The world is approaching the crucial midpoint of the 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals. Efforts have been made in bringing to the forefront the issues related to the environment, biodiversity loss, climate change, and India has achieved many milestones in integrating sustainable development into the public, private, and societal discourses. But, we still have a long way to go especially in terms of horizontal and vertical integration of sustainable development across spheres. With this rationale, this year’s WSDS focuses on the overarching theme: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience for Collective Action.

The Inaugural Session set the stage for the Summit deliberations. Since India is holding the Presidency of G20, this is a golden opportunity to further the voice of the Global South on issues related to sustainable development and climate action. The year will also see the important process of global stocktake at the climate negotiations at COP28.

In the Welcome Address, Mr Nitin Desai focused on the linkages between conservation and protection in discussions related to our environment. “There should be a specific link between conserving resources and protecting livelihoods. The horizontal link between institutions at both the government and global levels is missing, and we need to make these connections through such deliberations,” he asserted.

Following suit, Shri Bhupender Yadav in the Opening Address, foregrounded the importance of ecological sustenance and said, “India has been correcting ecological wrong into ecological harmony. Living in harmony with nature has been traditionally in our ethos, which is reflected in the mantra of Lifestyle for Environment Initiative (LiFE) of India.”

In the Inaugural Address, H.E. Dr Bharat Jagdeo stressed that “Returning to the principles of equity and justice should not be only in climate issues, but also in sustainable development. We know the known, but from the developing-world perspective, we need the ability to do the known. Balancing extremes in global discussions is needed if we need lasting solutions.”

The Keynote Address by H.E. Dr Sultan Al Jaber underscored that “Transitioning in food and water systems is as important as transitioning in energy systems. Let us ensure that the progress is truly inclusive so that no one is left behind. Step change and progress require a lot of capital; capital that should be available, if available, accessible, if accessible, affordable.”

In a Special Message, Shri Narendra Modi underlined the necessity of preservation and protection. “Environment conservation is a commitment and not compulsion for India. Human empowerment is impossible without a better environment and the way forward is through collectiveness rather than selectiveness,” he asserted.
With a legacy of over two decades, the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the only independently convened Summit based in the Global South that is organized at a massive scale for pioneering conversations to nudge ambition and action on sustainable development and climate solutions. The platform strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of global communities by assembling the world's most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform.

Addressing the august gathering, Mr Nitin Desai shared his opening remarks and reminisced, "When we started WSDS 22 years ago, our focus was on informing people about Sustainability Development, Climate Change, Land Degradation, because there wasn’t much awareness. That has changed significantly now." He highlighted that the need of the hour is action over information. "Focus must shift from informing people about sustainability to taking actions towards sustainability and protecting the environment." The Summit with the overarching theme ‘Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience for Collective Action’ was declared open by Dr Vibha Dhawan, who said, "To deliberate on issues of climate change and sustainability, TER, through WSDS, has brought together prominent leaders from the government, international organizations with academia, and civil society to mainstream climate resilience for climate change." However, she cautioned that we have a long way to go, especially in terms of horizontal and vertical integration of sustainable development across spheres.

In the Presidential Address, H.E. Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, underlined, "We will never meet the net zero target of 1.5°C without looking at forests." Regarding the importance of preparedness, H.E. Dr Bharrat Jagdeo added, "If a single hurricane could wipe out years of accumulated GDP, then we can’t talk about sustainability. Sustainability means adaptation with nature-based solutions.” About the incentives generated through certified forests, “15% of money will be for indigenous people and the remainder 85% will be used to deal with adaptation issues,” asserted Dr Jagdeo.

In the successive Keynote Addresses delivered by Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs and Mr Manish Bapna, what came across was the pertinence of fostering collaboration and collective action in addressing climate crisis.

“We are amidst droughts, floods, heatwaves, rising sea level; everything that was projected. We are not 0.4°C warmer than what we were used to 20 years ago. We are in an exhilarating crisis," said Prof. Sachs while highlighting the positive ways in which India’s G20 Presidency can be used. "There is a fundamental change in global politics which is underway. We are in the beginning of the multi-lateral world," he added.

Continuing the argument, Mr Manish Bapna said, “We can’t tackle climate change without recognizing poverty and development. And we cannot tackle poverty without tackling climate change.” Financial strength is central to both the agendas, he stressed. The developing world needs support and equity must be ingrained in the climate agreements and India plays an important role in making that happen. The esteemed panelists spoke on how leadership for people in the world needs to chart pathways and abide by nature-centric approaches in the collective fight against climate crisis.

