CSR TODAY

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IPCC

GOVERNMENTS SPLIT ON 'ACCELERATED' CLIMATE REPORTS FOR NEXT UN GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

Governments have decided against adopting a new structure for the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment cycle, committing instead to the traditional set of three "working group" reports and just one "special" report

CSR INITIATIVE
IIT Mandi iHub showcases the success of 'Drone Didi' program to President

CSR ISSUE
Planning for a future beyond 1.5°C

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Do you believe in life after oil?

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Nature is staging a comeback: UN recognizes seven World Restoration Flagships

Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
rt@iccsr.org

Together, the seven new flagships are expected to restore nearly 40 million hectares – an area almost 600 times the size of Nairobi – and create around 500,000 jobs.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) have named seven initiatives from Africa, Latin America, the Mediterranean, and Southeast Asia as UN World Restoration Flagships. These initiatives include ecosystems at the tipping point of outright degradation resulting from wildfires, drought, deforestation, and pollution. They are now eligible for technical and financial UN support.

The World Restoration Flagship awards are part of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration – led by UNEP and FAO – which aims to prevent, halt, and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. The awards track notable initiatives that support global commitments to restore one billion hectares – an area larger than China.

Terai Arc Landscape: Reviving Asia's mega-fauna

Over seven million people depend on the Terai Arc Landscape, stretching across 5.10 million hectares and shared by India and Nepal.

Regreening Africa's agriculture

The Regreening Africa initiative has been using proven agroforestry techniques, adapted to suit the needs of farmers under varying socio-ecological contexts in the past two decades, to restore over 350,000 hectares in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Somalia.

From Fires to Forests – Resilience in the Mediterranean

The Mediterranean basin is the world's second largest biodiversity hotspot, but 16 per cent of its forest species are threatened with extinction, in part due to climate-driven longer drought periods, extreme heat waves and wildfires.

Living Indus – Restoring a Cradle of Civilizations

The 3,180 km long Indus River has served as the vibrant core of the social, cultural, and economic life of what is today called Pakistan for well over 5,000 years. Some 90 per cent of Pakistan's people and more than three-quarters of its economy reside in the Indus Basin, and it irrigates over 80 percent of its arable land.

Acción Andina: Saving a global water and climate hotspot

The Acción Andina social movement is led by Peruvian conservation non- profit organisation, ECOAN (Association Ecosistemas Andinos).

Sri Lanka stopped planting mangroves and started growing them

In Sri Lanka, mangrove forests are immensely valuable coastal ecosystems that thrive at the border between land and sea and serve as an important bridge between marine and terrestrial biodiversity. The livelihoods of coastal communities in Sri Lanka are highly dependent on marine and coastal ecosystems.

Growing forests in Africa's drylands: African farmers transforming food systems

The Forest Garden Program, launched in 2015, includes multiple Forest Garden projects in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, The Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Uganda, and Tanzania. Through researched agroforestry techniques, unsustainable farming practices are replaced and nature regenerates, as farmers receive essential training, supplies and equipment for their success.

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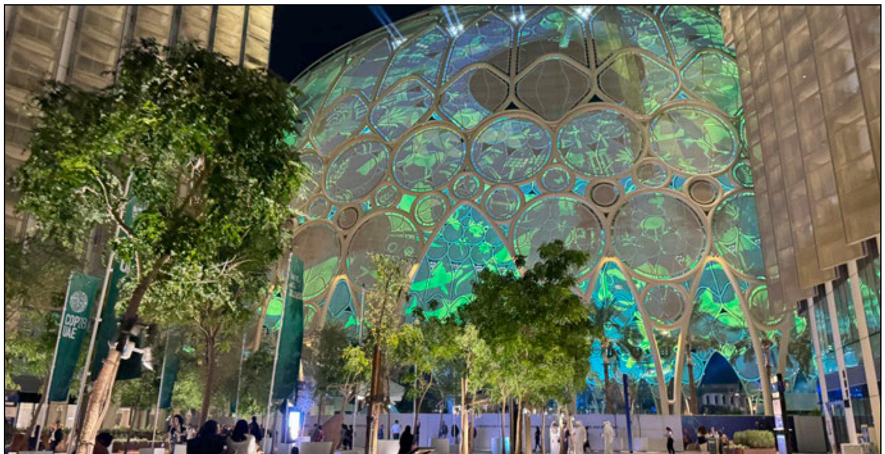

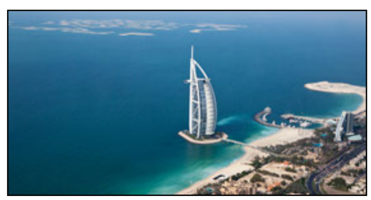

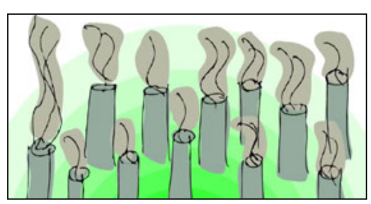

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CSR NEWS

NTPC to set up patient-attendant waiting facility at AIIMS under CSR

Country's largest power generation company, NTPC Ltd has signed an agreement with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi to set up "Patient – Attendant Waiting facility/Shelter" in AIIMS, New Delhi Campus under NTPC CSR at an estimated cost of Rs. 8 crores.

The proposed facility/shelter will facilitate and accommodate approx. 1,000 patients and their attendants every day 24x7. Facility/Shelter will have separate and specific need-based space for men, women and physically challenged and equipped with CCTVs, drinking water, centralized pantry Hall, etc. This basic facility will provide security, personal safety & protection from the weather and also helps patients & their escorts to ease stress apart from providing privacy & safety to them.

Dr. M Srinivas, Director, on behalf of AIIMS New Delhi and Shri Upendra Mishra, DGM(CSR), CC on behalf of NTPC signed the agreement in the august presence of Shri Neeraj Kapoor, GM(CSR/R&R/LA), NTPC, Senior Doctors from AIIMS, New Delhi and other staff.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in NTPC's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, aiming to enhance healthcare infrastructure and support patient welfare.

2024 Kicks Off with US$1 Billion Solar Energy Funding, Despite 9% Dip in 2023

Tracxn, a leading market intelligence platform has released its Geo Solar Energy Report. The report, based on their extensive database, provides a round-up of funding and other major developments in India's solar energy space in 2023.

This sector secured funding worth US$1.55 billion in 2023, 9% lower than the US$1.7 billion raised in 2022. However, within the first month of 2024, this space has witnessed US$1 billion in funding, with Sukhbir Agro Energy raising US$1 billion in its private equity round in January 2024.

The majority of the funding in this space comes from late-stage rounds. However, a decline in late-stage investments led to a subsequent drop in overall funding in 2023. Companies in this space attracted late-stage funding worth US$1.3 billion in 2023, a 23% decrease from the US$1.7 billion raised in 2022.

A sharp surge was observed in early-stage funding, which rose six-fold to US$252 million in 2023 from US$39 million in 2022. Seed-stage funding in this space has raised a total of US$11.5 million in 2023, a growth of 58% compared to the US$7.26 million raised in 2022.

- **Solar Energy Tech companies have already secured slightly over US$1 billion in funding in 2024 (till Feb 7, 2024)**
- **Total funding into Solar Energy companies in India fell 9% to US$1.55B in 2023 from US$1.7B in 2022**
- **A total of 39 $100M+ rounds have been closed till date**
- **Delhi led the city-wise funding, followed by Gurugram and Mumbai**

The solar energy sector in India has witnessed a total of 39 US$100 million+ rounds to date, out of which 12 have taken place in the last two years. No unicorns have emerged from this sector so far.

Among the cities, Delhi takes the lead in terms of total funding to date, followed by Gurgaon and Mumbai. Solar Energy companies based in Delhi have raised US$3.1 billion to date, followed by those based in Gurugram (US$2.7 billion) and Mumbai (US$2.3 billion).

There has been notable activity in terms of exits within this sector. The Indian solar energy sector has seen 43 acquisitions to date, of which 16 acquisitions were witnessed in the last few years, and 2024 has seen only one acquisition so far. Further, 49 companies have gone public to date, out of which three IPOs took place in 2023 and two in 2022.

IFC, Villgro, and DFC are the most active investors in the Indian Solar Energy space to date. CIIE, Social Alpha, and Villgro are the top seed-stage investors in this space, while Acumen, CIIE, and FMO are the top early-stage investors. Axis Bank, British International, and KKR are the top late-stage investors in this space.

The government of India has already started to focus on locally developing solar products by providing incentives worth more than US$3 billion in the last three years. States such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are already generating more than 9 MW of solar energy.

The Indian government has set a target of net zero emissions by 2070. It also plans to diversify 50% of its electricity requirement to renewable energy by 2030. The government is giving a push to the deployment of renewable sources of energy, especially solar, through policies and incentives.

The government also encourages 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) through the automatic route to promote solar energy within the country. These initiatives are expected to bolster solar energy companies and accelerate sectoral growth.

AT&T and L&T Technology Services collaborate to accelerate solutions to address climate change

Pioneering solutions that pair connectivity with engineering expertise to reduce emissions

L&T Technology Services Limited, a prominent global digital engineering and R&D services company, and AT&T, one of the largest telecommunications companies worldwide, today announced a strategic alliance aimed at curbing global emissions. This groundbreaking collaboration will utilize the combined resources and expertise of both companies to develop advanced solutions that can significantly reduce environmental impact.

As part of this collaboration, LTTS will participate in AT&T's Connected Climate Initiative (CCI), a collaborative effort that works on connectivity-based solutions to reduce greenhouse emissions by 1 gigaton by 2035. The effort brings together a diverse group of organizations to unleash the power of connectivity solutions, including the Internet of Things (IoT), fiber, 5G, and edge computing, to reach this goal. As a participant in the CCI, LTTS will collaborate with AT&T to work toward the collective emissions reduction commitment and help enable companies to make sustainable business decisions.

“Armed with AT&T's formidable telecommunications infrastructure and our own deep-seated expertise in engineering DNA, we are poised to make substantial strides towards a future less dependent on carbon,” said Alind Saxena, President, Sales and Executive Director at L&T Technology Services (LTTS). “This collaboration is a pledge to the planet. We're not just developing technologies - we're crafting a sustainable legacy, one that significantly reduces our environmental footprint."

For L&T Technology Services (LTTS), sustainability transcends the realm of mere commitment; it forms an integral part of the organizational ethos, deeply embedded in all their actions. The company offers an extensive suite of sustainability services that encompasses a wide range of solutions, all meticulously designed to mitigate environmental impact and drive positive change.

LTTS' offerings span from green engineering solutions and energy management strategies to waste reduction initiatives and community engagement programs. These solutions empower organizations to integrate sustainability into every facet of their operations. With a keen focus on innovation and collaboration, LTTS guides its global customers through the complexities of sustainability, equipping them to attain their environmental and social objectives while ensuring business success.

LTTS will work with AT&T to deliver a suite of cutting-edge services designed to leverage AT&T connectivity to help companies achieve emissions reduction targets.

LTTS will work with AT&T to deliver a suite of cutting-edge services designed to leverage AT&T connectivity to help companies achieve emissions reduction targets. Examples of this collaboration include:

- Developing engineering and connectivity solutions that are geared towards driving digital transformation for a greener future across various industries.
- gEdge, a scalable, ready-for-implementation immersive data center-in-a-box solution
- i-BEMS, an energy-efficient building automation framework
- Design and engineering for renewable energy utilizing connectivity to enhance reliability and efficiency of energy supply to the network grid
- Engineering and connectivity solutions focused on accelerating cleaner, sustainable energy such as green hydrogen
- Carbon sequestration technology and connectivity-enabled measurement and verification platforms

“As we work towards achieving the Gigaton goal, we know that it's collaborations like this one, combining our respective resources and expertise, that will help us get there,” said Shannon Carroll, AVP of Global Environmental Sustainability at AT&T. “Together with LTTS, we're committed to create a more sustainable tomorrow."

Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India launches Sustainability Garage - a Mercedes-Benz Initiative

Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) has launched the 'Sustainability Garage' - a Mercedes-Benz initiative, for promoting innovation in sustainable mobility.

In association with Prayoga Institute of Education Research, the Sustainability Garage, equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, will serve as a hub for multidisciplinary research, focusing on developing eco-friendly materials with diverse applications to benefit society. Underscoring its commitment to driving positive change and advancing sustainable practices, MBRDI's CSR initiative is a collaborative effort to create platforms and research spaces dedicated towards advancing sustainability among a diverse set of stakeholders.

(L-R) Dr. H S Nagaraja, Chief Mentor of Prayoga Institute of Education Research and Manu Saale, Managing Director and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India inaugurated the facility

The Sustainability Garage at Prayoga Institute of Education Research is a significant step forward in our sustainability journey. This initiative aims to foster collaboration between academia and industry, driving research and innovation in sustainable materials and technologies. Under this initiative, MBRDI has jointly developed specialised course material, and over 150 students from six universities in Karnataka - Jain University, RV Institution, JSS Science and Technology University, Vijaya College, Nrupatunga Institution, and St. Joseph's University - will participate in curated workshops and can experiment with the research equipment.

Manu Saale, Managing Director and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India, said, "Researchers at MBRDI are deeply engaged in ensuring sustainability as a core priority – from analysing materials to design greener products

Launch of Sustainability Garage, (L-R) Manu Saale, Managing Director and CEO of Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India and Dr. H S Nagaraja, Chief Mentor of Prayoga Institute of Education Research or better battery chemistry to pivoting increasingly towards digital engineering processes that reduce emissions or waste. In addition to partnerships with academia and research labs that help multiply our innovation quotient, it is important for the industry to create an ecosystem that nurtures innovation and embraces the principles of circularity and sustainability. We are excited to launch the Sustainability Garage at Prayoga Institute of Education Research, marking a significant milestone in our sustainability journey."

Dr. H S Nagaraja, Chief Mentor of Prayoga Institute of Education Research, noted, "It is necessary to nurture the spirit of innovation at a young age and enable an ecosystem for young researchers. Prayoga is developing and promoting pedagogies where creating solutions is a part of a student's learning journey. The collaboration with MBRDI for this Sustainability Garage underlines our shared belief that a strong industry-academia-student relationship can significantly impact the pace of innovation in the coming years. Our nation's abundant natural resources have the potential to be sustainable materials and the many talented young citizens of the country need to be nurtured. We are optimistic that this initiative will positively impact our society."

At Mercedes-Benz, sustainability is a fundamental pillar of the corporate philosophy. The company believes in creating lasting value for all stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, partners, and society at large. Its economic, environmental, and social responsibility encompasses its entire value chain and the holistic approach to sustainability revolves around six key focus areas: climate protection and air quality, resource conservation, sustainable urban mobility, traffic safety, data responsibility, and human rights. Through initiatives like Ambition 2039, Mercedes-Benz is committed to making its entire fleet of new vehicles net carbon-neutral along the entire value chain and over the vehicles' entire lifecycle by 2039.

'Srijangan' Illuminates Rural Education in West Bengal's Hingalgunj

In a visionary move, 'Srijangan,' an independent initiative, is ushering in a new era of education in the Hingalganj block of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. Embee Software Pvt Ltd spearheads this transformative project, focusing on enriching the lives of rural children through innovative learning experiences.

The Hingalganj 'Srijangan' project introduces five village-centric learning and experience centers, designed to complement formal education and bridge the learning gap prevalent in rural areas. Each center is equipped with a digital library, offering a wealth of relevant information for children aged 8 to 13. Trained facilitators guide the children through activity-based learning, emphasizing creativity, curiosity, and practical skills.

The project's innovative approach includes 'Inter-Generational Learning Centers', involving older community members in the educational journey. Sudhir Kothari, Managing Director at Embee Software, articulates, "The vision behind 'Srijangan' is to create sustainable and community-driven learning hubs that can be replicated across West Bengal and beyond. We are committed to making a lasting impact by nurturing the potential of every child in these communities."

Utsav Kothari, VP- Data and Application Business at Embee Software, emphasizes, "Our goal with the 'Srijangan' project is to create an ecosystem of learning that resonates with the needs of rural communities. We believe in empowering children with the skills they need to be successful in today's world while respecting and integrating the wisdom of older generations."

'Srijangan' not only addresses the shortcomings of the current education system but also stands as a beacon of hope for rural education, lighting the path for positive change in communities across West Bengal. Sudhir Kothari adds, "Education is the cornerstone of development. With 'Srijangan', we aim to provide more than just basic education; we want to ignite curiosity, enhance creativity, and equip the young minds of Hingalganj with the skills necessary for a successful future."

Embee Software, the driving force behind 'Srijangan,' contributes to the project's success through expertise in technology and education. The company envisions replicating the model in other regions, with each center evolving into a community-owned and managed hub for lifelong learning.

'Srijangan' not only signifies a commitment to improving education but also stands as a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives. Embee Software's collaborative approach ensures that 'Srijangan' becomes a beacon of hope for rural education, lighting the path for positive change in communities across West Bengal.

IIT Mandi Study Reveals Alarming Health Risks from Traditional Cooking Practices that Use Biomass Fuel in Northeast Indian States

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi (IIT Mandi), in collaboration with Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité (INRS), France, and the National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), India, have conducted a comprehensive study on the detrimental effects of indoor air pollution resulting from traditional cooking practices in rural kitchens across three Northeast Indian states.

