

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



PHOTO BY JONNY KENNAUGH ON UNSPLASH

**VOLUNTARY AND MANDATORY
SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS**

VIVEK K. SINGH

**CLIMATE ACTION AND HUMAN
RIGHTS**

ASHIMA MATHUR

From the CEO'S Desk

The global landscape on sustainability and sustainable business has evolved considerably in the last year and a half, not just driven by multilateral agencies, but also Governments, private sector, academia, civil society – and most importantly by a large battery of professionals from diverse backgrounds.

India has witnessed significant developments on various aspects of its sustainability agenda, characterised by key milestones driven by the Government of India. This included the launch of the national disclosure framework for responsible business (BRSR); developments pertaining to the national action plan on business and human rights and an initiative on sustainable finance - among others. Led by the Honourable Prime Minister, India also raised its ambitions on Climate Action at the COP26 Glasgow Summit last November. A time bound commitment to net zero emissions by 2070, was at its heart. The Indian private sector hasn't been far behind in demonstrating its leadership on sustainability in the recent past not just within the country but also globally. A number of companies have embraced the Science Based Targets initiative (67 Indian companies); co-developed the Transform to Net Zero coalition; contributed significantly to the global Trillion Trees initiative through mass tree plantation in millions and so on.

CRB's eighth annual conference India and Sustainability Standards 2021 (ISS2021 as it is referred to) was organised against this background, with the theme - Accelerating and Reinforcing Transformative Change for Societal Resilience. It emphasised on Transformative Change and underlined the need to build Societal Resilience against future shocks like COVID especially given the lurking threats of Climate Change and Biodiversity Loss.

We are thankful to all the partners, speakers, delegates who joined us this year. We had 50 partner organisations, 250 speakers, 34 sessions and over 850 delegates.

Some of the key take-aways for CRB and our partners were:

- Emphasise on context specific solutions and adapting existing 'good practices'
- Build partnerships and collaborations to widen engagement with stakeholders
- Include unheard voices and focus on engaging the unengaged in sustainability dialogues
- Design climate actions in an inclusive and collaborative manner

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- Empower and build capabilities of SMEs and Collectives
- Appreciate role of Voluntary Sustainability Standards in post COVID recovery
- Build widespread awareness and understanding on application of Circularity principles
- Integrate principles of Business and Human Rights into Climate Actions

CRB celebrated our 10th anniversary on 14th November 2021, close on the heels of ISS2021. As we embark on our journey into our second decade, we are conscious that it will remain a challenging task every bit of the way, given the aspiration that CRB nurtures and our vision that 'Businesses integrate sustainability into their core practices'. We will continue to follow a centrist path and push the boundaries of sustainability, sustainable business with a wider community of stakeholders. We are constantly inspired by the work of and growing interest among a wide range of practitioners on the subject and remain optimistic of the possibilities.

I am reminded of Napoleon Hill's famous saying, "One of the most common causes of failure is the habit of quitting when one is overtaken by temporary defeat" (Think and Grow Rich). We have the guts and the stamina for this marathon – we can't afford to fail, we wouldn't.

Rijit Sengupta
CEO, CENTRE FOR
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS



COVER STORY

VOLUNTARY AND MANDATORY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS



VIVEK K. SINGH



In the absence of adequate government regulations and risk mitigation mechanisms to manage supply chain risks the international businesses and MNCs joined hands with civil society to develop voluntary sustainability standards (VSS). This has been in response to the demand by consumers, civil societies, and other actors to take action to eliminate sustainability risks (Environment, Social, and Governance) in global supply chains. All these standards were derived from globally accepted principles, viz. - the International Labour Organization (ILO) principles on multinational enterprises and social policy, the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The guidelines thus created are voluntary in nature. Therefore, they don't place any responsibility on companies and the government to enforce them.

The multistakeholder approach and private sector participation in the formation of VSS helped them to increase their popularity for sustainability risk management. Although VSS has played a crucial role in facilitating sustainable practices and in reducing supply chain risks, they have been sometimes criticised for having limited effect in preventing violation, misconduct, fall short on remediation, and crisis situations. SMEs operating in multinational corporation supply chains commit themselves to observing these standards, but often fail to comply with issues consequently many multinational corporations demonstrate a poor track record on environmental and human rights issues in their supply chain.

In recent years, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, and experts have come out with studies and evidence, which highlight limitations of existing standards and due-diligence mechanisms to prevent or mitigate sustainability risk in the supply chain. The intricacies of these supply chains further limit their effectiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these inadequacies.

Specifically some of the limitations are:

- **The Multiplicity of standards** with little coordination at the operational level thereby increases compliance duplication, which results in loss of productivity.
- **High compliance costs** that must be borne by the suppliers in their entirety with little or no support from lead firms
- **Limited alignment with local business norms, cultural and legislative frameworks**, and often neglected externalities which play significant roles in eliminating or increasing risks.
- **Inability to address risks in the informal sector** due to lack of dialogue and adequate action to protect the most vulnerable and marginalized.
- **Limited effectiveness of third-party compliance** - Third-party compliance is effective in risk identification but does not foster an environment of trust between the lead firms and suppliers. Further, unhealthy due diligence mechanisms are responsible for promoting unethical practices.

