

“Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) and SDGs - India’s role in its Acceptance and Propagation” Webinar Outcomes held at the G. Parthasarathi Conference Hall, RIS, New Delhi on the 27th May, 2023.

DRI, RIS, the C20 LiFE Working Group and Yojak partnered to design and host a hybrid mode Seminar on LiFE and SDGs on 27 May 2023 entitled, “Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) and SDGs - India’s role in its Acceptance and Propagation”. The topic was chosen based on the Prime Minister’s call at Glasgow COP to focus on Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) as a major pathway for tackling climate change and ensuring progress towards SDGs. India’s G20 Presidency spotlights LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), with its associated, environmentally sustainable and responsible choices, both at the level of individual lifestyles as well as national development, leading to globally transformative actions resulting in a cleaner, greener and bluer future.

The idea behind LiFE is to evolve an international mass movement towards “mindful and deliberate utilisation, instead of mindless and destructive consumption” to protect and preserve the environment. Given that nearly two-thirds of carbon emission today occurs at the household level, the imperative of LiFE cannot be over-emphasised. India has emerged as the largest country and is slated to become the third largest economy in a few years. Despite, India’s significant development needs, India is championing sustainable lifestyles as a global movement as the only way to survive climate change.

The objective of this session, therefore, was to share the Indian traditions within which concepts like LiFE, circularity and sustainability have been practiced in everyday life. The precepts enunciated in the Chitrakoot Declaration and the launch of the World SDG Forum (WSF) were also shared.

The seminar – the first in a series for the WSF – aimed to trigger online and offline conversations among like-minded people who thus far might be working in diverse silos and geographies. This would not only strengthen the conviction but would give enormous opportunities of peer learning and advocacy.

The keynote speakers at the seminar included think-tank leaders who reflected on Indian ethos of sustainability and its current salience, social scientists working on the relationship between *Ekatma Manav Darshan* (Integral Humanism), G20 and SDGs, distinguished diplomats with experience in multilateralism and India’s legacy and leadership; and SDG literati and practitioners.

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 raging simultaneously – offers an opportunity to re-cast everyday behaviour and rediscover the spiritual and moral drivers of human action.

- The philosophy of Integral Humanism enunciated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya and put into practice by Rashtrarishi Nanaji Deshmukh provides both an example of and a foundation for LiFE – working with very poor, tribal people and communities in most remote regions of India. It is imperative to go beyond discussions on GDP and economic growth to focus on sustainable human development approaches that build the capabilities of people with regard to their social integration. Any appraisal for human progress should have parameters to cover loss of biodiversity and loss of other species and plants. The Chitrakoot model is absolutely clear as to how human beings, nature and biodiversity may all be brought together and can be reconciled in the development model.
- The Chitrakoot Model of rural upliftment has been sustained and validated as a best practice. The task ahead is replicate and upscale - to share the practice and the processes with a very wide audience and expand the open-source knowledge platform www.sdginterventions.org
- The Chitrakoot Declaration is a brave and 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 and showcase its promise, with more effective outreach of the concept and knowledge network. National and international consultations can help achieve this, at prominent international forums including at the UN. Upcoming events such as the SDG Summit and Summit of the Future can be leveraged for this. Global network and visibility will propel ever greater number of interventions to join WSF and indeed promote Chitrakoot as the Davos of SDGs.

The seminar affirmed the relevance of the WSF and provided the following pointers for the way forward:

- Leverage the global perception change regarding India, reflected very well in India's G20 Presidency, to drive the global conversation on SDGs and beyond.
- We must evolve WSF as a global collective to accelerate the achievement of SDGs which can happen only when interventions happen on the ground and not confined to expert level dialogues.
- Expand the set of interlocutors for the WSF seminars with greater representation and participation of international partners such as the UN, World Bank and other multilateral organisations.
- Sustain outreach to embassies, permanent missions and diaspora to bring in more and more SDG interventions and practitioners from across the globe.
- Maintain the momentum with regular seminars and webinars focusing on accelerating SDGs, leading up to the Third International Conference on SDGs.

- Partner with more organisations – national and international – working on SDG solutions and capacity building.

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