In a series of three papers, a research team from IIT Mandi comprising of Bijay Sharma, Ph.D. scholar, and Sayantan Sarkar, Assistant Professor, School of Civil & Environmental Engineering, and his collaborators analyzed the extent and consequences of harmful emissions produced during indoor cooking using firewood and mixed biomass.

Despite advancements, more than 50% of the rural population in Northeastern India (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya) continues to use traditional solid fuels such as firewood and mixed biomass for cooking, leading to the release of significant pollutants into the kitchen air. The research aimed to gauge the severity and disease burden associated with the use of biomass cooking fuel compared to LPG-based cooking.

The researchers measured size-resolved concentrations of aerosols, i.e., particles suspended in the air, and toxic trace metals and carcinogenic organic substances bound with it, during cooking with firewood, mixed biomass, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas. They modeled the deposition patterns of these particles and associated chemicals in various sections of the human respiratory system. The resulting inhalation exposure to these chemicals during cooking was then calculated.

(L to R) Mr. Bijay Sharma, Research Scholar, and Dr. Sayantan Sarkar, SCENE, IIT Mandi.jpeg

Utilizing this data, the researchers estimated the health impact (disease burden) on the rural NE Indian population, focusing on respiratory diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Pneumonia, and various cancers, using the 'Potential Years of Life Lost' (PYLL) metric. This metric estimates the potential number of years lost in a population due to premature death from ill health.

The study revealed that exposure to harmful aerosols in firewood/biomass-using kitchens was 2-19 times higher than in LPG-using kitchens, with respiratory deposition ranging from 29 to 79% of the total aerosol concentration. The fraction of population using firewood and mixed biomass faced 2-57 times higher disease burdens than LPG users.

Furthermore, the research found that the potential for oxidative stress, which leads to damaged cells, proteins, and DNA, was likely to be 4-5 times higher among people using biomass in kitchens than those using LPG. This stress is driven by the inhalation of metals and organic chemicals produced during indoor cooking using biomass fuel.

Highlighting the uniqueness of this research, Dr. Sarkar said, "Our study combines real-world aerosol measurements in rural kitchens with dosimetry modeling to robustly estimate the impact of cooking emissions on the respiratory tract. It is the first effort to estimate disease burdens caused by exposure to indoor cooking emissions in India in terms of potential years of life lost. The study also measures for the first time the potential for oxidative stress resulting from such exposure in the Indian context, and quantifies the additional risk that biomass users face compared to those who use the cleaner alternative LPG."

This research holds practical implications, emphasizing the urgent need for rural communities in Northeast India to transition to cleaner cooking methods. Recommendations include making LPG more accessible, improving cookstove programs, spreading awareness in rural areas, funding local solutions, and organizing health camps for rural women.

The three studies have been published in two journals – Science of the Total Environment and Environmental Pollution and are accessible through the following links:

- https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.167163
- https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2023.123246
- http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2023.162539

Tata Motors and NJMS Leading the Charge Against Leprosy

In the heart of India, amidst the bustling city of Jamshedpur, lies an organisation that is quietly making a difference in the lives of countless individuals, the Nav Jagrat Manav Samaj (NJMS). NJMS is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the prevention and control of leprosy. With support from Tata Motors, NJMS has been working tirelessly to eradicate this debilitating disease and empower those affected by it. It has achieved significant milestones in reducing the incidence of leprosy in Jamshedpur and the surrounding areas. Involving over 500 local volunteers, including Tata Motors employees and other like-minded philanthropists, NJMS has had a significant impact on various aspects, such as health, education, employability and livelihood initiatives.

NJMS conducts a powerful annual door-to-door survey, reaching 75,000 people for early leprosy detection. In just three years, cases in Jamshedpur have dropped from 1.5 to 0.5 persons per 1000. Operating Antyoday Bhawan, NJMS provides free medical care, boarding and lodging to 4000+ leprosy patients. They also support children's education and livelihood. Tata Motors' crucial support propels NJMS's impactful work in leprosy prevention, resulting in a significant decrease in leprosy incidence and thereby transforming lives in Jamshedpur and beyond.

Vinod Kulkarni, CSR Head at Tata Motors, emphasises, "Nav Jagrat Manav Samaj embodies the true essence of compassion and resilience in their unwavering commitment to eradicating leprosy and empowering individuals affected by this disease. Tata Motors is humbled to support NJMS in this noble endeavour, recognising their invaluable contribution to creating a leprosy-free society. Through collaborative efforts and unwavering dedication, we believe in fostering a future where every individual, regardless of their health challenges, can lead a life of dignity and inclusion.”

Central Railway under its CSR Initiative to Elevate Passenger Experience through Enhanced Toilet Facilities at CSMT

Central Railway has entered into a significant partnership with DMart Foundation, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, to enhance the sanitation facilities at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) railway station.

Effective from February 21, 2024, DMart Foundation has assumed responsibility for the maintenance of all toilet blocks at CSMT, with the exception of one older block in the suburban section, which is slated to be taken over in the coming days. This collaboration is a testament to Central Railway's commitment to fostering a clean and hygienic environment for railway passengers.

Under this initiative, DMart Foundation will deploy dedicated staff members round the clock to ensure the continuous upkeep of the toilet facilities at CSMT. The maintenance will be of the highest standard, aimed at providing passengers with a comfortable and sanitary experience during their travels.

Importantly, the usage of these toilet facilities will be made available to passengers free of charge, aligning with DMart Foundation's dedication to making a positive impact on the communities they serve.

This collaboration will address and alleviate passenger complaints related to the maintenance of restroom facilities at CSMT. Central Railway is optimistic that this proactive step will not only enhance the overall passenger experience but also contribute to a positive and hygienic atmosphere at one of the busiest railway stations on the Indian Railways’ network.

Central Railway encourages passengers to take advantage of the improved and well-maintained restroom facilities, and looks forward to receiving valuable feedback that will further contribute to the enhancement of services provided at CSMT.

Ambuja Foundation and IndusInd Bank Partner to Launch Integrated Water Resource Management Initiative

Ambuja Foundation, known for its various efficient water management programs, announced its partnership with IndusInd Bank to launch the integrated Water Resource Management Program (IWRMP) in the Mahad area of Raigad district in Maharashtra.

The collaborative initiative aims to confront and address the various challenges concerning water and agriculture that prevail in nine different villages of the Gandhari Catchments Cluster in the region.

The newly launched program aims to create awareness among the villagers around water conservation practices through the implementation of comprehensive measures such as soil water conservation, rainwater harvesting, and groundwater recharge. The IWRMP project focuses on achieving sustainable water access by deploying innovative technological solutions, ensuring year-round clean drinking water in the project villages. These initiatives aim to extend the water retention period, reduce runoff, and subsequently increase income generation for villagers. Moreover, the project seeks to optimize agricultural practices.

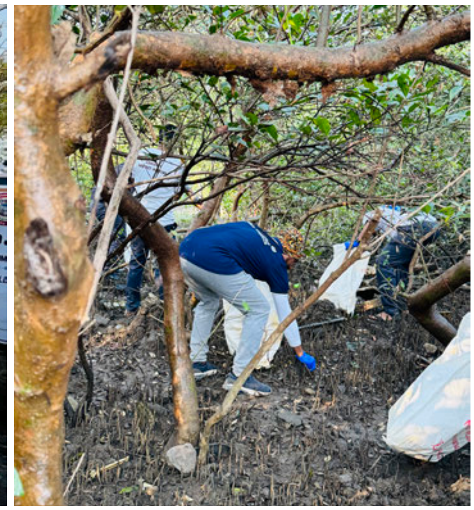
Speaking on the project, Pearl Tiwari, CEO, Ambuja Foundation, said, "We believe in empowering communities by educating them on sustainable practices. Through our continued efforts and strategic partnerships, we hope to drive a meaningful change and create a long-term positive impact on the environment. The project not only focuses on promoting efficient use of water but also underscores the importance of preserving our soil and adopting ideal water conservation techniques like rainwater harvesting. Together, we hope to bring about an environmentally conscious shift in our society."

Elaborating on the need for such a comprehensive project, Roopa Satish, Head – Sustainable Banking and CSR, IndusInd Bank, said, "At IndusInd Bank, our commitment towards fostering positive change through CSR initiatives is unwavering. In this spirit, our collaboration with Ambuja Foundation holds the promise of improving the socio-economic fabric of communities. By championing efficient water usage, we aim to transform mindsets, elevate farming practices, and enhance livelihoods. This partnership exemplifies our dedication to holistic community development, driven by a shared vision of progress and sustainability. Together with Ambuja Foundation, we look forward to cultivating a resilient community where the prudent use of water becomes a catalyst for enduring change and prosperity."

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the presence of the distinguished guests such as Mr. Akhlaque Khan, CSR Manager IndusInd Bank; Mr. Akash Surase, General Manager, Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd; Ms. Seema Bendugade, Sarpanch Pachad; Mr. Jayesh Lamje, Sarpanch, Punade Nate; Mr. Shailesh Lambe, Regional Head, Maharashtra, Ambuja Foundation.

As part of the program, an Innovative Village Resource Centre at Kinjloli BK Partekond was also launched. The centre will work as a knowledge hub fostering awareness about water and agriculture best practices and techniques among villagers. Under the IWRMP project, related construction works in Raigadwadi (Koliawhad), Punadewadi, Kondaran, Punade tarfe Nate villages will also take place, symbolizing a commitment to infrastructural development aligning with the broader objectives of the Integrated Water Resource Management Program.

Transworld Group Brings 227 Community Members and Students Together to Celebrate World Wetlands Day



Transworld Group volunteers recently marked World Wetlands Day across various locations, in alignment with meeting Sustainable Development Goals of Climate Action, Life Below Water, and Life on Land. The day is annually observed to highlight the significance of the wetland ecosystem and its crucial role in various life forms.

Over 40 employee volunteers and their family members joined hands with 227 community members and students to conserve marine & freshwater ecosystem and water bodies through Mangrove Restoration (Mumbai), Mangrove Plantation (Paradip and Kochi), Lake Cleanup (Chennai), and Beach Cleanup (Dubai - Umm Suqeim Beach, and Muscat – PDO Beach) activities. Awareness sessions were also organized among various communities and volunteers to reaffirm the importance of wetlands for humans, other ecosystems and climate change in collaboration with Green Utsav (Dubai), Vanashakti (Mumbai), APOWA (Paradeep), MIRROR (Kochi) and Eco Society India (Chennai).

This initiative has been part of Transworld Group's focus area of Marine Stewardship of the Environment as one of the company's flagship CSR initiatives.

"We are immensely grateful to our partner NGOs and all volunteers who joined us in this endeavor to protect and preserve our precious wetland ecosystems. Enabling marine conservation through local community initiatives such as these continue to drive our vision for a better world," said Ms Anisha Ramakrishnan of Transworld Group.

BookASmile and Sound Space Foundation Inspire Young Minds with Choir Programs in Schools

BookASmile, the charity initiative of BookMyShow, partnered with Sound Space Foundation to launch a choir program for beneficiaries from Abhyudaya Nagar and Akanksha Foundation in five municipal schools in Mumbai.

The choir program was introduced as an extra-curricular activity for school students aged between 8 to 14 years hailing from marginalised backgrounds. This sonic initiative was launched with an aim to make music accessible to all and empower the youth with the means and access to music as an art form through a structured choir program where the children were trained in vocals and choir set up which focuses intensively on classical music in various Indian vernacular languages along with English and different African languages. Through the year children are given various opportunities to participate in local events and shows, which eventually culminate into an annual showcase.

The initiative, supported by BookASmile, has positively impacted over 100 students across 135 classes, fostering a love for music and enhancing their overall well-being.

The selection process for the choir program was an inclusive and inspiring journey. Teachers identified students with a passion for music, conducting auditions to gauge their interest and commitment. The chosen children, eager to delve deeper into the world of music, willingly dedicated their time every week after school to participate in the program.

BookASmile's support to Sound Space Foundation stemmed from a mutual desire to promote talent and empower the underprivileged by democratising access to music. Recognizing the shared vision to nurture young talents, BookASmile and Sound Space Foundation decided to embark on this enriching journey together.

Over the past few months, the choir program has not only honed the musical abilities of the participating students but has also played a significant role in broadening their perspectives. Beyond the realm of academics, the program has helped students appreciate the importance of learning an art form, fostering a relaxed mindset that contributes to improved focus in their academic studies.

"We are thrilled to witness the positive impact our choir program has had on these young minds. It goes beyond creating musicians; it cultivates a holistic approach to learning and personal development. The collaboration with BookASmile has been instrumental in making this initiative a success." said Kamakshi and Vishala Khurana of Sound Space Foundation.

"At BookASmile, we believe in the transformative power of music to uplift and empower individuals from all walks of life. Through our collaboration with Sound Space Foundation, we are thrilled to embark on a journey that embodies our commitment to holistic individual development. By bringing music programs to underprivileged children, we aim not only to democratize access to music but also to foster emotional, social and intellectual growth. Together, we are cultivating a vibrant community where every voice is heard, every talent nurtured and every child empowered to become a trailblazer in the music industry and beyond." said Farzana Cama Balpande, Head - BookASmile.

As the program continues to unfold, BookASmile and Sound Space Foundation look forward to nurturing more young talents, instilling a lifelong love for music and making a lasting impact on the lives of these children.

Roots Foundation and PI Industries Collaborate for Project Sahyog 2024: Safeguarding Sustainable Agriculture Practices with Responsible Agrochemical Use

In a pioneering collaboration, Roots Foundation and Pi Industries jointly initiated Project Sahyog, bringing about an awareness of various agricultural methodologies amongst the farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh; with a core focus on environmental sustainability, economic empowerment, and entrepreneurial development.

In the agrarian states of Punjab and Haryana, the foundations of the entire farming ecosystem have been deeply rooted in chemical farming practices, setting these regions apart from the agricultural patterns prevalent in other parts of India. The paradigm shift brought about by the Green Revolution created a dependency on chemical-intensive agriculture, and this also highlights the critical need for prudent utilization of agrochemicals.

Against this backdrop, the key objective of Project Sahyog is to provide advocacy and hold awareness programs to educate farmers on the advantages of proper agrochemical application for sustainable farming; developing entrepreneurship capabilities amongst new-age farmers, by leasing out equipment and sharing knowledge within their communities; providing farmers with state-of-the-art and efficient spraying equipment to enhance productivity and crop yield; training to ensure farmers use the spraying equipment correctly, fostering a behavioral change towards sustainable practices and minimizing farmers' dependency on manual labor for spraying activities.

Under this, the project identified and selected a total of 100 entrepreneurial beneficiaries, including farmers, for the distribution of Boom Sprayers across Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. More than 226 farmers were provided with the machinery.

All beneficiaries have undergone training sessions on the proper operation of the Boom Sprayer, complemented by practical on-field demonstrations. Under the project, farmers were also taught about the agricultural best practices, benefits of boom sprayers, crop protection strategies, safe and responsible pesticide use, proper disposal of chemical containers, and advantages of farm machinery.

Following persistent efforts, farmers in Punjab and Haryana have experienced tangible benefits, witnessing a reduction in health risks while parallelly saving time and resources.

Roots Foundation and Pi Industries have been at the forefront of this journey, actively involved in the states of Punjab and Haryana for the past six years. Gradually, the impact has expanded to encompass Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh too, creating a bridge between service providers and farmers. Project Sahyog continues to forge a positive and enduring impact on sustainable agriculture practices, ensuring the prosperity of farmers in the region, through optimal usage of boom sprayer machinery.

Wadhwani Foundation launches AI Co-Pilot Functionality to its skilling platform to enhance the employability of 10million youth by 2027

The rapid advancements in AI and technology have transformed the job-market dynamics across sectors – highlighting the urgent need for not easily automatable and high-demand employability skills that increase a candidate's attractiveness in the competitive job landscape. Addressing this requirement, the Wadhwani Foundation today announced the launch of three new AI Co-Pilots to enhance the employability of youth and young adults across the nation. The newly launched functionality is a critical addition to the Foundation's AI-powered, Genie. AI platform – aimed at upskilling job seekers, especially those from underserved communities.

Genie.AI provides over 1000 hours of skilling and entrepreneurship content, backed by a network of experts and mentors. Offering free, tailored learning in English, Hindi, with expansion plans in other Indian languages, the platform partners with government and global entities to enable learning for a wide audience – aiming to reach 10 million learners by 2027. The AI Co-Pilot function accelerates the impact the Genie.AI platform by providing each learner with a set of robust tools to accelerate their mastery of employability skills, all personalized to the learner's target job.

Speaking about the launch of the new functionality, Dr. Ajay Kela, President and CEO, Wadhwani Foundation said, "In an era where technological prowess is a given, the real differentiator lies in one's ability to problem solve, critically think, effectively communicate, and innovate. These skills often remain out of reach of numerous job seekers from underserved communities. By harnessing AI, we can ensure that critical employability skills are not only ingrained in educational institutions but also transcend socio-economic barriers to learning. The idea is to sculpt a workforce which is not just job-ready but future-proof."

Sunil Dahiya, Executive Vice President, Wadhwani Foundation said, "Amidst evolving workplace dynamics, the Wadhwani Foundation focuses on empowering individuals with critical in-demand employability skills like adaptability and digital proficiency. Our AI-enabled platform and industry-led training equips job seekers with essential proficiencies for success ensuring they thrive in this rapidly changing job market."