Evolution of Mandatory Regulations and Way Forward

With the rise of SDGs, countries have begun to pass the third generation (see table 1 for an overview of first, second and third generation of disclosure) of mandatory disclosure laws that demand companies to publish comprehensive ESG information on their supply chains and ensure access to remediation for the victims of corporate malpractices. In the last few years, several European

Mandatory Supply Chain Due Diligence Regulations



and non-European nations have embraced or started to consider laws that integrate social and environmental due diligence.

Regulation Group	Detail
First Generation	UK Modern Slavery Act and EU Non-financial Reporting Directive ascertain company reporting or disclosure responsibility.
Second Generation	EU Conflict Minerals Regulations and the Netherlands Child Labour Due Diligence Act put forward the requirements, that cover entire human rights due diligence, which includes risk identification, comply take action, and to report on measures taken including their outcome
Emerging Third Generation	France's Duty of Vigilance Law and the upcoming Switzerland Responsible Business Initiative are third generation laws. It puts forward responsibility on companies to identify, prevent and account for their human rights and environmental impacts.

Sweden	Canada	Austria	Denmark
In March 2018, the Swedish government's Agency for Public Management released a report recommending that the government look into the possibility of mandatory human rights due diligence.	The Canadian government has issued a Call to Action : Ending the use of All Forms of Child Labour in the Supply Chain and a public consultation on this is underway	The draft bill on social responsibility in the garment sector has been referred to the relevant parliamentary committee	The parliamentary motion is under consideration on human rights due diligence law for all the large companies, including companies in high risk sectors
Germany	Italy	Finland	Norway
The BMZ has drafted the bill on National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights . The government is considering introducing the law	Under its National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, the government has committed to a review of existing laws to assess legislative reform introducing human rights due diligence for companies .	The Social Democrat - led Finnish government committed to mandatory human rights due diligence in its official programmes and will conduct a survey for this.	The Norwegian government appointed an expert committee in August 2018 to investigate a potential law on ethics information . The parliament's Justice Committee has recently discussed a potential Norwegian Modern Slavery Act .
Belgium	United Kingdom	Luxembourg	
The Federal Parliament voted in favour of a Belgian due diligence law proposal to strengthen the obligations of companies throughout their supply chains .	In 2015 Modern Slavery Act 2015 was passed to combat modern slavery. A clause was later added so that big businesses would be forced to make public their efforts to stop the use of slave labour by their suppliers . In April 2019, a group of civil society organisations launched a campaign calling for a mandatory human rights due diligence law . There is also a consultation underway for legislation to implement due diligence in UK supply chains to tackle illegal deforestation .	In March 2018, a coalition of 16 civil society organisations launched an initiative calling for the introduction of a duty of vigilance for companies headquartered in Luxembourg .	

However, all forthcoming mandatory due diligence legislation put compliance at the center to prevent the risks in the supply chains and approach whose effectiveness is doubtful. Hence, there is an urgent need to explore and devise a holistic new mechanism that can draw from existing knowledge, and bring all direct and indirect stakeholders together to collaborate for preventing and mitigating sustainability risks across supply/value chains

INDUSTRY FOCUS: SMEs AND SUSTAINABILITY

DEVYANI HARI



PHOTO BY ABOODI VESAKARAN ON UNSPLASH

The micro, small and medium scale enterprises (MSME) are not just instrumental for driving the economic growth and development in a nation but are also integral to achieving a sustainable and inclusive growth. It has been well established that the MSME sector in India will play a crucial role in delivering on our green commitments. The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives to promote the sustainability and competitiveness amongst the MSMEs. Accordingly, there are several schemes and programs (Zero Effect and Zero Defect, Energy Efficiency Programs, Lean Manufacturing etc.) to encourage adoption of cleaner practices. Further, schemes such as WASH and Saathi help the SMEs implement robust health and sanitation procedures on their premises. ZED scheme creates awareness amongst MSMEs about Zero Defect and Zero Effect practices and motivates and incentivizes them for ZED Certification while also encouraging them to become MSME Champions. 503 MSMEs have been rated under the scheme since its inception. The LEAN scheme is enhancing the competitiveness of MSME sectors through implementation of Lean Tools and Techniques. In 267 clusters (approx. 2500 MSMEs) the LEAN scheme has been implemented throughout the country. In yet another initiative, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India with support from UNIDO, Global Environment Fund (GEF) have come together for “Promoting Market Transformation for Energy Efficiency in MSMEs” with an objective to address the identified barriers for scaling-up energy efficiency measures and consequently promote a cleaner and more competitive MSME industry in India. The Government of India also prohibits the use of identified single use plastic items by 2022 across the MSMEs. The Government has also taken a lead to explore the feasibility of using Hydrogen as a fuel by MSMEs in their manufacturing process.

There is a strong business case for SMEs to adopt sustainable practices especially in emerging markets. This case is driven by buyers’ requirements (especially in Global Value Chains), increasing consumer awareness, more investments available for sustainable enterprises and tightening regulations both at the domestic and at international level. Needless to say, sustainability in the SME sector is not a recent conversation. However, one should acknowledge that SMEs continue to face barriers and challenges in the form of limited technical capacity, inadequate financing, lack of skilled manpower, lack of innovation and at times cumbersome regulations and compliances. As part of Global Value Chains, SMEs at times are burdened with multiple and costly standards and certifications. These factors have inhibited the sustainability journey of many SMEs.

