

Creating a sustainable society for our betterment

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Last Updated: 01st September 2017 10:11 PM | A+ A A- |



Sustainability, India and China are words that have seen the door swing both ways. President Trump's rants about India and China being "unsustainable" and reason to renege on the Paris Protocol are too well known. Here is the flip side: by aligning with THE UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the private sectors in India and China could alone unlock \$3.2 trillion in development opportunities and create hundreds of millions of jobs.

The Business & Sustainable Development Commission (BSDC) convened by the World Economic Forum concluded in its recent report that adoption of sustainability mandates by private players will spur achievement of SDG. The 17 goals of SDG aim to

primarily reduce poverty, protect environment and improve living standards globally by 2030. The report is really a roadmap for business leaders to see the benefits from adopting SDG, and reveals to them the biggest opportunities over the next 13 years.

The document reasons why Global Goals set out by the UN matters most for Asia; and concludes that emerging futures are for those engaged in building Cities. It predicts huge upsides for new enterprises in Energy & Materials, in Food & Agriculture and in Health & Well-Being. The market for "green" business ventures is expected to be \$12 trillion which will create 380 million new jobs worldwide. Further, 40% of these additional jobs are supposed to be in Asia with India & China hogging nearly 66% of the revenues! It forecasts China to account for almost half and India a sixth of the economic rewards of sustainable development.

Sector-wise, the maximum potentials are projected in areas related to Energy and City Development. Affordable housing for the developing world is expected to be the most rewarding market opportunity with a valuation of \$505 billion. Renewable energy is probably the second largest followed by businesses engaged in reduction of food waste in supply chains, and trailed by automotive industries adopting best circular practices. Undoubtedly the future belongs to those who "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle"!

Other major trends are the emergence of electric vehicles and novel solutions for urban mobility such as car sharing and pooling, which will substantially improve air quality surrounding beleaguered cities. Buildings have a huge responsibility for providing a sustainable future through adoption of better lighting solutions, energy efficient appliances and advanced heating and cooling technologies.

Agriculture and food production will have to address the surging demands and aspirations of exploding global populations while crop yields decline due to climate change. This sector which consumes most of global water and other vital resources is unfortunately expected to receive the least funding for innovation.

To achieve a new sustainable economy by 2030, businesses, governments and people will have to come together.

Governments need to create environments with legal frameworks that steers private sector away from corruption. India has the firepower to contribute to this massive projected growth and provide millions with prosperity in the business of holistic sustainability or "reciprocity". As an urban designer I sense this trend by the spate of recent interest shown by developers for affordable housing as against luxurious townships. The future is yours for the taking. Let's embrace SDG now, for the sake of India and the world!

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