Stakeholder Dialogue On Digitalisation for Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals in Karnataka

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Global Gateway

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CRB — CENTRE for RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS — Enabling Change for Impact

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Report of the Event

STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON DIGITALISATION FOR ACCELERATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN KARNATAKA

14 September 2023, IIM Bangalore

On 14 September 2023, the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) and Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIM Bangalore), with the support of the EU Delegation to India, organised a Stakeholder Dialogue on Digitalisation for Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals in Karnataka at IIM Bangalore campus.

This noteworthy gathering marked the fourth installment of a series of roundtables initiated by CRB, with prior editions taking place in Kolkata on 8th May 2023, Guwahati on 31st May 2023, and Pune on 22nd August 2023. These sessions collectively sought to foster collaborative dialogue and identify actionable strategies for advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across India at the regional level.

With a focus on Karnataka, this event endeavored to illuminate avenues for cooperation among key stakeholders in the realm of digitalisation, with a view to propel the SDGs not only within the state but also on a broader scale. In this report, we recapitulate the insightful discussions and outcomes that emerged from this vital dialogue.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan, Professor, Organizational Behavior & Human Resources Management, IIM Bangalore and Co-chairperson, CRB

Professor Srinivasan set the dialogue to order by giving a brief introduction about herself and stating that IIM Bangalore (IIMB) has been her alma mater and workplace. As the Chair of the digital initiatives at IIMB, she shared that the biggest takeaway in her 4-year journey both as a content producer and Chair was the transformative potential of digitalisation in the field of education in providing high-quality education in India. The results achieved through digitalisation in education at IIMB were considered remarkable, surpassing what would have been possible with traditional methods.

Furthermore, Prof. Srinivasan, as the co-chair of the Center for Responsible Business, emphasized the importance of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India, as India's progress in this regard would have a significant impact on the global SDGs. She recognized the need for cross-sectoral partnerships, highlighting the irony that SDG 17, focusing on partnerships, is required to address SDGs one to sixteen effectively. She concluded her address by encouraging all participants to actively engage and contribute meaningfully in the dialogue throughout the afternoon.

Opening Remarks by Rijit Sengupta, CEO, Centre for Responsible Business

In his address, Mr. Rijit Sengupta extended a warm welcome to all attendees on behalf of the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB). He highlighted that the event aimed to explore the potential for collaboration across stakeholders in the context of SDGs. He further mentioned that all 4 events in this series addressed collaboration and sustainability and were crafted to identify and synthesize critical elements of effective cross-sectoral collaboration.

Mr. Sengupta commended Karnataka's performance in SDG implementation, ranking among the top states in India. He mentioned specific areas where Karnataka had excelled and identified certain SDGs where improvement was needed. He then emphasized the need for disruptive approaches through innovation and technology to enhance the efficacy and impact of SDG achievement. He invited attendees to actively engage in the discussion on digitalisation, not only in terms of its potential to accelerate SDGs but also in defining the desired nature and purpose of digitalisation, emphasizing whose interests it should serve.

Mr. Sengupta concluded by expressing his anticipation of an engaging afternoon and extended his gratitude to all the partners and attendees.

Special Remarks by Laurent le Danois, Team Leader, Cooperation Section, EU Delegation to India

In his special remarks, Mr. Laurent le Danois, underscored the EU's commitment to collaboration, knowledge exchange, and sustainable practices across various sectors, with a particular focus on digitalisation and the importance of engaging the private sector in achieving SDGs.

He started by noting the ongoing collaboration between EU Delegation to India and CRB and appreciated the latter's multifaceted approach to sustainability. He indicated that the EU holds CRB in high regard and is particularly interested in how CRB can assist European businesses in engaging in sustainable practices with Indian partners. He highlighted that EU's interest extended beyond the conventional 2% corporate social responsibility (CSR) aspect. Instead, they are concerned with the sustainability of processes throughout the value chain, encompassing products and services. Mr. le Danois acknowledged India's significance in the context of SDGs, highlighting that global SDG progress heavily relies on India's efforts. He stressed the need for the EU to engage with India at a substantial level to contribute to SDG achievement.