The need for businesses to be more sustainable is extremely important in the current context with increasing instances of climate change vagaries, widespread supply chain disruptions, rising scarcity of resources, coupled with a shoutout to businesses to address their adverse environmental and social impacts. This makes it impossible for businesses to turn a blind eye to the sustainability discourse. International developments such as the [EU Green Deal](#) (to be achieved by 2050) and the subsequent [EU](#)

Circular Economy Action Plan have widespread implications and will cover the supply chains in India as well. Many buyer countries are tightening the regulations for supply chains and supply chain transparency and traceability is more important than ever. The scope of sustainability dialogues and measures will now extend well beyond the organised Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers.

Closer to home, the Indian government has announced ambitious targets for tackling climate change. The recent announcements made by PM Modi at COP 26 set a clear net-zero target for the country. The Indian SME sector will play a crucial role in achieving these targets. Further, the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC)'s "Draft Resource Efficiency Policy" paves the way for a strong circular economy in the country and requires sectoral Ministries to drive circular action plans in key strategic sectors. The National Action Plan on Human Rights to be released shortly will make it mandatory for businesses to understand their human rights footprint, analyse their risks and implement the requisite measures to address such risks. The National Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) mandates the top 1000 listed companies in the country to report on their environmental, social and governance practices along the Business Responsibility and Reporting (BRSR) Framework. A lighter version of the BRSR is also being developed for the SME sector. Efforts are underway to define a sustainable taxonomy for the country. The purpose of the taxonomy is to direct capital and finance towards more sustainable activity and to help measure and monitor the performance on sustainability. The private sector in India is also taking a lead on sustainability with them making public commitments and investing in making their operations greener and inclusive. Research clearly indicates that the supply chains are the biggest source of carbon emissions and sooner rather than later, companies' sustainability focus will be directed towards their supply chains impacting the SMEs.

In such a scenario, what is it that the SMEs can do? It is true that the SMEs need immense support in the form of regulatory incentives, concessionary lending, upgraded technology, innovations, skilling programs, reduced compliance burdens, collaborative partnerships with various stakeholders, creating capacity for understanding and implementing sustainable solutions and marketplaces that reward sustainability actions. However, these barriers



notwithstanding, many SMEs are opting to strengthen their resilience through sustainability. They have leveraged on government schemes, invested in worker well-being and skilling, invested in water efficiency and energy efficiency, and defined performance benchmarks for themselves amongst other things. There is merit in SMEs making a start on their sustainability plan. There will be a need to scrutinize their operations and their supply chains to understand the risks and potential opportunities for being sustainable. While some changes may require large investments and specific technical capabilities, many small, effective changes can be easily implemented. Networking and creating collective forums with key stakeholders for sustainable action can go a long way in driving sustainability. SMEs can take the lead in developing cluster level initiatives and collaborating with policy actors and financiers to operationalise the same. Partnership with academic/ research institutions can provide an avenue to drive needed innovations.

The writing on the wall is clear. Sustainability is becoming the mainstay of businesses and will be inevitable for all businesses. The choice with SMEs is to react to mandatory regulations which may require sweeping changes or proactively take the lead and chart their own course and competitive advantage.