With the passage of the Paris Agreement in 2015, the international community vowed to create societies that will be resilient to climate change and will be supported by the required financial flows to keep the global temperature increase between 1.5°C and 2°C above pre-industrial levels. With this sentiment in focus, the fireside chat on achieving a sustainable future began with comments from Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, who highlighted that the answer to sustainability “lies in fostering collaboration and collective action in addressing climate crisis. We are amidst droughts, floods, heatwaves, rising sea level; everything that was projected. We are not 0.4°C warmer than what we were used to 20 years ago. We are in an exhilarating crisis,” said Prof. Sachs while highlighting the positive ways in which India’s G20 Presidency can be used. "There is a fundamental change in global politics which is underway. We are in the beginning of the multi-lateral world,” he added.

Despite numerous pledges, we are still not on the path to curb the rising temperature and the increasing carbon emissions. Panelist Prof. Jeffrey D. Sachs, asserted, “Multilateralism is essential for developing countries as it represents the whole world and not just the North Atlantic world. A stronger African Union will lead to a better world along with India and China, as I believe in a world with strong regional cooperation between nation states.”

The fight for a sustainable future is the one unifying thread holding the world together; thus, it is vital for big businesses in addition to governments and international bodies to come forward and act for the earth and its complex ecosystems. In this regard, H.E. Dr Bharrat Jagdeo talked about how “Common But Differential Responsibilities (CBDR) has been effectively eroded to equal burden-sharing because the developed world refuses to enhance their decarbonization. We have to reform the entire architecture for scaling up funding for achieving greening infrastructure,” he added.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its latest Assessment Report has underscored, “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.” With the clarion call for urgent, immediate, meaningful, and ambitious action, the fireside chat served as a stage to bring together perspectives from across sectors, domains, and geographies to drive meaningful climate action. Additionally, in light of India’s G20 Presidency, the fireside chat sought insights from the esteemed speakers on how G20 can mobilize the developed world to raise their ambition in our collective fight against climate change.
Climate finance is one of the pillars in the proposed Green Development Pact outcome of the G20, under India’s G20 Presidency. According to the latest financing for Sustainable Development Report, the world has seen some positive developments as far as green energy finance is concerned.

In his Introductory Remarks to the session on Financing Sustainable Development, Dr Vishva Dhawan asserted, “Green budgeting is a tool involving budgetary planning designed to systematically map and track the sources of funds, outlays, expenditures and policies. Areas such as climate adaptation, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity preservation and pollution abatement need much more attention.”

The Addis Agenda global framework for financing sustainable development supports implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through innovative financing and diverse sources of finances including domestic public resources, private business and finance, development cooperation, debt, trade, systemic issues, and technology and capacity.

Chairing the session was Mr Manish Bapna, who remarked, “We are at a crossroads between two very different futures. We know finance is at the heart of the better environmental future we are hoping for.”

Furthering this argument, in the Ministerial Address, H.E. Mr Laszlo Borbely said, “Everyone is responsible in contributing to sustainable development. Without a very clear message (or an able) partnership with civil society, we (will) fail to achieve sustainable investments.”

The COVID-19 pandemic plunged millions into extreme poverty in 2021, and according to the United Nations, one in five developing countries’ GDP per capita would not return to 2019 levels by the end of 2023. In this regard, as part of MDB perspectives, Dr Pradeep Tharakan, said, “Sustainable financing for the future will rest on three pillars: more capital, Paris Agreement-aligned policies, and new investment models.”

There is a need for strengthening financing mechanisms and processes. In this context, during the Leadership Address, Mr Amit Prothi stressed, “Every dollar invested in resilient infrastructure will lead to four-fold returns. India needs to build 20 more cities like Mumbai to accommodate the urban push.” Areas such as climate adaptation, sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity and ecosystems integrity, and pollution abatement need attention. Mr Mahendra Singh observed, “The Indian financial institutions are risk averse and they need to share risk along with multilateral development banks (MDBs) to provide financial access to clean technologies for Indian corporates and SMEs.”

Developing countries have emphasized on bridging the financing gap between mitigation and adaptation actions. Questions around barriers towards scalable financing for adaptation and resilience must be addressed. This was highlighted by Mr Bård Vegar Solhjell who pointed out, “We are 1000 billion dollars short of financing SDGs, every year India is a global leader in many ways. It has shown leadership in solar power, hydrogen, and even in its G20 leadership.”

