



WSDS-ACT4EARTH

COP29 Compass Dialogue: Sustainable Lifestyles

5th September 2024 | 4:15 to 5:15 pm (IST) | TERI, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

EVENT SUMMARY

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Suggested Citation

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Background

Following the adoption of Agenda 21, the landmark outcome document from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), global attention has increasingly centered on the pressing issue of unsustainable production and consumption patterns. This focus culminated in 2015 with the establishment of responsible consumption and production as the twelfth goal within the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 12 is dedicated to fostering responsible and sustainable practices by promoting waste reduction, enhancing production efficiency, and raising awareness among governments, businesses, and consumers to adopt more sustainable behaviors. In India, various initiatives such as the Green Credit Programme, ecolabels, Mission LiFE, and circular economy initiatives work towards SDG 12 as well as climate action.

It is crucial to approach sustainable lifestyles by considering the resource value chains that include resource extraction, manufacturing, processing, use by consumers, and disposal. The resource value chain consists of two ends: upstream and downstream. The upstream segment includes resource extraction, while the downstream segment includes end-consumption and disposal. Mainstream frameworks on sustainable consumption and production, including SDG 12, fail to holistically capture downstream segments of resource consumption and production systems.

In terms of cumulative emissions, the United States, EU-27, and China are responsible for over 55% of cumulative GHG emissions from 1850-2022. On the other hand, the African Union (1 tonne per person), India (2 tonnes per person), and Brazil (2.2 tonnes per person) have per capita CO₂ emissions much lower than the world average (4.7 tonnes per person). In 2022, the per capita carbon emissions of the United States were 14.9 tonnes, more than triple the world average. In the context of climate justice and consumption, questions around overconsumption and underconsumption are key and need to be captured in global discourses.

With this background, TERI organized an Act4Earth Dialogue to deliberate and propose solutions for strengthening sustainable consumption to achieve the goals of climate justice. Based on the views received during the dialogue, the way forward has been identified, and suggestions on some of the key areas for improvement are documented below.

Global and Policy Context of Sustainable Lifestyles

- Current consumption and production patterns are unsustainable, and SDG 12 promotes responsible consumption.
- The LIFE Movement (Lifestyle for the Environment) encourages sustainable choices to reduce ecological footprints.
- Addressing under-consumption, equity, and climate debt is essential to achieving sustainable development goals.

Sustainable Lifestyles and Food Systems

- The global shift towards sustainable lifestyles is especially crucial in food systems. In India, where many farmers are small and marginal, the LIFE movement emphasizes healthy lifestyles, organic food production, local food consumption, biodiversity conservation, and composting.
- Discouraging monoculture and improving food waste management are vital.
- Policy support needs to be strengthened for both post-harvest and consumption-based food waste.

Lifestyles and Consumption Index for G20

- According to the Consumption and Lifestyles Index by TERI, the United States, Germany, and Canada are the highest-consuming G20 countries, reflecting significant resource use and ecological impact.
- India, Indonesia, and the African Union have the lowest consumption levels, highlighting minimal resource use and the challenges of under-consumption.

Circularity, Systems Thinking, and Global Narratives

- The global narrative on sustainable consumption initially focused on pollution control, then shifted to cleaner production, and later evolved to encompass industrial ecology and the circular economy, both of which adopt a systems-based approach.
- In developing countries, per capita material consumption and GHG emissions remain low. However, countries like Japan and Korea have shown that it is possible to decouple resource consumption from economic growth, setting an example for transitioning to sustainable practices.
- It is crucial to avoid blindly following Western consumption models. Instead, a thoughtful, localized approach to sustainable consumption should ensure climate justice and regional equity. Consumption reduction should not compromise basic needs but instead promote sustainability and equity.
- Frugal innovations and circularity are key to achieving sustainability in urbanizing countries like India.

