



## India – Post 2015: A Country in Transition

*To Choose Our Future*

### Global Green...Growing Impetus

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) come to an end in 2015, we are still far from realising the objectives set out in this global declaration. The world today faces an **enormous challenge** of lifting more than a billion people out of extreme poverty while maintaining the impact of development on our planetary boundary within acceptable limits. Current patterns and siloed treatment of socio-economic development are evidently leading us to a world that is socially unequal, ecologically fragile and economically more vulnerable than ever before. A *business-as-usual* or an incremental approach to improving development outcomes is insufficient in today's increasingly complex and interconnected world. This has prompted a transition towards a **new green economy**. An economy that promotes well-being for people and the planet while ensuring development and growth is sustainable, inclusive and resilient. The transformation is spreading and gathering pace across the globe, sparking new global collaborations, multi-stakeholder alliances, and new avenues for finance etc.

### Indian Path to Green Development...Green Enough?

The scenario of Indian development has mosaic summary. We have made huge progress in terms of living standards, health conditions, and access to knowledge, and connectivity etc. However, these leaps need to be juxtaposed with the dichotomies we face today with respect to nature, economy and society. Despite a high growth rate averaging around 8-9 percent per annum, 77 percent of India live on less than INR 20 a day (Arjun Sengupta Committee on the Unorganised Sector) which amounts to a poor population which is almost 2.5 times what the entire population was at the time of independence. Rapid growth of the economy has required a major expansion of infrastructure and resource extraction, which has had detrimental ecological and social impacts.

The best way to deal with any problem is perhaps bit by bit. A dinosaur problem in that way becomes of the size of an ant. In order to create the necessary transformations as a nation, India may have to focus attention to those which create positive multiplier effects. Efforts directed to those areas with huge potential for livelihood creation, multi-dimensional poverty alleviation, enhancing resilience, bringing in resource efficiencies, and economic growth need to be placed on a greater priority than others in achieving **well-being for people and the planet**.

To construct an alternative greener development pathway, India needs to cut to the heart of ongoing dialogue and advocate examples of proven practices in sustainable development. Such a *practice-to-policy connect* helps in the multiplication and scaling out of replicable solutions by creating an enabling environment. This helps in generating a policy influence to respond urgently to the current social and environmental crises in India.



## TARAGram Yatra... Inspiring Sustainability

TARAGram Yatra (TGY) is an annual event in India led by the Development Alternatives Group in partnership with international thinking – learning organisations, designed to deliberate on germane issues of development with the mission of inspiring sustainability in policy and practice. The Yatra – a *journey or pilgrimage for knowledge or learning to attain higher goals* – brings together top-level practitioners and policy makers from across the world. Such an approach offers the potential to identify and build upon the *spaces of hope* for transformation. Development policy – at its highest levels – is to be genuinely *locally driven*.

### Objectives

The UN Global process for a post 2015 sustainable development agenda offers us an opportunity to change the current siloed to an integrated approach taking into consideration the three dimensions (economic, social, environmental and governance) of sustainability. Through the Yatra, we hope to advance a more compelling, practical and solution-oriented vision of **well-being for people and the planet** — one that binds together and gives balanced weight to economic prosperity, equitable opportunity, a healthy and productive environment and participatory governance. With a **mix of dialogue and field visits**, scheduled to take place from **13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> of October**, the Yatra “**India – Post 2015: A Country in Transition – To Choose Our Future**” will identify *what can we do more, different and/or better* such that India transforms to a greener, more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy.

India, a country with huge regional variations can be divided into two large sub divisions — **rural and urban**. The problems and possible solutions of various issues in these regions are highly centric to their congeniality in the region. The two areas thus, need certain specific area oriented ways which can be integrated together for transition to a sustainable future.