Mr. le Danois emphasized a strong interest in digitalisation, recognizing the potential it holds. He highlighted the opportunity for knowledge exchange between the EU and India, particularly in the field of digitalisation.

As the EU sees meaningful private-sector engagement crucial for achieving SDGs, Mr. le Danois mentioned a positive experience in the Pune event where there was significant participation from the private sector. He highlighted the ongoing nature of these discussions, emphasizing the need for continued dialogue and collaboration. Each dialogue in this series of events organised by CRB had been unique, featuring different stakeholders. He found this

diversity of participants interesting and stressed the importance of connecting the insights gained from these dialogues to make them collectively meaningful.

Mr. le Danois recognized the challenges and expectations within the room, emphasizing the importance of making the discussions meaningful. He expressed the desire to consolidate insights from the four dialogues and ensure accountability in the collaborative effort to achieve SDGs.

Special Address by Mukund Raj, Project Head, SDG Coordination Centre, Karnataka

Dr. Mukund Raj, participated virtually and gave a presentation on digitatsation in Karnataka, specifically from the state government's perspective. He began by recapping the Goals 16 and 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasizing their significance. Karnataka was acknowledged as a leader in innovation and information technology (IT). The transition of policies from global to local levels was highlighted. Karnataka's efforts to extend the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index data down to the Gram Panchayat level were mentioned, with the upcoming launch by the Hon'ble Chief Minister anticipated. He acknowledged that in Karnataka, digital alignment has been achieved in governance and bureaucracy, and impactful programs have been made possible in SDGs due to the leap in IT in Bangalore. The presentation commenced with a framework centered around technology and policy, focusing on the Karnataka government's digitalisation initiatives. Listed below are some of the initiatives he mentioned:

- SAKALA: An act that ensures timebound delivery of government services to its citizens.
- Seva Sindhu: An initiative to deliver government services to the doorsteps of the citizens.
- BHOOMI: An integrated platform for reforming land record management.
- KUTUMBA: An integrated system with ration cards and various other entitlements.
- Education Sector Data Integration: Data of every child enrolled in the school system is maintained. This data is used for determining budget for education, child requirements, school requirements, teacher requirements, etc. It has also been integrated with the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) to monitor student nutrition.

- NammaYatri Mobile App: A mobile app developed for 3-wheeler vehicles, functioning like OLA & Uber, without any commission and the amount directly goes to the driver.
- AKANKSHA: The state's integrated CSR and SDG Facilitation platform, to facilitate collaborations with Public Private Partnerships / CSR Organisations / Foundations/ NGOs/ Multilaterals / Line Departments of the Government.
- Avalokana Platform: A platform that enables citizens to access data on budget and expenditures by all 39 departments on 1800+ programmes implemented by the state government. It also serves as the dashboard for SDGs.
- AI-based predictive model for budgeting: Using a large pool of data across the state level, district level, block level and so on, an AI-based predictive model for budgeting is being generated. This model is used to analyse school dropouts, rationalise schemes, etc.

Dr. Raj discussed initiatives aligned with the government's "6 – I" framework, developed by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR), Government of Karnataka i.e., Core Infrastructure, Institutional Framework, Internal Process Reengineering, Internal Capacity Building, Innovation and Investment Model.

Dr Mukund, UNDP - SDGCC

PANEL DISCUSSION

Topic : Digitalisation for Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals in Karnataka

Moderator: Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan, *Professor, Organizational Behavior & Human Resources Management, IIMB and Co-chaiperson, CRB*

Panellists:

- Sanjay Anandaram, *Executive Board Member, Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP)*
- Eske Bo Knudsen Rosenberg, *Consul General, Head of Trade & Innovation Centre Denmark*
- Vrunda Bansode, *Partner, SATTVA*
- Santhosh Jayaram, *Global Head - Sustainability, HCL Technologies*

Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan moderated the panel and highlighted the complexity of the SDGs and emphasized the importance of understanding the various perspectives discussed during the panel. She framed the conversation around the tension between institutionalization and values, asserting that the heart of the discussion revolved around delivering equity through the SDGs.