TRENDING TOPIC

CLIMATE ACTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

ASHIMA MATHUR

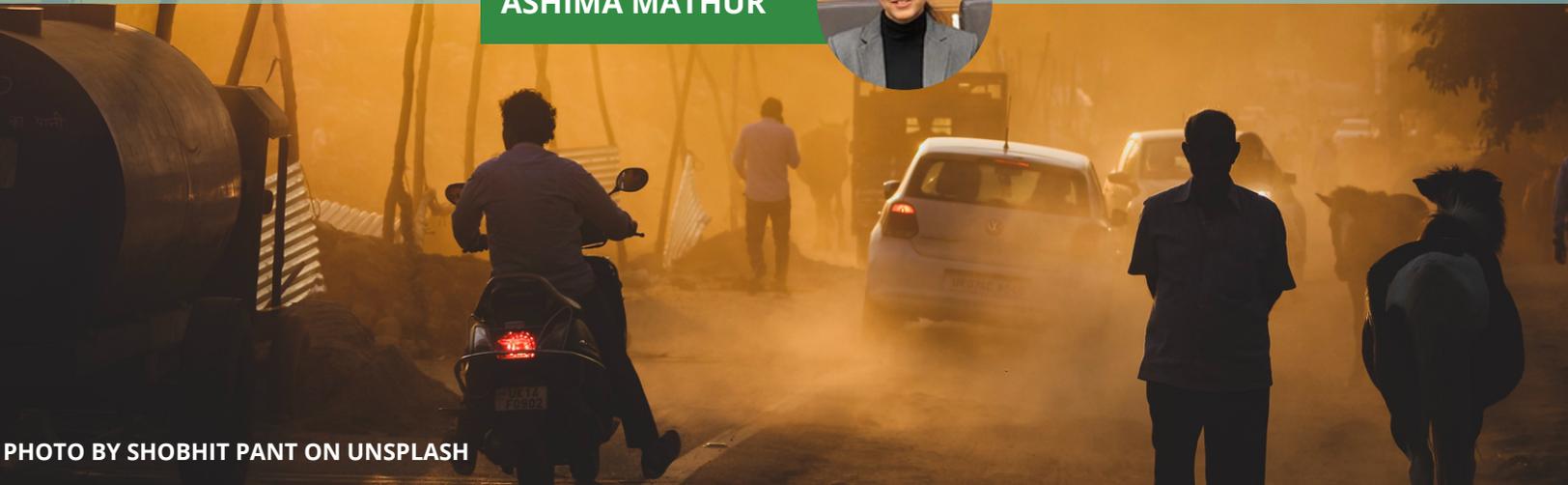


PHOTO BY SHOBHIT PANT ON UNSPLASH

The 26th United Nations Climate Conference, COP26, brought together world leaders and corporations from all over the world in Glasgow in 2021. Though the event's focus was on governments making a host of decisions in the collective endeavour to keep global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the impact of climate change on human rights cannot be overlooked.

Climate change has the potential to jeopardize nearly all human rights. Increased hunger and water crises, health risks from rising air temperatures and heatwaves, economic implications due to secondary damage related to climate change, increasing spread of pests and pathogens, loss of biodiversity due to limited adaptability are just a few of the ways that rising global temperatures directly affect us humans and our environment.

As climate change exacerbates inequalities and vulnerabilities, the protection of human rights becomes even more critical. Human rights are impacted directly by climate change, and indirectly by climate solutions where populations are excluded from transitioning to a net-zero economy and projects which at times negatively impact the community.

While the direct impact of climate change on human rights has received significant attention, the focus of this article is on the latter two, namely, climate solutions that leave communities behind and the harmful impact of renewable energy projects.

As we embrace solutions to address climate change and move forward, the paradigm shift will have various implications on different people and places. There will be an unavoidable impact on the job market when carbon-intensive industries decrease. Furthermore, new technology will be out of reach for some owing to a lack of financial resources and technical know-how, resulting in household issues such as lack of transportation, cooking fuel, etc. Researchers have pointed out, that access to modern energy is a precondition for overcoming poverty and resolving related human rights violations. Thus, it is essential to consider energy as a human right. Furthermore, it is also important that the solutions we develop are considered from a systems lens, aligned with the SDGs to support all groups of people and are sustainable in the long run.

The negative impact of the emission reduction project is also of concern. Developing countries began to systematically address the low-carbon transition, through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The CDM assists host nations in achieving sustainable development and reducing emissions while allowing industrialized countries some leeway in meeting their emission targets. The host nations will be able to receive additional resources needed to develop clean energy and other GHG mitigation projects after they are registered under the CDM by tapping into the CDM market. Although CDM programmes are thought to be very promising in terms of lowering emissions, the negative consequences of CDM initiatives are a source of concern². Another issue pointed by many is the adverse impact of renewable energy projects. Since 2010, renewable energy projects have been the subject of nearly 200 complaints of human rights violations, according to research by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. Dangerous working conditions, threats and intimidation of workers, harm to Indigenous Peoples' lives and livelihoods, and scarcity of basic resources due to these projects. Biofuel development has also been linked to water contamination, water insecurity, and land rights violations in other circumstances. The negative impacts of such projects can be attributed to lack of adequate policies entailing criteria on human rights, lack of well-defined stakeholder consultation, consent from local stakeholders, monitoring the project, a lack of grievance mechanism for individuals harmed by such projects, and not prioritizing the vulnerable and poor^{2,5}.

As a result, even though we are transitioning to a low-carbon economy, we are failing to create solutions that are inclusive and just for all. Using a human rights lens and establishing people-centered initiatives as part of the energy transition can help achieve a paradigm shift in which poverty, climate change, and inequalities are all addressed at the same time.



CRB ACTIVITIES

REPRESENTATIONS

GLOBOIL INDIA, 2021 21st September 2021

Rijit Sengupta attended the globoil conference to promote the uptake of sustainable palm oil among businesses.



THE 10YFP AND IRP AT THE WRF2021 ON "THE VALUE-CHAIN APPROACH: A TOOL FOR PRIORITIZED ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION", 12th October 2021

Rijit Sengupta represented CRB at the online workshop held over the course of The World Resources Forum 2021 "A Green Deal for Sustainable Resources", co-hosted by the Ministry for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation of the Republic of Ghana, and the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment. The workshop took place on 12 October, and involved stakeholders from policy, science, industry and civil society to delve into the most pressing challenges and co-design innovative solutions related to responsible sourcing, effective recovery processes, and circular systems for the use of resources. Watch the recording [here](#).

