

Actionable Messages

Message 1: NbS by itself cannot address climate change. NbS must be implemented in synergy with the emissions reduction through change in technology and changing consumption patterns of SDGs.

Message 2: The best solutions are those that work simultaneously against the major global environmental crisis as well as against the problems in the everyday lives of citizens.

Message 3: All the NbS projects require a long gestation period to mature and deliver results. That is why, long-term partnerships and collaborations with the international community, local regional communities, civil societies, and the government are required.

Message 4: Nature-based solutions only reverse the biodiversity loss and mitigate climate change when livelihood needs of the people are met.

Message 5: Nature is integral to our societal values and cultural practices. So, nature should not be seen as a commodity, it should be respected and protected.

Message 6: In the context of disaster management, the focus should be on making ecosystems more resilient in terms of sustaining and mitigating the shock of climate change impacts.

Narrative

The thematic track session titled, “Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Development” was conducted as part of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) – the annual flagship initiative of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The aim of the session was to synergistically address climate change, biodiversity loss and other societal challenges, and how NbS can be one of the cost-effective localized options for mitigation as well as adaptation to tackle impacts of climate change and minimize biodiversity loss. The event discussed efforts to mainstream NbS to achieve the sustainable development goals and highlighted the pivotal role nature plays in socio-economic, environmental, and sustainable development.

The session started with the keynote address by **Mr. Subhash Chandra, Additional Director General, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India**, who highlighted the different schemes which have been announced by the government to accelerate the conservation efforts namely, Green Credit Scheme, Mission MISHTY, and Amrit Sarovar. He also mentioned that India is among the few countries which not only committed theoretically, but it is also practising the balance of development and conservation. Mr. Chandra also highlighted that over the years, India has diverted 11.38 ha forest land and so far, has been successful to regenerate 10.29 ha of forest land, emphasizing that wherever the forest is diverted, our country is quick to compensate the biodiversity loss.

Following the keynote address, **Ms. Ilka Hirt, Deputy Director General, International Policy, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany** delivered a special address. She initiated the discussion by describing how the nature-based solutions lie at the intersection of many overlapping challenges, such as loss of nature and climate change risks. She emphasized that how summits such as the WSDS give an opportunity to ensure a renewed political momentum for the global implementation of the 2030 agenda to accelerate transformation towards a climate-friendly, nature-positive, and sustainable development. She further highlighted the role of NbS, how it can contribute to the achievement of various SDGs proving its importance to both the planet as well as the people. She mentioned that India and Germany have the same opinion on NbS, this includes focusing on the role of nature to simultaneously advance action on climate and biodiversity.

Following Ms. Ilka Hirt’s address, **Dr. Yogesh Gokhale, Senior Fellow, TERI**, proceeded with a brief presentation on nature-based solutions for sustainable development, where he explained how NbS is not necessarily new knowledge, but it is a reinvention of existing solutions and traditional ecological knowledge with a climate perspective. Most of the NbS definitions and works discussed during the session were on this premise and why there is a need to adopt these solutions because of their cost efficacy and decentralized nature. He mentioned that for forestry and biodiversity issues, there could be solutions, such as agroforestry, sustainable forest management which would also cover a number of issues, such as sacred conservation practices, land and water conservation activities. He further explained the need for waste-to-compost technology to tackle pollution, and in the context of disaster management, the focus must be on making ecosystems more resilient in terms of sustaining and mitigating the shock of climate change impacts.

The next speaker on the panel was **Dr. Vinod Mathur, Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority**. He highlighted the shift from ‘concept to practice’ of the NbS, challenges being faced, and the need for innovative solutions to push the NbS agenda. He emphasized that NbS can help achieve the objectives of several conventions. He talked about the OECMs (other effective area-based conservation measures), and mentioned that India became the only country in the world which developed its classification of OECMs. He also shared glimpses to understand the potential of OECMs. In his plea, he said, there is a need to protect wildlife and redefine the meaning of conservation. Boundaries must be expanded and corporates and communities should be included in the climate discourse. That is how the conservation

movement will gain momentum. He pointed out that people don't understand what OECMs are and have difficulties in understanding NbS too. People must realize, there is a value in conserving nature, only then we will move ahead. In his concluding remarks, he said, there is still a need to bring greater clarity and rigour in both the concept and practice of NbS.