Sanjay Anandaram emphasized the importance of viewing digitalisation as an institutionalised process rather than a mere conversion of physical entities into digital form. He stressed the need for integrating digitalisation into workflows, institutional governance, policies, and legal frameworks to effectively deliver services to beneficiaries. Mr. Anandaram highlighted the failures of past digitalisation efforts when they were treated as mere "computerization projects." He pointed out that designing digital solutions from a user-centric perspective is crucial, considering how services will be accessed and addressing potential issues. Sanjay discussed India's successful approach, which includes a core identity layer (Aadhaar), the JAM layer (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile), and various technology, policy, workflow, and legal infrastructures. He mentioned the need for clean data and emphasized de-duplication to ensure data quality. Mr. Anandaram then explained the global relevance of Aadhaar and the challenge of making a similar system available worldwide while respecting each country's identity systems. He highlighted the importance of an open-source, modular, and interoperable approach, which India has pioneered through MyGov. He noted

that India has partnered with over 70 countries to implement this model and issued nearly 100 million IDs globally.

Vrunda Bansode representing SATTVA, described it as an intermediary organisation and discussed their role in bridging the gap between government data and the private sector's efforts to contribute to SDGs. She mentioned the challenge of translating government data into a usable format for corporations interested in CSR initiatives. Vrunda emphasized the importance of data-driven decision-making for companies mandated to allocate 2% of their profits to CSR projects. She highlighted how her organization helps make government data more accessible and actionable for the private sector, enabling targeted investments in areas such as education and malnutrition. Ms. Bansode also discussed the significance of collaboration and trust among stakeholders, citing the example of the Akansha portal for CSR projects in Karnataka. She stressed that transparency and the effective use of digitalisation can enhance collaboration and ensure that CSR funds are directed towards meaningful and impactful initiatives. Vrunda provided statistics, such as the number of companies under mandatory CSR requirements in India, the amount of CSR funding received by Karnataka, and the sectors that receive the most investment, to illustrate the potential impact of corporate contributions to development and SDGs through data-driven decision-making and collaboration. She acknowledged the benefits of digitalisation in providing data for informed decision-making but also highlighted the challenges, including issues related to data accessibility and usability that need to be addressed for digitalisation efforts to realize their full potential.

Eske Bo Knudsen Rosenberg, from Denmark, provided insights into the country's approach to sustainability and digitalisation. He emphasized the need for a deep understanding of both the SDGs and digitalisation, highlighting that these concepts remain complex for many. Denmark nominated a tech ambassador to bridge the gap between foreign affairs and the private sector, particularly Silicon Valley tech companies, to enhance digital understanding within the government. He noted that India's digital initiatives, such as the Bangalore Tech Summit and projects like Aadhaar, serve as a source of inspiration for Denmark. Mr. Rosenberg underscored the importance of trust in digitalisation, indicating that Denmark's success stems from collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, including the government, industry, universities, and citizens. He acknowledged the challenge of defining sustainability and the need for data and dashboards to measure progress. Eske also expressed Denmark's interest in collaborating with India to gain inspiration and forge partnerships related to digitalisation and SDGs. He praised India's innovative approach to

digitalisation and its potential to benefit the global South. Mr. Rosenberg concluded by stressing the significance of designing trust into digital solutions and the importance of user-centric design in achieving sustainable development goals.

Santhosh Jayaram discussed the potential of digitalisation in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) during a panel discussion in Bangalore. He highlighted that although the COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges to achieving the SDGs, it also enhanced connectivity, offering an opportunity to make up for lost time, given that the SDGs have a 2030 deadline. He emphasized the importance of leveraging digitalisation to advance various SDGs, such as financial inclusion, agriculture, health, education, and gender equality. Mr. Jayaram cited examples of how digital technologies, including AI and machine learning, were being used to address these issues, such as reducing bias in recruitment and solving freshwater challenges. He also pointed out the role of digital technology in integrating diverse energy sources for a balanced energy grid and addressing climate change-related activities. Sustainable infrastructure and sustainable consumption and production were other areas where digital tools could make a significant impact. However, Santhosh acknowledged the need to balance the positive aspects of digitalisation with its environmental impact, emphasizing that sustainability should be at the core of these technological advancements for SDG acceleration. He compared SDGs to a seesaw, highlighting that achieving progress in some goals could put pressure on others, emphasizing the importance of balance and sustainability in pursuing these objectives.

