

Climate Leadership Summit

Proceedings

2024

Proceedings of the Climate Leadership Summit 2024, conducted by the
Centre for Sustainable Development, Bengaluru.

26th November, 2024

Acknowledgement and Declaration

This report is compiled based on talks given by the speakers listed in the 'List of Delegates and Speakers' section of this report. It is drafted with an intention of providing an insight into the topics covered on the day and therefore any errors in the statistics or sources are to be kindly excused although best efforts to produce current data where necessary have been made.

We sincerely thank all the speakers, delegates, guests, media and others for all their support and for making the event a successful one.

The CSD Annual Publication, The Climate Leadership Summit, Second edition of the National Youth Climate Conclave and more information about the annual events and CSD's work can be accessed in CSD's websites www.csdindia.in and www.greenskills.in

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Background:

The Leadership Summit on Climate Emergency (Climate Leadership Summit) was organised by Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) as an annual event on 26th of November, 2024. Various dignitaries have attended the summit giving insights into the topic “Climate Emergency - Call for Action”. The summit also saw a number of students from across cities of the country who were brought together by CSD for the second edition of the National Youth Climate Conclave that took place on 25th of November, 2024 in association with St. Francis College, Koramangala, Bengaluru. In the Summit, CSD’s annual publication was released. In addition, it organised an award ceremony for climate champions who participated in the National Youth Climate Conclave. More than 150 delegates including diplomats, administrators, academicians, industrialists, Policy Makers, Students and NGOs have participated in the event.

List of Delegates and Speakers

- Shri. Dr. T.B. Jayachandra, Hon’ble State Representative (Cabinet Minister Rank), New Delhi and Former Minister for Agriculture; Former Minister for Law & Parliamentary affairs, Higher Education and Minor Irrigation, GoK, Bengaluru.
- Prof. N.H. Ravindranath, Expert UNFCCC and former Head, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, IISC.
- Smt. Preeti Gehlot, IAS, Special Commissioner, BBMP
- Dr. Ashwin Mahesh, Climatologist and Urban Expert
- Dr. Saritha, Senior Consultant, Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI)
- Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar, IAS, Chairman, BWSSB
- Prof. Dr. M.K Ramesh, Former VC-Incharge, National Law School of India.
- Mr. Swaminathan, IFS (retd.)
- Ms. Rekha Krishnan, Founder WEFT and Ex-Ashoka University
- Mr. Vaideesh Sankaran, International Climate Expert
- Mr. Prashanth, Founder, ESSMART
- Mr. Harish HV, MD, Ecube Investment Advisors Private Limited
- Mr. S Santhosh Kumar, Deputy Manager, Harit - HCL Foundation
- Prof. Dr. Jagannatha Venkataramaiah, Former Scientist Engineer ISRO, Review committee member, World Meteorological Organization, 2021

Introduction and Inaugural Session - Climate Emergency - Call for Action

The Climate Leadership Summit commenced with an introduction by Dr. Srinivas R, Executive Director, Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD) who welcomed the distinguished guests and presented the summit paper.

He noted the following reasons as to why addressing Climate change is an emergency. According to the World Meteorological Association, there is a 66 percent chance that the annual average temperature will overshoot the 1.5 degree warming for at least one year between 2023 and 2027. The frequency and severity of natural disasters and extreme weather events in recent times are to be considered. The crisis is not just about the occurrence of these catastrophic events but about the impacts on various life forms and ecosystems. He also noted the increase of GHG emissions post covid pandemic with the emissions across the G20 countries accounting to 70% of the global GHG emissions. The vulnerable and exposed are the poor with increased risk to climate impacts. Dr. Srinivas also noted a few challenges that India and the world would be facing in addressing the crisis - Managing the side effects such as rising energy costs, labour displacements, etc, of transitioning into a low-carbon economy; Addressing gaps in the adaptive capacity; Effective participation of the private sector. He concluded with CSD's plan for the following two years which aims to work towards building integrated solutions for environmental problems.

Keynote Address - Prof. N H Ravindranath, Expert UNFCCC and Former Head, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, IISC.