### The deliberations will be undertaken with a view to:

- **Synergise** the pillars of sustainable development through a practice to policy connect
- **Engage** with people on ground to understand the local realities and locate key areas requiring action
- **Reveal** practical evidence-based solutions that can be replicated in other parts of the country
- **Ideate** on how to realise a sustainable future, merging it with global vision of sustainable development
- **Collaborative** learning to stir national dialogue and international discourse

### **Resilient Rural Livelihoods – Orchha & Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**

Failure of development initiatives to fully address the problem of persistent poverty in rural areas is leading to conflicts and social strife with long-term ecological consequences. These already daunting challenges are now being accentuated by new vulnerabilities and threats created by climate change and growing scarcity of resources. **Bio-diversity** and **Climate Change**, apart from their independent value considering the moral obligation to preserve all life forms and climate, are also knitted extensively in the livelihoods of communities in rural India. As the urban world becomes more crowded, rural areas need to be made more resilient to efficiently and sustainably manage their services such as provision of food and other environmental services with a view to promote natural resource management and bio-diversity conservation.

### **Sustainable and Smart Cities – Delhi & Thiruvananthapuram**

Rapid urbanisation in the country offers us new opportunities to steer the ongoing transformation towards greater sustainability as it is not just about cities growing in size, but also about new ways to manage our resources and landscapes. The increase in the demand for basic services by 5 to 7 fold in every city is an unprecedented managerial and policy challenge as per the Indian Planning Commission. **Urban water services** and provision of **green affordable housing** emerge as the integral components of any viable strategy to achieve sustainable development in India. It is not only the *knowledge of the urban transition* that is important but also *knowledge how to manage* this transition that is essential.

TARAGram Yatra is platform for multi-stakeholder, multi-perspective dialogue, organised with a belief in action based research to address the complex challenges of sustainable development. The diverse mix of interests and expertise is designed to encourage generation of new ideas and innovative solutions, and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience. We envision, device, disseminate, and devote ourselves to a pattern truly sustainable in the local boundaries and further expand its scope and benefits globally.

BACKGROUND



**Day 1 and 2: Field Visits**

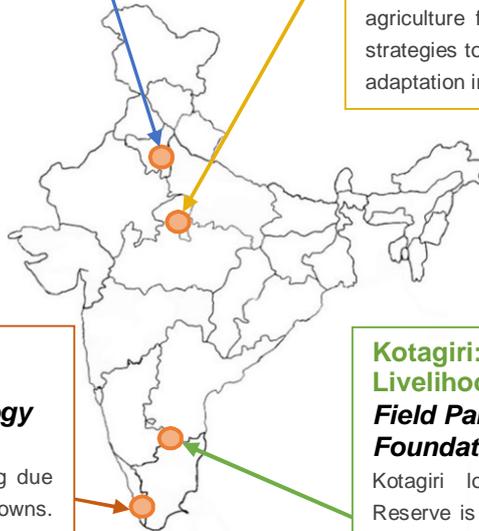
- ❖ Focus group discussions with stakeholders
- ❖ Examine potential transformative pathways
- ❖ Build network for bringing the green transformation

**Delhi: Urban Water Services**  
**Field Partner: Development Alternatives**

This Yatra will capture and address its most pressing urban sustainability priorities - building community and social resilience capacity for water services.

**Orchha: Climate Resilient Development**  
**Field Partner: Development Alternatives**

Bundelkhand, one of the most economically backward and drought prone regions, has nearly 80% of the population dependent on agriculture for income. The Yatra will explore strategies to mainstream climate resilience and adaptation in development planning.



**Thiruvananthapuram: Green Affordable Housing**  
**Field Partner: Habitat Technology Group**

Thiruvananthapuram is rapidly urbanising due to a reclassification of villages in census towns. The formation of this unique rural-urban continuum demands the creation of sustainable and affordable housing which will be explored through the Yatra.

**Kotagiri: Biodiversity Based Livelihoods**  
**Field Partner: Keystone Foundation**

Kotagiri located in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve is rich in bio-diversity and indigenous communities mostly forest dwellers and hunter gatherers. This Yatra explores the interdependencies between natural systems and people addressing the challenges of conservation and livelihoods.

BACKGROUND

**Day 3 and 4:**

**Reconvene at Delhi, Development Alternatives for Roundtable Discussion and Plenary**

- ❖ Experience sharing at round table discussion on
  - Urban water services
  - Biodiversity based livelihoods
- Climate resilient development
- Green affordable housing
- ❖ Movie screening & curated exhibitions
- ❖ Plenary discussion on *Transitions To Choose Our Future*

