



WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2023

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

February 22-24, 2023
New Delhi



Valedictory Session: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development for Collective Action *Release of Act4Earth Manifesto and WSDS 2024 Curtain-raiser*

PLENARY SESSION SUMMARY

Venue: Stein Auditorium

Date: 24 February 2023

Time: 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm (IST)

Suggested Citation

World Sustainable Development Summit (2023), Valedictory Session: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development for Collective Action, Plenary Session Summary (Rapporteurs: Tarishi Kaushik and Sparsh Peter), New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute.

Actionable Messages

Message 1: An improvement has been seen over the past 30 years in the awareness amongst people, consensus on scientific issues like climate change, growing engagement of corporates, and increased focus on collective action.

Message 2: Multi-stakeholder platforms by their informal nature bring together a wide range of participants, official and unofficial, which can offer better knowledge and understanding of intertwined challenges. This leads to greater ownership.

Message 3: Nations cannot wait for the global financial architecture to change before taking a stronger climate action.

Message 4: Green hydrogen is important because it helps derive similar kinds of benefits that are gained from non-fossil fuel use.

Message 5: Leadership plays a crucial role in driving change. Therefore, leadership for sustainable development requires inclusivity, resilience, adaptability, and creativity.

Narrative

The valedictory session titled, “Mainstreaming Sustainable Development for Collective Action,” was conducted as part of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) – the annual flagship initiative of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The aim of the session was to summarize the key messages emanating from various sessions that were part of the Summit deliberations. The session witnessed the release of the *Act4Earth Manifesto*, which included messages for the G20 presidency as well as COP28. The platform also served as a curtain-raiser for the 23rd edition of the WSDS where the dates and the theme of the next edition were announced.

The session began with the chair’s address by **Mr Nitin Desai, Chairman, TERI**, who summarized the key takeaways from the 3-day long summit. He identified one key message on why more work is required to bring countries together so that there is an increase in communication between them on issues of sustainable development and climate change and look at the challenges from a global perspective rather than from the point of view of the national interest. He emphasized that far more creative work is needed on promoting collective action. Mr Desai highlighted India’s role in G20 particularly focusing on the green development pact. He said that this is the first time in the G20 summit that a country has decided to highlight green development as a major theme. This is quite welcoming from the perspective of getting sustainable development as part of the collective action.

Following the chair’s address, **H.E. Ms Najla Bouden, Prime Minister, Tunisia** delivered the global leadership message virtually. She applauded the WSDS forum for deliberations, anticipation, and the proposals that come forth during the summit which act as a guide to several governments and international institutions. That the WSDS is the heart of global action, she added that the WSDS brings various stakeholders to the forum and helps in greater ownership and decision-making, and the actions are collective and successful. The current International Forum is critical for developing nations, especially after the pandemic, and fallout in Ukraine which have led to an unprecedented rise in food and energy prices. Ms Bouden urged all the governments at the national level to do a comprehensive review of policies to cater to the contemporary need for sustainable development. She insisted on opting for new economic alternatives, emphasized common but differentiated responsibility, and urged to focus on working towards making new and developed technologies and promoting them and making efforts toward alternatives. The WSDS is important to convey vision, promote brotherhood, and share experiences, she added.

Following Ms Bouden’s address, **Shri Hardeep S. Puri, Hon’ble Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs, Government of India** delivered the ministerial address. He remembered his association with the WSDS which went back to when it was known as the ‘Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.’ He said that over 22 years, WSDS had built a distinguished legacy of promoting global sustainable development. He highlighted that the theme of this year’s summit converged with the main objectives of India’s G20 presidency. He further added that it was imperative that we coordinate policy response across the world, led by G20. A reinforced commitment to the multilateral agenda is going to be fundamental in the global response. The minister highlighted that with the G20 presidency, apart from coming at a time when we are facing multiple crises, India is addressing and helping replication in the Global South in a manner where problems are largely similar.