12 Oct. 2021 | 15:30 – 16:20 CET

International Resource Panel | One planet handle with care

The Value-Chain Approach: A tool for prioritized action on sustainable consumption and production

 Jorge Laguna-Celis Head of the 10YFP Secretariat, UNEP	 Merlyn Van Voore Head of the IRP Secretariat, UNEP	 Maria Jose Baptista Programme Management Officer, IRP Secretariat, UNEP
 Jesus-Maria Alquezar Socio-economic Analyst, European Commission	 Andrea Dreifke-Pieper Director International Economy Unit, WWF	 Rijit Sengupta Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business in India

ONLINE WORKSHOP

WORLD RESOURCES FORUM 21

CHINA SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL ALLIANCE 18th October 2021

Rijit Sengupta, represented I-SPOC at a meeting of the China Sustainable Palm Oil Alliance (CSPOA) on 18 October 2021. The meeting was jointly organized by the China Chamber of Commerce of Foodstuffs and Native Produce (CFNA), the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and the World Wide Fund for Nature, Beijing Office (WWF China).

Mr. Sengupta, spoke about I-SPOC (the governance structure, its members and the work it has been doing in India on sustainable palm oil) and highlighted the palm oil consumption in India over the last 40 years, the challenges that are there in promoting uptake of sustainable palm oil and lastly the implications of the approval of the National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NEMO-OP) by the Central government of India.

Thank You for your attention!

CATALYZING A CIRCULAR WATER ECONOMY : MAPPING THE CHALLENGES AND BENCHMARKS FOR WASTEWATER REUSE IN INDUSTRIES WITH A SPOTLIGHT ON WASTEWATER REUSE CERTIFICATES (WRCS), 30 NOVEMBER 17th November 2021

This webinar was organised by 2030 Water Resources Group, the Government of Maharashtra, WBCSD – World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Israel Trade & Economic Mission Mumbai, and India-EU Water Partnership. Watch the recording [here](#).

Join us for a webinar on

Mapping the Challenges and Benchmarks for Wastewater Reuse in Industries with a spotlight on Wastewater Reuse Certificates (WRCS)

Tuesday, 30 November 2021, 5-7 PM IST

Catalyzing a Circular Water Economy

See link in caption to join when it's time

in collaboration with:

INCLUSIVE FINANCE INDIA VIRTUAL SUMMIT 15th December 2021

Devyani Hari represented CRB at the Virtual Summit for the session *Landscape of Sustainable Finance Taxonomy in India, Where are we Heading Towards?*.

CONVENINGS

INDIA AND SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS 2021 27th - 29th October 2021

The Centre for Responsible Business held its 8th Annual Sustainability Conference that concluded on the evening of 29th October. Like the earlier versions, this year's conference brought together diverse voices from a host of national and international stakeholders on this year's theme *Accelerating and Reinforcing Transformative Change for Societal Resilience*. This included sustainability enthusiasts, steadfast in their belief that promoting sustainable business, markets and societies is necessary and urgent. Some of the common messages from the discussions across sessions were - that the time to act on climate change is now; the need of the hour is to collaborate and together find specific solutions rather than reinventing the wheel; and to focus on voices of the marginalised and those who are often excluded from such discussions - to give them a platform and consider their perspective. Watch the sessions [here](#).



CRB'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY 15th November 2021

CRB celebrated its 10th anniversary on 15 November and saw participation from a diverse group of stakeholders including experts who were involved with the conceptualisation of the Centre. Starting off as a programme implemented by GIZ India in partnership with SAI and BSCI (now, amfori), and evolving into an organisation - pursuing

business led transformation towards sustainable economy and society. CRB has come a long way, as many friends and partners felt and has a long way to go in achieving its vision and should focus in its second decade on 'measurable impacts'. CRB's journey was encapsulated in a video that was released at this occasion and can be viewed [here](#).



WEBINAR ON UNPACKING BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SMES 16th November 2021

In collaboration with FNF and IGCC, CRB organised two webinars on Business and Human Rights for SMEs. These were held on 8 October and 14 December and saw participation from a variety of stakeholders. View the recording [here](#)

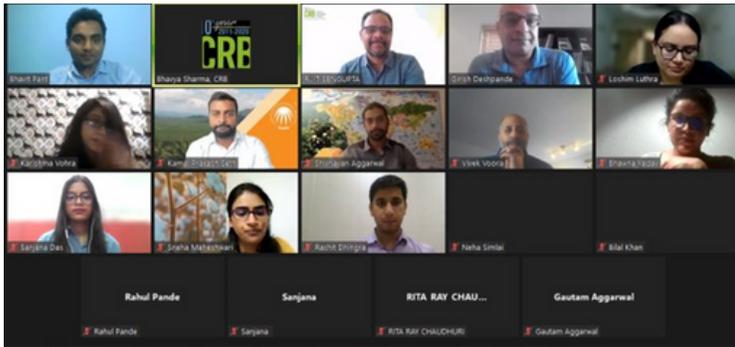


I-SPOC CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP 17th November 2021

The first members-only Capacity Building workshop of I-SPOC was organized on 17 November 2021. Some of the important points discussed were on Responsible Sourcing of palm oil in India, Transition towards sustainable palm oil highlighting the existing frameworks, good practices and the steps to move towards uptake of sustainable palm oil.

