

India – Post 2015: A Country in Transition

“To Choose Our Future”

The nearing end of the Millennium Development Goals, impending long overdue global climate commitments and the realisation of only few more decades left of ‘power over nature’ have provided an impetus to all nations to relook at their development and growth strategies. The process for a global post 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda initiated by 192 nation states in 2012 at Rio de Janeiro and the outcome document “The Future We Want” has catalysed thinking across nations, groups and individuals towards a more equitable, greener and inclusive society. Nations are reassessing their roles, opportunities and stakes involved while formulating and committing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the next two decades. At the same time, governments and citizen groups - have boosted the momentum towards designing a new development agenda.

Traditionally, the dichotomies of economic growth versus resource conservation debates and civil society-government-business stand-offs on the one hand, and decision making in narrow sectoral and departmental siloes on the other; has influenced development policy and action. These divisions have prevented comprehensive and systemic development strategies from being rolled out. Given the many dots that need to be connected in this cyclic process, this is best handled as a systems problem. It is no longer only about the trade-offs but about making the inter-connections and generating value manifold. Development action that is designed cross-sectorally brings different stakeholders together, identifies economic growth and job creation priorities and ensures that opportunities and indeed resultant benefits are distributed across ALL.

The **TARAGram Yatra** (TGY) provides an annual platform that brings together practitioners and policy makers to discuss issues of sustainability and identify *what can we do more, different and/or better* such that India transforms to a greener, more sustainable, resilient and inclusive economy.

This year, **TARAGram Yatra 2014 explores four different initiatives**. These initiatives emphasise cross sectoral solutions of market creation, livelihood securities, resource efficiencies, capacity creation and systems design for improving the quality of services and products for human well-being, greater value creation to society and indeed better environmental response. The **round-table discussions** following the field exposure shall delve deeper into the above perspectives; they will locate contradictions in policy and implementation frameworks, capacity gaps and strategies that drive change.

The **Plenary** shall draw upon these discussions to help develop an integrated idea of sustainable development for India post 2015. While issues of sustainable development are vast in nature and scope, we identify here certain key questions that need to be answered for designing India’s transition to a sustainable future:

- *What principles must guide policy making such that we build sustainable production systems; and how do we direct lifestyle patterns towards reduced ‘wants’ and zero wastes?*
- *How can we ‘plan for change’ taking into consideration rampant urbanisation, growing aspirations, changing climate and limited resources?*
- *What investments are required such that we bring our natural capital to a degree of stability, what will be the trade-offs and what sort of synergies should guide the prioritization?*
- *What scales of decentralisation are needed in infrastructure management, services delivery and production and governance systems such that these are efficient, accessible, affordable and kind to nature?*
- *How do we direct investments such that there are more job creating engines providing green and decent work?*
- *How do we enhance stakeholder engagement in social development as well as in business?*
- *What are some the most critical indicators of human and planetary well-being that need to be incorporated in the measure of our economic progress?*

The Plenary is directed by the idea of sustainable development not as an altruism but as that of enlightened self-interest and ‘whether industrialised or not, we all have but one life boat- planet earth’.

We assemble here from areas of academics, policy makers, field practitioners, business and industrial groups, civil society groups and enthusiastic citizens to shoulder the responsibility of development and take it towards our collective vision of a sustainable future.