The valedictory address was delivered by **Mr Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC** who acknowledged the number of discussions at WSDS and he felt clear-sighted about the magnitude of challenges that we face yet energized by the historic possibility of now. He planned on making COP28 a transformational moment, which must be a decisive decade. He focused on achieving the agenda differently as 2030 is only 7 years away and the emissions need to be halved. He wished to push for progress, both in the public and private sectors, and make leaders accountable for their commitments. With the aim of doing things differently, the UNFCCC wishes to take updates each quarter up to COP28. The Executive Secretary made his first request at the WSDS, regarding all initiatives born about recent COPs, feedback to the secretariat must be provided up till the upcoming sessions and we must support coalitions, partnership amongst state and non-state actors to achieve our goals and limit the temperature rise to 1.5°C. How the parties are working on the agenda and how they would be delivering on various aspects of climate change at COP28 are other important questions to be addressed. Closing massive gaps in mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and finance requires unprecedented collaboration and support at the highest levels. Mr. Stiell looked forward to India’s influential role in the G20 to help deliver a clear political framework for COP28. There must be targeted policy decisions in G20 countries which will provide the market signals. There are three areas where leadership and support

are needed. First, to deliver a truly transformative global stocktake, which is a focal point of COP28 and the first time the world would come together to determine whether nations are meeting the climate goals agreed to in Paris. Second is, emissions reduction. He said that there is a need for stronger commitments and particularly G20 nations should lead the foray. National strategies must include methane and other GHGs. Third, there is a need for financial reform to make it fit for a climate-resilient world. We must reduce support for climate-incompatible finance. Mr. Stiell talked about designing a financial architecture that caters to the needs for financing of loss and damage.

Following Mr Simon Stiell's address, **H.E. Mr Ugo Astuto, Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union to India** delivered the leadership address. He started the address by saying that we need to act fast now if we want to limit the global temperature rise to maximum of 1.5°C. We must uphold the promises made in the Paris Agreement for the future generation. We recognize how dramatic the situation is if we look at the latest IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report. Every country is affected by climate crisis, be it Asia, Europe, or the rest of the world. He said that we need to put efforts at all levels, be it the government, international community, the private sector, or civil society. That is why multi-stakeholder initiatives like WSDS are important at the present juncture. He also highlighted initiatives being taken by the European Union domestically, such as the green deal, integrating sustainable development in policy arenas with the aim of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. He emphasized working together at a global level and leveraging private capital and public finance, reviewing the working of international financial institutions to get them take cognizance of the climate emergency. In conclusion, he said that we need to roll up our sleeves collectively to achieve the ambitious goals. The G20 focuses our minds and injects momentum into our endeavour toward the green transition. India has rightly put climate change and the pursuit of sustainable development goals at the very centre of its programmes.

Dr Ajay Mathur, Director-General, The International Solar Alliance talked about the need for building our solar capacities and to see how we could achieve this feat. He said that we are at the focus of the phase of convergence, where sustainable development and climate change come together, and which forms the heart of the G20 Summit. G20 should recognize a push for solar energy and try to make up for public sector financing. He talked about green hydrogen and how it brings together the benefits of non-fossil fuel along with the development and how it could make a huge difference at a time when there is a fallout between Russia and Ukraine, with rising gas prices, which in turn has led to a rise in the price of fertilizers in India and which has started showing on our food bills. There is a comprehensive need to work on solar modules everywhere, which also points out the need for industrial infrastructure. He emphasized that there is a need to learn from the success stories of various countries and implement them in other places. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the targets that have been set regarding the temperature. There is a need for sandboxes, where new ideas can be generated, and carbon sequestration could form part of one such idea.

Hon'ble Justice Prathiba Singh, Judge, Delhi High Court delivered the women's leadership address. She began the address by highlighting how every development has an impact on the environment. The Indian judiciary has always been over-cautious about the environment, especially in the last 30–40 years. Builders and architects build mansions, but women build homes. Efforts need to be scaled up at a very high level to tap the untapped potential of women in achieving sustainable development for all. For the environment, we need to come out with a very strong message campaign that can reach the common man and woman and make it their responsibility to take care of the climate and the environment. She said that women play a very important role today in contributing to the environment and going forward, tapping women's potential is going to be the key for sustainable development and for all the targets we need to achieve for tackling climate change.

The women's leadership address was continued by **Dr Renu Swarup, Former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology** who congratulated Dr Dhawan on the success, history, and her association with the WSDS. She talked about the very important keywords like, sustainable development, climate resilience, collective action, all of which are intrinsically linked and interdependent that none is achievable without the other. From the Stockholm Conference to the Earth Summit, we have been indulged in talks related to human development, economic development, environment action, which have clearly brought out the interdependence of all the factors and the need for a holistic framework to tackle the global challenge before us. The solution can only be through collective action. Also, once we have addressed the issues, the core principles of sustainable development get not just mainstreamed

but get internalized into the framework as we move on. There is a need to look at the case studies where we have achieved success and identify what the correct decisions were so that we can implement them in future. Dr. Swarup felt a sense of satisfaction and pride as she applauded the Government of India that has worked on a lot of actions pertaining to multi-stakeholder networks to address various climate-specific issues. Dr. Swarup mentioned that there is a need to look at the three 'Ps' which include *policies*, *programmes*, and *people*, which in turn form an integral part of a strong action that should be taken as we go ahead. She said that collective response was the main reason we got through the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn from the COVID-19 experience, we can have a robust ecosystem, capacities, diversity, global collaboration and convergence, innovative models to tackle the problem at hand, she added.