Prof. N.H. Ravindranath delivered the keynote address starting with differentiating between climate change and climate emergency with the emergency framework shifting the climate risk from the future to the present. Many country governments today have declared a climate emergency, the UK government being the first in 2019. Various governments have set stiff targets to reach net zero as we know but the rate of GHG emission has been only increasing throughout the years. He emphasized on the Paris agreement and the reasoning behind the urgency for action to limit the global mean temperature. He noted that most states in India are prone to droughts and floods with a steady increase in vulnerability and exposure of districts every year to either droughts or floods and/or both.

Biggest emergency for India he stated is the increase in high intensity rainfall leading to floods and adverse climate impacts. He also stated that the current programmes and efforts are lacking and inadequate in addressing climate change and impact mitigation. He concluded by noting the potential

and scope in understanding climate change as a science for decision making. Also said it is important to mainstream risk and vulnerability assessment in all Government programmes and schemes.

Inaugural address - Dr. T.B Jayachandra, Hon'ble State Representative, New Delhi and Former Minister for Agriculture; Former Minister for Law & Parliamentary affairs, Higher education and minor irrigation, Government of Karnataka, Bengaluru.

Dr. T.B. Jayachandra briefed on the history of Climate change, its impacts from 1970, the Paris Agreement of 2015, India's National Action Plan, 2008 and reiterated the need for urgency in climate action in the country and the state. He shared his experience on combating Climate change by bringing water impounding structures in the state during his period of service in the Government. Representing Karnataka, he also spoke about the state's significant contributions to combating climate change. He detailed the various actions and policies implemented by the Karnataka Government to address this global challenge. He concluded by emphasizing on collaborations within the country's Governments and other Country governments to tackle the issue.

Closing remarks for the Inaugural session - Dr. A Ravindra, Chairman, Centre for Sustainable Development; Former Chief Secretary to Government, Government of Karnataka.

Dr. A Ravindra highlighted the key aspects of Climate Change which are essentially Energy and Water from the talks of the previous guests. He had also highlighted the following key issues pertaining to Climate Change and its impact. Talking about sustainability, he notes that it is essential to address the question "Is growth with green possible?" in India and overall. Dr. Ravindra also noted the frequency of extreme weather events in recent times and briefed on the term "the triple planetary crisis". He suggested a paradigm shift in development models to work towards a Just Green transition and to mitigate the climate impacts especially impacting the poor and vulnerable. He concluded by emphasizing on the responsibility of individuals and political leaders to make sustainable and eco-friendly choices to address the issue.

The CSD annual publication was also released during the inaugural session.

Session 1: Climate Emergency Plans - Local Actions to deal with Climate Emergencies

Moderator: Dr. A. Ravindra

Speaker 1: Smt. Preeti Gehlot, IAS, Special Commissioner, BBMP.

Ms. Preeti Gehlot spoke about the Climate Action Plan of the Bangalore city, which is the third city in India to do so, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Being the nodal officer of the Climate action cell, she stated that the key objective of the cell was to bring together all stakeholder departments tackling the issue of Climate Change with projects. She also spoke about the cell's efforts to promote awareness on the subject in other Government departments. She also highlighted the responsibilities of citizens in mitigating climate change.

Speaker 2: Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar, IAS, Chairman, BWSSB

Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar introduced by stating the geographical advantages of Bengaluru. He explained the need for sustainable water resources for a growing city like Bengaluru especially amidst the water scarcity due to Climate Change. He stated that water conservation is the current prime focus of BWSSB for tackling the water issue in the city. He also promoted use of water aerators by the citizens to conserve water at a household level. He also stated a few successful strategies that worked for the department, they are: Use of innovative technology and Promoting public participation.

Speaker 3: Dr. Saritha, Environmental Management and Policy Research Institute (EMPRI)

Dr. Saritha discussed the role of EMPRI which is the nodal agency of the state for climate change, in capacity building and consultancy for the Government for policy making. The State Action Plan for Climate Change was brought out in 2015 and revised in 2021 which details many key aspects such as vulnerability assessment, impacts of climate change and strategies for mitigation, etc that are essential to addressing climate change. EMPRI's focus is also to mainstream the plan with its implementation programmes. She also detailed on the introduction of Key performance Indicators (KPIs) in departments to ensure effective work by them towards adaptation and mitigation of Climate change impacts.

Speaker 4: Dr. Ashwin Mahesh, Climatologist & Urban Expert

Dr. Ashwin Mahesh stressed on the severity of the impacts and further circumstances of climate change by noting some examples of purchasing capacities. climate events in the past and the present

and prediction of these events in the future. He explained the importance and role of public participation in mitigating climate impacts which would aid the Government to effectively implement the schemes and policies on the ground.

