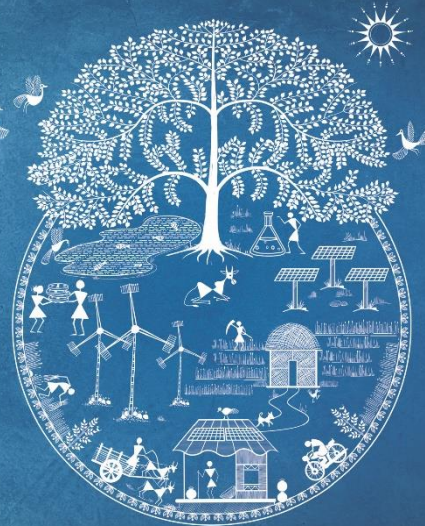




# WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2023

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

February 22-24, 2023  
New Delhi



## Women Leadership Session: Promoting Diversity and Inclusion for a Greener Future

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### PLENARY SESSION SUMMARY

Venue: Stein Auditorium

Date: 24 February 2023

Time: 11:15 am – 12:15 pm (IST)

#### Suggested Citation

World Sustainable Development Summit (2023), Women Leadership Session: Promoting Diversity and Inclusion for a Greener Future, Plenary Session Summary (Rapporteur: Shubhi Goel), New Delhi: The Energy and Resources Institute.

## Actionable Messages

**Message 1:** One of the biggest fallacies in the gender and climate discourse has been either elevating women to the status of heroes or relegating them to that of being mere victims.

**Message 2:** Promotion of diversity and inclusion drives a just and equitable world. Therefore, women are critical to leadership.

**Message 3:** Reports and decisions in favour of women must be put into effect to ensure accommodation of specific needs. There is a need for emphasis on education and training because only well-trained women can contribute to development and higher leadership.

**Message 4:** Despite the exorbitant usage of the word ‘intersectionality,’ much of the world continues to design solutions in *silos* — keeping women outside the decision-making process, and consequently, limiting the perspectives for holistic policymaking.

**Message 5:** The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly calls for ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities in leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. Women must be structurally represented in the decision-making process at all levels.

**Message 6:** Senior leaders with an emphatic streak can ensure minimum gender bias. Women have led sustainable development actions as activists, advocates, and scientists and yet, men outpace women in leadership roles and pay parity across sectors including corporates, non-profits, governments, law, education, and security establishments.

**Message 7:** Just and inclusive spaces in the private sector hold the resources to drive capital and ensure that there are more women leaders in boardrooms. As climate is a behaviour-driven phenomenon, it is important to drive the economic and financial rationale toward women for a green economy.

## Narrative

We are heading into a ‘new’ world whose common future would be an assortment of climate change-induced conflicts, waves of pandemics, extreme weather events, plummeting socio-economic disparities, and unending humanitarian crises. In view of this, listening to, acting by, and enabling the inclusion of women in decision-making processes become imperative. One of the biggest fallacies in the gender and climate discourse has been either elevating women to the status of heroes or relegating them to that of being mere victims. With this premise, a Women Leadership Session, titled “**Promoting Diversity and Inclusion for a Greener Future**” was organized as part of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2023, the annual flagship initiative of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).

In the series of keynote addresses, **Ms Deepali Khanna, Vice President, The Rockefeller Foundation**, who was also chairing the session, highlighted, “The promotion of diversity and inclusion drives a just and equitable world. Women leaders are critical to leadership. By bringing people from diverse backgrounds, we can make bridges to fill the gaps.”

Reports and decisions in favour of women must be put into effect to ensure the accommodation of specific needs. “There is a need for emphasis on education and training because only well-trained women can contribute to development and higher leadership positions,” pointed **H.E Ms. Nialé Kaba, Minister of Planning and Development, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire** in the ministerial address through a video message.

Despite the exorbitant usage of the word ‘intersectionality,’ much of the world continues to design solutions in silos, keeping women outside the decision-making process and consequently, limiting the perspectives for holistic policymaking. In this regard, the empowerment of women in public and private spaces is important. “Climate resilience and action need more women leaders to drive change,” asserted **H.E Ms. Emma Theofelus, Hon’ble Deputy Minister of Information, Communication, and Technology, Namibia**, while adding how “specific and intentional actions were taken to mainstream women into leadership roles in Namibia.”

