

The 3rd International SDG Conference 25th to 27th February 2024, Chitrakoot, INDIA



**A discussion on LiFE Society to
Accelerate the Achievement of the SDGs and
SDGs II & IV.**

**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**



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CONCEPT NOTE FOR THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL SDG CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT CHITRAKOOT FROM 25-27TH FEBRUARY 2024.

Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), founded by Bharat Ratna Rashtrarishi Nanaji Deshmukh in 1968, is an independent “think-and-do tank” devoted to rural upliftment and empowerment of all!

Given that nearly two-thirds of carbon emission today occurs at the household level, the imperative of LiFE cannot be overemphasized. Since the Hon Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi’s speech at the COP 20 on the 1st of November, 2021 in Glasgow where he introduced the idea of LiFE – Lifestyles for Environment, and called upon the global community of individuals and institutions to drive LiFE as an international mass movement towards “mindful and deliberate utilisation, instead of mindless and destructive consumption” to protect and preserve the environment, there has been a major conversation around the concept, at both the individual level as well as the national and international arenas. He added that LiFE puts individual and collective duty on everyone to live a life that is in tune with Earth and does not harm it.

During India’s G-20 presidency, there was a large, concerted effort to ensure that LiFE took centre stage in the discussions of the C-20. The Varanasi Development Ministerial Meeting on 12 June 2023, produced a document “G20 High Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development” that articulated the Lifestyles for Sustainable Development Approach that called for an embodiment of the spirit of One Earth. One Family. One Future.

1. Respectful, responsible conservation, sustainable use and regeneration of natural resources is at the heart of environmentally conscious lifestyles as well as consumer choices – One Earth.
2. Requires collective and coherent actions, collaboration and coordination amongst stakeholders at all levels, including individuals, communities, academia, media, civil society, government, international organisations, private sector, and industry to combat land degradation and desertification, halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, reduce environmental pollution, and achieve global net zero greenhouse gas emissions by or around mid-century, through low GHG emissions/low-carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable development pathways, taking into account different national circumstances, and capacities – One Family.
3. Integrated approach for achieving our shared goals on development, environment and climate¹ with human beings at the centre of our actions, leaving no one behind – One Future.

The last official G20 program of the India Presidency was a ‘Global Summit on LiFE Economy: From Principles to Action’ conducted by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) at the Vigyan Bhavan in Delhi from the 26th to 28th November 2023, where delegates tried to address the elephants In the room, and looked to initiate a paradigm shift in the thinking of Global economies, its objectives and measurement systems.

This is easier said than done and will not happen by itself. People need to be aware of concepts like LIFE, circularity and sustainability – and then practice these in everyday life. Global fora will take time to absorb and trickle down messages and money for everyday practice by people. We now need to build dialogue on large scale public action that is unfettered by the constraints of government and intergovernmental bodies.

Deendayal Research Institute with its MOU partners at the World SDG Forum, whose ‘Chitrakoot Declaration’, adopted at its 2nd International SDG Conference in Chitrakoot, called for ‘India and the global South, to initiate efforts for a new and inclusive world economic order, which will hasten the process of fulfilling SDGs in a cooperative economic architecture’.

In May 2023, a hybrid WSF webinar was hosted by DRI along with RIS. It flagged precisely this aspect for the realization of LIFE. The objective was also to share the Indian tradition within which concepts like LIFE, circularity and sustainability have been practiced in everyday life.

The major points from the keynote remarks, Q&A and the online interventions were as follows:

- The concept and practice of LiFE have been rooted in indigenous traditions across civilisations, but eroded and marginalised by the provenance of capitalism and industrial society. The current crisis – banking crisis, climate change, inequality and conflict ongoing simultaneously – offers an opportunity to re-cast everyday behaviour and find again the spiritual and moral basis for action. The New Washington Consensus is an example of this quest.

- The philosophy of Integral Humanism enunciated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay and put into practice by Nanaji Deshmukh at Chitrakoot, provides both an example of and a foundation for LiFE – working with very poor, tribal people and communities in most remote regions of India, to build a society based on cooperation and integration of each human being, where each is responsible for the welfare of all others, where the distinction between self and society is obliterated and life is based upon interdependence and complementarity.

The Chitrakoot Declaration is a brave yet practical commitment to bring together SDG practitioners and interventions from across the globe under the aegis of the World SDG Forum (WSF). The G20 presidency of India and the troika (Indonesia, India and Brazil) is an important platform to highlight the urgency of accelerating progress towards SDGs not only till 2030 but also beyond.

