

Flash report

Celebration of World Environment Day 2021: Empowering Youth for Sustainable Consumption and Production & Ecosystem Restoration



Date: Thursday 3 June 2021 | 11.00-12.00 (Indian Time)

Venue: Online via Zoom

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List of Acronyms:

CE	Circular Economy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EU	European Union
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SGGSCC	Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWITCH-Asia RPAC	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WED	World Environment Day

Background:

Objectives of the event

SWITCH-Asia is the programme funded by the European Union (EU) to promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) across the Asian Region. The SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component (RPAC), implemented by United Nations Environment Programme, is designed to strengthen the dialogue at regional, sub-regional and national policies on Sustainable Consumption and Production and thereby contributing to green growth and reduction of poverty in Asian countries.

World Environment Day (WED) takes place every year on 5th June as the United Nations' flagship day for promoting worldwide awareness and action for the environment. This year's observance of World Environment Day is on the theme of 'ecosystem restoration' and focus on resetting our relationship with nature. It also marks the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

This year, 2021, RPAC plans to celebrate the WED, with the theme of '**Ecosystem Restoration**' this year and the key message is '**Reimagine. Recreate. Restore.**' Increasing food consumption by a growing population, together with changing dietary habits, poses an immense challenge for the global food system including India with the second largest population in the world. A crucial question is how to meet the increasing demand for food and provide healthy diets for all for the decades to come without undermining the Earth's resources and crossing planetary boundaries. At the same time with the rise in online food delivery due to pandemic, packaging waste (mostly plastic) has emerged as a key concern.

In line with the WED theme of ecosystem restoration, SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce (SGGSCC), University of Delhi organized a webinar for youth, to highlight the vital role of applying SCP principles for the resilient ecosystems with a focus on Sustainable Food Systems. This webinar aimed to inspire youth action and engagement towards adopting sustainable, organic and healthy diets while being mindful of the packaging waste and issues around it.

Logistical information about the event

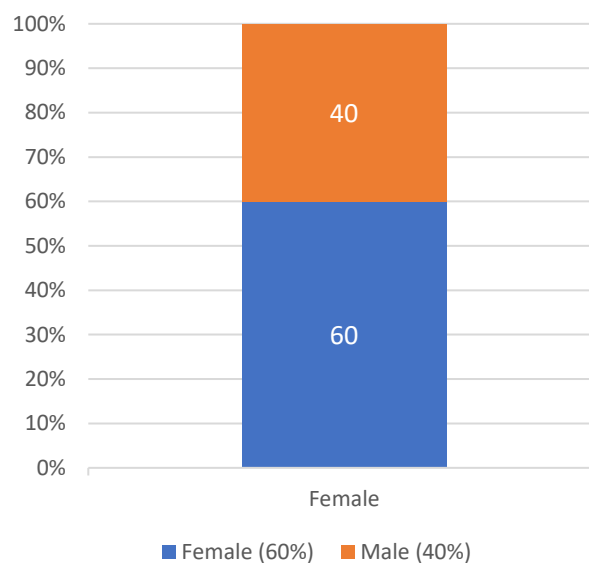
SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce (SGGSCC), University of Delhi organized a webinar for youth on 3rd June 2021. The event was organized online through Zoom. It was also streamed live on [YouTube](#).

Review on Participants:

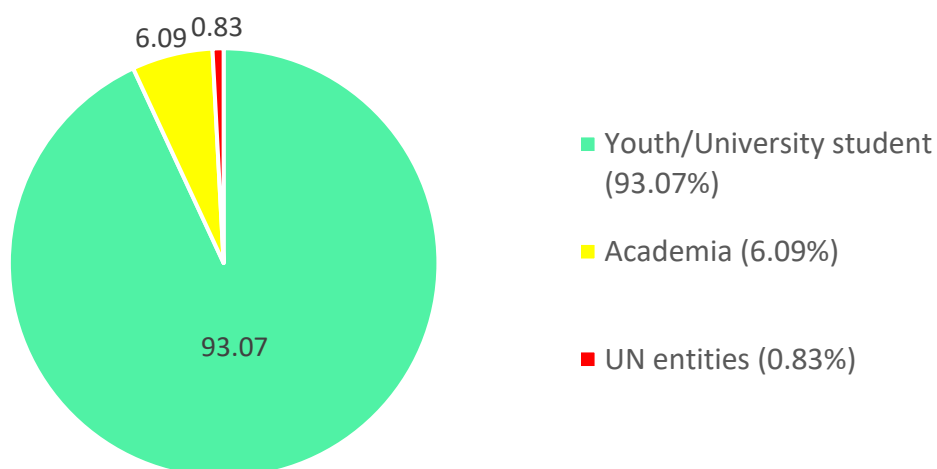
More than 350 participants were registered prior to the event, viewers joined the session online which was accessible through Zoom and Live broadcast on [YouTube](#). The event has garnered over 2300 views on various social media platforms including SWITCH-Asia Facebook and Twitter handles.