The landmark initiative is an online, mobile-first platform with 24x7 anywhere, anytime access for developing employee's essential workplace skills.

Employers require learners with a range of skills beyond technical knowledge, including effective communication, adaptability to change, customer-centricity, professionalism, and innovation, amongst others. To address these needs, the Wadhwani Foundation has released three exciting AI Co-pilots: My Tutor for students, My Mentor for faculty, and My Interview Coach for job applicants.

My Tutor personalizes the learning experience with immediate assistance and tailored content. Users can ask questions during lessons for instant clarifications, engage in targeted skill practice to check their learning, and receive clear guidance on key points to remember. With My Tutor's cutting-edge personalization, each lesson is adapted the user's individual career goals, such as providing specific insights and scenarios for a learner aspiring to become an automotive sales associate. Additionally, it incorporates real-life, scenario-based learning challenges relevant to the user's career path. My Tutor also encourages collaborative learning, allowing users with similar career goals to engage in group activities, enriching the learning process through shared experiences.

My Mentor significantly enhances the teaching experience by offering faculty additional tools to deliver more effective and engaging lessons. It provides AI-generated discussion prompts for each lesson, aiding faculty in creating more engaging and interactive classroom discussions. Additionally, My Mentor offers insights into common misunderstandings learners might encounter, helping educators anticipate and address learning challenges effectively.

Finally, My Interview Coach helps learners demonstrate their knowledge during job interviews. Recognizing that most learners lack access to one-on-one coaching, My Interview Coach gives each learner specific job questions customized to the learner's target job, enables the learner to video themselves answering the question, and then provides scores and detailed guidance on how to improve. Through this tool, learners build their confidence and ability to convey their knowledge and experience effectively in high-stakes interviews.

Mark Malaspina, Chief Product Officer, Skilling, Wadhwani Foundation, spoke about the potential of these three AI Co-Pilots, "In a country where students and job seekers struggle to find personalised coaching, these AI Co-Pilot can be a game-changer. They not only accelerate learners' acquisition of skills adapted to their career goals and the opportunity to practice critical communication skills in interview settings, but they also enable trainers with information and strategies to make training more effective and relevant to their students. The AI functionality coupled with the robust 360-degree support of Genie.AI platform has the potential to create a workforce adept not just in technical skills but also armed with critical thinking and communication proficiencies that enable innovation and its implementation in an ever-evolving job market."

In the coming months, the Foundation will continue to roll out impactful new AI features on the Genie.AI platform. In development now is a new AI Co-pilot, My Career Advisor, that will enable learners to explore careers based on their skills and interests, understand the "day-in-the-life" of different job roles, and create a personal plan for building the skills and experience they need to pursue the career of their choice.

Genie.AI and these embedded AI Co-Pilots are transformative steps in education and employment that revolutionise skill development and career readiness with personalised learning, innovative teaching aids, and robust interview preparation. Democratising education, the platform is set to help millions of Indians realise their career aspirations in today's dynamic job market.

Shaping a better tomorrow: IPA and Samhita report highlights Indian Pharma sectors positive social contributions and responsible Business Framework

The Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) in collaboration with Samhita Social Venture released a report titled 'Deepening the Responsible Business Agenda: Showcasing the CSR and ESG Initiatives'. IPA companies are at the forefront of CSR engagement, spanning social and economic development projects across 22 states and reaching over 15 million people.

This report delves into the realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance and initiatives in the Indian pharmaceutical sector. It advocates for a transformative shift toward embracing a comprehensive 'Responsible Business' framework. Furthermore, it documents the sustainability initiatives on building livelihoods, carbon neutrality, waste management, and water and energy conservation. The report also recognises the exceptional efforts exhibited by Human Champions of the IPA pharma companies.

The welcome address by Mr Sudarshan Jain, Secretary General, IPA, highlighted that the IPA companies are committed to looking beyond business and serving the larger purpose of commitment towards society. In the keynote address, Dr Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals appreciated the CSR and ESG initiatives undertaken by IPA companies and the contributions of the Indian pharma industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Arunish Chawla, Secretary, Department of Pharmaceuticals, said, "I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance for their outstanding CSR initiatives, particularly in the area of healthcare. The collaborative model, where both public and private sectors contribute, plays a pivotal role in promoting positive externalities, benefiting society, the economy, and our citizens' well-being. IPA's commendable efforts during the challenging COVID-19 period, ensuring access to affordable medicines and the entire pharmaceutical supply chain, deserve special mention. Today's event timely showcases the industry's commitment beyond CSR, creating shared values for both business and society. This report serves as a benchmark for sectors aiming to build purpose-driven organizations. My sincere appreciation to all involved in implementing these impactful initiatives."

Over 5,000 diploma students to benefit as Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) expands its 'Campus to Corporate' Program in Telangana

HCCB, Telangana Academy for Skill & Knowledge (TASK), and Aahan Consulting join forces to bridge skills and employability gap among Telangana's youth

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), one of India's leading FMCG companies, is set to expand the reach of its acclaimed 'Campus to Corporate Program' in Telangana, in partnership with the Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) and Aahan Consulting.

In 2024, the program aims to equip nearly 5,000 final-year diploma students from Government Polytechnic Colleges with employable skills. The initiative was announced at the Government Girls Polytechnic College, with C. Srinath, Regional Joint Director, Department of Technical Education, Telangana in attendance.

Among other dignitaries present at the event were A Pullaiah, Secretary, State Board of Technical Education and Training (SBTET), Telangana, Narsaiah Goud, Principal, GPW, Secunderabad, Shrikant Sinha, Chief Executive Officer, Telangana Academy of Skills and Knowledge (TASK), Pranav Sheel, Zonal Vice President – Commercial, HCCB.

This program represents a significant expansion of a productive partnership that, since its launch in 2022, has already surpassed its initial milestone by training over 15,000 students across Telangana. This achievement aligns with the recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between HCCB and TASK last year, aiming to upskill an additional 10,000 college students by the 2023-24 academic year.

The "Campus to Corporate" program aims to upskill and make the college students industry ready. TASK works on creating batches of students, identifying locations for the physical classroom sessions, and the calendar for these training sessions. HCCB on the other hand works towards developing the content, identifying the trainers, conducting the Train the Trainers program (TTT) to create and expand a pool of expert trainers, and conducting the virtual and physical classroom sessions.

The trainings include sessions on soft skills, resume building, and interview preparation. The program

will help nurture talent and bridge the gap between academia and the industry, ensuring that the next generation flourishes in the corporate landscape.

Sri C. Srinath, Regional Joint Director, Department of Technical Education, Telangana said, “Telangana holds significant promise and opportunities for our youth. Initiatives like ‘Campus to Corporate’ are crucial in facilitating a smooth transition for students into professional roles. We welcome the efforts and contributions of HCCB in enhancing the skillset of our students and being a notable part of Telangana’s growth story.”

Himanshu Priyadarshi, Chief Public Affairs, Communications, and Sustainability Officer at HCCB, said, “HCCB remains deeply committed towards the growth and prosperity of Telangana, as highlighted during our recent discussions with the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri A. Revanth Reddy. Through our 'Campus to Corporate Program', we aim to harness the dynamic nature of today's job market and equip the young professionals with adequate skills to make them employable. We are firm in our dedication to empowering the state's youth, driving positive community change, and fostering economic development. We are excited about the future and our role in supporting the vibrant economy of Telangana”

The announcement comes close on the heels of HCCB's recent meeting with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana, Sri A. Revanth Reddy, highlighting the company's INR 3,000 crores expansion plans in the state, including the upcoming greenfield project at Bandatimmapur in Siddipet district. The initiative is part of HCCB's broader engagement with the Government of Telangana, encompassing various projects aimed at skill development, water stewardship, and waste management.

ONDC, NCCF and Shiprocket Join Forces to support "Sarkar se Rasoi Tak" Initiative

In a significant move to streamline access to essential household commodities, the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF), and Shiprocket have joined forces to support the government's "Sarkar se Rasoi Tak" initiative. This collaboration aims to deliver key staples such as Aata, Dal and Chaawal directly to consumers' homes via the ONDC network, ensuring affordability and convenience.

Through this initiative, residents of the Delhi NCR region (Gurgaon and Faridabad) will be able to order Bharat brand rice (Bharat Chawal), wheat flour (Bharat Atta), and lentils (Bharat Daal) online with the guarantee of government-approved prices. Orders are shipped within 24 hours and free of delivery charges.

Consumers can place orders for these products through ONDC-supported buyer applications such as Paytm, Magicpin, Mystore, and Pincode, ensuring an efficient and hassle-free shopping experience. This initiative not only promises to make essential staples readily available but also supports local sourcing, reflecting India's commitment to agricultural heritage, self-reliance, and sustainability.

Additionally, Shiprocket aims to enhance the seller experience on the ONDC Network by offering streamlined onboarding and comprehensive post-support services. This will further enable sellers to broaden their customer base.

T Koshy, Managing Director and CEO at ONDC, stated, “The 'Sarkar se Rasoi Tak' initiative epitomizes the transformative power of digital commerce in democratizing access to essential goods. ONDC is proud to participate in this collaborative effort to promote inclusivity and empower consumers across India. By leveraging the ONDC Network, we are enabling consumers to connect directly with local cooperatives and experience the richness of Bharat's agricultural heritage.”

Anice Joseph Chandra, Managing Director at NCCF, added "We are delighted to partner with the ONDC Network on this forward-thinking initiative, which aligns with NCCF's mission to deliver quality essentials at affordable prices. Leveraging the ONDC Network's wide reach and advanced technology, we're set to redefine access to essential commodities."

Speaking about the initiative, Saahil Goel, CEO & Co-Founder of Shiprocket said, “ As an eCommerce enablement platform we align with the innovative e-Governance initiative - "Sarkar se Rasoi Tak" whereby, by working together with ONDC and NCCF, we aim to bridge the gap between consumers and locally sourced products. While this initiative is currently running in the Delhi-NCR region, we plan to expand it to other cities of the country via multiple collaborations. Aligning with the Government's mission Shiprocket continues to support local small-scale merchants, we've observed the immense potential of Indian MSMEs. Thus, at the heart of Shiprocket, lies a fervent dedication to empower #Vocalforlocal.

Lives of Farmers Transformed in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh: Global Vikas Trust's Impact Study reveals remarkable results

The Global Vikas Trust (GVT), under the visionary leadership of Mayank Gandhi, has spearheaded a transformative movement in the lives of farmers across Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, particularly in suicide and drought-affected regions like Beed and Parli. The remarkable impact of GVT's initiatives has been unveiled in an Assessment Impact Study conducted by the prestigious Tata Institute of Sciences (TISS), highlighting astounding progress in agricultural development and farmer welfare.

The unveiling ceremony of the Assessment Impact Study took place today in Mumbai, attended by key dignitaries including Mr. Mayank Gandhi, Managing Trustee at Global Vikas Trust, Prof. S. Siva Raju, Professor & Deputy Director at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad Campus; Sandra Shroff, Vice Chairman – UPL; Raamdeo Agarwal, Chairman - Motilal Oswal financial Services; Sushil Kumar Jiwarajka, Hon. Consul General of Greece in Mumbai and Chairman of GVT advisory board and Ashwini Saxena, CEO - JSW Foundation. This event highlighted the pivotal role of GVT in revolutionizing agriculture practices and elevating the socio-economic status of farmers.

The comprehensive report, prepared by the Centre of Excellence in CSR at TISS, analysed the impact of GVT's agriculture development initiatives across various districts including Palghar, Nanded, Beed, Solapur, Osmanabad (Dharashiv), Jalgaon in Maharashtra, and Burhanpur and Dhar/Barwani in Madhya Pradesh. Based on meticulous surveys encompassing 1248 farmers and stakeholders, the study provides compelling evidence of GVT's transformative impact.

Mayank Gandhi, Managing Trustee of Global Vikas Trust said, "While education and healthcare support etc is good for maintaining the status quo of the nation, the only way for transforming India is sustainable agriculture at scale. Therefore, multiplying incomes of small and marginal farmers can make India a "sone ki chidiya" again. Thus, a tenfold increase in tens of thousands of farmer's incomes in some of the worst area validates our path of transforming India." TISS is the gold-standard in ethical and virtuous impact assessment. Established in 1936, it has worked on its own and helped other organizations in promotion of sustainable, equitable and participatory development.

Prof. S. Siva Raju, Professor & Deputy Director at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad Campus, "The Centre for Excellence in CSR at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) has conducted a study to assess the impact of the agriculture development initiatives of Global Vikas Trust (GVT). It is observed that the availability and utilization of high-quality saplings hold the key to ensuring increased agricultural production and resilience against the challenges posed by pests and climate change. The adoption of the quality saplings not only contributed to greater agricultural productivity but also played a crucial role in ensuring crop diversity and economic prosperity in the Western region. GVT's promotion of horticulture also contributed to environmental conservation, as the organisation employs sustainable farming practices, such as organic farming and permaculture."

"From planting hope to reaping prosperity – that is the magic of Global Vikas Trust under Mayank Gandhi's leadership. Their ten times income growth for farmers is remarkable! MOFSL & I are honoured to be part of this journey, of building a sustainable and thriving rural India." Raamdeo Agarwal, Chairman, Motilal Oswal Group.

"For the past five years, Global Vikas Trust, under Mayank Gandhi's leadership, has been making a real difference in rural communities. Their work has empowered countless farmers and led to a remarkable ten times increase in income within a year, as confirmed by TISS. As a chairperson of the advisory board for GVT, I am hugely impressed by their impactful work. I am also very thrilled about Krishikul, and it has the potential to significantly enhance farmers skills and knowledge. I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with GVT, eagerly awaiting Krishikul's launch." said Sushil Jiwarajka, Hon. Consul General of Greece in Mumbai and Chairman of GVT advisory board.

"Global Vikas Trust, under Mayank Gandhi's leadership, is not just planting trees, they are building hope! Witnessing a ten times income increase for farmers in 4,000 villages through their work, as shown by the TISS study, is truly inspiring. UPL and I are honoured to be part of this movement, empowering rural communities and fostering a brighter future for generations to come." mentioned Ms. Sandra Shroff, Vice Chairman, UPL.

"Global Vikas Trust, led by Mayank Gandhi, is transforming rural landscapes and lives. With initiatives like planting 4.5 crore fruit trees, their impact is undeniable. The recent TISS survey showing a tenfold increase in farmer income in just one year speaks volumes. We are proud to support GVT's mission, united in our commitment to sustainable rural development." said Pradeep Kumar Kheruka Chairman, Borosil Renewables Ltd.

FORM IV

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS ABOUT THE PUBLICATION CSR TODAY

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I, Rajesh Tiwari, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: March 1, 2024

Sd/-
(Signature of publisher)

GALE Teams Up with Surabhi Foundation Trust in Bengaluru, Pledging Support for Rural Education Empowerment

GALE, a Business Agency, as part of its continued commitment to India, has joined hands with Surabhi Foundation Trust to support the Surabhi Chinnara Sambrama, an event dedicated to uplifting the lives of children in rural Bengaluru. As part of its CSR initiative, GALE supported and sponsored Surabhi Foundation Trust's initiative benefiting over 800 children from 35 government schools across the region. Furthermore, GALE is extending its support with the construction of the Surabhiprouda Boys Home at Beleke and actively participated with close to 40 volunteers in the Surabhi Chinnara Sambrama event to motivate the children.

The Surabhi Chinnara Sambrama event celebrated the talents of local school children, fostering a joyful and supportive environment. With carefully designed indoor and outdoor activities, the event aimed at holistic development and equal participation for all students.

A.S. Patil, Director of Surabhi Foundation Trust, expressed gratitude, stating, "By supporting the event, GALE is making a significant impact in the minds of young children. This event provided an opportunity to showcase the talent of local children with a mix of indoor and outdoor activities. This year GALE is going above and beyond, sponsoring the construction of the Surabhiprouda Boys Home at Beleke, providing a foundation for quality education, and fostering a nurturing environment for these children. We are truly grateful for GALE's invaluable support, and their dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of these children is commendable."

Sanjay Krishnamurthy, President of GALE India, shared, "At GALE India, we are dedicated to fostering education for underprivileged children. Our contribution is a continued commitment towards social responsibility and making a positive impact on the lives of the local community and the future workforce of the country. Surabhi Chinnara Sambrama has been a splendid event, and we hope to support it in a bigger and better way next time."

GALE and its volunteers have been actively supporting Swabhimaan a registered charitable trust in Ejipura, Bengaluru, for the last four years. Their initiatives include building the primary school, painting the school, donating books, conducting Christmas celebrations, and funding the salaries of staff and teachers.

For 2024, GALE is working with Surabhi Foundation Trust, which aims at making quality education accessible to rural children in and around Bengaluru. The foundation collaborates with local bodies to set up schools, hostels, and other facilities for children's education.

Smile Train India Builds the First Cleft-Inclusive Image Repository on Shutterstock

Collaborates with Tonic Worldwide to Build Cleft Inclusivity

During National Lipstick Day in July, which falls in the National Cleft Awareness Month; Smile Train - the world's largest cleft focused charity, saw an opportunity to spark meaningful conversations around the inhibition that women with a cleft feel while wearing a bright shade of lipstick.