The panelists provided unique perspectives on digitalisation and its impact on achieving the SDGs in Karnataka and beyond. They discussed the complexities of the SDGs and the need for an institutionalised approach to digitalisation.

BREAKOUT SESSION - *Digitalisation for Pursuing Sustainable Development Goals in Karnataka*

All the participants of the Bangalore event were divided into 2 groups for an activity on **developing collaborative ideas** involving various stakeholders towards pursuing Sustainable Development Goals in Karnataka with a digitalisation angle. These group members were randomly selected to enhance diversity in terms of industries. These ideas that the groups came up with will be further researched and some of them may even be transformed as proposals for a future project. The groups presented their ideas, which are summarised below -

- Group 1 - This group highlighted the pressing issues surrounding SDGs 3 and 17, focusing on the deteriorating condition of the Vrishabhavati river in Bengaluru. This once-pristine waterway now suffers from pollution, primarily due to the influx of domestic sewage from the city and industrial effluents from areas like Peenya, Yeshwanthpura, Kumbalgodu, Bidadi, and Harohalli. Their proposal centered on fostering a collaborative effort among the state government, private sector enterprises, research institutions, and civil society organizations to initiate a comprehensive project aimed at revitalizing the river. Emphasizing the role of digitalisation, they stressed its utility in data collection and awareness-raising, thereby addressing health and environmental concerns. By utilizing a digital platform, these issues can be systematically recorded and communicated to the government for the development and implementation of effective policies.

- Group 2 - This group spotlighted the significance of SDG 11 and SDG Target 12.6, with a central focus on promoting the circular economy. Their primary emphasis lay in waste management, particularly concerning food waste and municipal solid waste. They argued that the waste collection system should undergo an upgrade to bolster the principles of a circular economy. Notably, Bengaluru boasts one of the country's oldest composting centers, yet challenges persist as biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste, despite initial separation by households, often intermingle in landfills. To address this, they proposed the implementation of an AI-based system capable of post-collection waste scanning. This system would route biodegradable waste to composting facilities, while dry waste would be directed to recovery centers for recycling or repurposing. Only a small fraction, approximately 5%, comprising sanitary or biomedical waste, would be earmarked for safe disposal in landfills.

Theoretically, this approach could recover nearly 95% of waste, potentially benefitting livelihoods, and enabling the utilization of compostable waste in agriculture. The group identified Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd. (BESCOM) as the pivotal partners for addressing this challenge.

CONCLUSION

Some **key takeaways** from this event are as follows -

- *Collaboration and Sustainability*: The event aimed to explore collaboration across stakeholders for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and emphasized the need for disruptive approaches through innovation and technology to enhance SDG achievement.

- *Karnataka's Performance*: Karnataka was recognized as a leader in innovation and information technology (IT), with efforts to extend the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index data down to the Gram Panchayat level. The state ranked among the top states in India for SDG implementation.

- *Digitalisation Initiatives*: The presentation highlighted various digitalisation initiatives in Karnataka, including SAKALA for timebound delivery of government services, Seva Sindhu for doorstep delivery of services, BHOOMI for land record management, KUTUMBA for integrated entitlements, and Education Sector Data Integration.

- *Importance of Partnerships*: Prof. Vasanthi Srinivasan emphasized the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships to effectively address SDGs. SDG 17, focusing on partnerships, was highlighted as crucial for achieving SDGs one to sixteen.

- _Digitalisation as an Institutionalized Process_: Sanjay Anandaram stressed the importance of viewing digitalisation as an institutionalized process, integrating it into workflows, governance, policies, and legal frameworks. Designing digital solutions from a user-centric perspective and ensuring data quality were also highlighted.
- _Global Relevance and Inspiration_: The event highlighted the global relevance of digitalisation initiatives like Aadhaar and the interest of other countries, such as Denmark, in collaborating with India to gain inspiration and forge partnerships in digitalisation and SDGs. The importance of trust, data measurement, and user-centric design in achieving sustainable development goals was also emphasized.

The event ended with closing remarks from IIM Bangalore and CRB with a promise to continue looking into the SDGs in India at regional levels.

Group Photo