help cities identify high-risk zones, manage encroachments, and design infrastructure that withstands extreme events.
2. Participants highlighted the value of real-time data systems that combine transport, air quality, and flood-related information to guide targeted interventions such as rerouting public transport, optimising bus stop spacing, and improving road and drainage design to minimise congestion and emissions.

Solutions

3. The discussion underlined the need to leverage innovative financing mechanisms, including municipal bonds, blended finance models, and outcome-based funding to address municipal budget constraints. Such mechanisms can unlock private sector participation beyond CSR, enabling larger and sustained investments in resilient infrastructure.

4. Technological innovation was seen as a critical enabler. Tools such as AI-based flood and traffic management, advanced road construction materials, and integrated water-energy solutions can strengthen city systems when adopted in a planned, interoperable manner. To maximise their impact, institutional capacity-building, regulatory clarity, and standardisation are essential.

5. Citizen engagement and stakeholder co-creation emerged as pivotal for long-term resilience. Engaging citizens in planning, implementation, and monitoring not only increases awareness and ownership but also ensures that solutions are locally relevant and widely accepted.

https://youtu.be/6VkMHLModBQ

L to R: Rajeev Agarwal, CEO, BitChem; Shekhar Singh (IAS), Municipal Commissioner, Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation; Nitin Seth, CEO, New Mobility, Reliance Industries Ltd.; Debolina Kundu, Director, National Institute of Urban Affairs and Gaurav Mathur, Lead Business Development, Grundfos

We must move from reactive measures to proactive planning—integrating resilience right from the Master Plan stage. Our approach in city is to use real-time data and GIS to identify vulnerabilities and act before crises happen

Shekhar Singh

Urban resilience is not just a technical issue; it is also about governance, citizen engagement, and financing innovation. Cities that bring citizens and private sector together in decision-making will see transformative results.

Debolina Kundu

We are seeing increasing willingness from municipalities to explore new materials and technologies that are climate-friendly and locally adaptable. This is a positive shift from short-term fixes to long-term sustainable solutions.

Rajeev Agarwal

Integrated water and energy management solutions are no longer optional—they are becoming central to resilient urban infrastructure. The encouraging part is that cities are now open to partnerships that combine technology, financing, and operational know-how to make this a reality.

Gaurav Mathur

Reimagining Sustainability: The Power of Purposeful Partnerships

Panellists

Dr Balakrishna Pisupati
Country Head
UNEP India

Seema Arora
Deputy Director General
Confederation of Indian Industry

As climate and sustainability challenges intensify, it is increasingly clear that transformative changes cannot be achieved in silos. The future calls for a new paradigm, one where collaboration across sectors, industries, institutions, and communities becomes the foundation for progress.

The session explored the transformative role of partnerships in driving sustainability, highlighting the need for inclusive, purpose-driven collaboration across sectors to meet India's environmental and developmental goals.

Dr Pisupati underscored the importance of aligning sustainability efforts with national priorities and global frameworks, such as the SDGs and climate commitments. He stressed that partnerships must go beyond transactional relationships to foster systemic change, especially in areas like biodiversity, circular economy, and climate resilience.

Seema Arora echoed this sentiment, emphasising that industry must embrace sustainability not just as compliance but as a strategic imperative. She highlighted CII's role in enabling ESG integration, capacity building, and policy advocacy, and called for deeper engagement between government, industry, and civil society to scale impact.

Key Takeaways

- **Sustainability is a systems challenge:** Environmental concerns span resource consumption and pollution, requiring coordinated action across the entire value chain. No single stakeholder can drive change alone.
- **Purposeful partnerships are essential:** Collaboration between industry, government, civil society, and institutions is vital to accelerate sustainability outcomes and meet climate and development goals.
- **Empowered consumers drive transformation:** Individual actions matter. Informed and engaged consumers can influence industry practices, especially toward products designed for durability and end-of-life reuse.
- **Policy enablement and incentives matter:** Green incentives and supportive policy frameworks are powerful levers for change. Rewarding environmentally sound behavior can reinforce sustainable choices.
- **Sustainability must be strategic, not just compliant:** Businesses must embed sustainability into core strategy, moving beyond checklists to long-term value creation and resilience.
- **Capacity building and ESG integration are critical:** Industry transformation hinges on equipping stakeholders with the knowledge, tools, and governance structures to implement ESG effectively.
- **Localized solutions aligned with global frameworks:** India's sustainability journey must reflect local realities while staying interoperable with global standards like SDGs, GRI, and IFRS.
- **Awareness and education unlock action:** While citizens express willingness to act sustainably, they often lack guidance. Research and outreach are key to bridging this gap.
- **Small-scale success stories inspire scale:** Entrepreneurs and small businesses have demonstrated impactful sustainability practices. These models should be documented and scaled to inspire broader adoption.