While executing the Lipstick Day campaign, the organization realized that representation of individuals with clefts was almost non-existent as there were no images of cleft-affected models available on AI platforms, leave alone the image banks.

In a country where more than 35,000 children are born with a cleft every year, there is not one image of a cleft-affected model. It was no longer about the lack of awareness around individuals with a cleft, but lack of representation. So, what began as a Lipstick Day campaign for cleft inclusivity evolved into a movement to address the underrepresentation of individuals with a cleft.

For this, Smile Train India, in collaboration with Tonic Worldwide, built the first cleft-inclusive image repository on Shutterstock. This repository is a ready source for brands and organizations to use for their day-to-day communication and take a small step towards a big change.

Mamta Carroll, Smile Train's Senior Vice President and Regional Director for Asia, said: "While there are discussions about body positivity and representation of various skin tones, there is hardly any conversation around representation of individuals with clefts in the modeling and film industry. As the world's largest cleft focused organization, one of our objectives is to create an enabling environment for people with clefts to thrive in life. Our Shutterstock project is a pioneering step to build a repository of stock images of cleft affected individuals that brands, corporations, and casting agencies may use for their communications materials and enable representation for individuals with a facial birth difference. I am extremely grateful to actor Sarika Singh and Sonaali Malhotra for their courage in being a part of this project."

Josna Joseph, Senior Creative Director at Tonic Worldwide, said: "The Lipstick Day campaign, for me as a woman and a marketer, was an opportunity to challenge the toxic beauty standards that have led to such intense biases and pathetic displays of discrimination against anything that looks or feels unfamiliar. Yes, we've had conversations around this, but not nearly enough. It's why representation is so crucial. Though I yearn for the day when no representation, for any version of beauty, is required at all. As a first step, we have built a repository of images on Shutterstock. Several brands, who share our vision, are using these images in their communication. As an agency, we will be focusing more on inclusive scripts, cast, and campaigns.

Sun Pharma included in S&P Global Sustainability Yearbook 2024

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd, together with its subsidiaries and/or associates referred to as Sun Pharma, announced that it has been included in the S&P Global Sustainability Yearbook 2024. Within respective industries, this Yearbook aims to distinguish those companies that have demonstrated strengths in corporate sustainability

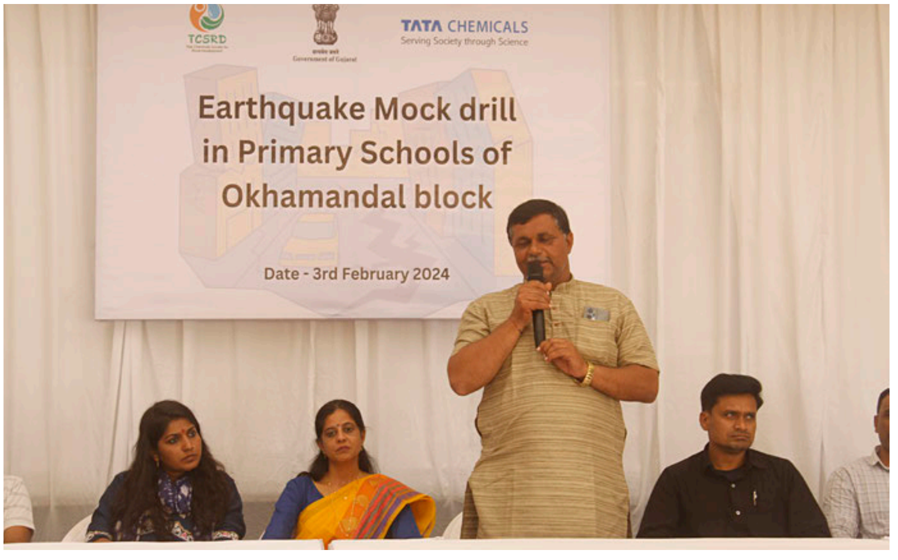
This recognition attests to Sun Pharma's commitment to incorporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles through focused initiatives across its businesses.

Dilip Shanghvi, Managing Director of the Company said, "Sun Pharma continues to focus on delivering sustainable outcomes for all our stakeholders. Sustainability is an integral part of our way of doing business. We are guided by a clear roadmap around our ESG priorities and the S&P Yearbook inclusion is a testament to our progress on the roadmap."

Based on the S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA) for 2023, over 9,400 companies were assessed for The Sustainability Yearbook 2024. Out of these, 739 companies have qualified for inclusion in The Sustainability Yearbook 2024 globally.

Tata Chemicals spearheads earthquake preparedness program for 6000 students from 64 schools of Okhamandal region

Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development (TCSRD), the esteemed CSR arm of Tata Chemicals Limited, organised a mock drill under school safety week on 3rd February to address the seismic vulnerability of Okhamandal, Gujarat, for more than 6,000 students from 64 schools. As part of company's commitment to community safety, Tata Chemicals initiated this comprehensive earthquake preparedness program, which was a collaborative effort with District Disaster Management Agency in Khambhaliya, aimed at preparing students and the community for potential hazard of earthquakes.



The event, officially cleared by the District Collector Office in Devbhumi Dwarka, allowed Tata Chemicals to take the lead in improving disaster resilience in the region. A workshop, held on January 25, 2024, trained over 100 volunteers and teachers. The collaborative initiative included the Gujarat government, the Coastal Salinity Prevention Cell and the Education Department, demonstrating their commitment to ensuring Okhamandal's safety and preparedness in the face of potential disasters.

Mr. N. Kamath, Chief Manufacturing Officer & Plant Head at (Mithapur) said "The objective of the mock drill was to increase

copping capacity of students as well as communities towards potential risk of earthquake in order to minimize injuries and fatalities. Its primary aim was to raise awareness about responding to such situations calmly and responsibly, without succumbing to panic. We are gratified to note the success of our efforts to enhance community safety and disaster preparedness. It is imperative to appreciate the importance of routine drills for addressing all probable disasters. We also extend thanks to the District Disaster Management Agency (DDMA) for their essential role in initiating and maintaining these critical awareness and preparedness efforts."

The success of the earthquake preparedness program was evident in the active participation of 64 schools, with over 100 volunteers, 180-plus teachers, and representatives from various government agencies, including the District Disaster Management Agency, Fire Department, RTO, Gujarat Police, Health Department, and '108' services. The fire & safety department of Tata Chemicals played a crucial role in coordinating with officials from the district administration and education department, ensuring seamless execution of the drill.

The earthquake mock drill stands as a testament to Tata Chemicals' commitment to corporate social responsibility and the well-being of the communities it serves.

Coforge inaugurates The Coforge Public Library in Noida

Coforge Limited, a global digital services and solutions provider, inaugurated an open-for-all, fully digitized, one-of-its-kind public library in Sector 59, Noida. Sudhir Singh, CEO & Executive Director Coforge inaugurated the Coforge Public Library.

Coforge is committed to the causes of Education and Environment as a part of its Corporate Social Responsibility program. This unique initiative is expected to create a lasting impact in the community by offering free access to a world-class library facility to all.

The Coforge Public Library is spread over an area of 12000 sq ft. and boasts a collection of over 10,000 books, 3.5 crore titles available online, and 200 books in Braille.

Sudhir Singh, CEO, Coforge lights an inauguration lamp at the Coforge Library

The Coforge Public Library in Noida - an open-for-all, fully digitized, one-of-its-kind public library in Sector 59, Noida

Inspired by the principles of equal access and lifelong learning, the library has a vibrant, contemporary design incorporating concepts of inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability. It has a separate children's section designed to encourage creative thinking, reading, and storytelling.

At the inauguration ceremony, Sudhir Singh, CEO and Executive Director, Coforge, explained the motivation behind the project, "The Coforge Public Library is a testament to our commitment to enriching local ecosystems and empowering local communities. We hope this library will become a cherished space for intellectual growth and knowledge sharing amongst all, especially among school children and young adults in the community."

Tata Trusts to launch India's first state-of-the-art Small Animal Hospital

Tata Trusts is set to launch India's first state of the art Small Animal Hospital at Mahalaxmi in the heart of Mumbai. The hospital is a first-of-its-kind and spans over 98,000 sq ft, across 5 floors with a capacity of over 200 beds.

Inspired by philanthropist and former Tata Group Chairman Ratan Tata's vision for a super speciality hospital for pets, the facility will provide round the clock services through pet-sensitised veterinarians, nurses and technicians trained to deliver quality care with a mission to save lives.

The hospital will be launched in March 2024.

"Pets are our family and their lives matter to every pet parent. When I looked around and saw the lack of infrastructure for pets in India, it made me wonder why in such a large country with a significant pet population we cannot have a facility that can save lives and make pet lives better," Taya said.

The Small Animal Hospital aims to be one such facility with specialized facilities to treat every pet care, love and a human approach.

Commenting on the initiative, Dr. Thomas Heathcote, Chief Veterinary Officer, Advanced Veterinary Care Facility (ACVF) says, "As one of India's leading philanthropic institutions, we acknowledge the interconnected links between human health and animal health, and are committed to enhancing the quality of pet healthcare in the country. The hospital which is set to launch in phases will cover comprehensive advanced healthcare for pets across the continuum, right from consultation and diagnostics, to treatment, to high level nursing care, and resolution of their problems."

In the coming months, we also plan to conduct collaborative training programs with the top rated veterinary institute internationally, Royal Veterinary College, London and will support a robust veterinary ecosystem in the city.

The hospital is situated on the acre of land allocated by Burhan Mumbai Municipal Corporation to Tata Trusts' Advanced Veterinary Care Facility (ACVF) situated in Mahalaxmi.

The launch will be phased with a few facilities launched on day one: Emergency & Critical Care - 24x7 triage and treatment services; Inpatient and ICU units (including isolation units); Surgical Services (Soft Tissue Surgery, Orthopedics etc.); Pharmacy Services; Support Functions such as Diagnostics - Radiology & Imaging (MRI, X-Ray, CT Scan & USG), Laboratory - Hematology, Microbiology, Cytology, Clinical Pathology, Biochemistry, Histopathology and Anesthesia.

Built by a team of experts who embody Tata Trusts' DNA of compassion, courage, commitment, collaboration and professionalism, Small Animal Hospital, Mumbai is set to establish itself as a proud benchmark for the highest quality of care delivered to patients and users of the facility.

JK Tyre Introduces Sikhsha Sarthi Scholarship Programme

In a significant step towards promoting education and empowering communities, JK Tyre has joined hands with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and Protean Vidyadsaarthi to launch the 'JK Tyre Shiksha Sarthi Scholarship Scheme' exclusively for the daughters of heavy motor vehicle drivers from the states of Tamil Nadu & Karnataka. This initiative underscores JK Tyre's commitment to corporate social responsibility and aims to make quality education accessible to the driver's girl child.

The newly launched scholarship program is tailored for various undergraduate courses, offering financial assistance ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 per annum. This monetary support is aimed at easing the financial burden on families associated with the transportation sector, allowing deserving students to pursue their academic aspirations without hindrance. The online application process is accessible at www.vidyasaarthi.co.in, streamlining the application for the JK Tyre Shiksha Sarthi Scholarship.

Commenting on the collaboration and the launch of the scholarship scheme, Dr Raghupati Singhania, Chairman & Managing Director, JK Tyre & Industries Limited stated, "At JK Tyre we recognize the invaluable contribution of the commercial vehicle drivers to the transportation industry and our commitment to them & their families' well-being extends beyond our business interests. We believe in the transformative power of education and are dedicated to fostering an environment where every child has the chance to excel. The JK Tyre Shiksha Saarthi Scholarship Scheme is not just about financial aid but about empowering the next generation and we are proud to partner with TISS and Protean Vidyadsaarthi to make this initiative a reality."

CSR INDIA UNITED

"SATO Toilet Express" takes affordable sanitation solutions to 95 villages across Bihar and Maharashtra”

SATO, the award-winning social business part of LIXIL announced its ambitious and impactful initiative, "SATO Toilet Express – Swachata Ka Sandesh Gaon Gaon Mein!"

This van-based awareness campaign is designed to raise awareness about the importance of using toilets in rural and semi-urban areas across 2 states in India - Bihar and Maharashtra.

"SATO Toilet Express" is not just a campaign; it is a dynamic and comprehensive effort to instill a behavioral shift towards improved hygiene and sanitation practices. The initiative reaches the grassroots of society, embodying SATO's commitment to make safe sanitation more accessible to all. In order to achieve that, it introduces affordable solutions that can be easily acquired at the village level by masons, retailers, and dealers. The van covered 60 villages in Bihar and 35 villages in Maharashtra over 30 days, bringing awareness and

promoting positive sanitation practices in each community.

Recent research by FINISH Mondial and the Sanitation Learning Hub in Bihar & Maharashtra reveals increased toilet coverage after the launch of SBM, yet universal access remains elusive. Poverty and social marginalization disproportionately affect those excluded from toilet usage. Retrofitting and maintenance services are crucial, addressing defunct toilets. Interventions should factor in flood, drought, and appropriate technology for diverse terrains. Many schools lack functional handwashing facilities. Community toilets often don't exist or are non-functional due to a lacwk of maintenance systems. In most villages, finding workers for toilet construction is challenging. The study underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to ensure widespread, sustainable sanitation access.

Anandita Kakkar, Leader Marketing, South Asia, LIXIL, commended:' By directly engaging communities, this campaign transcends conventional hygiene promotion, becoming a powerful catalyst for positive change in peoples' lives. Going beyond awareness, SATO's hands-on approach in regions of Bihar and Maharashtra instills lasting behavioral shifts. The impact is not just immediate but signifies a broader transformation towards sustainable sanitation practices.

The initiative involves integrating dynamic awareness modules into the SATO Toilet Express to educate communities on the importance of using toilets, promoting proper hygiene, and emphasizing the overall well-being impact of sanitation. It includes interactive initiatives like live demonstrations and engaging activities to make sanitation awareness informative. SATO has partnered with local community leaders and NGOs to ensure the campaign aligns with the unique needs and cultural nuances of each region.

North and East seeks NGO partnerships in Uttar Pradesh for 'McDonald's for Youth' hiring initiative

In its unwavering dedication to empower local communities and drive social change, McDonald's– North and East India has made a commendable move to uplift youth including youth from under-privileged background in Uttar Pradesh through its prominent community program, "McDonald's for Youth." As part of this initiative, McDonald's welcomes NGOs in the state, to collaborate and help connect with potential beneficiaries in local communities.

Through this community campaign, McDonald's India – N&E aims to create a ripple effect by leading positive change and serving brighter futures. This visionary endeavor addresses one of the most pressing issues faced by today's youth: equal opportunities and better career prospects.

Speaking on the initiative, Rajeev Ranjan, Managing Director, McDonald's India – North and East, said, "McDonald's for Youth is a campaign dedicated to providing gainful employment including youth from less privileged communities. We aim to meet 50% of our entry-level requirements through this program. We keep working towards continuously enhancing their knowledge skill and abilities through McDonald's world-famous high-quality training programs so that they keep growing in their professional career. More than just filling positions, this program is about community engagement and breaking down barriers to growth, fostering economic development, and empowering youth to succeed in professional and personal life. With 800 recruits so far, we are inviting local NGOs in Uttar Pradesh—Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida, Meerut, Kanpur, and Agra—to accelerate recruitment for the programme."

'McDonald's for Youth' community program aims to benefit 2000 underprivileged youth with employment prospects across North and East India by 2025.

McDonald's North and East India employs nearly 6,000 people, investing significantly in training and development initiatives.

McDonald's India – North and East has collaborated with NGOs such as Magic Bus Foundation, Save the Children, Light House Community Foundation, Udayan Care, SEWA Bharat, Trrain, Saksham, Tarraqi, SPID, Lend- a- Hand, Quess Corp Ltd., etc. on a national level for hiring process.

In Uttar Pradesh, McDonald's India – North and East is currently working with Magic Bus Foundation and Yuva Parivartan. The company currently has 41 restaurants in Uttar Pradesh and is considering hiring employees through NGOs for these locations.

By collaborating with NGOs and leading the way in creating opportunities for under-privileged individuals, McDonald's India - North and East hopes to be a catalyst for change while helping to shape a brighter future for India.

Tata Motors Empowers Women to bring about a Socioeconomic Change with the traditional handicraft of 'Chikankari'

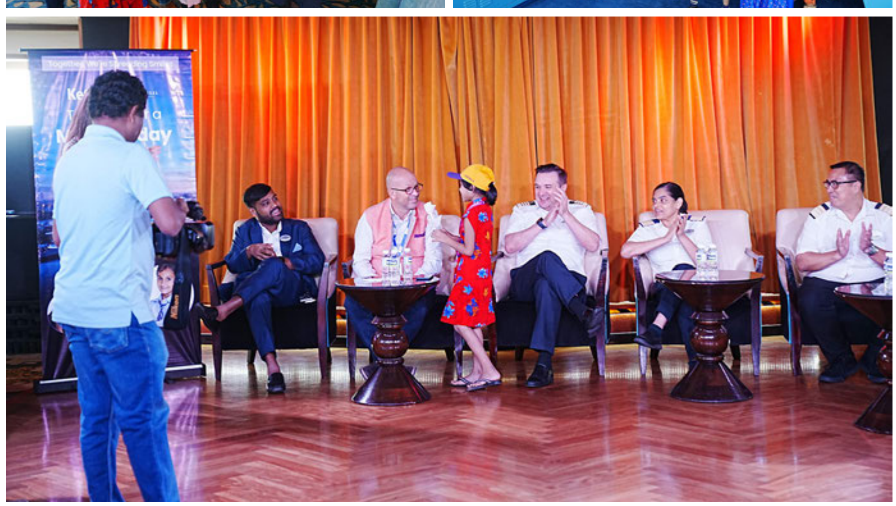
In a transformative journey unfolding in the rural heartland of India, women are intricately weaving threads of change to attain economic independence. Tata Motors Samaj Vikas Kendra (SVK) has helped these women master the craft of 'Chikankari' and organise themselves into groups to run a successful business venture basis this skill. The project has had an enduring impact on other women leading to active engagement of more than 150 women to form SHGs and actively engage in credit and thrift activities thus mobilising a remarkable Rs.25 lakhs over the past 16 years.