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development rightly calls for ensuring women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life. Women must be structurally represented in the decision-making process at all levels. “Countries must pay attention to important social, economic, and environmental goals and indicators in the global context in terms of the triple environmental crises that are climate change, loss of biological biodiversity, and environmental pollution. To achieve progress on the SDGs, increased access and use of

knowledge, science, and innovation are essential,” foregrounded **H.E. Ms. Elba Rosa Perez Montoy, Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Republic of Cuba** via a video message.

Senior leaders with an emphatic streak can ensure minimum gender bias. Women have led sustainable development actions as activists, advocates, and scientists and yet, men seem to outpace women in leadership roles and pay parity across sectors including — corporates, non-profits, governments, law, education, and security establishments. “Empower women through education and mainstream women into policymaking,” urged **Prof. Prateek Sharma, Vice Chancellor, TERI School of Advanced Studies** while taking cognizance of the fact that gender equality is a fundamental right.

On adaption and resilience, **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Former Chief Scientist, World Health Organization**, in the keynote address, shared, “The health impacts of climate change need actionable approach by empowering healthcare workers and providing the needed support at the grassroots level. There are a lot of technological solutions available and there is no dearth of innovation happening in India. These innovations need to be affordable, sustainable, and eco-friendly,” she added.

“Just and inclusive spaces in the private sector hold the resources to drive capital and ensure there are more women leaders in boardrooms. As climate is a behaviour-driven phenomenon, we need to cater the driving economic and financial rationale toward women for a green economy,” said **Ms. Riddhima Yadav, Board Director, Institute for Women, Peace and Security**.

This session facilitated a platform where a strong panel of women leaders across the world came together and deliberated on the path to a sustainable future for all. The discussions revolved around ways to address the numerous challenges confronting women and gender minorities in leadership positions, including poor access to social and economic capital, a constraining gender culture, paucity of role models/mentors, and inadequate positive attitudes about their own personal capacities.

## Making Words Count @WSDS 2023

“ Countries must pay attention to important social, economic, and environmental goals and indicators in the global context, which is affected by triple environmental crises that include climate change, loss of biological biodiversity, and environmental pollution.

***H.E. Ms Elba Rosa Perez Montoya  
Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, Republic of Cuba***

“ The mindset of women as leaders explains the reluctance of political actors to favour and encourage women’s participation on the electoral list. The approach to taking climate actions must be inclusive with the establishment of mechanisms and means, whereby effective implementation is assured.

***H.E. Ms Nialé Kaba  
Minister of Planning and Development, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire***

“ Specific and intentional actions are being taken to mainstream women into leadership in Namibia. There must be a willingness to trust women to take lead as far as senior positions are concerned.

***H.E. Ms Emma Theofelus  
Hon’ble Deputy Minister of Information, Communication, and Technology, Namibia***

“ The inequity in accessing technologies, resources, and funds needs to be mitigated. The focus should be on distributive innovations. There are a lot of technological solutions available and there is no dearth of innovation happening in India. These innovations must be affordable, sustainable, and eco-friendly.

***Dr Soumya Swaminathan  
Former Chief Scientist, World Health Organization***

“ Adequate representation, the role of the private sector, and the importance of economic ability to drive more inclusive approaches can create a low-carbon economy. Climate leadership does not necessarily need to be measured in terms of experience but can be understood by the impact one can drive at the individual level, at the company level, and at the national level.

***Ms Riddhima Yadav  
Board Director of the Institute for Women, Peace and Security***

“ The dominant male group tends to create a false sense of comfort and agreement, and as a result, the voices of women are unheard. Gender diversity at the company level enhances the company’s performance.

***Prof. Prateek Sharma  
Vice Chancellor, TERI SAS***

“ It is crucial to build a greener future for us all by promoting diversity and inclusion. It is no secret that our world is facing significant environmental challenges from climate change to resource depletion.

***Ms Deepali Khanna  
Vice President, The Rockefeller Foundation***