

Date : 3 November, 2010
Workshop 5 : Business and CSR in a Green Economy
Coordinators: Dr. Gopichandran and Praveen Prakash
Moderators : Alide and Cristina Moreno
Rapporteurs : N . Ramjee , Shekar K

Session 4 : Time 11:45 to 13:30



Ms. Allide welcomed the gathering and requested the participants to work towards arriving at recommendations for the EC and how we could go forward. Also, some thoughts on the vision for the future should be explored upon.

Prof. Marie Harder. Head Waste and Energy Research Group, University of Brighton shared her experiences in their research in developing indicators to help quantify or measure the values and Ethics in businesses.

She started the presentation with the presumption that they believe that the way in which we see, understand and value ourselves and the world around us is essential to creating a sustainable, just and responsible society. She submitted to the group that her project has been created to help us, as civil society organisations, businesses and faith communities, to explore and share what people value through the use of values-based indicators.

She presented to the group that theirs is an effort to quantify how an organisation or a company empowers a community, establishes a trusting work environment, or improves social and economic justice, all basic and essential factors of CSR activities. She questioned if sustainability is a central

focus for an organisation or business, what role do values play and regardless of a business, organisation or project's goals or outcomes, how might values contribute to the success of these outcomes?

She shared the feedbacks they have received from some of the civil society organisations (CSOs), faith-based organisations and businesses on the importance of their values-based work. That, which has usually been as a non-measurable intangible asset until now, are being quantified.

She presented some of the methods they put to use to achieve the same and also shared that their work needs to be pursued further to arrive at an universal tool, although at this moment it is individual and localised.

This was followed by a presentation from **Mr. Mahesh Pandya** of the organisation named, Paryavaran Mitra, Ahmedabad. He began his presentation by quoting texts from the Indian National Pledge to show how values have always been deep rooted in India. He also presented the use of "Reservation Policy" as a sign of caring for the downtrodden and weaker sections of the society.

He then shared some of the social customs and practices reflecting the responsibilities of businesses for welfare activities for poor and also for other life forms, like the cattle.

He questioned the fundamental principles of CSR, for whom and what. He stated that from his experiences he believed that CSR is a way of appeasing exploited or victimized people. He complained that there is an absolute lack of transparency about CSR and questioned if it is ethical CSR at all?

He brought to the attention of the group that companies practice CSR only for the sole reason that it is mandatory and prescribed by the rules of the land.

He shared his observations on the Clean Development Mechanisms and that in almost all CDM projects, prior CDM projects surrounding community had been victims of pollution from that project especially due to pollution effects. So after CDM projects implementation, surrounding community should get some amount from CDM revenue for their welfare.

He brought to the attention of the group that Mr. Surya P Sethi, Principal Advisor (Energy) Planning Commission, in May 2006 at Climate Change Dialogue, made a statement and quoted, "Reducing the poverty ratio by 5 % points by 2007 and by 15 % points by 2012, CDM will help in achieving this goal". However until this year of 2010 nothing of this has been realised and there is nothing wrong in the community questioning the sincerity in these efforts.

He also made the statement that several of the Public hearings are advertised in English Language newspapers, which are seldom read by the community at large.

Then Ms. Allide invited the youth in the group to share their views on the last three days of deliberations. A Student from the School of Planning opined that in their planning exercises it is never taught to bear in mind the importance of ensuring livelihood for the poor, while planning or designing a plan for any developmental programmes, which is essential for sustainability.

Another student voiced the importance of laying out guidelines to be followed in practicing CSR activities...

The group got together to summarize their discussions as follows:

1. Business is "Social license to operate"

2. Codes for Corporate Social Accountability & How to report on inclusive growth
3. Converge principles of policy & financing with respect to a road map.
4. Alternative energy as a WOOP
5. Neutral forum for scientific assessments and reporting guidance
6. Framework for Desert – side port
7. Common charter for industries in an area
8. Integrate litigation and response in MIS on a Green industry template
9. Parameters on “What satisfies a community?”
10. Indicators of HID initiatives
11. Information on investments
12. Don’t hide the problem – Sharing is caring
13. Link Development Index with other economic parameters
14. Develop a business case for desired behaviour
15. Training & Capacity building of industry is critical

The group came up with the following recommendations:

- Use the Earth Charter as an inspirational document when reviewing the vision, mission and strategic objectives of business, incorporating its principles into the organization’s values;
- True CSR, includes transparency, accountability, no corruption.
- Business should create capacities: build human capital based on knowledge sustainable development in all direction.
- The Annual Sustainable Report must show hard data including parameters about a better salary distribution.
- Dialogue among stakeholders lined on the four principles of the Earth Charter.

Dr. Gopi and Ms Allide and Ms Christina thanked the group for their contribution in the last three days of deliberations.