https://youtu.be/7-OLNi3daTA

Dr Balakrishna Pisupati, Country Head, UNEP India and Seema Arora; Deputy Director General, CII

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- goal: train 10,000 women for logistics roles across eternal
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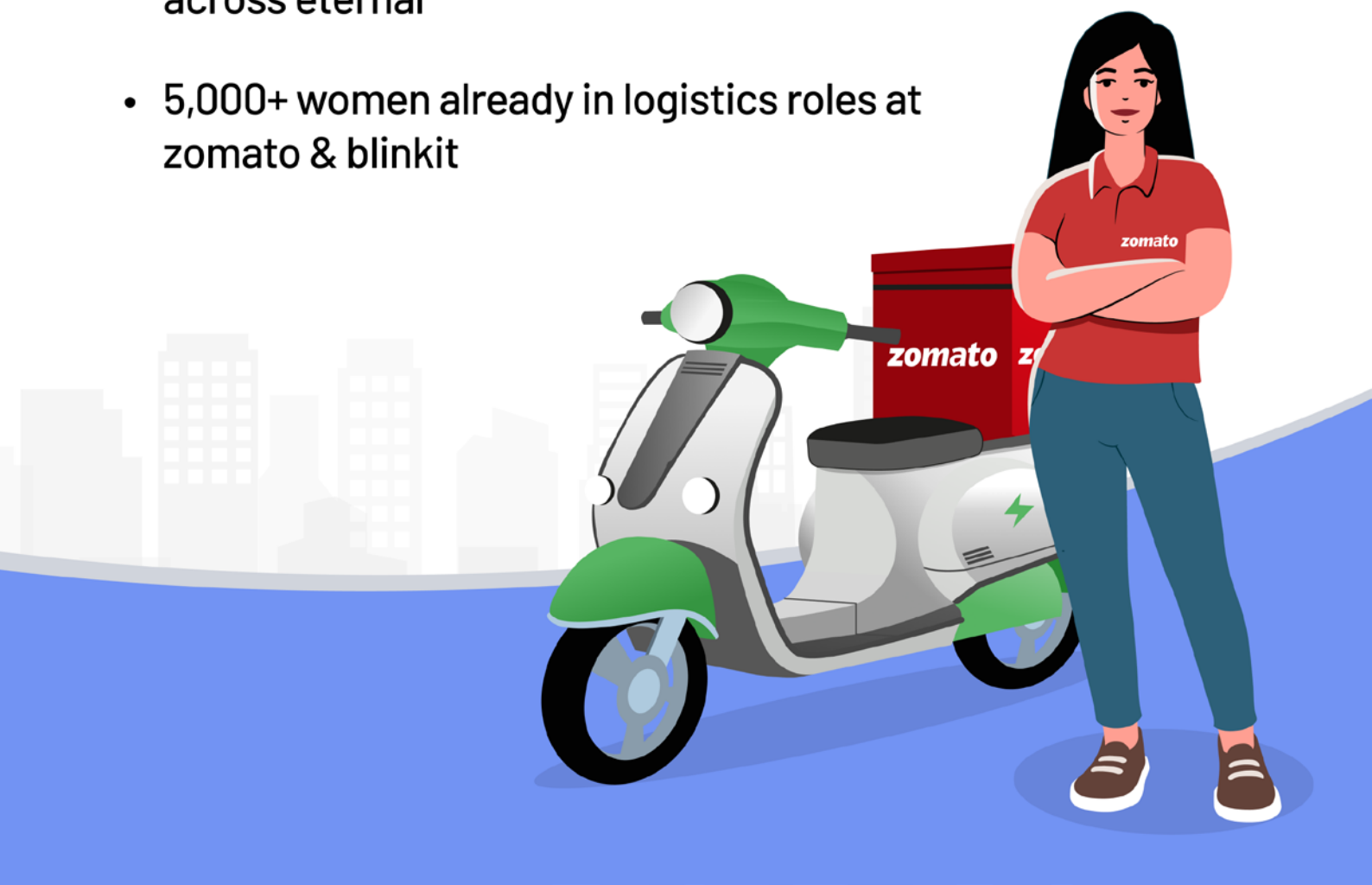