Mr. Shailesh Tembhurnikar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Maharashtra Forest Department, talked about the benefits of nature-based solutions like livelihood issues of the locals, improving the quality of air and water, and reducing the adverse impact of climate change through mitigation adaptation strategies, and suggested that it can provide 37% of the mitigation needed until 2030 to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement. He also pointed out the limitations of NbS, as it cannot by itself address climate change. NbS should be implemented in synergy with the emissions reduction through change in technology and consumption patterns. He suggested that there is a need to quantify and measure the assessment of impacts of the NbS through mathematical modelling. He concluded by stating that the NbS projects require a long gestation period to mature and deliver results. That is why the long-term partnership collaborations with the international community, local regional communities, civil societies, government, and finances are required.

The next speaker on the panel was **Dr. J V Sharma, Programme Director, Water Waste and Natural Resources, TERI**. He stated that Nbs can reverse the biodiversity loss and mitigate climate change only when livelihood needs of people are met. He further added, India has a strong policy and regulatory regime to implement NbS. For achieving the targets, the National Forest Policy, 1980 mandated to have ecological security of the nation as a prime objective with the involvement of the forest-dependent communities, including tribals with the support of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Environment Protection Act, Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Biological Diversity Act. These acts provide a regulatory regime for biodiversity conservation and ensure access to benefit-sharing to the people who are involved in the conservation of biodiversity. He emphasized that all legislations should provide space for people's participation and implementation should be done in the right spirit. He also mentioned that the national-level financing is not sufficient to mitigate and adapt climate change; for this, developed countries must come forward. For e.g., the US has supported forest plus 1 and forest plus 2, whose objective was to produce project documents for achieving financial resources through carbon finance from REDD+ but both 1 & 2 failed and most of the finance went to capacity building and other aspects.

The last speaker was **Ms. Mechthild Caspers, Head of Division on Climate Policy in the Land Sector, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, German**. She mentioned that we need to review our regulatory framework to make all the measures work so that these are not counter-acted by other regulations which are in place at the moment. She added that we need to have a robust MRV and cooperation not only within our national system but also at the international level.

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“	<p>In our view, this World Sustainable Development Summit is the prime opportunity to give a renewed political momentum, pushing for the global implementation of the 2030 agenda to accelerate transformation towards climate-friendly, nature-positive, and sustainable development. Instead of working in <i>silos</i>, we need to find integrated and holistic answers. The best solutions are those that work simultaneously against the major global and environmental crisis as well as the problems of everyday lives of citizens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ms. Ilka Hirt Deputy Director General, International Policy, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany</p>
“	<p>India is among the few countries which actually practises a balance of development and conservation. Over the years, India has diverted 11.38 lakh ha of forest land, and so far, we have been successful in regenerating 10.29 ha of forest land. Wherever forest is diverted, we are quick to compensate the loss of biodiversity. We don't see nature as a commodity. We respect and work with nature. So, nature-based solution is not new to India.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mr. Subhash Chandra Additional Director General, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GoI</p>
“	<p>We cannot extend our national parks and sanctuaries. We need to find innovative solutions to meet our determined contributions. India is the only country which has developed its classification of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Vinod B. Mathur Vice-chair, IPBES Bureau and Former Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority of India</p>
“	<p>Quantification, measurement, and assessment of the impacts of NbS must be carried out to calculate the potential of mitigation. We want to have long-term partnerships and collaborations with international as well as local regional communities, civil societies, and the government.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mr. Shailesh Tembhurnikar Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Maharashtra Forest Department</p>
“	<p>We are conserving biodiversity but the other part of the Biodiversity Act (2002) is whether we are providing the access to benefit-sharing to the communities, who are involved in the conservation of biodiversity. It has been almost 20 years and we have failed to pass on the benefits to the people who are engaged in the conservation of biodiversity. The Government of India and the state government must look into this too.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. J V Sharma Programme Director, Water Waste and Natural Resources, TERI</p>
“	<p>We need a review of one regulatory framework to make all the measures that can work and are not counter-acted by other regulations. We need to transform the way that we use land at the moment, and find new ways that are compatible with our climate and biodiversity goals, and this we can only do if we have strong partnerships with landowners and land managers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ms. Mechthild Caspers Head of Division on Climate Policy in the Land Sector, Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Germany</p>