Tata Motors SVK began work on this project in 2007 wherein they worked on a two prong strategy, to revive the handicraft also linking it to social economic development of women. SVK established a dedicated training centre for women from 15 villages in and around, to equip them with the required skillset and apprise them of the market trends. In 2011, the scope of the SHG Federation programme was enhanced to include newer skillsets like production of jute bags, candles, herbal Gulal, cloth bags, artificial jewellery, etc.

Tata Motors also helped these women leverage various women welfare schemes run by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to enhance their skills and tap into opportunities to generate income. Now these women are serving as harbingers of change wherein they have not just attained financial freedom but fostered a social change breaking down societal barriers thus paving way for gender equality.

Mr. Vinod Kulkarni, CSR Head at Tata Motors, stated, "SHG Federation is a 360 degree programme wherein we help women join hands to develop their own enterprise as a group to attain financial freedom which in turn helps them uplift their socioeconomic status. It is believed that gender equality and empowerment of women is key to the success of the Millennium Development Goals. The success of the programme showcases our determination and commitment to pave way for an equitable society."

Cordelia Cruises, Ketto, and Child Help Foundation Join Forces to Empower Youth



Cordelia Cruises, India's premium cruise line, in collaboration with Ketto and Child Help Foundation (CHF), embarked on a transformative journey to enrich the lives of young minds. On February 17th, 2024, Cordelia Cruises welcomed students from CHF aboard the Empress, offering them a first-hand experience of maritime life and career opportunities.

The event, organised as part of Cordelia Cruises' commitment to fostering youth development, provided students with an immersive tour of the cruise liner 'Empress'. From exploring the intricacies of ship operations to engaging in enlightening conversations with the onboard crew and officers, the children were given a glimpse into the dynamic world of seafaring.

"Giving back is not just an option; it's our duty. We organised this event with the singular aim of offering these wonderful children a day to remember. We have the power to make today memorable and hopeful, and that's exactly what we've done. We created a day filled with wonder, joy, and dreams for the children. Their enthusiasm onboard the cruise was unmistakable—they explored, asked questions, captured memories, played games, enjoyed the video arcade, and ended the day with a delicious lunch. They returned home with hearts and memories full, a gift we are profoundly grateful to have shared.

At Cordelia Cruises, we believe our success is measured not by our achievements but by our impact on lives and our contribution to joy. We're on a mission to inspire and nurture the future leaders of our country by connecting with the youth. Providing them with first-hand experiences on our ship, we aim to enlighten them about the operations, opportunities, and unique life at sea. By engaging in open dialogues with these young minds, we seek to ignite their interest in the maritime industry and empower them to envision a future within it. We believe in growing by lifting others, sharing the love and support we've received, and expressing our deep gratitude.

This initiative represents our commitment to a legacy that goes beyond traditional business metrics, practising what we preach. Together, we're sailing towards a future filled with greatness and endless possibilities.", Jurgen Bailom, President and CEO of Waterways Leisure Tourism Pvt Ltd, Cordelia Cruises.

"We are delighted to partner with Cordelia Cruises on this initiative. At Ketto, we believe in the power of collaboration to create meaningful impact. By providing these young students with a unique opportunity to explore the maritime industry, we hope to ignite their curiosity and inspire them to pursue their dreams fearlessly." Varun Sheth, Founder and CEO at Ketto.

"At CHF, our mission is to better the lives of children, and initiatives like these align perfectly with our goals. We are grateful to Cordelia Cruises for opening their doors to our students and offering them a glimpse into a world of possibilities. This experience will undoubtedly leave a lasting impression on these young minds and inspire them to reach for the stars." Rajendra Pathak, Founder & Managing Trustee, CHILD HELP FOUNDATION (CHF).

Global Solidarity in Action – Impacting 10,000 children for nutritious meals

Share Our Strength, an American based charity organisation is expanding its international support to The Akshaya Patra Foundation and The Breakfast Revolution in India, with the intent of working together to build more avenues to nourish children in schools. Share Our Strength announced today that they will host an exclusive fundraiser on March 17th at the ITC Grand Central in Parel, Mumbai in aid of the two Indian charities. The dinner event aims to raise INR 1 crore to provide daily breakfasts and lunches for over 10,000 underprivileged school children for the upcoming academic year. Share Our Strength has also committed to match all donations from the event, thereby doubling the impact.

As India prepares for a $5 trillion economy in the next three years, and more thereafter, it is important to ensure that our upcoming generations can shoulder this high growth. The key to fuelling these aspirations lies in nourishing more of our children with proper nutrition and education. Numerous studies affirm the critical role of daily breakfast and lunch meals in school to improve the cognitive development and learning ability of students.

"Since 2014, we have made steady progress in serving healthy breakfasts to thousands of underprivileged school children. But there is more work to be done. Having served about 400,000 undernourished children and women with about 30.2 million meals, we envision to impact 1 million lives by 2030. This fundraiser is our humble effort towards helping more children, not only to address undernutrition but also act as an incentive to increase school participation rates," said Pankaj Jethwani, Co-Founder, The Breakfast Revolution.

"We are honoured to collaborate with fellow organizations that share our belief that the path out of poverty starts with proper nutrition. We believe every child deserves a chance to learn on a full stomach. Together, we can ensure thousands more children receive the food they need to thrive," said Shridhar Venkat, CEO, Akshaya Patra.

"At Share Our Strength, we understand very well how hunger impedes human potential. We believe in the work of The Breakfast Revolution and Akshaya Patra and will match funds raised at this event. Our goal is to build the capacities of both organisations, and add an additional 1 million children to receive school meals over the next 5 years," said Debbie Shore, Co-founder, Share Our Strength.

The invite-only fundraiser promises to be a landmark event and is chaired by Avani Davda (distinguished business leader and advisor) and Gauri Devidayal (Co-Founder and Director of The Food Matters Group). The leadership teams of all three charities will be present alongside multiple luminaries from across India and other countries.

"I have seen firsthand the monumental impact organizations like Akshaya Patra have had through their nutrition programs. This fundraiser is an opportunity to multiply that impact for thousands more children by joining hands with The Breakfast Revolution and Share Our Strength", said Chef Sanjeev Kapoor. He further added, "Meals in school help children reach their full potential. By coming together, we can nourish millions of children towards a brighter future." Several acclaimed chefs such as Manish Mehrotra, Asma Khan, and Anil Rohira will join Kapoor in curating an exceptional culinary experience in support of this noble cause.

Funds raised will deliver on a joint commitment to make a lasting difference in society by addressing critical issues like food security, undernutrition, increased school attendance and reduced dropout rates amongst impoverished children.

Hon'ble President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu reviewing IIT Mandi iHub Drone Didi program

IIT Mandi iHub showcases the success of 'Drone Didi' program to President

IIT Mandi iHub, a cutting-edge Technology Innovation Hub specialising in Human-Computer Interaction, has garnered prestigious recognition from the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) of India for its Drone Didi skill development program.

On January 24, 2024, representatives from IIT Mandi iHub, including Somjit Amrit, CEO, IIT Mandi iHub, and Shashi Bala, a beneficiary of the Drone Didi program, presented the success of this initiative to President Droupadi Murmu, at the inauguration ceremony of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Government of India's 'Kaushal Bhavan' in New Delhi.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of the hon'ble Union Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, and the hon'ble Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

Highlighting Women's Empowerment in Agriculture through Drone Automation, Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, said, "Empowering women in the crucial realm of agriculture through the implementation of drone automation is a transformative initiative. It not only harnesses the power of technology but also fosters a more inclusive and equitable agricultural landscape. The integration of women into this pivotal sector ensures a diversified and skilled workforce, contributing significantly to the growth and sustainability of our agricultural practices."

Mr. Somjit Amrti presenting Drone Didi program to Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurs

Mr. Somjit Amrit presenting Drone Didi program to Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Govt of India

Mr. Somjit Amrit, CEO, IIT Mandi iHub at the inauguration ceremony of MSDE's Kaushal Bhavan

'Drone Didi' is an Entrepreneurship Development Program tailored for women in Himachal Pradesh and beyond, with a specific focus on Agri Drone Applications. The project serves not only as a skill development endeavour but also as a robust platform for women to establish businesses in the burgeoning field of drone technology.

As part of the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0, participants in the Drone Didi program receive comprehensive training and support, including:

- Theoretical and Practical training on Drone flying leading to securing Remote Pilot Licenses
- Training on Agricultural Drone Applications like crop pesticide spraying, monitoring field conditions, plant health, seeding, and pollination
- Providing capacity building support in entrepreneurship
- Providing Mentorship support and enabling market/credit linkages

Speaking about the initiative, Amrit said, "At iHub, we believe in harnessing technology for societal benefits. 'Drone Didi' is more than just a skill development program; it is a catalyst for change, empowering women to become leaders in technology and entrepreneurship. This project is a testament to our commitment to inclusive growth and aligns with our vision of creating a skilled, self-reliant India. We aim to take this project to a national level soon."

Executed with support from the Agriculture Skill Council of India, the first batch of the Drone Didi program is currently underway, with a total of 20 female students at the IIT Mandi campus in collaboration with the Institute's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR). In addition to technical support, CAIR is also providing On-The-Job (OTJ) opportunities to the Drone Didis.

Sharing her experience, i Bala, a beneficiary of IIT Mandi iHub's Drone Didi program, said, "I have a background in BSc (Agriculture) and have been seeking a different and exciting career path in Agriculture. That is when I learned about the Drone Didi program offered by IIT Mandi iHub. After understanding the benefits of this girls-only residential program, I decided to join. I am pleased with what I have learned so far in this program, such as drone applications, maintenance, DGCA guidelines, Agri-drone applications, business skills, and soft skills. I also have a Mentor who is a sounding board for me and gives me full support in pursuing my aspirations."

IIT Mandi iHub's Drone Didi program stands as a beacon of empowerment, merging technology with entrepreneurship to uplift women in the field of drone technology. The program's success, recognized by the National Skill Development Corporation, reflects IIT Mandi iHub's commitment to fostering inclusive growth and contributing to the vision of a skilled, self-reliant India. With plans to elevate the project to a national level, IIT Mandi iHub continues to champion societal benefits through technological innovation and translation.

Global food supply chains may become less important beyond 1.5°C of warming, as producing countries restrict exports and major sovereign importers like China focus on achieving self-sufficiency. *Image: Nik Shuliahin / Unsplash*

PLANNING FOR A FUTURE BEYOND 1.5°C

It is an open secret in climate circles that limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius is no longer possible. As COP28 approaches, we must abandon this target, which has become an obstacle to truly innovative action, feels **Simon Zadek**

Negotiators and activists preparing to attend the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai are grimly aware that there is no realistic chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. But what has become an open secret in climate circles must be shared more widely. Paradoxically, it may be the only way to muster the political will needed to eschew incrementalism in favour of disruptive action that is commensurate with the scale of the challenge.

The official view remains that the 1.5°C target set by the 2015 Paris climate agreement is still achievable, but only if we act decisively and immediately. While that may be true in theory, the necessary reforms are politically painful and therefore almost non-existent. Global coal consumption, for example, climbed to a new all-time high of 8.3 billion tonnes in 2022. Moreover, Chevron and ExxonMobil recently invested a combined US$113 billion in securing additional oil and gas reserves – an unambiguous bet on the long-term profitability of fossil fuels.

It has become starkly apparent that we are barrelling toward global temperatures of at least 2°C above pre-industrial levels. This aligns with the International Energy Agency's recent conclusion that, based on today's policies, global emissions could push up average temperatures by around 2.4°C this century.

A future beyond 1.5°C will look very different from our current reality, and every tenth of a degree will have major consequences. At 2°C warming, it is estimated that around 40 per cent of the world's population will be exposed to severe heatwaves, while up to one-third will experience chronic water scarcity. The human cost, in terms of displacement, lost livelihoods, and early deaths, will be unprecedented, with vulnerable communities, largely in poorer countries, bearing the heaviest burden.

We must do everything within our power to prevent these outcomes. But, ironically, raising false hopes of achieving the 1.5°C target has become a roadblock to progress on climate action. As NatureFinance, the not-for-profit I work for, highlights in a publication released on the eve of COP28, "Time to Plan for a Future Beyond 1.5 Degrees," this goal reflects our ambition, but perversely has embedded the fiction of a "win-win" energy transition, whereby the future world looks much like ours, only without carbon emissions. This narrative, promoted by many political, business and civil-society leaders, constrains our response, forcing us to act within the confines of conventional wisdom.

Humans struggle to react to slow-moving crises. Escaping this pattern usually requires a "new truth" to become self-evident, often through a sudden jolt that cements a paradigm shift and broadens the realm of possibility.

A future beyond 1.5°C will look very different from our current reality, and every tenth of a degree will have major consequences. At 2°C warming, it is estimated that around 40 per cent of the world's population will be exposed to severe heatwaves, while up to one-third will experience chronic water scarcity.

In the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, for example, finance ministers and central bank governors abandoned the long-held belief that monetary expansion must be avoided at all costs for fear of inflation; instead, they embraced quantitative easing – in effect, printing money – to stimulate recovery. Similarly, after the Covid-19 pandemic erupted, leading G20 governments renounced their commitment to fiscal probity and adopted costly universal income payments previously derided as utopian fantasy.

Pivoting to a "beyond 1.5°C" narrative could provide the jolt necessary to reject a business-as-usual mindset in favour of interventions that break from accepted norms and disrupt the status quo. Consider, for example, the existential issue of food security. Helping vulnerable smallholder farmers shift to regenerative practices might work in a world where warming is limited to 1.5°C. But it could hinder their pivot away from farming methods and livelihoods that will no longer exist if temperatures exceed that target.

At the same time, global food supply chains may become less important beyond 1.5°C of warming, as producing countries restrict exports and major sovereign importers like China focus on achieving self-sufficiency. Such on-shoring is likely to accelerate investment in capital-intensive food production that is more climate-resilient and less nature-dependent, including vertical farming and lab-grown proteins. Judging by the rollout of renewable-energy technologies, the main challenge may be deploying these resilient food systems at scale in poorer countries.

The finance sector is also ripe for disruption. Investments must urgently be steered away from carbon-intensive assets. Yet ongoing efforts to factor climate-related risks into asset valuation and allocation have obviously failed. Much bolder action is needed to align financial flows with national and international climate policies and commitments. Central banks and supervisors, for example, must move beyond financial risk and discard their cherished policy independence, which they have previously done in times of crisis. Under such circumstances, regulators could align with national net-zero policy goals and international commitments in imposing mandatory requirements on financial institutions to deliver net-zero, nature-positive portfolios within a certain timeframe.

Realism about the 1.5°C target is necessary to abandon incremental efforts and begin thinking bigger. Truly innovative climate action is impossible without letting go of this much-hoped-for goal and the comforting vision of an illusory future that accompanied it. While such a pivot would not guarantee success, it could unlock unconventional measures to limit rising temperatures and prepare for a warmer world.

Simon Zadek is Executive Director of NatureFinance and Co-Lead of the Secretariat for the Taskforce on Nature Markets.

(Source: https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/planning-for-a-future-beyond-15c/)

As fossil fuel emissions heat the planet, they are driving more extreme weather - from heavy rains and droughts to heatwaves - as well as gradual sea level rise. All can affect crops, ruin farmland and make it harder for farmers to work.
Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

HOW DOES CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT FOOD SECURITY?

Climate change impacts are driving more crop failures and hunger - but adaptation efforts and farming reforms could cut risks.

As impacts from prolonged droughts to extreme heat worsen, climate change is threatening the world's ability to produce enough nutritious food and ensure everyone has access to it.

At COP28 in Dubai, more than 130 country leaders on Friday called for global and national food systems to be rethought to address climate change - the first such official recognition at a UN climate summit of growing worries about food security and planet-heating emissions from agriculture.

Here's how global food systems and climate change affect each other, and what might be done about rising risks:

How is climate change threatening food security?

As fossil fuel emissions heat the planet, they are driving more extreme weather - from heavy rains and droughts to heatwaves - as well as gradual sea level rise. All can affect crops, ruin farmland and make it harder for farmers to work.

A warming climate also is bringing crop diseases and pests into new locations or making infestations more severe, ruining more harvests and reducing yields.

Such problems, combined with other pressures on food systems - from growing conflict to crop export restrictions by food-producing countries and speculation in markets - mean food is becoming less affordable and more people are going hungry.