Figures below presents the distribution of participants who registered prior to the online launch event by stakeholders and gender. Based on total of 361 registration, 60% were female and 40% were male. Both of them represented mainly by Youth/University student sectors.

Registration by Gender (%)



Registration by Stakeholders (%)



Summary of Key Messages:

The dialogue on 'Empowering Youth for Sustainable Production and Consumption and Ecosystem Restoration', as a complimentary to the Celebration of the 2021 World Environment Day, brought together several notable speakers from academia, international organizations, civil society and private sectors to share insights, current status, challenges, opportunities and practices on how to engage and empower youth to restore and protect ecosystem through sustainable production and consumption as a principle and a systemic tool.

The crucial role of youth in sustainable consumption and production, and how to empower youth to become the change agents were highlighted. The expert panel discussed the importance of sustainable lifestyles and behavior changes, environmental education, sustainable food production and innovative approaches to engage youth for SCP. In this panel, environment education, technology and innovation were highlighted as important aspects to engage youth and mainstream sustainable production and consumption.

Through this webinar, the RPAC successfully highlighted how youth can and should be empowered for sustainable consumption and production, raised understandings on linkages between ecosystem restoration and sustainable consumption and production. The webinar inspired participants to take actions by adopting sustainable lifestyles and systems for resilient food ecosystems.

Welcome and Opening

Welcome remarks

Dr. Kawal Gill

Associate Professor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce

Dr. Kawal Gill explained the concepts of triple planetary crisis, global ecological footprint, carrying capacity of earth and earth overshoot day to highlight the issues with the current consumption patterns and the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns. She stated that they are constantly looking for opportunities to promote sustainable development and environment education as well as strengthen the student engagement.

Key remarks

Dr. Jatinder Bir Singh

Principal, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce

Dr. Jatinder Bir Singh highlighted that environmental education is a core subject at SGGSCC. He said innovation is the only way forward to shift our consumption and production patterns towards sustainability. While education is one part to enable sustainable transition, changing attitudes and values with constant nudging is equally important. He also mentioned that one of the gaps in current curriculum on environment education is that they were not designed with inputs from industry and multinational agencies working on the subject. He asked for active engagement with educational institutions and handholding of faculty and students on developing programmes and hands on practical projects to help students understand the concepts better.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

Regional Coordinator Resource Efficiency & SWITCH-Asia RPAC Project Manager, UNEP Asia Pacific Office

Dr Mushtaq Memon emphasized on the key role of youth as present and future agents of change for achieving sustainable consumption and production. He said that every year World Environment celebrations brings a lot of enthusiasm which majorly comes from Youth participation. India has the biggest youth population in Asia and promoting and adopting Sustainable lifestyles will be crucial in enabling Sustainable transition and Sustainable Development of the region. He highlighted the role the European Union through regional programmes such as Switch-Asia in mainstreaming sustainable production and consumption and sustainable lifestyles in the Asia region.

Panel sessions

Environment Education & Sustainable Lifestyles

Ms. Gayatri Raghwa

Consultant UNEP, Environment Education

Ms. Raghava stated that youth are the change agents – they set the trends. Youth today are very responsive and aware of environmental impacts of their actions. If we get sufficient number of youths engaged and involved in field of environment and sustainability, the world can change very fast for better. She shared that in order to make a campus sustainable, it requires incorporating sustainability in its curriculum and operation, and even in terms of its thinking and perception. Hence, a sustainability framework is needed. UNEP is looking to establish an India green university network to enable experience sharing and bring about collective action.

Presentation on Green Nudges

Dr. Gurminder Kaur

Associate Professor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce

Dr. Gurminder Kaur delivered a presentation on the Green Nudges project taken up by SGGSCC as a pilot campus for UNEP Green Nudges initiatives. She stated that gentle persuasions and nudges make Gen-next ready of change and lead to a more sustainable behavior. She showcased the efforts being undertaken by the college to green its operations including use of solar energy, solid waste management amongst others. She also shared experience with the pilot project on Green Nudges to nurturing change by engaging both faculty members and students. Pilot surveys were conducted to understand the existing behavior and plan and measure the behavior change after the project. Reopening of campus will give a big push to this initiative to introduce green nudges in behavior in everyday campus life.