Side Events & Roundtables

Closed Door CEO Roundtable on Physical Risk in Value Chains

The CEO Roundtable was organised in collaboration with WBCSD to bring together Indian business leaders to discuss strategic responses to physical climate risks. The session highlighted that climate events are becoming patterned and exponential in nature, making adaptation and resilience essential business imperatives alongside emission reductions. The roundtable highlighted practical approaches to risk assessment and management across value chains; shared best practices and shaped a collective agenda for corporate climate resilience.

Participants highlighted how physical risk assessments are being run across sites and value chains, with adaptation measures already being implemented. It was shared that beyond operations, companies are exploring digital twins' post-sale to track circularity across the product lifecycle. It was also stressed that corporates need to embed circularity into design, packaging, and labelling to truly close loops.

Key Takeaways

- Physical risk are no longer abstract sustainability issues but immediate economic risks.
- It must be integrated into business strategy, board discussions, and procurement decisions.
- Digital tools, AI modelling, and scenario simulations are essential enablers for resilience but must also include MSMEs.
- Financial quantification is key as companies often look for clarity on costs of action vs. inaction; more work is needed to link risks to financial outcomes.
- More efforts are required for circularity & resilience; corporates must embed circularity into design, packaging, and operations.
- Challenges like heat stress, water scarcity, or soil health can vary widely across locations. Localised adaptation will be critical for efficient solutions for low-cost interventions.

Closed Door CEO Roundtable on Physical Risk in Value Chains

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Eco Edge 2nd Annual Stakeholder Meet

The Second Annual Eco Edge Stakeholder Meet was held on 2 September 2025 brought together 55 participants from diverse sectors to discuss the evolving ESG landscape in India.

The meeting provided an engaging platform for dialogue and learning, with discussions covering CII's work on ESG and Eco Edge, a Masterclass on BRSR Core, a panel discussion on ESG in Finance: A Multi-faceted Approach, and insights on driving ESG impact across companies and value chains.

It opened with an overview of the Eco Edge programme's mission to build sustainable value chains and its potential role in policy advocacy. The session showcased ESG initiatives, including the launch of a SaaS-based ESG tool, peer benchmarking, and maturity certification, which have already impacted hundreds of companies and professionals. The Centre's policy advocacy efforts were also highlighted, including contributions to SEBI's BRSR Core framework and international ESG standard alignment.

The Masterclass on BRSR Core emphasized the growing importance of ESG disclosures, especially for value chain partners and MSMEs. It featured practical insights from Axis Max Life Insurance's ESG journey, underscoring the need for robust governance, stakeholder engagement, and data systems. A panel discussion on ESG in finance revealed how investors are integrating ESG into decision-making, with emphasis on risk mitigation, data credibility, and tailored financial instruments for SMEs.

The final session showcased corporate ESG strategies from Apraava Energy, Škoda Auto Volkswagen India, and Bisleri, highlighting supplier assessments, global-local ESG alignment, and integrated sustainability frameworks.

Key Takeaways

- ESG is becoming integral to investment decisions, with a focus on risk, governance, and long-term value creation.
- Investors increasingly evaluate sustainability-related risks, management quality, and ESG practices alongside financial performance. Transparent disclosure and credible ESG storytelling enhance valuation and foster investor confidence.
- High-quality, investor-grade ESG data is critical for credibility, supporting long-term investment and reinforcing corporate narratives.
- SMEs and large corporates require tailored support, including ESG-linked financing, sustainability assessments, and supply chain incentives, to integrate ESG into operations and value chains.
- Leadership buy-in, embedding ESG culture, and articulating a coherent strategy before disclosure are essential for credible ESG performance and access to sustainable finance.
- Supplier engagement and capacity building are vital, as regulatory compliance and ESG readiness influence competitiveness, funding access, and long-term viability.
- Aligning global ESG frameworks with local contexts and supplier capacities ensures effective implementation, supported by governance, KPIs, and incentives.