- The resurgence of the Global South is evident and India is today among the leaders of world based both on its demographic size as also track record in economic growth and poverty reduction. The WSF must seize the opportunity offered by this fortunate conjuncture and showcase its promise with more effective outreach of the concept and knowledge network. National and international consultations can help achieve this as also international and UN partnerships. to join WSF and indeed build up Chitrakoot as the Davos of SDGs.

The 3rd International SDG Conference to be held at Chitrakoot on 25-27 February 2023, will explore the idea of a LiFE Society that would place the concept of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ with sustainability and equity as its pillars. The conversation around LiFE has thus far focused on economic models. Given that individuals and households do not choose their lifestyles, the transition to a 1.5 degree economy needs a shift towards a LiFE Society, where food, wellbeing and lifelong learning come together to build a social contract around which new and more sustainable ways of managing growth and fighting climate change can be built.

Accordingly, the Third International SDG Conference will focus on specific SDGs, within the overall context of building a LiFE Society, in continuation of its mission to bring SDG practitioners front and center in the discussions on the accelerating progress towards SDGs, as also partnerships to sustain beyond 2030.

The Conference will commence and conclude with specific plenary recommendations and action plans for a LiFE Society in pursuit of SDGs. These plenaries will book-end parallel sessions on SDGs 2 (End Hunger, Achieve Food Security, Improve Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture) and SDG 4 (Ensure Quality and Inclusive Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning). The conference will bring together global experts, national advisors, state and district administration, civil society, as well as the actual beneficiaries on the single platform of the World SDG Forum.

***Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niraamayaah |
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyant, Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet |
Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||***

***May All be Happy, May All be Free from Illness.
May All See what is Auspicious, May no one Suffer.
Om Peace, Peace, Peace.***

LiFE Society for Sustainable Development Goals Brief & Tentative Schedules

Day 1: Inaugural 4.00 -6.00 pm – Theme: LiFE Society for Sustainable Development Goals.

Day 2: SDG 2 & 4.

Day 3: Valedictory and Generic Closing and Outcomes.

SDG 2 – What We Grow. How We Grow. What We Eat.

Hunger takes many forms. In its most basic definition it is a lack of food that causes a deterioration of the body and its functions as it is malnourished. Hunger, however, is more than an empty stomach. The most affected by hunger are children. Despite all the so-called progress of civilisation, according to the UN data, 2 billion people in the world do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. In 2022, an estimated 45 million children under the age of 5 suffered from wasting, 148 million had stunted growth and 37 million were overweight. It estimates that more than 600 million people worldwide will be facing hunger in 2030. Hidden hunger causes Anemia. In India, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS 5) conducted in 2019-21, 58.5% of all women in the age group 15-49 are anemic, as opposed to 27.4% of men. Cultural norms as well as poor nutritional choices are as much to blame as the lack of food, especially in urban India. Without a global strategy and global co-operation to ensure equitable access to basic food grain and non-grain food (including water, forest foods and uncultivated foods) and the utilisation of sustainable agricultural practices to avoid soil degradation, the goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 appears impossible. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - treating the world as one family - is the only possible pathway, as no family allows its members to starve.

2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round. [What We Eat].

2.2 By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons. [What We Eat].

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment. [How We Grow].

2.4 By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality. [How We Grow].

2.5 By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed. [What We Grow].

2.A Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries. (What We Grow).

2.B Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round. (What We Grow).

2.C Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility (How We Grow).

SDG 4 What We Learn. How We Learn. Where We Learn.

“Raising school enrolment, like economic development in general, takes a long time. This is partly because, as a mountain of empirical evidence now shows, economic conditions and slowly-changing parental education levels determine children’s school enrolment to a greater degree than education policy interventions. A succession of international meetings has nevertheless adopted a litany of utopian international goals for universal school enrolment and gender parity in education based on the idea that a correct education policy backed by sufficient cash could achieve the goals in short order. The latest of these, the Millennium Development Goals, call for universal primary schooling and full gender parity by 2015. This work quantifies how long it has taken countries rich and poor to make the transition towards high enrolments and gender parity. There are three central lessons. First, there is a remarkable uniformity of experience in the rates of enrolment increment, a reality from which the various rounds of goals appear entirely detached. Second, many countries that have not raised enrolments fast enough to meet the goals have in fact raised enrolments extraordinarily rapidly by historical standards and deserve celebration rather than condemnation. The very few poor countries that have raised enrolment figures at the rates envisioned by the goals have done so in many cases by accepting dramatic declines in schooling quality, failing large numbers of students, or other practices that cast doubt on the sustainability or exportability of their techniques. Third, aid-supported education policies can help within limits, and their performance should be judged in the context of country-specific, historically-grounded goals. But a country’s broader development strategy outside the classroom matters much more than education policy.”

