

Note on Webinar “Climate Change – What Individuals Can Do.”

The containment of the increase in global temperatures to below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2030 is at the heart of the SDGs. It is well understood that this is not only a matter of climate science and technology but a fundamental change in lifestyle for individuals, households, communities, economies, and nations – while ending the development deficit in terms of poverty, hunger & malnutrition, ill-health, illiteracy, gender discrimination, basic services and an entire gamut of growth and equity issues and governance challenges.

The 5 Ps – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships – encapsulate both the challenges before us and the resolution of these challenges.

Sustainability is at the heart of it all. The concept and practices of sustainability are of course grounded in indigenous traditions and scriptures across the globe. Within the Indic civilizational sphere, the relationship between Prakriti and Purusha (Nature and Humanity) is one of mutual sustenance and beneficitation.

The World SDG Forum (WSF) is based on this very understanding and aims to build up a global alliance of SDG interventions (and interventionists), distinct from the exalted circle of policy gurus, experts, national and global agencies, etc. As a community of practitioners (www.sdginterventions.org), the WSF has its mandate and vision enshrined in the Chitrakoot Declaration, driven by successive International Conferences on SDGs, held at Chitrakoot in April 2022 and February 2023.

Under the aegis of the WSF, the webinar series is intended to build up the conversations on how to learn from practice and accelerate the achievement of SDGs.

Under the rubric of the SDGs, three goals focus specifically on environment and ecology – climate change (Goal 13), life under water (Goal 14) and life on land (Goal 15). These three goals are of course related to progress under the social development, and economic growth goals, the targets for climate change action, ocean conservation and protection of land ecosystems (water, forests and land) have a direct bearing on arresting climate change. These three goals are also the intersection between the Paris Treaty under the UNFCCC and the 2030 Agenda under the UNGA Resolution.

“Taking urgent action to combat climate change and its devastating impacts is therefore imperative to save lives and livelihood, and key to making the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals – the blueprint for a better future – a reality.”

Governments, experts and international agencies have indeed focused on the role of states, markets and global agreements to take up the gauntlet of climate change – its mitigation and adaptation to it as also resilience in its wake. However, comparatively less attention is given to the role of individuals in tackling climate change. India has taken up the credo of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) and the High Principles for LiFE under the G20 consultations have indeed amplified the imperative for a new mode of lifestyles. The SDG Action Agenda taken

up under the G20 dialogue have also stressed the importance of grassroots SDG interventions grounded in the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Under the WSF webinar series, our objective is to bring practitioners into the conversation as to what we as individuals and organisations can do to achieve SDGs – bringing the micro or local perspective to bear on macro or global topics.

It is therefore timely and moot to focus on the role of individuals to arrest the spiral of climate change – to reduce the carbon footprint, clean up the oceans and stop the degradation of land, water bodies and forests.

The keynote speakers at the webinar would include practitioners of volunteer-based beach cleanup, forest restoration and private sector partnership to remove ocean plastics and practice leaders from UN and international agencies. We expect also to hear from grassroots interventions from rural India and an interactive discussion regarding what works and how to obtain a way forward for replication and upscaling.