Session 2: Panel Discussion on Climate Justice

Moderator: Prof. (Dr.) M.K. Ramesh

Speaker 1: Dr. M.H. Swaminathan, IFS (retd.)

Dr. Swaminathan highlighted a few successful outcomes of the COP29 in terms of climate financing. He briefed on the history of climate events such as floods in Karnataka and noted vulnerable districts of the state. Deforestation was noted to be a continuing challenge for mitigating climate change impacts on vulnerable communities.

Speaker 2: Dr. Ashwin Mahesh, Climatologist & Urban Expert

Dr. Ashwin stated that Climate justice/Climate change is a social and political issue. He also encouraged active citizen participation with a focus on outcome-oriented solutions.

Speaker 3: Ms. Rekha Krishnan, Founder WEFT & Ex-Ashoka University.

Ms. Rekha differentiated between equity and equality in line with the topic of Climate Justice. The essence of climate justice according to her is having equitable policies. She addressed the reasons as to why justice in climate is essential, one of them being the dichotomy between the developed and developing countries and the responsibility they share in addressing Climate Change. The other reason being unequal impacts of climate change impacts on different groups of people. She noted that driven by Climate change the changes in the energy sector can be broadly categorised into two - Reduction of fossil fuels and Enhancement of clean energy. This transition would also result in unintended effects affecting certain sections of the population. She detailed on the positive and negative impacts of transition decisions and urged the audience to think about “who is benefited and who is affected”. And lastly, concluded by emphasizing that it is essential to understand and review whether the Just transition models and projects are reaching the vulnerable and most impacted. Also stated that decentralized energy systems being small scale establishments ensure justice through providing choice.

Speaker 4: Mr. Vaideesh Sankaran, International Climate Expert

Mr. Vaideesh urged people to reflect upon chasing capitalism amidst the climate crisis as it proves unjust to the vulnerable and the most impacted. He noted that conversations surrounding climate justice often leave out non-human life forms. The two main approaches while dealing with Climate justice are Legal approach and Operational approach. He also notes milestones in these approaches, one of them being the inclusion of climate change impacts as a human right in the Indian constitution. He shared some of his experiences and challenges faced in the operational approaches to deliver justice to the impacted due to lack of awareness, socio-cultural sentiments and various other reasons within the population overall.

Speaker 5: Dr. Vidya Ann Jacob, Christ University

Dr. Vidya discussed the concept of Climate Justice with respect to India in terms of policy and noted three main aspects - Fair and Equitable, Right-based approach and Sustainable Development are key to rendering justice to the impacted. She also notes that most of the climate policies are not legally backed leading to unjust practices in the climate action front. She also discussed the impact of climate change in India and key takeaways from COP29 like carbon markets.

Session 3: Action for Climate Empowerment

Moderator: Dr. Srinivas R

1. Agriculture Technology - Mr. Prashanth Venkataramana, Founder of ESSMART:

Innovations exist in clean tech, agriculture, healthcare and the like fields that aim to empower and help the rural population and/or the poor. However, Mr. Prashanth notes that these innovations or products do not reach the catered population in a mainstream way. They are often given out to the population, in ineffective methods such as donations or subsidization. 60% of the population is employed under the Agriculture sector. Leveraging the potential, ESSMART aims to bridge the gap between the technology and consumption by the end user, in this case, the rural population, by working with suppliers, rural retailers and FPOs/cooperatives in a phygital manner. He briefed about the types of impactful products that are sold in the rural shops through ESSMART's network. One of the challenges being financial constraints of the consumer(farmer) to purchase and adopt the technology, ESSMART was able to pilot a program, Rang De, that lets individuals fund and invest in farmers willing to purchase the products through a digital platform. He also lastly mentions the need for

building climate resilience through financing the farmers who are vulnerable to Climate Change impacts and emphasized that ESSMART's efforts are working towards the same.