The UN World Food Programme estimates that 333 million people face "acute" food insecurity in 2023 in the 78 countries where it works - a huge boost from about 200 million prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Crop failures are not a new phenomenon, with surpluses in some regions long making up for shortfalls in others, but scientists fear stronger climate impacts could drive simultaneous failures across major global "breadbaskets", resulting in a swift rise in global hunger.

What is being done to address these threats?

Around the world, many farmers are adapting to climate extremes in a variety of ways, from digging irrigation ponds to trap floodwater and store it for dry times, to adopting new climate-smart seeds and bringing back hardy traditional crops.

But some challenges - such as more frequent and extreme heatwaves that can make it difficult for farmers to work outside - are harder to counter.

Money to help small-scale farmers - who supply about a third of the world's food - adapt to climate risks is also falling dramatically short.

In 2021, they received only about US$2 billion, or 0.3 per cent of total international climate finance from public and private sources, according to Amsterdam-based think-tank Climate Focus.

With little outside help available, many such farmers - who have contributed little to the emissions heating up the planet - are paying the costs of climate adaptation themselves.

The Climate Focus survey of 13 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America found nearly 440 million small-scale farmer households now spend about US$368 billion annually on adaptation costs, or about US$838 each per year.

Analysts say efforts to shore up global food security also need to reach well beyond farms, to try to rein in speculators in food markets, discourage export clampdowns and revamp increasingly overwhelmed humanitarian aid systems.

Can we find ways to grow more food to make up for the losses?

Expanding the amount of land being farmed - or boosting the use of fossil-fuel-based fertilisers and developing new crop varieties - have long been accepted ways to grow more food.

But agricultural land expansion often comes at the expense of forests and other natural ecosystems that are critical to conserve because their vegetation absorbs and stores climate-heating carbon dioxide emissions in order to grow, helping to curb climate change.

For example nearly 20 per cent of the vast Amazon rainforest has now been lost, largely to soybean farming and cattle ranching.

Scientists fear additional deforestation could over time turn the forest into a dry savanna, imperiling rainfall for agriculture across South America - and sabotaging the world's climate and biodiversity protection goals.

Efforts to intensify the amount of food grown on a set land area have shown some success but often require large amounts of expensive fossil fuel-based fertilisers.

In recent years, however, more environmentally friendly farming methods are gaining new adherents, from the United States to India.

But food analysts say the best way to increase global supplies is not to grow more but to reduce the huge amount of food wasted each year.

While the world produces enough food for everyone, about a third of it is lost or wasted along the supply chain from field to fork, according to the United Nations, which says the average person wastes 74 kg (163 lb) of food each year.

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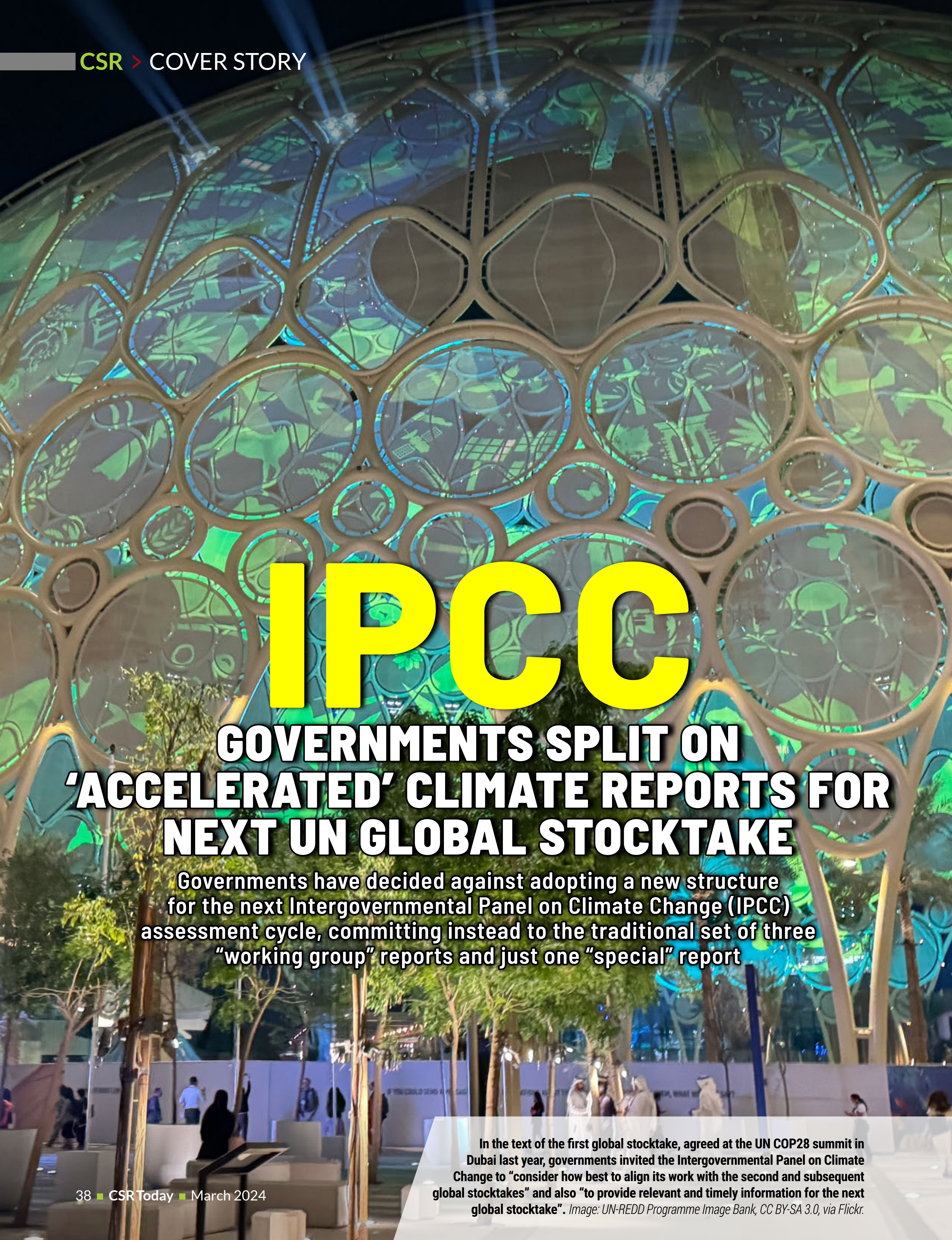


IPCC

GOVERNMENTS SPLIT ON 'ACCELERATED' CLIMATE REPORTS FOR NEXT UN GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

Governments have decided against adopting a new structure for the next Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) assessment cycle, committing instead to the traditional set of three "working group" reports and just one "special" report

In the text of the first global stocktake, agreed at the UN COP28 summit in Dubai last year, governments invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to "consider how best to align its work with the second and subsequent global stocktakes" and also "to provide relevant and timely information for the next global stocktake". *Image: UN-REDD Programme Image Bank, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*

At a four-day meeting in Istanbul last week, delegates debated several different approaches for the work programme of the IPCC's seventh assessment cycle. These included a more radical option to replace its huge assessment report with a series of shorter special reports on specific topics.

Nonetheless, delegates decided in favour of the usual assessment report and instead focused on the possibility of its three working group reports being delivered by the end of 2028.

This would allow the reports to inform the UN's second global stocktake, which will gauge progress towards the Paris Agreement goals. However, despite most governments agreeing on the accelerated timetable, a few countries "strenuously objected", blocking a final decision on timelines, which will be revisited at an IPCC meeting in the summer.

One person present at the meeting tells Carbon Brief that "most of the resistance about the 2028 timeline came from Saudi Arabia, China and India".

IPCC chair Prof Jim Skea described the gathering of more than 375 delegates from 120 governments – which overran into a fifth day – as the "one of the most intense meetings" he had ever experienced.

The seventh assessment cycle will also include a special report on climate change and cities as well as a methodology report on short-lived climate forcers – decisions that governments had previously already agreed. The deliberations saw the addition of a second methodology report on carbon dioxide removal technologies, carbon capture utilisation and storage, plus a revision to the IPCC's 1994 technical guidelines on impacts and adaptation. An overall "synthesis" report for AR7 will follow in 2029.

Reacting to the decisions, one scientist tells Carbon Brief that she is "not thrilled" by the decision to produce "a whole set of working group reports again", given they will "not say that much new".

And another says that "waiting until 2028 for the three reports and 2029 for the synthesis is too late to have an impact on decision-making. The world will be significantly different by then".

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING?

The synthesis report, published in March 2023, marked the final product of the IPCC's sixth assessment report (AR6) cycle.

> **There is a bewildering range of frameworks being suggested and applied to track and monitor adaptation progress, and the policy salience is pressing, with discussions for the global goal on adaptation ongoing.**
>
> –DR CHANDNI SINGH
> Senior Researcher, Indian Institute for Human Settlements

Just weeks after its publication, the secretary of the IPCC invited member countries to submit nominations for the IPCC bureau for the AR7 cycle. Over the following months, 100 nominations were submitted for 34 positions – including IPCC chair, vice chairs and co-chairs and working group vice chairs.

Four candidates were nominated for the position of IPCC chair – Dr Debra Roberts from South Africa, Dr Thelma Krug from Brazil, Prof Jean-Pascal Van Ypersele from Belgium and Prof Jim Skea from the UK. These were the first elections in the history of the IPCC with women running for the position of chair.

The new IPCC chair and leadership team were elected at a meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in July last year, via a secret ballot.

Prof Jim Skea was elected as chair, as the IPCC announced:

"With nearly 40 years of climate science experience and expertise, Jim Skea will lead the IPCC through its seventh assessment cycle. Skea was elected by 90 votes to 69 in a run-off with Thelma Krug."

To select the rest of the bureau, the IPCC mandates that at least one IPCC vice chair and one co-chair from each working group should be from a developing country.

Dr Ladislaus Chang'a from Tanzania, Prof Ramón Pichs-Madruga from

Cuba and Prof Diana Ürge-Vorsatz from Hungary were elected to the positions of IPCC vice chair.

IPCC documentation adds that "consideration should also be given to promoting gender balance". Women make up 40% of the IPCC bureau for AR7 (pdf).

The meeting in Turkey was the first full meeting for the new leadership team. Its purpose was to make a series of decisions for AR7, such as discussing the IPCC budget over 2023-26 and reviewing lessons learned from AR6.

Skea also presented his "vision for the seventh assessment cycle", in which he highlighted three key themes – policy relevance, inclusivity and interdisciplinarity.

For example, on interdisciplinarity, Skea said that he is "keen to explore ways of enhancing collaboration" with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), given the "intertwined nature of the climate, biodiversity and pollution challenges".

WHAT DECISIONS WERE DELEGATES MAKING?

Among all the decisions that government delegates debated last week, the one that dominated discussions was which option to choose for AR7's "programme of work".

This programme sets out the overall approach that the IPCC takes through the assessment cycle, including the number and types of reports that the body produces.

Traditionally, the centrepiece of an IPCC cycle is an "assessment report" that comprises three working group reports and an overall "synthesis" report. The IPCC's three working groups are:

- Working Group I (WG1): The physical science basis
- Working Group II (WG2): Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability
- Working Group III (WG3): Mitigation of climate change

For AR6, these reports were published in August 2021, February 2022 and April 2022, respectively. They were each around 2,000-3,000 pages in length.

The synthesis report then "integrates" the main findings of the three working group reports. It also takes into account any "special reports" that the IPCC has published during the assessment cycle.

These are shorter reports on specific topics, written by authors from across the three working groups. In AR6, for example, the IPCC published three special reports – each around 600-900 pages long:

- Global warming of 1.5°C ("SR15") in October 2018
- Climate change and land ("SRCCL") in August 2019
- The ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate ("SROCC") in September 2019

Finally, an assessment cycle typically also includes "methodology" reports, which "provide practical guidelines for the preparation of greenhouse gas inventories" and "technical papers", which are "prepared on topics for which an objective international scientific/technical perspective is essential".

Ahead of the meeting in Turkey, an "informal group on the programme of work" had been established to prepare a paper setting out the options for the AR7 programme of work, taking into account the lessons learned from AR6 and the views of IPCC member countries. (Of the IPCC's 195 members, 66 sent in submissions – roughly split 60-40 between developing and developed countries.)

One of the challenges faced during AR6 was the "very high workload" as a result of "the unprecedented number of reports, the rapidly increasing literature, and a significant increase of review comments on the final government draft [of the reports]", the paper says.

It notes the need for IPCC reports to be "shorter and more concise, focused on new science and [able to] provide policy relevant information".

The paper adds that "many member countries recommended ensuring adequate input from the IPCC is available for the second global stocktake to be concluded in 2028, either as a contribution from the assessment reports, topical [special reports], or as a specific dedicated product". The global stocktake is a five-yearly temperature check that is a vital part of the Paris Agreement. It is meant to help countries collectively assess where they are, where they want to go and how to get there in terms of climate action and to identify gaps to course correct.

In the text of the first global stocktake, agreed at the UN COP28 summit in Dubai last year, governments invited the IPCC to "consider how best to align its work with the second and subsequent global stocktakes" and also "to provide relevant and timely information for the next global stocktake".

WHAT WAS AGREED FOR THE AR7 'PROGRAMME OF WORK'?

The informal group set out three options for AR7's programme of work:

- A "light" option with the usual assessment report and then just one special report and methodology report. This would see a "reduced workload compared to the AR6" and a shorter timeline.
- A "classical" option with the usual assessment report and up to two special reports and two methodology reports.
- A "special report gallery" option that replaces the assessment report with a larger collection of special reports (a working assumption of four).

The paper notes that "nearly all" member countries wanted AR7 to include the three working groups reports and synthesis, and the "vast majority" were also in favour of more than one special report and methodology report. (There were 13 countries that wanted to stick with one special report and methodology report.)

Previous assessment cycles suggest that a single working group report takes four years to produce from start to finish, the paper notes, while a special or methodology report can take three or three-and-a-half years. Although working group reports within an assessment cycle are produced in parallel, a complete set – including a synthesis report – "is not considered possible in less than about four and a half years", the paper says.

The table below, from the paper, presents the feasibility of when the reports could be published under each of the three options – from "not feasible" (grey) to "risk of delay" (yellow) and "feasible" (green).

The paper analysed the three options against a series of criteria that include the time allowed for "engagement of underrepresented communities". The findings, shown in the "scorecard" below, classify how achievable each criterion is for the three options – yes (green), no (red) or partly (yellow).

Despite being a "fairly straightforward exercise in agenda setting", the discussions over these options at the IPCC meeting in Turkey "evolved into fraught deliberations that ran overnight on Friday and well into Saturday morning", the Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) reports.

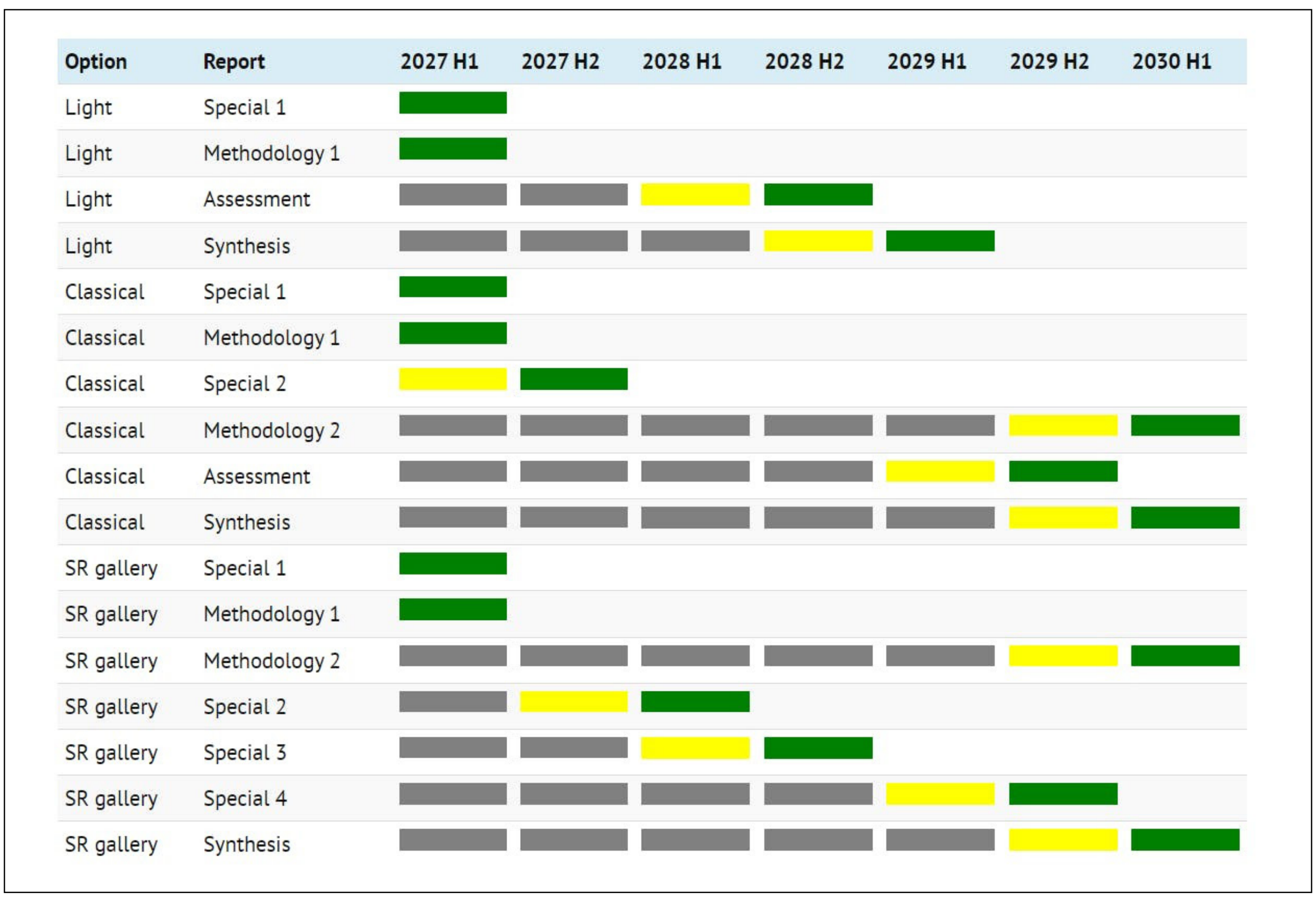
It adds that the discussions "came down to the wire as delegates laboured in plenary and huddles to secure consensus on the programme of work".

