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THE FUTURE OF FORESTS HOW TO BALANCE DEVELOPMENT WITH CONSERVATION?

Despite efforts to protect them, tropical forests are dwindling at a near-record rate at a time when humanity needs them more than ever in the fight against climate change.

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Audit of CSR work needed



Rajesh Tiwari Publisher rt@iccsr.org

AROUND RS 14,000-15,000 CRORE IS SPENT BY THE COMPANIES ON SOCIAL WELFARE PROJECTS UNDER CSR PROGRAMME EVERY YEAR. he projects undertaken by India Inc under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law are likely to face audit as part of the proposed end-use monitoring of the earmarked funds.

It is one of the encouraging developments - that would be like a major report cards of sorts.

Around Rs 14,000-15,000 crore is spent by the companies on social welfare projects under CSR programme every year.

It may be recalled, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has sent fresh notices to over 5,000 companies that have failed to spend 2% of their profits on social welfare activities under the mandatory CSR policy.

The current e-form for CSR compliance will be replaced with a new one to capture more details about the projects. The committee may also modify the term 'local area.' As per the current provisions, a company should spend the CSR funds preferably in the local area of its operation.

The India's CSR reporting survey 2017 by KPMG hile backward districts did not get the desired attention in the year 2016-17, there are interesting trends that are emerging in India's CSR discourse which especially focus on the backward regions of the country. There is growing interest amongst governments to use CSR as a medium for forming partnerships with corporates, leveraging CSR resources to accelerate development, and reducing disparity in backward regions. State governments have started establishing mechanisms which can act as enablers to bring different stakeholders together in creation of a sizeable impact on the communities.

According to a PwC report, CSR in India has traditionally been seen as a philanthropic activity. And in keeping with the Indian tradition, it was an activity that was performed but not deliberated. As a result, there is limited documentation on specific activities related to this concept. However, what was clearly evident that much of this had a national character encapsulated within it, whether it was endowing institutions to actively participating in India's freedom movement, and embedded in the idea of trusteeship.

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CSRNEWS



Agromet Field Unit upgraded and installed in IIT Roorkee

n Agro-Met Field Unit (AMFU) has been installed at Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee under Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa Project which is part of 130 such units in the country. The Agromet Advisory Services (AAS) has been initiated by Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

The mission of the AAS is to provide tailor-made management information to the farmers in real-time format. This is part of the flagship scheme of Niti Ayog which is named as "Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS)"

A new website (www.gkms.iitr.ac.in) has been developed which is launched on May 01, 2019. This new website will also provide online real-time weather information to the stakeholders

including farmers. The developed website will include links from relevant AMFUs and institutions as well as IMD Pune to provide more comprehensive information about the weather conditions in and around Roorkee.

IIT Roorkee AMFU is providing information to the farmers of three districts which are Dehradun, Haridwar and



Pauri Garhwal. The IMD, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India has identified two IIT's namely IIT Roorkee and IIT Kharagpur for this purpose. These AMFUs provide district level Agromet Advisory Bulletins (AABs) for all the 640 districts of the country.

Out of these 130 AMFUs, 50 AFMUs are further assigned to provide block level information. IIT Roorkee is one of these 50 block level units. The Experimental Agrometeorological Advisory Services (EAAS) was initiated at IIT Roorkee on 31st May, 2005.

Expressing his happiness on this weather advisory project, Prof Ajit K Chaturvedi, Director, IIT Roorkee said "Agromet Advisory Services is a very useful program of IMD and we are delighted that IIT Roorkee is a part of it. It gives us an opportunity to serve the farmers in our region and also allows us to use the data obtained for research."

The activities of this center are daily surface Agrometeorological Data Observation in which they observethe daily rainfall, evaporation, sunshine hours, relative humidity, wind velocity and direction, air and soil temperature, dry and wet bulb temperature, dew quantity, and grass minimum temperature etc. and transmits this data to IMD, Pune online.

The medium range weather forecast for 5 days is received by AMFU Roorkee from Met Centre, Dehradun on every Tuesday and Friday. Agro Advisory Services are provided to the farmers on the basis of this forecast on every Tuesday and Friday.