L-R: Ms. K.S. Priyadarshini, Director & Head Sustainable Finance, HSBC Bank; Mr. Vishal Bhavsar, Head ESG, Multiples Equity; Mr Chirag Mehta, Chief Investment Officer, Quantum AMC

L-R: Sandeep Raheja, Chief Procurement Officer, Apraava Energy; Ganesh Kalia, Director - Sustainability & Corporate Affairs, Bisleri International Pvt Ltd; Ajay Bhatt, Head – Corporate, Product and Sustainability Strategy, Škoda Auto Volkswagen India Private Limited (SAVWIPL)

Networking Breakfast Session – Conversations & Connections

As part of the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit, the CII Centre for Women Leadership (CWL) organised a dedicated networking breakfast session for Women in Sustainability on 3 September. The session served as a dynamic forum for women professionals from diverse sectors to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange experiences, and identify opportunities for collaboration. It brought together more than 70 seasoned women leaders, emerging changemakers, and passionate advocates, all united by a shared commitment to advancing sustainability.

While women play a critical role in advancing sustainability, there remains a lack of structured platforms that enable their active engagement, collaboration, and leadership across sectors. The CII Centre for Women Leadership seeks to address this gap by building a gender-inclusive Community of Practice that empowers women leaders, changemakers, and advocates to drive impactful sustainability initiatives. This initiative complements and strengthens CESD's mission by ensuring that women's voices, leadership, and unique perspectives are actively included in shaping sustainable development strategies.

Community of Practice on Women in Sustainability: Objectives

- To create a platform for knowledge exchange, enabling members to share experiences, best practices, and lessons learned.
- To foster collaboration by facilitating partnerships and joint initiatives among diverse stakeholders, including government, civil society, businesses, and research institutions.
- To empower women leaders in sustainability, enhancing their capacity to advocate for their issues and contribute effectively to sustainable development.
- To encourage innovation by developing solutions to gender-specific challenges in the sustainability sector.

Networking breakfast session for Women in Sustainability

Roundtable: Harnessing Data & Technology for Clean Air in Cities & Industries

On 3 September, CII hosted the Roundtable on "Harnessing Data & Technology for Clean Air in Cities & Industries" which brought together around 23 stakeholders including industry members at India CEO Forum for Clean Air to harness data-driven solutions for a much-needed dynamic policy response and proactive air quality management in cities & industries.

The roundtable highlighted the need for gradual shift from compliance-based reporting to real-time management by leveraging actionable solutions, especially near-reference grade solutions with reliable data for dynamic policy & management response from city administrators and plant managers.

CII CABL Roundtable on Harnessing Data & Technology for Clean Air in Cities & Industries

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Roundtable: Financing Transition to Zero Emission Vehicular Fleets

On 3 September, CII's Clean Air Better Life initiative organised a Roundtable on "Financing Transition to Zero-Emission Vehicular Fleets". The deliberations brought together around 20 leaders from finance, logistics, and mobility domains to deliberate ease of financing for zero emission vehicles across the value chain of deliveries. The participants highlighted the operational cost advantage of EVs, while acknowledging challenges such as high upfront costs, secondary markets, and high-risk perceptions among lenders. Discussions focussed on the urgent need to scale emerging solutions like asset management, blended financing and other such risk-sharing models, underscoring the role of partnership-driven ecosystems in accelerating the transition to zero emission fleets. The roundtable concluded with a clarion call for multi-sectoral consortium as a key to advancing zero emission deliveries.