2. Climate Empowerment - Global Experience - Mr. Vaideesh Sankaran, International Climate Expert

Mr. Vaideesh begins the talk by explaining the difference between climate action and climate empowerment. Climate empowerment enables individuals/organizations to focus on action on an ongoing basis. Elements of Climate empowerment according to him are Education, Technology, Finance, Policies, Institutions and Investments. Going by the elements with examples of each, It was noted by him that transition to a non-fossil fuel based economy is the key to addressing climate change and focusing on green skilling and green jobs helps us achieve Just transition to a green economy. As for the element of Technology, Sustainable cooling is a potential area of expansion in India pushing the air conditioning manufacturers to use energy efficient technology. Blended finance is a concept that is currently being focused across the world which includes blending of three types of finances - public, private and philanthropic, making climate projects economically viable. Creating international carbon markets is an approach to addressing climate change which helps raise private funds to do so and in India, the carbon markets are expected to be functional by 2026. Voluntary carbon markets already exist across the world and efforts to establish compliance carbon markets are being made simultaneously. Under policy, the European Green Deal brought by the European Union introduced STH which stands for Systematic Transformation Hub, a tool which addresses the need for an integrated approach in policy making to address climate change by identifying the sectoral linkages and understanding impacts. Mr. Vaideesh lastly states two examples under investments that have been very successful in addressing climate change. They are the IRB - Inflation Reduction Bill which focuses on sustainability in terms of climate and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that focuses heavily on investments in Energy Efficiency. He states that collaboration and partnerships are key to effective climate action and empowerment. He concluded by outlining the roles students should adopt, including being integrators, scaling-up scientists, priority optimizers, simplicity advocates, and effective team workers.

3. ESG Status & Challenges - Mr. Harish HV, MD, Ecube Investment Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Mr. Harish briefs about topics such as sources of carbon emissions, income inequalities, governance failures and importance of corporations in addressing these issues. Corporations control 70% of GDP

of the world making it essential to look at the climate impacts posed by them with the help of ESG - Environmental Social Governance. Companies are also being pushed to adhere to ESG practices for increased investments and government compliances which he notes is a step towards promoting and creating responsible businesses. He commended India in being ahead in terms of reporting and disclosure. Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) is an ESG framework for Indian companies to report on various sustainability aspects.

Challenges of ESG are observed to be, reluctance of adoption by companies due to the misconception of incurring additional costs, improper and non-transparent reporting to ensure compliance and various such reasons. He advises companies to look at ESG as a tool for increasing efficiency in which way the climate impacts are reduced and the businesses function responsibly and sustainably.

4. Harit Initiatives - Mr. S Santhosh Kumar, Deputy Manager, Harit - HCL Foundation.

Mr. Santhosh emphasized on the action-oriented initiatives taken by HCL Foundation under their CSR programmes for Climate and Environment. He noted that the CSR expenditure in the country has been gradually increasing by 10-15 percent every year with expenditure in the year 2022-23 in India being about INR 30,000 crores. Focused on micro-level climate issues, HCLF's Harit has been working in 11 states of the country in five thematic areas - Environment education and awareness, Water conservation, Animal welfare, Afforestation and Habitat restoration and Coastal and Marine conservation. He also emphasized on the monitoring and maintenance aspect in each project ensuring effectiveness.

5. Climate Resilience pathways for Youth since UNCED 1992 - Prof. Dr. Jagannatha Venkataramaiah, Former Scientist Engineer ISRO.

Prof. Jagannatha emphasized on the importance of sustainable practices especially practice by young adults. He also noted the increase in natural disasters per year since 1990 to 2024 from 50 to 250 respectively. He also advised that working in advance and self-study are key to successful outcomes and extended wisdom. He concluded with a prayer in Kannada, "Breathing properly is meditation; Living simple is the best form of yoga; Our elders live in us, science is in our breath; If you follow the natural laws of expecting nothing in return, nature and community based solutions are already present for any climate disaster; expecting no good for others is longevity; The country has given the best possible leadership yesterday, today and also tomorrow"

Award ceremony of the National Youth Climate Conclave (Second edition) 2024

The award ceremony announced the results of the Finals of the National Youth Climate Conclave 2024 that took place on the previous day i.e, 25th November, 2024.

First Prize - Team Brazil from Stella Maris College, Chennai

Second Prize - Team Germany from Fergusson College, Pune

Third Prize - Team India from St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru

Conclusion

The Climate Leadership Summit concluded with a renewed commitment to addressing climate change through local actions, fostering climate justice, and empowering communities. The discussions emphasized the role of governments, institutions, and citizens in creating a sustainable future. The summit successfully provided actionable insights and strategies for combating climate emergencies.