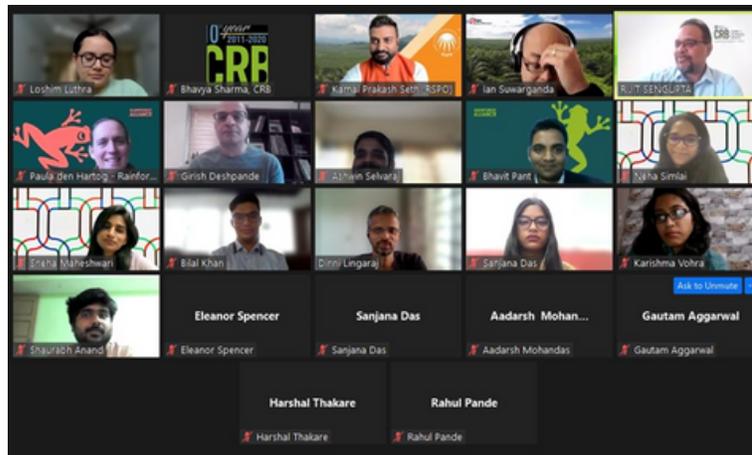
The workshop also discussed some relevant business

cases, the challenges the members are facing in the uptake of sustainable palm oil and the support needed to move towards sustainable procurement.



SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL COALITION FOR INDIA (I-SPOC) MEMBER MEETING AND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 7th December 2021

The Sustainable Palm Oil Coalition for India (I-SPOC) conducted its 6th Member Meeting on 7 December 2021. The discussion at the meeting focused on updates from the Secretariat and the Working Groups on the activities they have undertaken since June 2021 and action plan for the first quarter of 2022. The actions of the new Working Group on Financial Institution and Domestic Production (part of Government Policy Working Group) were also discussed.



ENGAGEMENTS

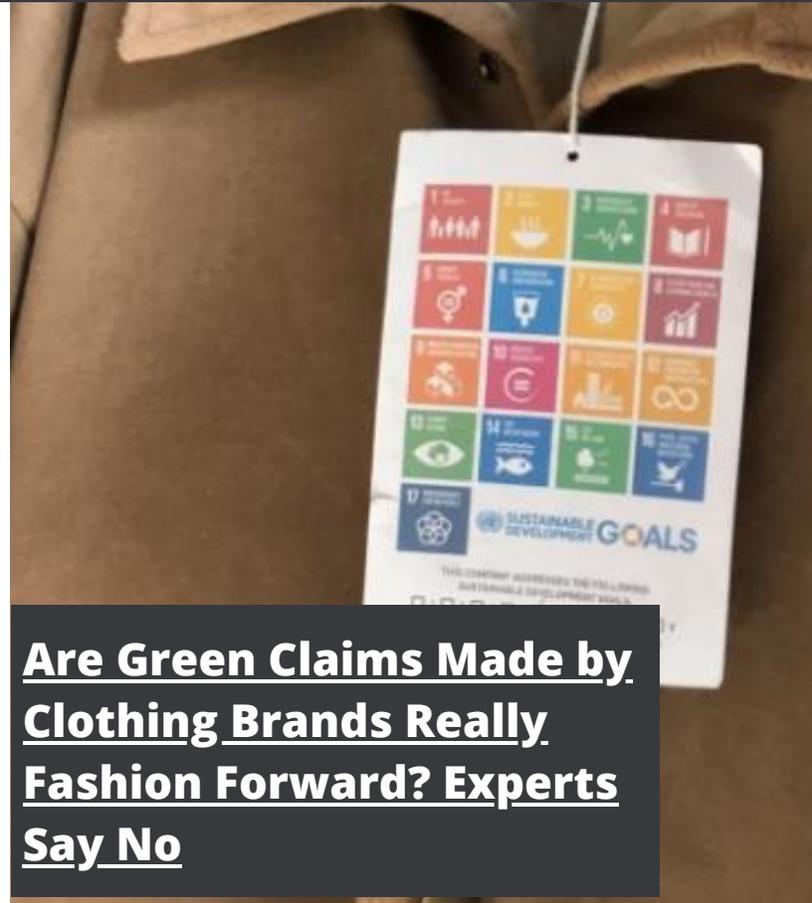
LAUNCH OF FOOD AND LAND USE COALITION INDIA ACTION COALITION FOR RESPONSIBLE SOURCING & TRADE OF COMMODITIES (FOLU INDIA-CREST) October 2021

The Action Coalition (CREST) at present includes Centre for Responsible Business (CRB), IDH – The Sustainable Trade Initiative India, WWF India, and World Resource Institute India (WRI India). CRB will lead the action coalition for the next 3 years. The Vision of the Action Coalition is to advance efforts on responsible sourcing and sustainable production, leveraging India's pivotal position in global agricultural and forest commodities trade. Additional information may be found [here](#).

