Enabling responsible business for a sustainable future

With a vision to create a synergy for the corporate sector as a whole to move towards sustainability, TERI-BCSD (Business Council for Sustainable Development) was set up by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in 2001. The Indian partner of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Geneva, the Council has now evolved into a strong industry body with membership of more than 100 companies from diverse sectors, including PSUs, MNCs, and private companies from across India. TERI-BCSD is a guide to the Indian corporate diaspora encouraging businesses to develop a vision of a sustainable company, translate that vision into a management action plan, and turn sustainability into a competitive advantage. The Council member company representatives identify, conceptualize, and implement projects in partnership with researchers at TERI, where TERI provides research and implementation support to the business council and acts as the permanent technical resource.

Mission
To provide an independent and credible platform for corporate leaders to address the issues related to sustainable development and to promote leadership in environmental management, social responsibility, and economic performance.

The work undertaken by TERI–BCSD India has no ideological or political bias.

This session was initiated by Dr R K Pachauri; who spoke about the impact of climate change and greenhouse gas emission on global commons, and the effects of their destruction on society. As an example of these effects, Dr Pachauri mentioned the impact of climate change on sea-level rise in coastal areas.

Mr Peter Bakker revealed how in India, a greater number of people are being made aware of sustainability. Mr Bakker also stated that business has a clear role to play in ensuring sustainability. Mr Sudhir Vasudeva shed light on sustainable development in terms of his work in the hydrocarbon sector. He illustrated a five-point agenda; dealing with a company’s carbon footprint, the role of small businesses, initiation of outreach for sustainability, global citizenship, and issues of ethics and morality.

Dr Sam Pitroda emphasized that developmental modules based on 20th century experiences are not sustainable or desirable, and we need to critically analyse them. According to Dr Pitroda, sustainability is a buzz word that everybody is concerned about. He also illuminated Gandhi’s thoughts on sustainability. Mr Anand Sharma spoke about the role of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in relation to sustainable development, and the potential of green and clean technology in the cause of sustainability.

Ms Annapurna Vancheswaran delivered the vote of thanks.
Panel Discussion I

Doing Business while Protecting the Global Commons: Case studies and lessons learnt since Rio 1992

Chairperson and Moderator Mr Nitin Desai, Chairman, TERI-BCSD and Former UN Under Secretary General
Panelists Ms Aimee Christensen, Founder & CEO, Christensen Global Strategies, LLC and Strategic Adviser, Prince of Wales’ Business & Sustainability Programme • Mr Ajit Gulabchand, Chairman and Managing Director, Hindustan Construction Company, Chairman, TERI-BCSD and Former UN Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs • Dr Bindu N Lohani, Vice-President, Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank • Mr Philippe Joubert, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Atos • Mr Anil Jain, Chairman and Managing Director, Jain Irrigation Ltd • Mr Venkatesh Valluri, Chairman, India Region, Ingersoll-Rand (India) Limited

Former Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, Mr Nitin Desai, chaired and moderated the first panel discussion at the World CEO Sustainability Summit. As 2012 has been designated the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All by the UN; it was appropriate that the Special Advisor to the United Nations High Level Group of Sustainable Energy for All, Ms Aimee Christensen, emphasized the roles and responsibilities of business development, and the necessity to internalize externalities for sustainability. Ms Christensen subsequently spoke about the requirement of mutual cooperation between businesses and government as an essential pre-requisite for sustainable development.

Mr Ajit Gulabchand, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Hindustan Construction Company, drew upon his vast experience in the areas of sustainable development and disaster resource management to describe how water resource management is an essential part of the movement towards sustainability. Mr Gulabchand also spoke about ensuring the reusability and recyclability of water resources. Mr Anil Jain emphasized the role of irrigation in food and water management, and spoke about the impact of water recycling, which is a form of renewable energy in the realm of sustainable agriculture.

Mr Philippe Joubert talked about carbon emissions and carbon footprints as major issues related to sustainability, and mentioned the kind of research and development that is needed to address this problem. Dr Bindu N Lohani talked about the role of policy-makers in sustainable development; in addition, he also addressed the need for forest conservation as a crucial component of sustainability.

Dr Ajay Mathur shed light on energy efficiency and sustainability, while Mr Nitin Paranjpe addressed the role of water resources as sources of renewable energy. Mr Venkatesh Valluri spoke about the use of conversion strategies as one of the possible solutions for sustainable development; expanding this idea to cover business conversion, technology conversion, and social conversion.

SPECIAL EVENT

Business Solutions for Sustainable Energy for All: Corporate Leadership in Addressing Energy Challenges in India

The TERI-BCSD, in collaboration with the WBCSD organized a special event “Business Solutions for Sustainable Energy for All: Corporate Leadership in Addressing Energy Challenges in India” on 1 February on the sidelines of the 9th World CEO Sustainability Summit. Speaking at the Expert Panel I, Mr Harry Verhaar, Senior Director – Energy and Climate Change, Philips Lighting compared the current status of rural India and Africa to Europe in the 1860s. Dr Pradeep Monga, Director of Energy and Climate Change Branch, UNIDO emphasized that to achieve “energy for all,” we have to keep in mind three goals—achieving energy access to all by 2030; doubling sharing of energy by 2030; and doubling energy efficiency by 2030.