Recently, the Agromet observatory has been upgraded with the installation of advance equipment at IIT Roorkee. The data received from AWS are being sent at 15 minute interval to IMD Pune through GPRS which is based on Global System for Mobile (GSM) service.



Everything You Need to Know about Coral Bleaching And How We Can Stop It

What is coral bleaching?

Coral bleaching happens when corals lose their vibrant colors and turn white. But there's a lot more to it than that. Coral are bright and colorful because of microscopic algae called zooxanthellae. The zooxanthellae live within the coral in a mutually beneficial relationship, each helping the other survive. But when the ocean environment changes—if it gets too hot, for instance—the coral stresses out and expels the algae. As the algae leaves, the coral fades until it looks like

it's been bleached. If the temperature stays high, the coral won't let the algae back, and the coral will die.

What triggers coral bleaching?

The leading cause of coral bleaching is climate change. A warming planet means a warming ocean, and a change in water temperature—as little as 2 degrees Fahrenheit—can cause coral to drive out algae. Coral may bleach for other reasons, like extremely low tides, pollution, or too much sunlight.

Why does coral bleaching matter?

Coral bleaching matters because once these corals die, reefs rarely come back. With few corals surviving, they struggle to reproduce, and entire reef ecosystems, on which people and wildlife depend, deteriorate.

Bleaching also matters because it's not an isolated phenomenon. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, between 2014 and 2017 around 75% of the world's tropical coral reefs experienced heat-stress severe

THE FUTURE OF FORESTS HOW TO BALANCE DEVELOPMENT WITH CONSERVATION?

Despite efforts to protect them, tropical forests are dwindling at a near-record rate at a time when humanity needs them more than ever in the fight against climate change. In this interview with Eco-Business, World Resources Institute's global forests director Rod Taylor argues that we need to rethink the balance between development and conservation.

Haze in the sky, and deforestation on the ground, depict the impacts of unsustainable agriculture on Indonesia's forests. The European Union, which relies on soy, palm oil, rubber, maize, coffee, and cocoa imports to fuel its commercial activities, has pledged to stop "deforestation imports" by 2020. Image: Aulia Erlangga/CIFOR, CC BY-NC 2.0



reserving and restoring the world's forests is arguably the most important thing humanity can do to keep the climate crisis

in check as global carbon emissions continue to rise. And yet, despite efforts to protect them, last year was a near record for deforestation in the tropics, home to the world's most powerful carbon sinks.

So what can we do to safeguard the future of forests while enabling development for the poorest people who live in and around them? Rod Taylor, global forests director for the World Resources Institute (WRI), a Washington-head-quartered environmental think tank, believes that, with smarter thinking and the help of technology, there is a future for the lungs of the planet.

Taylor joined WRI in 2016 from World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International, where he was forests director, to run WRI's flagship forest programmes, such as Global Forest Watch, a groundbreaking forest monitoring tool that provides governments and companies with near real-time satellite data on tree cover around the world.

Eco-Business caught up with the Australian at the 6th Singapore Dialogue on Sustainable World Resources (SDSWR) on 2 May to ask him which commodies are driving the most deforestation (spoiler: it might not be beef), if certification is working, and how hopeful he is for the future of one of the world's most valuable resources.

Does protecting forests mean development has to come to a halt in the tropics?

It's a question of balance. I have a lot of sympathy for the high forest cover argument [countries that are mostly forested should be able to convert some forests for development to alleviate high poverty rates], but more so in countries like Gabon, which is still 95 per cent forested and has solid policies in place to protect forests. But West Papua [which is home to a third of Indonesia's remaining rainforests] is part of Indonesia and I don't think the governance is in place

to prevent a domino effect—a foothold of development that spreads, and soon you've got another Sumatra or Kalimantan, with runaway deforestation.

There's is an argument for the high carbon stock approach (HCSA) tool, which was invented for countries like Indonesia, home to highly fragmented landscapes with patches of forest. HCSA has done a good job of putting circles around viable forest, and saying these forests are off limits if a company claims that it is deforestation-free. But how does that play out in Gabon or Guyana, where it's wall-to-wall forest?