The final decision falls between the "light" and "classical" options – comprising a full assessment report with synthesis, as well as one special report and two methodology reports. In addition, AR7 will also include a revision of the IPCC's technical guidelines on impacts and adaptation, published way back in 1994. (See following sections for more details.)

Skea tells Carbon Brief that the "big issue in the mind of most governments when they went into the meeting" was for "the IPCC to produce something that's useful for the global stocktake by the end of 2028". (Even though this process actually starts "in late 2026 through 2027", he notes.)

There were "kind of two ways of going about" this, explains Skea:

"One was to have a second special report, which was prepared in time for the global stocktake with the working group reports coming after that – and, obviously, not being ready in time. The second option was to dispense with the second



Feasibility of release of the products listed in the AR7 structure options at indicated periods in time, based on past practice, from "not feasible" (grey) to "risk of delay" (yellow) and "feasible" (green). *Source: IPCC (2024)*

Criterion	Light	Classical	SR gallery
Allows strong integration across working groups	Somewhat constrained	Yes	Yes
Input available to second global stocktake	Special report 1 only	Special reports 1 & 2	Special reports 1 & 2
Time window allows significant new literature	Somewhat constrained	Yes	Yes
Time window long enough to allow engagement of underrepresented communities	No	Yes	Yes
Level of undue stress to authors and IPCC Technical Support Unit	Medium	Low	Low
Number of topics to be covered	Somewhat constrained	Large	Somewhat constrained
Comprehensive literature assessment	Somewhat constrained	Yes	Highly constrained
Time distance to the third global stocktake	Long	Medium	Medium

Scorecard for the three programme options assessed against a series of criteria. Shading refers to whether that criterion is achievable - yes (green), no (red) or partly (yellow). *Source: IPCC (2024)*

special report and produce the three working group reports on quite a fast timetable."

Therefore, says Skea, "what we've ended up with is much more like what was labelled 'light', because the key point of 'light' is that there were no extra products before the second global stocktake". (The agreed second methodology report "could take place later" in the assessment cycle, Skea notes.)

However, while there was agreement on the selection of reports, the "accelerated" timeline for working group reports was not agreed as "some countries didn't necessarily want that", he adds.

Prof Sonia Seneviratne, a climate scientist from ETH Zurich who is a WG1 vice-chair for AR7, notes that "it was very difficult to reach a final decision because a majority of countries wanted to have all assessment reports completed at the latest in 2028". She tells Carbon Brief:

"Delivery of the IPCC [assessment] report in 2028 would be critical for the IPCC to fulfil its mandate of being 'policy relevant'. [Nonetheless,] the final decision keeps the door open for the three assessment reports to be released by 2028 – that is, in time for the global stocktake – provided that the schedule is carefully developed."

Prof Friederike Otto, senior lecturer in climate science at Imperial College London's Grantham Institute and IPCC AR6 author, says she is "not thrilled" by the decision to produce "a whole set of working group reports again", which "will require a huge amount of work for many scientists".

The final reports for WG1 and WG3 will especially "not say that much new", she tells Carbon Brief, costing the "best scientists a lot of time they cannot use to actually advance the pressing questions".

Dr Valérie Masson-Delmotte, a senior researcher at the Laboratoire des Science du Climat et de l'environnement in France and IPCC WG1 co-chair during AR6, says that the "positive" of not adding further special reports "is that there will be more time for expert meetings or workshops in particular on topics possibly stimulating the integration across working groups".

However, she tells Carbon Brief:

"The less positive outcome is a lack of innovation for the AR7, which I see as a transition cycle, and where I think it is critical to prepare a different approach for the AR8 in order to keep IPCC policy relevant and motivating for scientists."

This timeline (see section below) means that, even with only one special report, the AR7 cycle "might be much more challenging" than AR6, says Prof Joeri Rogelj, professor of climate science and policy at Imperial College London and IPCC AR6 author. He tells Carbon Brief that "this looks like a daunting cycle", adding:

"Given the sequence of working group reports and the time needed to finalise, review and approve reports, this puts enormous time pressure on WG1 and WG2."

HOW MANY SPECIAL REPORTS WILL AR7 HAVE?

The decision to limit the production of new special reports is in line with the reported preferences of IPCC chair Jim Skea, who previously promised that he would strongly resist pressure to produce more reports, saying they dragged on the IPCC's core work and resources.

"I'll say something very strongly – over my dead body will we see lots and lots of special reports," Skea said shortly after he was elected.

At its 43rd session in April 2016, the IPCC decided to include a special report on climate change and cities in the AR7 cycle. A "cities and climate change science conference" was held in Edmonton, Canada, in March 2018 to "inspire the next frontier of research focused on the science of cities and climate change".

The comments submitted by member countries suggest that "nearly all countries supported the idea of additional products in the seventh assessment cycle, such as special reports, technical papers or methodology reports", the IPCC says. It adds that countries suggested a total of 28 different topics, with special reports on tipping points, adaptation, and loss and damage receiving the most support.

However, some countries had expressed concern that the three special reports included in AR6 involved a "substantial amount of work". Some suggested that only two special reports should be produced in AR7 – including the report on cities – to "avoid overburdening the authors".

At last week's meeting in Istanbul, delegates decided to stick with just the already agreed special report on climate change and cities.

Despite the focus on tipping points before the meeting, the view that emerged during discussions in Turkey was that "if there were to be a second special report it has to have a sufficiently comprehensive character that it would be useful for the second global stocktake", Skea explains to Carbon Brief.

Several governments mentioned that a second special report "should provide guidance or evidence on climate action", says Skea, "which a tipping points report would not" because it would be focusing on "yet another reason for acting urgently, whereas a lot of governments were looking for guidance on how to take urgent action".

Similarly, while there was "a big push for adaptation from some governments as the subject of the second special report" at the meeting, says Skea, "a lot of the arguments were 'well, that's WG2's job anyway to produce an impacts, adaptation and vulnerability report' – hence, it would be a duplicative effort".

Overall, the deliberations in Turkey "went much more towards the accelerated working group reports rather than the second special report option", Skea says.

However, this logic has not been universally welcomed. Prof Lisa Schipper – a professor of development geography at the University of Bonn and AR6 coordinating lead author – tells Carbon Brief that "the fact that none of the additional special reports was agreed is not good".

She notes that special reports can "take a lot of time and energy away" from the IPCC's Technical Support Units and authors. However, she adds:

"A series of special reports instead of a series of working group reports before 2029 would have allowed for this science to be more regularly assessed, and for countries to have continuous input for decision-making. When the assessment is put off to 2029, this also means that governments' attention is delayed until then."

Dr Céline Guivarch is a professor at Ecole des Ponts ParisTech and was a lead author on AR6. She tells Carbon Brief that the decision on special reports "was probably to be expected". However, she adds:

"It is a very concerning sign because special reports are important to give faster assessments and to cover topics in more integrated ways than the WG1, WG2 and WG3 'siloes'."

WHAT OTHER REPORTS WILL AR7 INCLUDE?

As well as working group reports and special reports, there are a range of other products that the IPCC can produce.

At the 49th session in May 2019, it was decided that the IPCC Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) should produce a methodology report on short-lived climate forcers. Short-lived climate forcers, such as methane and black carbon, are gases and particulates that cause global warming, but typically only stay in the atmosphere for less than two decades.

Ahead of last week's meeting in Turkey, around half of IPCC member countries had indicated that they want an "additional product" from the TFI. By far the most sought-after product was on carbon dioxide removal and carbon capture and storage. The meeting saw the addition of a second methodology report on "carbon dioxide removal technologies, carbon capture utilisation and storage".

In addition to the methodology reports, AR7 will also include a revision of the IPCC's technical guidelines on impacts and adaptation, published in 1994, as well as adaptation indicators, metrics and guidelines. This will be "developed in conjunction with the WG2 report and published as a separate product".

The ENB notes that the revision was proposed by India and supported by Saudi Arabia. It adds that Kenya, South Africa, Azerbaijan, Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay "acknowledged this as a good compromise, given the lack of consensus for a special report" on adaptation.

Dr Chandni Singh, senior researcher at the School of Environment and Sustainability at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements and IPCC AR6 author, says this is "very welcome". She tells Carbon Brief:

"There is a bewildering range of frameworks being suggested and applied to track and monitor adaptation progress, and the policy salience is pressing, with discussions for the global goal on adaptation ongoing."

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR PRODUCING THESE REPORTS?

The delegates also used the meeting to begin discussing the timeline for the upcoming AR7 cycle. In a press release, Skea stressed the importance of "getting policy-relevant, timely and actionable scientific information as soon as possible and providing input to the 2028 second global stocktake".

However, a full timeline for the AR7 cycle was not agreed at the meeting in Turkey. The dates for the working group reports will be developed by the IPCC bureau and presented at the next meeting in late July or early August for a decision.

The ENB reports that while most countries "broadly agreed on the need to ensure that a balanced set of scientific inputs, covering both mitigation and adaptation, would be available in time for the second global stocktake in 2028, a few countries strenuously objected". It adds:

"Until late on the final day of the session, governments' positions were converging towards having the three working group assessment reports completed by 2028, or at least 'striving' to have them completed. Still, the small number of delegates who opposed this timeline held fast."

One person present at the meeting tells Carbon Brief that "most of the resistance about the 2028 timeline came from Saudi Arabia, China and India". This "seems politically motivated given the political position of these countries regarding climate mitigation", they add.

The ENB reports that Saudi Arabia "opposed the shorter timeline, saying this would lead to compromised working groups reports both in content and inclusivity". It also reports that China "emphasised that AR7 aims to be inclusive and developing country scientists should be given time to make their contributions", adding:

"Noting the heavy burden on government officials from developing countries in AR6, China cautioned against doing work in AR7 'in a hurry' and emphasised 'that completing the WG reports in 2028 is impossible'."

India "flagged their preference for a longer timeline, urging the chair to not predetermine 2028 as end point for AR7", the ENB says.

Delegates did agree on a timeline for some of the reports, the ENB notes:

- The special report on climate change and cities will be published in "early 2027".
- The methodology report on short-lived climate forcers will be published "by 2027".
- The TFI will hold an expert meeting on carbon dioxide removal technologies, carbon capture utilisation and storage, and provide a methodology report on these "by the end of 2027".

(Some of the IPCC documents published ahead of the meeting report that author selections for the special report on cities are already underway. More than 1,200 experts were nominated and the IPCC bureau is currently working to pare down the list to around 100 people. The list is expected to be finalised by the end of January, when the chosen experts will be invited to an initial scoping meeting, which will be held in April in Riga, Latvia.)

In addition, the IPCC says that the synthesis report – the final product of the AR7 cycle – will be "released by late 2029".

If governments do agree that all working group reports are ready in time for the second global stocktake, the timeline for the WG1 report, in particular, will be "very time-constrained", says Rogelj, as it would need to "conclude around late 2027". He explains:

"Otherwise, there will be insufficient time available for the two other working group reports to go through final review and approval in time for the global stocktake. For the research and climate modelling community, this also means a literature cut-off earlier in 2027 leaving very little time for new coupled climate model runs."

However, Prof Roberto Sánchez-Rodríguez, a professor in the department of urban and environmental studies at the College of the Northern Border in Mexico and IPCC vice chair for WG2 during AR6, says that even this timetable "fails to recognise the severity of the climate crisis and the pace of change in socioeconomic and geopolitical conditions in the world". He tells Carbon Brief:

"Waiting until 2028 for the three reports and 2029 for the synthesis is too late to have an impact on decision-making. The world will be significantly different by then."

Schipper says that getting the reports out before 2030 is important, as 2030 is a "mental tipping point for many". She adds:

"The IPCC special report on 1.5°C said that we needed to be well on our way with action to stay below 1.5 by 2030 – and, clearly, we are not."

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(Source: https://www.eco-business.com/news/ipcc-governments-split-on-accelerated-climate-reports-for-next-un-global-stocktake/)

The UN Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, set the goal of limiting temperature increases to "well below" 2°C (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times while "pursuing efforts" for a tougher ceiling of 1.5°C. *Image: Sam valadi, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*

DO YOU BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER OIL?

The Middle East sees no sunset for fossil fuel use with renewable energy unable to match the profits earned from oil and gas.

It's the multi-billion dollar question and the stakes for the world could not be higher: Will oil and gas interests at the COP28 climate talks silence calls for the phase-out or phase-down of increasingly profitable fossil fuels?

It's a perennial Turkeys-voting-for-Christmas question when it comes to COP - but this time it has added relevance, and not just because the talks are happening in the oil-producing United Arab Emirates and led by Sultan al-Jaber, head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). Jaber is also the founding CEO of the UAE's renewable energy firm Masdar.

Yet despite growth in the use of renewables worldwide, including solar and wind power - accounting for 7.5 per cent of global energy consumption, excluding hydropower, in 2022, according to the UK-based Energy Institute - oil profits are soaring since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Analysts say this is discouraging oil and gas companies from investing in renewable energy - vital to cutting the greenhouse gas emissions fuelling global warming - and pushing them to channel their money into developing more fossil fuel extraction capabilities.

"In relative terms, if you compare the profit you can generate from renewable assets to that (of profit from oil), they look worse than before, but they haven't really changed," said Nils Bartsch, head of oil and gas research at Urgewald, a Berlin-based environment and human rights organisation.

Profits from the sale of fossil fuels are also making some companies "weaken" their climate strategies, Bartsch said in a phone interview with Context.

In February, energy giant BP scaled back plans to reduce oil and gas output by 2030, reducing its target to 25 per cent from 40 per cent from 2019 levels.

ADNOC, meanwhile, plans to boost oil production capacity to 5 million barrels per day (bpd) by 2027 from its current 4 million bpd as part of a US$150-billion investment plan, said a report released by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and climate researchers this month. With profits soaring, analysts say there is little incentive to cut oil production. Fossil fuel firms around the world are all "betting" on "producing the last barrel of oil", said Bartsch.

This includes the Gulf too and has serious implications for efforts to curb potentially catastrophic climate change, activists say.

Earlier this month, Urgewald released a report looking at whether a company's activities are in line with the International Energy Agency's (IEA) roadmap to net zero emissions by 2050.

It found that ADNOC had missed its targets by the highest margin of any company in the world - and said its plans are out of kilter with the global goal to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times.

"While ADNOC's CEO Sultan al-Jaber is in the driver's seat of this year's climate summit, his company is on a clear collision course with the 1.5°C goal," the report said.

On the opening day of COP28 on Thursday, Jaber said his team at the negotiations was "laser-focused on keeping 1.5 within reach" and delivering the "maximum" ambition in response to a UN assessment of global progress that found efforts lagging far behind what is needed to meet that target.

'Conflict of interest'

The need for action is clear. This year is set to be the warmest year since records began in 1940, according to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service.

The UN Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, set the goal of limiting temperature increases to "well below" 2°C (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times while "pursuing efforts" for a tougher ceiling of 1.5°C.

To achieve that goal, greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by 43 per cent from 2019 levels by 2030, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This would require countries to ramp up their plans to phase out the extraction and use of fossil fuels - coal, oil and natural gas.

At the COP26 talks in Glasgow, world governments agreed to phase out "inefficient" fossil fuel subsidies to help fight global warming. Since then, however, global fossil fuel subsidies have risen by US$2 trillion to US$7 trillion, according to the International Monetary Fund.

> **In relative terms, if you compare the profit you can generate from renewable assets to that (of profit from oil), they look worse than before, but they haven't really changed.**
>
> **–NILS BARTSCH**
> Head of Oil and Gas Research, Urgewald

Many environmentalists have expressed concern about whether any further progress can be achieved at COP28 and have raised doubts about Jaber's suitability as president of the talks.

"There's a conflict of interest if we have an oil and gas executive that is COP president," said Bartsch. "I fear that when it comes to upstream oil and gas specifically ... not much will happen," he added, referring to the expansion of fossil fuel production. "This is what's really putting our climate efforts in danger."