India’s New Education Policy recognises the continuum between school education, higher education and technical, medical and vocational education. Government has accordingly reformed the Human Resource Development ministry into the Education Ministry, with distinct but interlinked verticals. It has introduced new avenues for expanding access to higher education, with approvals for Indian public universities to open campuses abroad for technical education, enabling regulations for high ranked foreign universities to set up campuses and a major thrust on Edutech, to reach the unreached by leveraging India’s massive IT footprint. The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been ameliorated through technology-enabled learning and capacity building to leverage new advances including AI for ensuring that the education sector take into account the revolution under way in the digital space. Catering to the SDG 4 credo re lifelong learning, the capacity building of government functionaries to deliver local services has been a key area for action.

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes. (Where we Learn).

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. (Where we Learn).

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. (Where we Learn).

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. (What we Learn).

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. (How We Learn).

4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy. (What we Learn).

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development. (What we Learn).

4.A Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. (Where we Learn).

4.B By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries. (What We Learn).

4.C By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states. (How We Learn).

The Chitrakoot Declaration

Preamble,

The Government of India launched the “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” initiative to commemorate 75 years of Independence and its achievements, growth, and leadership across sectors over the last seven decades. This celebration of ‘India @75’ has coincided with India taking over the G20 presidency - one of the powerful international forums where 20 member countries discuss, deliberate and resolve the pressing issues of the time, prioritizing global economic and developmental parameters. During its tenure as G20 president, India aims to project the agenda of equitable and inclusive development along with a shared future highlighting the principle of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” (One Earth, One Family, One Future).

While the G20 had earlier predominantly been a forum for discussion on economic and financial concerns as witnessed during the 2008–09 global financial crisis, it has expanded its domain over the years. One such key area of expansion has been the linking of its efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals like Global Health and Wellbeing for All (SDG3). The resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25th September 2015 emphasises that ‘the interlinkages and integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals are of crucial importance in ensuring that the purpose of the new Agenda is realised. If we realize our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda, the lives of all will be profoundly improved and our world will be transformed for the better.’

The concept of “sustainable development” is a vital amalgamation of three interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars: economic development, social development, and environmental protection. The existing inequality in the capacity and capability to fund, manage and monitor the actions are major hindrances. Thus, a combination of collective and individual action through transformative policies by both developed and developing countries, is essential. While promoting strong, sustainable and balanced growth as key agenda of the G20, its efforts in achieving SDGs could act as a benchmark to steer the world order towards a positive direction.

The idea of “Integral Humanism”, based on Bharat’s world view and propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, was translated into action by Rashtrarishi Nanaji Deshmukh, with Chitrakoot as its epicentre.

The first international seminar on experience sharing process of SDGs was held at Chitrakoot on 15th-17th April 2022. One of the outcomes of that successful conference was the decision to make it an annual feature with a view to stocktaking of the progress in movement towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

This second International SDG Conference held on 26th–27th February 2023, at Deendayal Parisar, Chitrakoot unanimously adopts the following “Chitrakoot Declaration”:

- Having realised the need to learn from experience and experiments on realising the SDGs, this conference endorses the decision to hold such an international gathering every year till 2030. A suitable decision can be taken thereafter on continuation of the conference series.
- Having given the civil society sufficient space in determining the SDGs, it is now necessary to provide a framework for the involvement of the civil society in the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs.
- Realising the inadequacy of the present global economic binaries in the progression towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative for India and the global South, to initiate efforts for a new and inclusive world economic order, which will hasten the process of fulfilling SDGs in a cooperative economic architecture.
- Recalling the experiences and experiments of institutions such as the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), especially at Chitrakoot, it will be relevant to delve on a new narrative laying emphasis on family as the fulcrum of solutions in the spirit of ‘Local to Global’ — Gramoday to Sarvoday (village to the universe); from grassroots to global. Thus, the World SDG Forum (WSF) will eventually transform into a global forum for all, with every stakeholder as a partner, participant and beneficiary.



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