Rod Taylor, global director, forests, World Resources Institute. *Image: WRI*

Are you saying that the whole country is off limits to agriculture? It's a different conversation.

I used to live in Papua New Guinea. It's an example of where there needs to be some flexibility. If you can get good rural development outcomes with a cap on deforestation, it can work.

How hopeful are you for tropical forests right now?

The rate of tropical forest loss was flat for a long time until 2015, when there was a dramatic spike in a year of intense fires [the haze of 2015, caused by slash-and-burn forestry in Indonesia, was the worst in Southeast Asia's recent history]. It has fallen since, but to a

higher level than before 2015. An area the size of Belgium was lost last year. While that is not as dramatic as 2015, it is significant and does not include what has been hacked out of dry woodlands in East Africa, as that doesn't show up as dense forest cover by the satellites.

Has progress been made at protecting forests?

After years of certification and traceability efforts by the forestry industry, it is harder for a company to go into a frontier region [such as Papua or Gabon] and start hacking away out of sight. NGOs are investigating which companies are linked to which, making it harder for companies with opaque corporate structures to hide from deforestation. Meanwhile, the drive for more consistent data sets has meant that we're slowly getting clarity on concession boundaries in Indonesia.

But business can only go so far.
There will always be markets that don't care. There may be squeaky clean supply chains going into Europe and the US, but what about the big domestic markets of Brazil, India or China?
That's the big question—will those big markets get more discerning?

Which commodity is driving the most deforestation? Palm oil has taken the most flak by the international media and NGOs. But the palm oil industry argues that it is a high yielding crop and other commodities such as soy and beef are more to blame.

The jury's out on palm oil. If palm oil companies want to access premium markets, there's a business risk in deforestation. But there's a question mark over the right model for small-holder palm farmers in Indonesia [who are often blamed for driving most of the deforestation]?

The European Union's renewable energy directive [which has banned palm oil imports for biofuel because of the crop's links to deforestation] is seen as a swipe against palm oil in this region [Malaysia's Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok called the EU's stance on



Is UAE leading the way for concentrated solar power in the Gulf?

Oil-rich United Arab Emirates has set a target to source up to 30 per cent of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030 and has become the only country to have the concentrated solar power technology in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

By Sania Aziz Rahman, Inter Press Service

Ariel India achieves a GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS® Certificate for The Largest Laundry Lesson; enables next-gen to #ShareTheLoad

Anil Kapoor leads by example as 400 sons take up household chores as part of the culmination of Ariel's Sons#ShareTheLoad



400 sons shared solidarity by participating in the largest laundry lesson hosted by Ariel for the Guinness world records

n a historic celebration of the culmination of their latest campaign Sons #ShareTheLoad, Ariel India attempted and achieved a Guinness World Records certificate by imparting the Largest laundry lesson to sons of today, so that they can grow up to be equal partners tomorrow. Joining the movement was leading Bollywood star, actor, husband and dad par

excellence - Anil Kapoor who lead by example and encouraged the participants. Ariel launched the 3rd edition of their #ShareTheLoad movement earlier this year, urging the current generation to raise their sons like they have been raising their daughters, so that the next generation can lead more equal lives. Supporting that thought, celeb mom Mandira Bedi joined the Largest laun-

dry lesson to impart the required skills to young men and pledged to raise her son with the values to #ShareTheLoad. For the record, 400 sons came forward to show solidarity towards the cause by learning how to do laundry, because with Ariel laundry is the simplest chore to start sharing the load with.

Ariel has been unearthing the reality of inequality within house-



elaying the implementation of climate policies could cost the world's top companies US\$1.2 trillion over the next 15 years, according to a report on how global warming could impact investor portfolios globally.

In Asia, extreme heat and coastal flooding are the main weather hazards that will impact businesses based on a sample of 30,000 of the largest listed companies surveyed by the United Nations Environment Finance Initiative (UNEP FI).

Increasing levels of heat will affect energy company facilities found in four locations in eastern China, with expenses running up to US\$219 million, while the production facility of one of the top oil companies in Indonesia is exposed to flooding risk, which could lead to costs of US\$125 million for one location alone. The UNEP FI project brought together twenty of the world's largest investors to create a report that

will serve as a guide for companies to be more transparent about climaterelated risk.