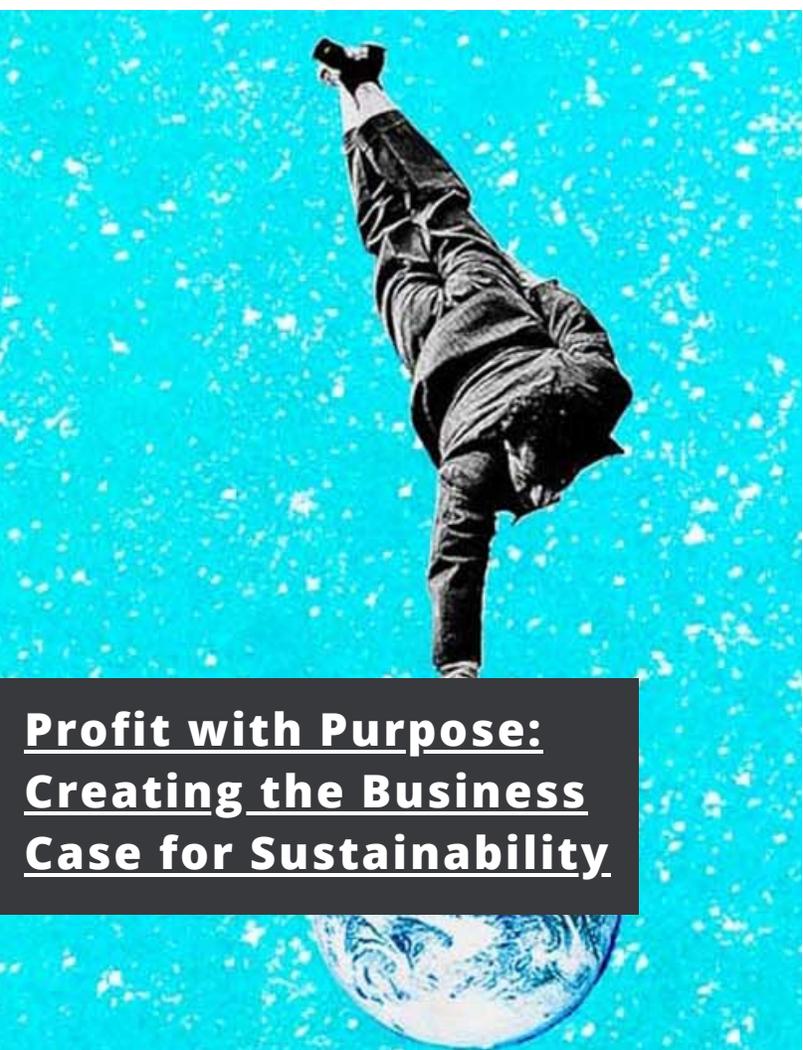
FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK



MaaS: Enabling efficient, low-carbon manufacturing



Are Green Claims Made by Clothing Brands Really Fashion Forward? Experts Say No



Profit with Purpose: Creating the Business Case for Sustainability



Trendy clothes that are gentle on the earth

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS NEWS ROUND UP

BY PADMAJA GOSWAMI & SHREYA MAJUMDAR



BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

GREATER RIGHTS PROTECTIONS FOR GIG WORKERS IN EU & UK

The EU called on the gig economy companies like Uber and Deliveroo to ensure their workers get the minimum wage, access to sick pay, holidays and other employment rights under plans for new laws to crack down on fake self-employment. This proposal will now shift the burden of proof on employment status to companies, rather than the employees working for them. Until now, gig economy workers have had to go to court to prove they are employees, or risk being denied basic rights. The proposals are an attempt to provide legal certainty, after European courts have been asked to settle about 100 disputes relating to gig economy companies. [Read the full article.](#)



SDG MOMENT

PRIVATE SECTOR AND SDGS

SDG MOMENT 2021

Convened by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the second SDG Moment of the Decade of Action was organised virtually on 20 September 2021. The event took place with the overarching goal of serving as a platform to set a course of actions and solutions to mitigate and end the COVID-19 pandemic and advance towards achieving the SDGs, on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially for developing and least developed countries. With over 30 heads of state, leaders at the 2021 SDG The moment sought for international solidarity and decisive action to keep intact the promise of the SDGs. [Read more here](#)

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

GODREJ CONSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTS A CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

Godrej & Boyce has announced that their business Godrej Construction is committed to minimizing the impact of construction on the environment. The firm has taken various specific steps toward sustainable development over the years, and three of their Concrete materials manufacturing units recently received the GreenPro certification from the Indian Green Building Council. Godrej Construction is the first in India to obtain this noteworthy certification for its RMC plants. In a recent press release, the company stated, "the business has recycled over 25,000 metric tonnes of concrete debris by implementing circular economy principles in their construction materials line of business, while their Ready-Mix Concrete (RMC) plant, Recycled Concrete Materials (RCM) plant and common areas of Godrej IT Park building in Mumbai are now powered by 100% renewable energy. Godrej Construction is one of the first in the RMC industry to switch to green energy." Godrej Construction is one of the first in the RMC industry to switch to green energy.



Stock Catalogue, Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

IMAGE SOURCE: REUTERS



SMES & SUSTAINABILITY

TV9 LAUNCHES 'MENTORS OF GLOBAL BHARAT' SERIES AND 'DARE2DREAM AWARDS 2021' FOR SAP TO HELP SMES

After the stupendous success of Leaders of Global Bharat series that aimed at empowering Indian SMEs hit hard by pandemic induced lockdowns last year, TV9 Network and SAP India have again joined hands to forge two pioneering initiatives to help homegrown businesses rise and shine in enabling an Atmanirbhar Bharat. With the objective to engage our business heroes from SMEs in more meaningful pursuits to inspire a whole new generation to take on the mantle of entrepreneurship and also acknowledge their contribution to India's growth, SAP India and TV9 Network announced the launch of Mentors of Global Bharat series and Dare2Dream Awards 2021. Read more [here](#).