CII CABL Roundtable on Financing Transition to Zero-Emission Vehicular Fleets

Roundtable on Emerging trends in Nature-related Risk & Opportunity Management

As part of the CII 20th Global Sustainability Summit, a high-level roundtable on "Emerging Trends in Nature-related Risk & Opportunity Management" was held on 3 September 2025 in New Delhi. The roundtable was chaired by Tony Goldner, CEO of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD). The session brought together over 30 Indian companies for an in-depth dialogue on the evolving nature-related disclosure landscape.

Goldner shared perspectives on integrating nature-related aspects into Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) disclosures using the TNFD recommendations. He also spoke about the global adoption of TNFD, development of sector-specific guidance, and the importance of improving access to nature-related data through TNFD's Nature Data Public Facility initiative.

Indian business leaders shared their early experiences with TNFD implementation, including challenges related to data availability, assigning financial value to nature-related risks, and integrating these considerations into existing reporting structures and business decision-making. The roundtable served as a valuable platform for peer learning, highlighting the growing importance of addressing nature and climate risks in a cohesive and strategic manner.

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B2B Meetings

Media Coverage

THE ECONOMIC TIMES | News

India is committed to fighting climate change, says Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav

Synopsis

Despite developed nations' unfulfilled financial and technological commitments, India remains committed to multilateralism and combating climate change, stated Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav. He emphasized India's dedication to finding solutions and highlighted the nation's successful model of sustainable growth. India is poised to lead global growth while balancing ecology and development.

MP Bhupender Yadav holds talks with COP30 President Designate Ambassador on climate change

India has faith in multilateralism and is committed to fighting climate change even though developed countries have failed in fulfilling their commitment to provide finance and technology to developing nations, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Tuesday.

न्यूज़

02/09/25 | 12:58 pm | Bhupender Yadav | Global Sustainability Summit

Bhupender Yadav Pitches For Resilience, Regeneration, Responsibility At Global Sustainability Summit

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Tuesday said India's growth model seeks to strike a balance between economic progress and ecological stewardship, stressing that sustainability should be seen as a lifestyle choice rather than a distant goal.

Addressing the 20th Global Sustainability Summit in Delhi organised by the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development, Yadav said India has emerged as the fastest-growing major economy while also taking the lead in climate action.

Hindustan Times

India concerned about Global South's rights in climate talks: Bhupender Yadav

He referred to his meeting with COP 30 President André Aranha Corrêa do Lago (Brazil) in Delhi on Monday and said many issues remain pending

Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav said the implementation of carbon markets will be among key issues at COP30. (X)

Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav on Tuesday said India is concerned about the Global South's rights in

rediff

India & Climate Change: Yadav at CII Summit

New Delhi, Sep 2 (PTI) India has faith in multilateralism and is committed to fighting climate change even though developed countries have failed in fulfilling their commitment to provide finance and technology to developing nations, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Tuesday.

Participating in a panel discussion during the 20th CII Sustainability Summit, he said climate change is a global threat but its impact is felt most severely by developing countries which are not responsible for the crisis.

Daily World

Wed, 03 Sep 2025; daily - Daily World - Chandigarh; Size: 87.49 sq. cm.; Circulation: 125000; Page: 5

India has faith in multilateralism, committed to fighting climate change: Bhupender Yadav

NEW DELHI India has faith in multilateralism and is committed to fighting climate change even though developed countries have failed in fulfilling their commitment to provide finance and technology to developing nations, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Tuesday. Participating in a panel discussion during the 20th CII Sustainability Summit, he said climate change is a global threat but its impact is felt most severely by developing countries which are not responsible for the crisis.

"Our first stand is... we have faith in multilateral forums and our prime minister's clear message is that India will be part of the solution, not the problem," Yadav said. "Developing nations need finance and technology to deal with climate change, and developed countries have not fulfilled their commitments for

said.

Discussing his meeting with COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago here on Monday, Yadav said they discussed ways to advance work on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement as well as issues related to climate finance and "the rights of the Global South".

"We are very concerned about the rights of the Global South. We discussed that this is a multilateral forum, so every country must contribute its positive role in the COP," he said.

The Assam Tribune

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India balances fastest economic growth with global climate leadership: Bhupender Yadav

Gadkari bats for green hydrogen and biofuels as sustainable path to a developed economy

The transport ministry has started pilot projects across 10 highways to convert them into green hydrogen corridors, with trucks and buses as well as refuelling stations, says Gadkari.