Dr. Shailly Kedia, Senior Fellow, TERI and the Curator of the Summit launched the *Act4Earth Manifesto* and did the curtain-raiser for WSDS 2024. The 23rd edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit will be organized under the umbrella theme of '**Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice**', announced Dr Kedia.

The Act4Earth initiative was launched at the valedictory session of WSDS 2022. Building on the discussions of WSDS, this initiative will seek to continuously engage with stakeholders from public and private spheres of life with agendas for global, regional, national, sub-national, and organizational levels. WSDS activities seek to incorporate principles of outcome-based continuity in stakeholder engagement and action. Being a major global summit, WSDS 2023 strengthened engagement to address the serious problems facing this planet through the impacts of climate change, the rapid degradation of the earth's ecosystems both on land and in the ocean, as well as the growing disparities between the rich and poor.

At the valedictory session of WSDS 2023, the *Vasundhara* magazine's 12th edition was launched with the central theme 'Genesis'. The issue aims to focus on sustainable technology and its importance in envisioning a greener future. The articles in this edition revolve around the uses and importance of sustainable technology in various sectors, such as agriculture, mobility, health, and construction among others.

Dr. Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI delivered the vote of thanks. She began by highlighting how this WSDS was not just about discussing the problems but also about discussing the solutions and the way forward. She thanked all the participants for attending the summit, both in person and virtually. She also expressed her sincere gratitude to all the dignitaries for being part of TERI's journey toward making sustainable development a globally shared goal. She also thanked all the partners for supporting the Summit.

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“	<p>More work is required in bringing countries together to discuss the issue of sustainable development and climate change and look at it from a global perspective rather than a national interest. We still need to do far more creative work on promoting collective action. This is the first time in G20 that a country has decided to pick on green development as a major theme and push it at the G20 meeting, which is welcoming from the perspective of getting sustainable development as part of the collective action.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mr Nitin Desai Chairman, TERI</p>
“	<p>I urge all the governments at the national level to do a comprehensive review of policies to cater to the contemporary need for sustainable development. The current International Forum is critical for developing nations, especially after the pandemic and fallout in Ukraine, which have led to an unprecedented rise in food and energy prices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">H.E. Ms Najla Bouden Prime Minister, Tunisia</p>
“	<p>Food, fertilizer, and fuel are the three areas facing tremendous crises. These three have a solid link with the kind of discussions we should have and are having with reference to the issues of sustainable development. At the global level, a paradigm shift in the international climate regime is required to move from a country-specific approach to a people-centric approach to climate action.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shri Hardeep S. Puri Hon'ble Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India</p>
“	<p>There is clear-sightedness about the magnitude of the challenge and there is excitement about the historic possibility of now. This makes COP28 a transformational moment. There is a need for a world where we can build a just society for all and we should knock down barriers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mr Simon Stiell Executive Secretary, UNFCCC</p>
“	<p>We need to act now and we need to act fast to address climate change. G20 is a great opportunity to inject momentum into our endeavour towards green transition. There can be no real progress on the SDGs without progress on climate. And there can be no progress on SDGs without India.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">H.E. Mr Ugo Astuto Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union to India</p>
“	<p>There is a need to build our solar capacities and it is important to see how we can achieve this feat. The focus is on the phase of convergence, where sustainable development and climate change come together, which forms the heart of the G20 Summit.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr Ajay Mathur Director-General, The International Solar Alliance</p>
“	<p>Women play a very important role in contributing to the environment. Going forward, tapping women's potential is going to be the key to sustainable development and to achieving climate-related targets and goals. While technologies are essential, we need to remember the changes at the grassroots level that we must bring to our country.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Hon'ble Justice Prathiba Singh Judge, Delhi High Court</p>

“	<p>There is a need for a holistic framework to tackle the challenge before us. We need to learn from case studies that were successful and decipher the steps that led to the success and accordingly implement these whenever and wherever needed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr Renu Swarup Former Secretary, Department of Biotechnology</p>
“	<p>This WSDS, we have not just discussed the problems, but we have also started discussing the way forward. Sustainable development and climate change – these are engraved in each one of us at TERI.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr Vibha Dhawan Director General, TERI</p>