The five pillars of the Green Development Pact, under India’s G20 Presidency, are envisaged to include: Lifestyle of Environment (LiFE), Circular Economy, Climate Finance, Accelerating Progress on SDGs, and Energy Transitions & Energy Security. Dr Dhruba Purkayastha observed, “Cost of money is far higher in emerging economies than in OECD countries, it is nearly seven times higher,” and therefore, there is a need for “modification of the financial architecture to socialize the climate investments,” added Dr Purkayastha.
Continuing the thread in the Ministerial Address, H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Ono joined in and made it clear that “One of the important tools to improve and enhance carbon financing is the market mechanism under the Paris Agreement.” He added that “a wide range of approaches like sustainable technologies can help in increasing resource efficiency and (ensuring) improved economies under the G20 Green Development Pact.”

Over the last 50 years, resource consumption in the G20 countries has significantly increased. With this in mind, in a series of Keynote Addresses, Prof. Ian Martin noted: “The G20 challenge is about leadership, because without the leadership, it will not change. It is not about the science, it is about the policy, the fusion of technology that sits behind the science to deliver progress.” He pointed out with an example of how Australia and India are 10,000 km apart but are in fact “joined by an almost complete sharing of economic and social challenges (to ensure) clean and energy economic development, food security, water security.”

Leading the G20 presidency, India has set ambitious goals for inclusive sustainable economic growth and climate action: “Transforming the dreams into reality is about creating and maintaining investments in sustainable infrastructure,” said Dr. Bruno Oberle, as part of the Keynote Address series. “Sustainability is about creating a new consumption and production model, a new developmental model that is more aligned within the limits of the physical platform that we are living.” Dr. Oberle added.

Green Development Pact is expected to be a blueprint of strong actions for the next decade, powering green development in the world. Therefore, as brought out by the thought-provoking discussion, it now becomes essential to articulate the specifics of the G20 Green Development Pact as well as mechanisms to ensure the operationalizing of the Pact.

Lifestyle approaches are essential to consider the consumption of goods and services along with extraction of resources, production, and disposal. Since demand, including lifestyle choices, drives supply, it is imperative that we focus on the downstream segment of value chains. In the session titled lifestyles for Environment, Institutions, Policies, and Social Movements, chaired by Dr Protoplas Ghosh, frameworks on sustainable consumption were brought to the table. Setting off the series of Ministerial Addresses, H.E. Ms Mariam Almheiri, Minister of Climate Change and Environment, United Arab Emirates, H.E. Dr. Yaouke Fowad, Minister, Ministry of Environment, Egypt, Global Leadership Addresses: Prof. Jeffery D Sachs, Professor, Earth Institute and Columbia University, Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, Former IPCC Vice-Chair and Dr Erik Solheim, Former Executive Director of UN Environment & President Green Belt and Road Institute, BRI Green Development Institute, Dr. Janet Potočnik, Co-Chair, International Resource Panel, Discussant: Dr Sunee Pandey, Director, TERI.

As part of the Global Leadership Addresses, Prof. Jeffery D Sachs, Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, Dr Erik Solheim (who joined virtually), and Dr Janez Potočnik (who joined virtually), shared insights on adoption of sustainable lifestyles and the need to look at traditional practices while influencing consumer behaviour. Prof. Sachs asserted, “for a huge amount of transformation, it is a change of technology and not a change of lifestyle.” We cannot afford to treat our planet as a big dumpyard. Echoing the thoughts of Prof. Sachs, Prof. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele reiterated, “We have been using the atmosphere as a big dustbin, as a free dustbin mostly, and the size of the dustbin the inhabitants of this planet are using everywhere, is not the same.”

There are various channels through which consumer choices can be influenced: policies and market signals are the primary ones; apart from that, other channels could be the surrounding environment, work culture, urban amenities, and marketing campaigns. Adding to the discussion, Dr Erik Solheim said, “We must avoid a negative finger-pointing agenda and talk about a positive agenda for change; it is mainly about change in society, political decisions to organize society, business decisions as to how we draw on technology to scale that change, adding to that the component of lifestyle change.”
Humanity's well-being is intertwined with the health of the ocean. According to the World Ocean Assessment, the ocean is Earth's largest ecosystem, regulating global climate and driving weather-related systems.

The fireside chat titled Sustainable Ocean Management for People and Planet, moderated by H.E. Mr. Hans Jacob Frydenlund, began with introductory remarks by Dr. Vibha Dhawan, who highlighted, "The sustainable ocean management targets to find solutions to triad issues related to pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss."