Manas Pimpalkhare

Published • 2 Sep 2025, 11:17 PM IST

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari(ANI)

New Delhi: Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari said on Tuesday that using indigenous green hydrogen and biofuels in the transport sector would contribute to India's ambition to become a developed economy.

ET Infra.com

From The Economic Times

Gadkari pitches green hydrogen to cut transport fuel costs and boost energy exports

Nitin Gadkari said lowering hydrogen fuel costs could transform transport, reduce dependence, and make India an energy exporter.

Road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said green hydrogen could significantly lower fuel costs for road transport, railways, shipping and air travel. He said research should focus on lowering the cost of hydrogen fuel to meet specific needs.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal (Photo/ANI)

"Competitiveness will only get better with sustainable pathway": Piyush Goyal at CII Sustainability Summit

ANI | Updated: Sep 02, 2025 13:37 IST

New Delhi [India], September 2 (ANI): Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Tuesday emphasised that competitiveness would only improve with a sustainable pathway as India continues to remain committed to its sustainability goals.

ET THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Wed, 03 Sep 2025; daily - Economic Times - Ahmedabad; Size: 324.61 sq. cm.; Circulation: 17524; Page: 8

GOYAL SAYS 13TH ROUND OF INDIA-EU FTA SET FOR SEPTEMBER 8

Trade Talks with US, EU Going on; Ties with China Looking up

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India is in dialogue with the US for a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said Tuesday, adding that trade negotiations with the EU are at an advanced stage and relations with China are "returning to normal" as border tensions ease.

Goyal said the 13th round of India-EU free trade agreement (FTA) is set for September 8 with EU trade commissioner Maroš Šefčovič visiting New Delhi on September 8.

His statement comes after US treasury secretary Scott Bessent termed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), of which India, Russia and China are a part, as being largely performative.

"I think at the end of the day, India is the most populous democracy in the world. Their values are much closer to ours and to China's than to Russia's... I think at the end of the day, two great countries (India and the US) will get this solved. But the Indians have not been great actors in terms

Our supply chains are resilient. We are not at the mercy of any other country choosing to switch on or switch off the tap, making India atmanirbhar

PIYUSH GOYAL
Commerce & Industry minister

SME STREET

India Emerges as a Global Sustainability Leader: Piyush Goyal at CII's Global Sustainability Summit

Business Standard

Kimbal Named CII Emerging Eco Organization, Showcases ESG Leadership in Energy-Tech

New Delhi [India], September 8: Kimbal Private Limited (formerly Sinhal Udyog Pvt. Ltd.), India's leading provider of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) solutions, has been recognized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) as an Emerging Eco Organization for 2024-25. This recognition, awarded through the CII Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development,

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

For 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with the Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

In the journey of India's economic resurgence, CII facilitates the multifaceted contributions of the Indian Industry, charting a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future. With this backdrop, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme for 2025-26, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 9 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 250 counterpart organisations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

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CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development

20 YEARS OF CELEBRATING SUSTAINABILITY

The CII Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD), now in its 20th year, drives sustainable, environmental, inclusive and climate-friendly transformation among stakeholders. It is the ecosystem creator for sustainable development in India and builds collaborative initiatives for enhancing actions; designs data-driven digital tools and frameworks for capacity development and advocates for policy reforms to advance responsible business practices.

CESD works towards bringing local and global macro challenges to the centerstage; building policy consensus on critical issues; strengthening stakeholders' awareness and representation on policy & regulatory reforms and enabling actions that positively impact the environment, nature and communities.

With a vision to drive transformation towards sustainable development, CESD continues to play a focal role in Government-Industry dialogues on national regulations; articulating stakeholders' discourse on global policies; putting forth Indian Industry's stand on macro-economic issues and accentuating the need for sustainable and inclusive transformation.

CESD focuses on six transformational pathways: Advancing Creation of a Circular Economy; Facilitating an Facilitating and Enabling ESG Ecosystem Accelerating Nature Positive Actions; Enhancing Solutions for Clean Air; Building Climate Resilience and Low- Carbon Economy and Fostering Dialogues, Engagements & Knowledge Exchange.

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