The pilot study suggested that the longer companies delay decarbonisation to help cap a global temperatures rise at 2 degrees Celsius, the higher the costs will be.

The report showed that even if countries can transition immediately to carbon neutrality, investors will be spending US\$4.3 trillion on policy changes to respond to extreme weather, but will face a further loss of US\$1.2 trillion for an overall cost of US\$ 5.4 trillion if greenhouse gas emissions are not set on a downward path by 2020.

"Climate change is posing a significant threat across many sectors and regions, and businesses must play a key role in ensuring transparency around climate-related risks and opportunities," said Sherman Kwek, chief executive officer of Singapore property giant City Developments Limited (CDL), Sandbags are piled up to block floods caused by heavy rains in China's Hunan province. Image: ImagineChina-Editorial, CC BY-SA 2.0 via Deposit Photos

which was one of the investors behind the study.

A case study in the report revealed that out of 1,200 companies with the highest market capitalisation in the world, three companies with facilities in Asia face the most physical risk of coastal flooding.

An Indonesian energy company is set to lose US\$125 million if no policy action on greenhouse gas emissions is taken. Another energy company in Singapore risks US\$51.87 million, while a Japanese company in the utilities services sector faces US\$42.84 in costs. The identity of the companies was not disclosed in the report.

The region's climate risk was highlighted in the report when the asset manager arm of insurance company



The rising tide of Sustainable Seafood

Despite its swift rise, the sustainable seafood movement's work is far from done. To safeguard the future of fish, more seafood businesses must commit to sustainability, and consumers must be even more resolute in demanding a transparent seafood supply chain and supporting sustainability with every purchase.

Two Steps Forward A tale of two circles



As we increasingly explore, design and implement business strategies that can lead to circular systems of commerce, it will be ever more important to understand where we are. That means we'll need solid baselines from which to set ambitious goals and to measure progress, writes **Joel Makower**, Chairman & **Executive Editor, GreenBiz Group**

ore than 25 years ago, I made a curious discovery about trash, thanks to some obscure data published by the U.S. government. The data indicated that what is commonly referred to as municipal solid waste (MSW) — consisting of "everyday items we use and then throw away," according to the Environmental Protection

Agency — was only a tiny fraction of the overall waste picture.

Indeed, MSW, which includes newspapers, cardboard, yard clippings, bottles and cans and various other things people toss out, represents less than 2 percent of the bigger picture — what I dubbed Gross National Trash, or GNT.

You can see it in the graphic below. The entire circle on the left represents a mere sliver of the circle on the right. GNT includes the daily detritus of our industrial world — the emissions. effluents, dregs and debris created by business.

The numbers, from 1992, seemed to be a one-off calculation, not one of those government data sets that are regularly updated. Ten years ago, I was able to update the data, which didn't change the overall percentages, although some numbers swung so wildly that the whole data set became suspect.

As I concluded in 2009: "The government — and the rest of us — don't have a clue about how much waste companies produce."

Now, the data sets have been updated again. And, once again, the numbers are similar — and similarly suspect. The implications of so many unknowns when it comes to waste represent a conundrum for the emerging circular economy: If we can't accurately measure our waste, how can we manage it?

To understand the problem, it helps to understand the bigger picture. The GNT pie includes five major slices:

The biggest slice consists of industrial wastes from pulp and paper, iron and steel, stone, clay, glass, concrete, food processing, textile manufacturing, plastics and resins manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, water treatment and other industries and processes. All of it results from fabricating, synthesizing, modeling, molding, extruding, welding, forging, distilling, purifying, refining and otherwise concocting what are collectively referred to as the finished and semi-finished materials of our manufactured world.



Nine major opportunities for electric buses and trucks

Especially at a time when many transit agencies across the country are committing to 100 percent electric, many states are increasing their efforts to get more electric cars, trucks and buses on the road and The Green New Deal is generating buzz and conversation on climate change, writes **Joel Espino**, Environmental Equity Legal Councel, The Greenlining Institute

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