Promoting SCP systems for organic food supply chains in India

Ms. Nivedita Varshneya

Project Manager, BhoomiKa

Ms. Varshneya presented the experience with a SWITCH-Asia funded grant project – BhoomiKa which is enabling creation of organic food supply chain in India. She stated that COVID 19 pandemic has brought out the risk from zoonotic diseases and the linkages with the biodiversity loss. She said that clean, green and fair food can be mainstreamed by changing the mindset of consumers and creating a pull factor. By making the switch to sustainable foods, consumers can change the way farmers produce through demand and supply increasing, better agro-biodiversity and environment conservation promoting. Food should be sustainable, local, seasonal, fresh and also rich in nutrients. Fair pricing for farmers and transparency and traceability for the consumer are important factors to enable sustainable food production. Changing consumer behavior and mindsets through awareness by way of farmer markets, education programmes and workshops would ensure positive change throughout supply chain.

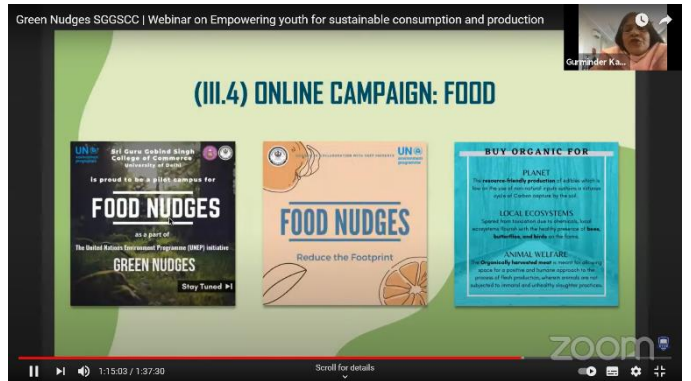
Managing Plastics and Packaging Waste in Food Delivery

Ganesh Kollegal

AVP – Govt. Affairs, Swiggy

Mr. Kollegal talked about the challenges with the COVID-19 Pandemic which has had a disruptive impact and the central role that e-commerce platforms such as Swiggy have played in increasing access to essentials during the pandemic. The e-commerce companies have observed a massive increase in orders over the past year. He stated that Swiggy is committed to ensure better management of plastic and packaging waste in food delivery. He mentioned that while plastic food containers cannot be completely and immediately replaced as the alternatives which help to transport food items hygienically and safely are not readily available, other associated single use packaging has been significantly eliminated. It is important to educate consumers that these containers are made of food grade plastic and can be reused at home for storage. It is also critical to clean the food containers before discarding or disposing it to enable effective recycling by preserving its intrinsic value. Individual effort to segregate the waste plays a critical role in waste management.

Snapshots of the Event



Annex:

Annex 1: The Final agenda

Time (GMT)	Theme
1100 – 1105	Welcome Remarks Dr. Kawal Gill Associate Professor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce
1105 - 1110	Key Remarks Dr. Jatinder Bir Singh Principal, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce
1110 – 1115	Opening Remarks Dr. Mushtaq Memon Regional Coordinator for Resource Efficiency- UNEP ROAP, Project Manager - SWITCH-Asia RPAC
1115 – 1120	Environment Education and Sustainable Lifestyles Ms. Gayatri Raghwa Consultant UNEP, Environment Education
1120 – 1130	Presentation on Green Nudges Dr. Gurminder Kaur Associate Professor, Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce
1130 – 1140	Promoting SCP systems for organic food supply chains in India Ms. Nivedita Varshneya Project Manager, BhoomiKa
1140 – 1150	Managing Plastics and Packaging Waste in Food Delivery Ganesh Kollegal AVP – Govt. Affairs, Swiggy
1150 – 1200	Q/A & Closing Moderated by Archana Datta SWITCH-Asia RPAC Project Coordinator for India, UNEP

For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page:

<https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/empowering-youth-for-scp-ecosystem-restoration/>

Contact SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Funded by European Union

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Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

Regional Coordinator for Resource Efficiency

United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Project Manager

Regional Policy Advocacy Component

(SWITCH-Asia – the European Union funded programme)

Email: memon@un.org