Jaber has previously said that a phase-down of fossil fuels is inevitable and essential, but as part of a comprehensive, thought-out energy transition plan that considers the circumstances of each country.

"One size fits all will not work so we need to be flexible and agile," he told Reuters in October.

Phase down fossil fuels, ramp up renewables

In the lead up to COP28, many activists and environmentalists unsuccessfully called on Jaber to resign his post at ADNOC.

His dual role "is emblematic of the problem," said Rachel Kyte, former adviser to the UN secretary-general on climate and now co-chair of the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative, during a webinar on COP28 earlier this month. The challenge, she explained, is the simultaneous need to gradually wind down fossil fuel use and ramp up investments in emerging economies and green infrastructure and energy.

Gulf countries argue they have a competitive advantage that puts them in the best position to continue meeting demand as it declines. "They can do it cheaply, they can do it effectively, they believe," she said.

She cited the example of Saudi Arabia's giant state-owned oil company Aramco, which invests most of its profits back into green energy.

"The Saudi Arabian theory of change is we will be green at home and then we will export our last very efficiently-produced barrel of oil," Kyte said.

She called on the UAE to bring together oil- and gas-producing governments and companies - both from the Gulf and the West - at COP28 to commit to be "at least part of the solution" and produce credible plans to cut their emissions to net zero.

"It is high time that they stop sitting on their hands and complaining and asking for the rules to be different for them... and start producing those plans," she said.

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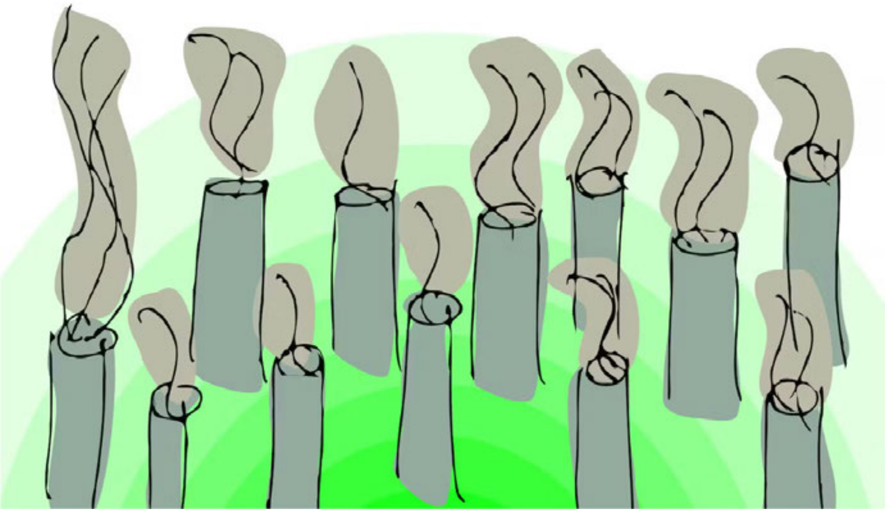
(Source: https://www.eco-business.com/news/do-you-believe-in-life-after-oil/)

THE SUSTAINABILITY BUZZWORDS OF 2023

Your cheatsheet to a list of clichés and overused jargon by the sustainability sector this year, along with some new and revived phrases that made us stop and think, explains **Liang Lei**



Corporate green commitments are increasing alongside global greenhouse gas emissions. *Image: Rawpixel.*

Was there ramped-up ambition this year, or were firms mostly making empty vows about how sustainability is in their DNA? It is hard to tell with the green-bashing, bleaching and hushing in the business world, which could do with a little more corporate vulnerability and less competence greenwashing. The industry also grappled with climate quitting, biodiversity credits and Scope 4 accounting. Meanwhile, deinfluencing is trending, while deadnaming was punished in court. Hope you are keeping solastalgia at bay amid the global boiling and polycrisis.

Good job, if you managed to read that paragraph in a single breath. How many sustainability catchphrases did you pick out? Eco-Business unpacks the terms we hear recurrently in a turbulent year that strained markets and societies.

Ambition

It is certainly not a new buzzword, but the term was used endlessly by officials at the recent COP28 climate summit, especially when they were talking about action to phase out fossil fuels. Simon Stiell, who heads climate change work at the United Nations, called the conference an "ambition exercise" before it started. A few days in, he said there were "low, middle, and high ambition options" on many issues. As talks entered crunch time, he urged policymakers to strive for the "highest ambition" outcomes, a call echoed by summit president Sultan Al Jaber of the United Arab Emirates.

In the end, as countries agreed to "transition away" from fossil fuels, Stiell said the agreement is a floor, not a ceiling, and that the world "must ramp up ambition". Zhao Yingmin, a Chinese official, said climate action needs to feature "both ambition and pragmatism". Anusha Mata, analyst at UK-based think-tank E3G, said the final text "does not fully live up to ardent calls for higher ambition", especially from climate vulnerable countries.

Transition (and 'Transition-washing')

Beyond COP28's fossil "transition" compromise, this year also saw big names join efforts to transition Asia away from coal. US$150 trillion climate finance group GFANZ joined the Monetary Authority of Singapore to craft policies on the early closure of coal plants. Singapore, along with private sector partners and the Asian Development Bank, also announced a plan to use "transition" carbon credits for retiring coal plants in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, Indonesia and Vietnam released plans on how they will use a combined US$35.5 billion of "Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP)" investments from wealthy countries and GFANZ to shift towards clean energy.

The transition movement follows from a wave of coal divestitures in past years, which sceptics say just puts pollutive assets in the hands of shadier private financiers.

Some observers, meanwhile, warn of risks in mismanaged transitions, in living costs and loss of livelihoods for local communities.

Vietnam's Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) plan is taking place while climate activists are getting arrested, they point out. Meanwhile, fossil fuel businesses may not move as fast without the threat of divestment, and financiers themselves could exploit loopholes that regulators are starting to call "transition-washing".

Corporate vulnerability

An antidote to sustainability clichés, perhaps? Public relations experts are now calling for more humility in how brands talk about their sustainability journey. Showing "corporate vulnerability" by being honest about mistakes and sharing reflections are untested opportunities in avoiding reputational risks and building trust and camaraderie, they say.

Earlier this year, Stephan Loerke, chief executive of the World Federation of Advertisers, called on colleagues to be "open about your challenges" in sustainability publicity. "Monitoring and publishing data that shows how you are progressing on the journey is critical to credibility", he said.

A report by brand manager Vero for sustainability communication in Southeast Asia also exhorted the merits of "candour to the point of vulnerability", through constantly checking against common greenwashing mistakes, such as a lack of evidence, being vague and omitting negatives.

"Too much of corporate communication focuses on crafting an idealised image that disguises the imperfect realities of doing business in the modern world. We hope to push back against that tendency, at least in this realm where lack of transparency poses a quite literal threat to the world we all share," it said.

Competence greenwashing

First emerging in 2020 and fully in the spotlight this year, the term refers to jobseekers and corporates embellishing sustainability credentials to get a better job or land lucrative green business contracts.

The rise of this new variant of greenwashing coincides with market demand for sustainability professionals exceeding supply. It has been flagged as an issue for Singapore as the city-state tries to position itself as Asia's sustainable finance hub. In the wider job market, there could also be a push towards generalist sustainability roles, which could be overshadowing the need for technical specialists in areas such as biodiversity.

Competence greenwashing could erode trust and cause sustainability initiatives to underdeliver.

"The industry-wide lack of material environment, social and governance (ESG) expertise and granular knowledge around the complexity of sustainability issues, especially in the 'E' category, should be a red flag in terms of the scientific robustness of any ESG review," wrote Prof Kim Schumacher, who coined the term.

Green-bashing, bleaching, hushing

Greenwashing has been around long enough to spawn countercultures. Just this month, a report by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) wrote that "in addition to greenwashing, other malpractices such as green-hushing and green-bleaching are becoming prominent".

Green-bleaching refers to when financiers underplay the sustainability credentials of their funds to avoid regulatory scrutiny, while greenhushing is when companies keep mum on their sustainability initiatives lest watchdogs find loopholes in them. IOSCO said some regulators globally think such practices constitute unclear communications.

In another sign of how prevalent the practices are, late last year, consultancy South Pole found that a quarter of 1,200 firms surveyed are keeping quiet on their science-based net-zero emissions targets.

The phenomena could be a response to green-bashing, where vigilantes call out and sometimes organise boycotts against firms for sustainability wrongdoings.

Carbon markets would particularly feel they are victims of green-bashing, starting with UK newspaper Guardian's indictment of credit certifier Verra, and the string of investigations into questionable carbon projects that followed. South Pole itself landed in hot water over its massive Zimbabwe forest project alleged to have been mismanaged and sold too many credits.

Observers have conceded there are black sheep but said many good projects also exist. The carbon market is still in a slump as buyers remain wary of reputation risks.

'Sustainability is in our DNA' (and similar)

We covered this in one of our top-read opinion pieces this year. Corporates are lining up to make such proclamations in their brand communications and sustainability reports, perhaps reflecting a "safety in sameness" as consumers increasingly demand for green buys, according to one observer.

Whether these proclamations are genuine will require a deep-dive into what businesses are actually doing in support of their statements. But the ubiquity of claims such as "sustainability is at the heart of everything we do" or "sustainability is in our core" is undeniable: each of these terms return tens to hundreds of thousands of results in Google searches.

Global boiling

United Nations secretary general Antonio Guterres is known for impassioned quips when speaking about climate change, and his line for 2023 is particularly fiery. "The era of global warming has ended. The era of global boiling has arrived," Guterres said, as scientists announced that July this year is the hottest month on record.

Scientists also recently confirmed that 2023 is the hottest year on record, with January to November being on average 1.46°C warmer than pre-industrial times. Researchers have previously said 1.5°C is a safety limit for temperature rise, against more severe extreme weather events.

United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres addressing world leaders at the COP28 climate conference. *Image: Flickr/ UNclimatechange.*

Scope 4

As if Scope 3 isn't complex enough for carbon accountants to grapple with, a new category of emissions is now making its rounds, and gaining big-name supporters such as Japan's tech giant Panasonic and America's Pacific Gas & Electric Company.

Scope 4 essentially refers to emissions avoided through the use of products and services that are energy efficient. For instance, a gas power plant may make the argument that its use can help to avoid even more emissions had a more pollutive coal plant be built in its absence.

Sounds familiar? While such a concept is nascent in carbon accounting, it is already mainstream in carbon offsetting. Forest managers use avoided emissions to calculate the benefits of keeping trees standing in areas of high deforestation risk (and in the process attracting the ire of critics).

So observers are similarly at loggerheads with the new Scope 4 concept. Some say it reflects the true value companies bring to decarbonisation, while others claim the idea moot because it does not deal with real greenhouse gases being emitted.

As a reminder: Scope 1 refers to emissions from a company's own operations, Scope 2 from the company's electricity used, and Scope 3 from the company's supply chain and customers.

Biodiversity credits

Last year, plastic credits got its moment in the sun amid talks to curb plastic waste globally. This year, the limelight has turned to biodiversity credits, as countries globally commit to protecting 30 per cent of the world's nature without quite figuring out how to fund the effort.

The World Economic Forum believes corporate funding of conservation work, to "offset" losses from construction projects elsewhere, could reach US$2 billion in 2030 and US$69 billion by 2050.

In many ways, both the promises and risks of commodifying biodiversity protection are evident from what has been happening in the carbon market. A well-functioning business model creates a sustainable flow of money to cash-strapped conservationists. But without watertight rules, cowboy developers will game the system and sideline vulnerable local communities. It is also scientifically hard to determine if biodiversity loss in one area can truly be exchanged one-for-one with protection in another.

Solastalgia

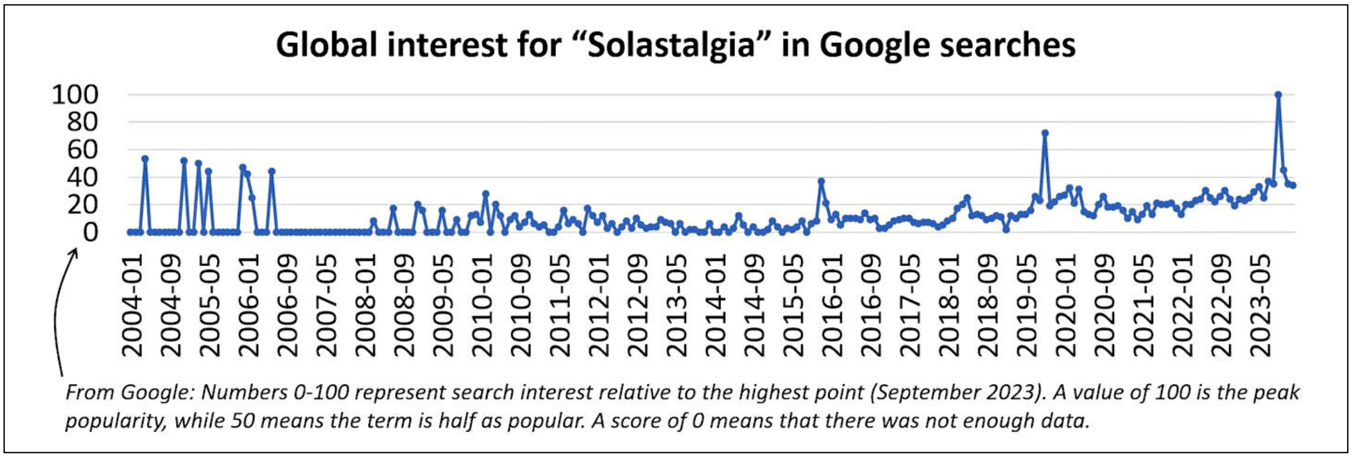
Ever feel down thinking about the state of the environment today? Now you can place a name to that apprehension. Solastalgia could be triggered by extreme climate events – wildfires, storms, droughts – or the realisation that the creep of global warming has made one's environment unrecognisable. It falls under the more general eco-anxiety phenomenon, which also counts emotions such as guilt and frustration.

The term had been coined back in 2005 by an Australian researcher, Professor Glenn Albrecht, but has gained prominence in recent years as climate change becomes more noticeable worldwide.

This psychologist suggests joining community environmental activities, practising eco-art therapy and using virtual reality to experience one's ideal surroundings as antidotes. Albrecht himself came up with another term, "soliphilia", where people feel love, responsibility and a desire to help heal nature around them.

Climate quitting

Amid grievance that their employers are not moving fast enough to address climate change, some workers are calling it quits and switching to "greener" jobs.



Source: Google; Image: Eco-Business

Researchrun by former Unilever chief executive Paul Polman this year found that over 40 per cent of 4,000 United States and United Kingdom workers would think of quitting if their employers' values did not align with theirs. Meanwhile, consultancy KPMG said a third of 18-24-year-old UK job-seekers have turned down offers from poor ESG performers.

Some link the trend to the larger conscious-quitting movement, where employees are said to be rethinking what matters in their careers after the pandemic, which killed many and exposed the fragility of contemporary capital systems.

"That might not be great news for companies that take a lax approach to articulating ESG principles. But there is also an opportunity for these businesses, since an organisation's climate policies can also positively affect employee retention," KPMG said of the climate quitting trend.

Deadnaming

Employer alert: addressing people by their birth names before they changed gender identity could land you in hot soup, as the transport department of a UK borough found out this year. The office was made to pay an employee over US$31,500 in a civil suit for repeatedly using her outdated name – deadname – for at least two years.

Awareness about deadnaming increased earlier this year as several states in the US considered legislation that could compel schools to deadname trans students or report them to their parents.

Progress elsewhere is mixed. Messaging platform Discord said this month it could ban users if they misgendered and deadnamed others. Meanwhile, Twitter (now X), which enacted similar policies in 2018, rolled them back in April. Advocates say deadnaming inflicts trauma on victims and invalidates their identity.

Deinfluencing

Do you rely on influencers to help you pick your next shirt or shoe purchase? You may soon come across personalities helping you narrow your choices instead – sometimes on sustainability grounds.

A growing caucus of online gurus are here to tell you that overconsumption and fast fashion is out of vogue. Here's someone telling you not to overhaul your wardrobe for no good reason. Another account counsels against Apple's Airpods, or Dyson's premium hair stylers.

The tag #deinfluencing on Tiktok was viewed 100 million times at the start of the year. The figure has since grown to 1.1 billion. Some deinfluencers are also calling out big brands for overcharging on their products, while recommending budget face creams and hair gels that work just as well – useful guides amid the economic headwinds.

Polycrisis

The World Economic Forum warned at the start of the year that we are in the middle of a "polycrisis" – the pandemic's long tail is still tripping Asian economies, the war in Ukraine seems to have no end, the cost of living is sky-high, all while the climate continues to heat up dangerously. Italian climate think-tank CMCC Foundation opined that we need to be prepared for a polycris "era".

Now, add Israel's war in Gaza to the list of troubles to deal with, before everyone can focus again on addressing global warming.

The world has in the past faced many problems at the same time. The term polycrisis was used as early as the 1970s, when the United States was defeated in the Vietnam war, and experts were first warning about the limits to growth.

We have, on balance, managed to get through those episodes. Many people emerged better off. Do we now have what it takes to tide through another rough wave? Pray tell, 2024.

(Source: https://www.eco-business.com/news/the-sustainability-buzzwords-of-2023/)

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