The Expert Panel II discussed the fact that energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency are the focus areas for the energy sector for providing sustainable energy to all. It was stressed that business should engage with policy-makers and the process of policy-making should consider that fossil fuel reserves are finite and the present distribution of energy is inequitable. The panelists also emphasized on adequate policy frameworks and innovative financing mechanisms and the need to move beyond dialogue and partnership and address the aspirations of the poor.

The CEO Panel dwelt on the role to be played by business in transforming national energy systems. While environment friendly technologies were the focus, it was also clearly stated that unlike the developed world, renewable energy is a part of the mainstream energy solution in India and, hence, business should drive the final solutions.
Mr Yvo de Boer chaired and moderated the session invoking Gandhiji’s words—“Our planet can accommodate our need, but not our greed.” Mr Raghupathi N Cavale emphasized on inclusive and sustainable growth and focused on the IT, telecom, and automation industries with regard to energy efficiency. He also talked about energy saving in the agriculture and banking sectors, and how progress was being made in the right direction. Dr Joseph Fiksel raised concerns about the rapid and rampant consumption of the existing pool of natural resources as a result of which the pool was fast depleting. He also stated that India could be a laboratory for innovation and provision of concrete and workable solutions in sustainable development, and mentioned about “dematerialization” as a solution for a sustainable environment.

Talking about the role of banking in environment, Mr Girish Aivalii emphasized on the need for adopting sustainable practices and excellent management systems. Mr M S Mehta focused on food security and energy security as well as conservation of natural resources. The main focus of the deliberations moved to the power sector where Mr Rajiv Ranjan Mishra spoke about the role of the power sector in maintaining a sustainable environment and the progress made thus far. On a different note, Mr Noel Ryan talked about the acceleration of the process of urbanization in India, which is proving to be a challenge to the restoration and maintenance of the ecological balance. In his address, Mr Arun Seth focused on the business ecosystem in the telecom sector and the move towards a sustainable environment.

As they said it

Policy-making goes hand in hand with strategy to build the atmosphere for sustainable development.

Mr Raghupathi N Cavale
Vice-President – India Business, Infosys Ltd

Technology and sustainability are a never ending journey.

Mr M S Mehta
Group CEO, Vedanta

Mr Arun Seth
Chairman, BT India & Alcatel – Lucent India & Vice-Chairman, TERI-BCSD

Realizing the MDGs: the Forests-Poverty Link

The Forestry and Biodiversity Group, in partnership with the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, organized a Special Event on the theme “Realizing the MDGs: the Forests-Poverty Link” on 1 February 2012. In his opening remarks, Dr P J Dilip Kumar, Director General Forests, and Special Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, said that forests should be used to maintain ecological services while reducing people’s dependence on forests and developing alternative livelihood opportunities. He stressed on the importance of cross-fertilization of ideas among scientists and practitioners, and the need for forest services to develop allies outside the department, who could represent their views adequately. Mr Ashwini Kumar, Additional Chief Conservator of Forests, Uttar Pradesh provided an overview of forestry and poverty, and alleviation programmes in the state.

The technical sessions focused on the poverty reduction potential of participatory forestry approaches and the Forest Rights Act 2006. Speakers in these sessions included high level representatives from central and state governments, international agencies, research institutes, and grassroots organizations. Special presentations were made by officials of states (West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh), where the Forest Rights Act is being implemented.
The high level session was introduced by Dr Kandeh K Yumkella where he set the theme for the discussion by highlighting three targets that need to be achieved by 2030, namely: ensuring universal access to modern energy, doubling the rate of improvement in energy efficiency, and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Mr Erik Solheim stressed upon the public-private partnership where the grants/funds should lead to leveraging investments towards technology-neutral modern energy access programmes. Dr Farooq Abdullah suggested measures towards cutting down subsidies on kerosene and diesel so as to mobilize resources for renewable energy promotion and environmental protection. Dr R K Pachauri urged the proactive participation of big corporates in the field of research and development to cater to the needs of the society at large. He further emphasized the need for awareness creation at the household level to adopt clean and energy efficient technologies. Mr David Sandalow also stressed on taking energy efficient products to the market and up-scaling them.

The session also witnessed interesting discussions on recognizing traditional local knowledge and skills, where Dr Elinor Ostrom identified some of the best practices in Africa and Asia. Mr Peter Bakker mentioned the importance of stable policies and regulatory regimes to support the initiatives taken by the private sector. Dr Bindu N Lohani raised some pertinent issues like modalities of leveraging private money, difficulties in taking projects to remote and far flung rural areas, and linking energy projects to income generating activities. Mr Patrice Coeur-Bizot advocated the importance of capacity building to strengthen the energy security projects.

Mr Peter Bakker delivered the vote of thanks and also mentioned that “dematerialization” could be a solution for a green future and sustainable environment. According to Mr Bakker, the first panel focused on technical perceptions of sustainability while the second panel emphasized on the role of business leadership for a move towards sustainability. Mr Nitin Desai used the keyword “Optimus” for the World CEO Sustainability Summit and mentioned about the integration of technologies for achieving the goal of sustainable development.

Speaking at the Dinner Session, Mr Sudhir Vasudeva, Chairman and Managing Director, ONGC Ltd emphasized on the issue of imparting knowledge about sustainable practices in the real world of business. He mentioned that ONGC is considered to be one of the biggest polluters, but they still try their best to do business in a sustainable manner in every respect possible. He concluded his brief speech by leaving the discerning audience with “food for thought”. He called on the audience to discuss the real burning issue of sustainable development over “dinner” or “food for thought”! Saying so, he extended his appreciation for TERI for organizing such a wonderful event.