

WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2021

**REDEFINING OUR COMMON FUTURE:
SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL**

February 10-12, 2021 | India Habitat Centre,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi, India

teri



First Pre-Event on

'REDEFINING OUR COMMON FUTURE: SAFE AND SECURE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL'

June 4, 2020

Given the current global health crisis and its close inter linkage with climate impact, TERI's annual flagship event, the **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2021** will be held under the umbrella theme of **'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'**. Discussions at the platform will focus on the current crisis and the roadmap that nations need to adopt enroute a greener recovery. WSDS 2021 will additionally focus on a fresh ambit of subject areas, new interventions in policy development, and close engagement with multiple stakeholders, especially the youth. The Summit aims to extend its reach through closer engagement with its national and international networks to bring home the principle of, **'action now is a must'**. The Summit platform is hopeful for a healthy recovery from the current pandemic and preparations are underway for it to be held as an on- ground event scheduled from **10-12 February, 2021** at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India.

The WSDS platform has over the years held a series of international and regional pre-events on issues of global importance in the run- up to the Summit. The discussions held during these pre-events are then carried forward to the main Summit stage where they are further deliberated by subject experts. These pre-events have become building blocks for the Summit's deliberations and play a crucial role in engaging with multiple stakeholders and regional practitioners throughout the year. With a special focus on the current pandemic and the global efforts being made to recover, the discussions of the WSDS 2021 pre-events held as either e-dialogues or as on- ground events, will be brought forward to the main WSDS 2021 stage in February where they will be further matured across the three days of the Summit.

We are delighted to announce that the first pre-event for the WSDS 2021 Summit will be based on an emerging forum of engagement, i.e. an IT Platform in order to ensure that efforts towards

transformation both to address climate change as well as the sustainable development goals, are re-invigorated, rather than being forgotten or stalled during this period of global lockdown.

It is with this background that the WSDS Secretariat and TERI will be launching the discussions in the run-up to the WSDS 2021 on an e- platform. The first such pre-event to the Summit will be held in the first week of June, 2020 to commemorate the **World Environment Day** and will bring together leading national and international experts from the Government, corporate, civil society and the youth sectors to focus on the modus operandi required to address the current health crisis while tackling global climate change.

Theme: 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'

What struck a single nation in December, 2019 has over the course of mere months, enveloped and ravaged the entire globe. The novel coronavirus has left the world exhausted and put an enormous strain on national resources. While countries shut down air spaces, and restrict internal movement; a deepening sense of fear and panic has waded through the global community. The COVID- 19 crisis has thrown the world off its charted course of actions and efforts, and with no substantial end in sight. With struggling economies, strained resources, and most importantly, rising health risks; nations across the globe are redrawing their national and international policies and rules of governance.

A new world order where 'work from home' policies have been strongly implemented; private investments towards strengthening public health infrastructure made, and a rising sense of solidarity that seemed to lack in the 'Pre- COVID era' practised, what has also emerged are endearing sights of nature reclaiming urban spaces. From monkeys frolicking Thai streets, to wild turkeys gallivanting in Oakland, California; while news of dolphins swimming in Venetian waters turned out to be false, the overarching sense is that nature is finally breathing.

As we marvel these sights, we also need to acknowledge the visionary measures undertaken by some leading Heads of States and Governments from across the globe who have arisen as telling examples for the rest of the world. Countries such as Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Norway, and Taiwan, have been hailed for their decisive measures taken well in time by their respective administrations to curtail the spread of the virus through effective and practical measures. What evidently stands out as a common factor amongst these countries is that they are all led by women leaders. The 'go hard and go early' approach adopted by leaders such as the Hon'ble President of New Zealand, Jacinda Arden was a milestone in keeping a check on the number of positive cases in the country. With women holding a mere 7% of the world's government leadership roles, their systematic and skilful navigation of the virus has yet again made the world pay attention to the need for an accelerated and enhanced presence of women across the workforce in all sectors. The WSDS has and will always continue to engage closely with leading women practitioners through all its multifarious activities and engagements. This Summit pre-event will much like in the past, engage closely with women leaders from across sectors in the capacities of speakers, lead discussants, participants, and media representatives.

The current crisis may have weakened our economies and revealed shortcomings in our health infrastructures, but it also imperative that we treat the crisis as a wake-up call. It is crucial that global efforts are made to re-think, re-plan, and re-emerge with recovery plans that would not only strengthen our economies, but also our health infrastructures, our travel priorities, our business models, and most importantly, our climate negotiations. Now is the time when subject experts, scientists, economists, practitioners, civil society, the academia, and especially the youth, come together to deliberate on actionable agendas that will constructively address climate change.

The pandemic has presented itself as an opportunity for governments and businesses to plan for 'green recoveries' as COVID- 19 marks a turning point in the progress on climate change. The road to economic recovery can no longer ignore climate priorities.

The theme of the first WSDS pre- event will attempt to address the following questions that directly emanate from this current global pandemic:

1. What are the compelling and critical challenges that emerge as we redefine our future?
2. How can Governments and Businesses address the global call for change that will ensure a safe and secure environment for all?

Objectives of the discussions

- › One of the key aims of the Summit platform and its pre-events is to collate multifarious voices from across regions, sectors, and workforces in order to chart an inclusive and wholesome roadmap for governments, businesses, and civil societies. This pre-event will thus aim to achieve such inclusiveness in its deliberation.
- › Through this pre-event, the aim will be to open the floor for a discussion on the priority areas that need to be fast-tracked in an immediate and a post COVID- 19 scenario while we remain confined to our home spaces.
- › Discussions during the pre-event which will be helmed by sector experts will shed light on how people's behaviour could change as a result of the current pandemic in ways that positively or negatively impact the environment.
- › Key questions on how recovery plans can be made greener will be a key discussion element.

Role of youth during the pre-event and means of their involvement

While subject experts deliberate on the need of the hour to chart a roadmap to greener recovery, an important stakeholder that must be intricately involved in the deliberation process is the youth. It would not be incorrect to opine that it is a future that is being envisaged and developed for them and as the next generation whose members will tackle climate crisis; their thoughts, ideas, and innovations need to be respected, encouraged, and incorporated in on-going policy changes. With 50% of its population below the age of 25, a developing country like India relies heavily on its incoming young workforce. Given these numbers, it becomes imperative that their voices become a major part of the country's recovery discourse.

The WSDS stage has welcomed the presence and participation of the youth throughout its journey of twenty years. Through dedicated sessions, youth volunteer programmes, and dedicated youth competitions, the Summit has recognised and rewarded active members of the youth community. In a continuous endeavour to engage with them, and leverage their potential, the WSDS 2021 pre-event will open the floor for their voices to be heard stronger than ever before. Special invitations to global youth leaders, innovators, and change makers will be extended to ensure their presence while experts deliberate on a future roadmap. The presence of the younger community during the discussion will allow the panellists to engage with them and hear from them first- hand their ideas, solutions, and innovations. The Summit platform aims to extend its reach to the younger community through this event and it actively encourages the participation of school and university students, young researchers, young professionals from every sector, and young entrepreneurs to mark their presence and intervention at our platform.

Means of involvement

- › Selected youth leaders will be invited for an exclusive youth led webinar held during the week of the World Environment Day and will broadly focus on the theme of this year's Environment Day, 'Biodiversity'.
- › The Summit Secretariat will ensure the participation of young leaders during the Summit pre-event webinar where they will have the opportunity of sharing their thoughts and ideas with the panellists.

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Reach out for opportunities to participate & partner: wds@teri.res.in

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