Fast Fashion and Resource Stress

- The fashion industry, especially fast fashion, is a major polluter, particularly in water consumption. Addressing unsustainable practices in the fashion sector is essential as the world faces increasing resource stress, especially water stress.
- Reforms in the fashion industry can help reduce its ecological footprint, contributing to global sustainability efforts.

India's Leadership in Global Advocacy on Sustainable Consumption and Lifestyles

- India has championed internationalized sustainable lifestyles through platforms like the G20 and UNEA, and the next step could involve promoting sustainable lifestyles at the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- India can develop Mission LiFE as a template for circularity, focusing on reducing unsustainable consumption.

Policy Instruments and Global Best Practices

- A combination of policy, market, and social instruments is needed to support sustainable lifestyles. Lifecycle-based approaches, which address the entire value chain from resource extraction to waste management, are crucial.
- Many countries have successfully transitioned to sustainable consumption through robust policy frameworks. Japan and Korea are examples of countries that have decoupled resource consumption from economic growth.
- International collaboration on sustainable consumption will be key in addressing future challenges like increasing urbanization and resource scarcity.

Annexure: Agenda

2:30 pm to 3:00 pm	Registration
Panel Discussion 1: Climate Finance 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	
3:00 pm to 3:05 pm	Context Setting by Chair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr R R Rashmi, Distinguished Fellow, TERI
3:05 pm to 3:15 pm	Framing Presentation by TERI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Shailly Kedia, Senior Fellow and Associate Director, TERI
3:15 pm to 3:25 pm	Policy Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Rajasree Ray, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change
3:25 pm to 3:55 pm	Panel Discussion on Climate Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Ashish Chaturvedi, Head, Action for Climate and Environment, UNDP India Mr Arun Krishnan, Programme Manager, CPI Global Ms Yeshika Malik, Climate Change Specialist, World Bank
3:55 pm to 4:10 pm	Q&A: Climate Finance
Panel Discussion 2: Sustainable Lifestyles 4:15 pm to 5:15 pm	
4:15 pm to 4:20 pm	Context Setting by Chair Mr Manjeev Singh Puri, Distinguished Fellow, TERI
4:20 pm to 4:30 pm	Framing Presentation by TERI Ms Madhuparna Maiti, Research Associate, TERI
4:30 pm to 4:50 pm	Panel Discussion on Sustainable Lifestyles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Rijit Sengupta, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Responsible Business Dr Suneel Pandey, Senior Fellow and Director, TERI
4:50 pm to 5:05 pm	Q&A: Sustainable Lifestyles
5:05 pm to 5:30 pm	High-Tea

Master of Ceremony: Ms Palak Khanna, Research Associate and Area Convenor, TERI

About

World Sustainable Development Summit

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship multistakeholder initiative organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades of making ‘sustainable development’ a globally shared goal. Over the years, the Summit platform has brought together thought leaders, heads of state and government, scholars, corporates, youth groups, and civil society representatives from across the world. The Summit series has established itself as a responsible and effective platform for mobilizing opinion-makers to drive ambition and advance pioneering actions to address some of the most relevant issues concerning sustainable development and climate change. The Summit series has witnessed the participation of 58 Heads of State and Government, 137 Ministers, 13 Nobel Laureates, 2,045 Business Leaders, 3,373 Speakers, and 40,362 Delegates.

Act4Earth

The Act4Earth initiative was launched at the valedictory session of the 21st edition of WSDS. Building on the Act4Earth discussions of WSDS, this initiative seeks to continuously engage with stakeholders through research and dialogue. The Act4Earth initiative has two components: the COP Compass and the SDG Charter. The COP Compass will seek to inspire and mobilize leadership at all levels for inclusive transitions through ambitious and informed policies and measures that will enable paradigm shifts toward meeting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Paris Agreement goals through mitigation, adaptation, and means of implementation. The SDG Charter will seek to identify gaps and suggest ways for strengthening and mainstreaming sustainable development in policy agendas for enhanced environmental, social, and economic outcomes.