Ogunbiyi talked about financial security and pointed out, "It is vital to see energy as a lifeline energy. In this context, joining the Summit virtually, Dr. Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Mr Arne Walther, Former Chairman, International Energy Agency, Lord Adair Turner, Chairman, Energy Transitions Commission, Prof Kazuko Takeuchi, President, Institute for Global Environmental Studies, Dr. Jon Creyts, Chief Executive Officer, Rocky Mountain Institute, Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. Erik Olsen, Head of Research/Research Manager, Institute of Marine Research, and Dr. Jon Creyts shared their insights and remarked, "Green hydrogen will be part of India's success, and it will be a pillar of our energy dialogue in future. One year ago, the discussions about green hydrogen were about the cost of electrolyzers and how it can contribute to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss."

And Dr. Olsen added, "Improved marine management and planning can be a catalyst for blue economy."

Ocean innovations must consider marine ecosystems as a whole and promote adoption of ecosystem-based approaches, marine spatial planning, strategic environmental assessments, and integrate traditional knowledge from local communities in policymaking on marine ecosystems. Without effective integrated management actions that can address the range of challenges, the ocean will fail to provide its full potential of goods and services to the planet and humanity.

The objective of this session was to examine some of the innovations linked to ocean, which include marine spatial planning and how it can contribute to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

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**PLenary Session**

**Venue: Stein Auditorium**

**TOWARDS ENERGY SECURITY AND INCLUSIVE ENERGY TRANSITIONS**

Ministerial Addresses: Mr. Suman Bery, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, India, H.E. Ms. Kadi Simson, European Commissioner for Energy, Leadership Addresses: Dr. Damilola Ogunbiyi, CEO and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Mr. Arne Walther, Former Chairman, International Energy Agency, Lord Adair Turner, Chairman, Energy Transitions Commission, Prof Kazuko Takeuchi, President, Institute for Global Environmental Studies, Dr. Jon Creyts, Chief Executive Officer, Rocky Mountain Institute, Mr Saurabh Kumar, India Head, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, Ms Seema Paul, Program Director, Sequoia Climate Foundation.

Moderator: Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI

The objective of this session was to examine some of the innovations linked to ocean, which include marine spatial planning and how it can contribute to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.
The world is facing unprecedented challenges in the form of socio-economic inequities, unemployment, climate change, environmental degradation, as well as health crisis. In such a scenario, the business sector can play an important role in providing the much-needed support in terms of technology development, propelling innovation, and finance.

At the CEO Forum, chaired by Mr Manish Chourasia and Mr Girish Sethi, the former said, “In the last few years, a number of business houses have given huge commitments and there have also been a lot of actions on the ground.”

Contributing to the discussion, Mr Sethi said, “According to me, water and waste are two important subjects which do figure very much in all our SDGs. These are two important topics that we always tend to forget in all the discussions when it comes to SDGs.”

In the Keynote Address, Ms Soma Mondal highlighted, “The first thing that the corporate should understand in terms of the steel industry is when we are looking towards reducing carbon consumption, we are reducing coke consumption and using better technology.”

Technology and innovation are at the heart of sustainable development. Innovation is not limited to new breakthrough technologies and often involves incremental improvements and adaptations of existing technologies, processes, and practices. In the series of Leadership Addresses, Mr Rasmus Valanko and Mr Naveen Unni took forward the conversation and stressed on issues related to innovation systems from market-based approaches to innovation-based approaches. Mr Valanko said, “Government has a huge role. They can also help to provide the right signals. If we are talking about demand signals, green public procurement can have a big role in many countries in terms of incentivising some of the First Investments in creating that market and the business case.” Mr Unni added, “We always overestimate what we can do in one year and we always underestimate what we can do in ten.”

In this regard, Mr Sandeep Bhatia asserted how essential it is for the business sector and policymakers to come together to unlock means conducive for development, demonstration and deployment of green technologies and innovations.

Mr Bhatia remarked, “If you want me to leave three messages, just put it down into three areas – commit, act, and monitor. The last part of monitor is very clear – how can I have ESG? It’s just not for compliance or getting funding, but also to make sure that internally, you are looking at everything which impacts the ESG on the 17 parameters.”

Green innovations and policies can be given an impetus though green investments, demand-enhancing measures, innovation policies, standards, regulatory support, and public procurement.

Through this session, executive heads from businesses and industries came together to deliberate on how best can our society move toward a ‘public goods’ approach to accelerate realization of the SDGs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (CLOCKWISE)
- H.E. Dr Sultan Al Jaber, COP28-President Designate conferred with Distinguished Alumni Award by TERI School of Advanced Studies
- Tete-a-tete with Professor Jeffrey Sachs
- CSO Roundtable with COP28 President Designate
- MOU Signing between TERI and Guyana on Sustainable Agriculture
- MOU Signing between TERI and Capgemini on Sustainability