



WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2023

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

February 22-24, 2023
New Delhi



INAUGURAL SESSION

Visionary Leadership for Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience

Venue: Stein Auditorium

Date: 22 February 2023

Time: 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (IST)

Suggested Citation

World Sustainable Development Summit (2023), Visionary Leadership for Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience, Inaugural Session (Rapporteurs: Sonia Grover and Risaal Amina), New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute.

Making Words Count @WSDS 2023

“ Environmental conservation is a commitment and not a compulsion for India. Human empowerment is impossible without a better environment and the way forward is through collectiveness rather than selectiveness.

Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

“ There should be a specific link between conserving resources and protecting livelihoods. A horizontal link between institutions at the government and global level is missing, and we need to make these connections.

Mr Nitin Desai
Chairman, TERI

“ India has been correcting ecological wrongs into ecological harmony. Living in harmony with nature has been traditionally in our ethos which is reflected in the mantra of the Lifestyle for Environment initiative of India.

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

“ Returning to principles of equity and justice should be not only in climate issues but also in sustainable development. We know the known, but from a developing world perspective, we need the ability to do the known. Balancing extremes in global discussions is needed if we need lasting solutions.

H.E. Dr Bharrat Jagdeo
Vice President, Republic of Guyana

“ Transitioning in food and water systems is as important as transitioning in energy systems. Let's 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, and if accessible, affordable.

H.E. Dr Sultan Al Jaber
Special Envoy on Climate Change and COP28 President Designate, UAE

“ As we set the ball rolling for the 22nd edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit, I would like to express my heartiest gratitude to our Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi for his message and kind words of encouragement.

Dr Vibha Dhawan
Director General, TERI

Actionable Messages

Message 1: Conserving resources and promoting sustainable livelihoods go hand-in-hand and are not mutually exclusive.

Message 2: 'Call to action' would be central to the agenda of UAE COP aims to unite all parties around inclusive and transformational progress.

Message 3: A comprehensive paradigm shift is needed in the approaches related to mitigation, adaptation, finance, loss and damage. Energy transition must be accelerated so that no one is left behind.

Message 4: There is a need to reduce the production of fossil fuels. Carbon capture, utilization and storage, and a mass transit to renewable energy are required. The combined action on all these fronts will deliver lasting solutions.

Narrative

The 22nd World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) was inaugurated by distinguished world leaders comprising a panel of Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, H.E. Dr Bharrat Jagdeo, Vice President, Republic of Guyana, H.E. Dr Sultan Al Jaber, Special Envoy on Climate Change and COP 28 President Designate, UAE, along with Mr Nitin Desai, Chairman, TERI, and Dr Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI. This year's WSDS focused on the overarching theme, 'Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience for Collective Action.'

The session began with the welcome remarks by **Mr. Nitin Desai, Chairman, TERI**. He cordially welcomed the esteemed guests present on the dais. He highlighted that sustainable development means defining clear links between development and the environment. Emphasis should be on a link between conserving resources and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The second link he emphasized was on the connection between sustainable consumption and production, which is also echoed in the initiative launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister through Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE). He also stressed that there is a need to horizontally link institutions both at the government and global level.

The opening address was delivered by **Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India**. He mentioned that WSDS focuses on the idea of collective action for sustainable development, which coincides with the theme of G20. He indicated that India, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is emerging as an inspiration for countries across the globe, highlighting that economic development and conservation of environment can go hand-in-hand. The minister rightly stated that combating climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation transcends all political boundaries. He gave various examples of India leading the path of sustainable development, such as introduction of cheetahs on India's mainland, initiation of LiFE program, which has received global appreciation. Moreover, he added that one of the key elements of the Union Budget 2023 is 'Green Growth', which focuses on the need for sustainable development.

His Excellency **Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo**, in his keynote address, brought everyone's attention to the two significant individuals in the room, Sultan Al Jaber and Bhupender Yadav, who will be heading the COP28 proceedings this year and, who will be leading the upcoming G20 Presidency, respectively. He urged all to return to the principle of equity and justice, not just in climate issues but in sustainable development. He also stated that for lasting solutions, there should be a balance in discussions that take place in the various bodies. We need to put combined effort in three areas, namely, reducing fossil fuel production, carbon capture utilization and storage, and a mass transit into renewable energy. H.E. Dr. Jagdeo called attention to the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which are not only extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, but also are fiscally stressed. They require a reform of the global financial system for achieving sustainable development.

The second speaker was **H.E. Sultan Al Jaber, Special Envoy on Climate Change and COP28 President Designate, UAE**. He stressed that WSDS, over the years, had made meaningful contribution to the sustainability discussions across the globe and under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister, India would soon become the third largest economy in the world. This would mean that it will be one of the largest energy consumers globally, and thus there is a need to ensure sustainable development.

He highlighted that UAE, being one of the largest investors in renewable energy is focusing on high growth low carbon pathways. UAE supports India's transformative pathway for a cleaner, greener, and bluer future for just and sustainable development for all. He further stressed that UAE takes on the role of COP28 with

humility and deep sense of responsibility and aims to unite all parties while keeping in mind the non-negotiable target of 1.5°C.

He assured that in COP28, transforming our food and water systems will be given the same attention as transitioning our energy and industrial systems. H.E Dr. Sultan Al Jaber pointed out the shared beliefs of India and UAE in safeguarding and respecting nature. The UAE has always embedded environmental stewardship, environmental protection, and climate action into its national development. The health of the planet, climate, and humanity are deeply interconnected and essential for true sustainable development. He also emphasized that for sustainable development, there is a need for lots of capital to be available, accessible, and affordable. Finally, he reminded all that the world progresses through partnerships not through polarization, and said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it.”

The ‘Inaugural Message’ from the **Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi** was read out by Dr. Vibha Dhawan. The message highlighted that for India, “Environment conservation is a commitment and not compulsion.” He emphasized that India is transitioning towards renewable and alternate sources of energy and adopting technology and innovative ensures finding solutions to urban challenges. He also mentioned, “Human empowerment is impossible without a better environment, and the way forward is through collectiveness rather than selectiveness.”

Next, **Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Chancellor at TERI-SAS**, presented the Distinguished Alumni Award to H.E. Sultan Al Jaber, who had received his honorary doctorate in 2010 from TERI University (now TERI-SAS) for his efforts in spearheading renewable energy initiatives globally. Dr. Nayak highlighted some of the many achievements of the awardee, such as establishing the UAE’s renewable energy trajectory, adoption of renewable energy across UAE, and the region as the founding CEO of Masdar. He applauded Dr. Sultan Al Jaber’s championship in decarbonization strategies and low carbon solutions.

Finally, **Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI**, delivered the vote of thanks. She expressed her sincere gratitude to the esteemed guests on the dais, all the partners who have contributed towards the success of WSDS, and all those who have supported TERI, as a think tank and centre for research and policy implementation in its long journey of 50 years. She wholeheartedly thanked the WSDS and TERI teams for organizing the Summit successfully in a physical format after a long hiatus of two years.