BUSINESS & HUMAN RIGHTS

RETAILERS AGREE TO EXTEND BANGLADESHI GARMENT WORKERS' SAFETY PACT

The renewal of the Bangladesh Accord in September 2021 and its historic expansion into new countries is being celebrated by stakeholders globally. The new agreement, renamed as the International Accord for Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry, will ensure continuing protection of ready-made garment workers under the new pioneering model of worker safety. As a witness signatory on the Accord Steering Committee, the WRC works with the Steering Committee members to ensure the principles of the Accord are being fully executed and that inspections and repairs are taking place in a timely fashion. Fashion retail giants H&M, Inditex, Uniqlo, are some of the key brands signing the accord, amongst others. Read more [here](#).

PRIVATE SECTOR & SDGS

COP26: UN CLIMATE SUMMIT 2021

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP26, was the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference, held in Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom, from 31 October to 13 November 2021. Hosted by the UNFCCC Secretariat, COP26 brought together stakeholders from banks, investors and insurers representing 40% of global financial assets, who committed to decarbonizing their business by mid-century. Together-with issues of adaptation and mitigation, session discussions centred around sustainable Finance and there was mutual consensus to continuing support to developing countries. Nations reaffirmed their duty to fulfill the pledge of annually providing 100 billion dollars annually from developed to developing countries. Read the full article [here](#).



IMAGE SOURCE: IHRB

ABB INDIA HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO CHAMPION THE CAUSE OF SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

As energy efficiency becomes a center point in reducing climate change risks, the need to promote adoption of sustainable technologies gain greater significance. ABB India is playing an active role in leading this movement, by bringing stakeholders together and offering solutions that can help in achieving energy goals. While industries are the economic growth engines, they account for around one-fourth of the total greenhouse gas emissions. Driving carbon neutrality would not only help India meet its net zero targets but would also help in adopting a green economic model on a large scale. ABB is working closely with both large industries and the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to accomplish their energy goals through their technologically superior motors, drives and digital technologies that facilitate industries, buildings and infrastructure sector to optimize operations while reducing environmental impact. Read more [here](#).

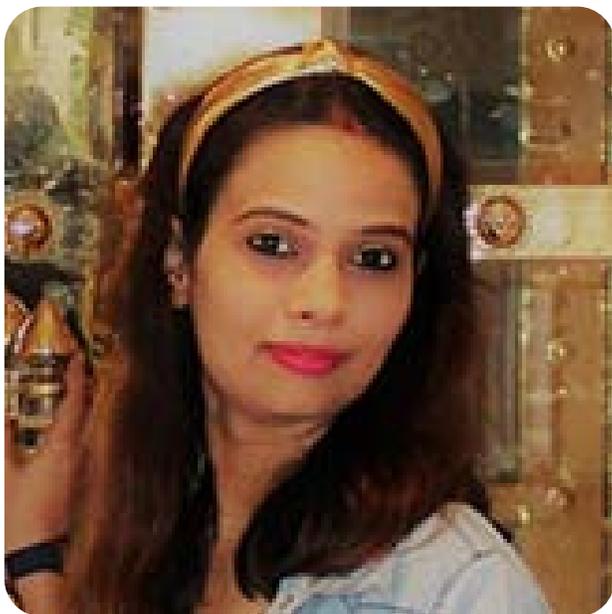


IMAGE SOURCE: EE TIMES

CIRCULAR ECONOMY

MOHUA AND UNDP SIGN MOU TO STRENGTHEN WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR IN INDIA UNDER SWACHH BHARAT MISSION-URBAN 2.0

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India to strengthen the waste management sector in India under the overall ambit of Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban 2.0. The collaboration is another step towards realizing the vision of 'Clean Air, Clean Water, Clean Land' in urban India through a circular economy approach based on the 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) principle. It will cover interventions in the areas of capacity building, digital interventions, research and development, monitoring and evaluation, and social and behavior change communication. Through this MoU, UNDP India will also be facilitating the setting up of 75 Smart Swachhata Kendras across the country, working with local partners and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). Moreover, in line with SBM-U 2.0's core objective of sanitation and waste workers' welfare, the model will also focus on integrating informal waste pickers – SafaiSaathis - and linking them to various government welfare schemes. Read more [here](#)



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Preeti is a science graduate with a degree in Mathematics(Honours) from Delhi University, and pursued her masters in Human resources from I.P University. She has more than 9 years of experience working with the telecommunication sector, across Talent Acquisition (Recruitment), Complete employee cycle, Employee Engagement, Policy Formulation & Implementation, Data Reporting / HR Analytics.

In her free time she enjoys exploring people, places, culture and stories across the globe.

ABOUT CRB

Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) was established in 2011 as think-tank to pursue its vision, 'businesses integrate sustainability into their core business practices'. Given that sustainability is a multi-dimensional problem especially in the context of India and other emerging economies, CRB has adopted a model of engaging multiple stakeholders to develop action plans for promoting sustainable/responsible business, across various sectors in India.

CRB has consolidated its programmatic activities into the following thematic areas:

- Circular Economy
- Business & Human Rights
- Private Sector & SDGs
- Voluntary Sustainability Standards
- SMEs & Sustainability

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