

Flash report

Celebration of World Environment Day 2021: Ecosystem restoration In Sustainable Consumption and Production Context



The poster features a central image of two hands holding a small green basil plant in soil. The background is a light, textured surface. Logos for SDPI, switchasia, and the European Union are at the top. The event title and date are prominently displayed in the center-right. A QR code and Zoom link are provided for registration. Social media handles and hashtags are listed below the date. At the bottom, logos for 'REIMAGINE RECREATE RESTORE', 'WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY', 'UN environment programme 50 1972-2022', and 'PAKISTAN 2021' are shown.

SDPI Sustainable Development Policy Institute

switchasia REGIONAL POLICY ADVOCACY

Ecosystem Restoration
In Sustainable Consumption and
Production Context

SATURDAY
05 | 3:30 PM
June | 5:00 PM

 **ZOOM**
WEBINAR

SDPI PAKISTAN OFFICIALSDPI SDTVPakistan

#GenerationRestoration
#WorldEnvironmentDay

**REIMAGINE
RECREATE
RESTORE**
#GenerationRestoration

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

UN environment programme 50 1972-2022

PAKISTAN 2021

Date: Saturday 5 June 2021 | 16.30-18.00 (Pakistan Time)

Venue: Online via Zoom

Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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List of Acronyms:

BFFP	Break Free From Plastic
CE	Circular Economy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EU	The European Union
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
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.**' Pakistan is the global host for WED 2021. Accordingly, SWITCH-Asia RPAC, implemented by UNEP, in collaboration Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized an online webinar on "**Ecosystem Restoration in Sustainable Consumption and Production Context**" on **5th June 2021**. The webinar objectives is to celebrate the WED, highlighting linkages between Ecosystem Restoration and principles of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), and strengthening a dialogue on green economy and SCP in Pakistan.

Logistical information about the event

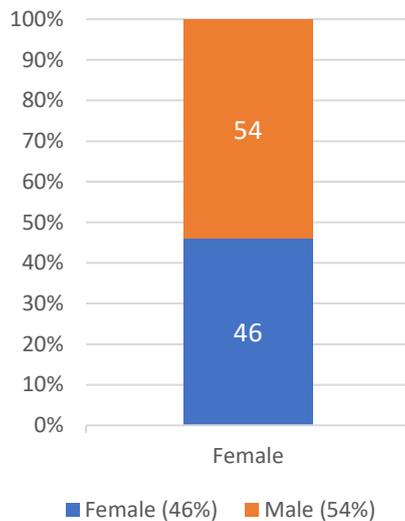
The webinar was organized by UNEP Regional Office for Asia the Pacific in partnership with SDPI on 5th June 2021. The event was organized on Zoom and streamed live on SPDI and SWITCH-Asia Facebook pages.

Review on Participants:

More than 60 participants were registered prior to the event, and 500+ viewers joined the session online which was accessible through Zoom and Live broadcast on SDPI's [Facebook](#) page.

Figures below presents the distribution of participants who registered prior to the online launch event by stakeholders and gender. Based on total of 61 registration, 46% were female and 54% were male. Both of them represented mainly by academia and NGOs sectors.

Registration by Gender (%)



Overtop stakeholders

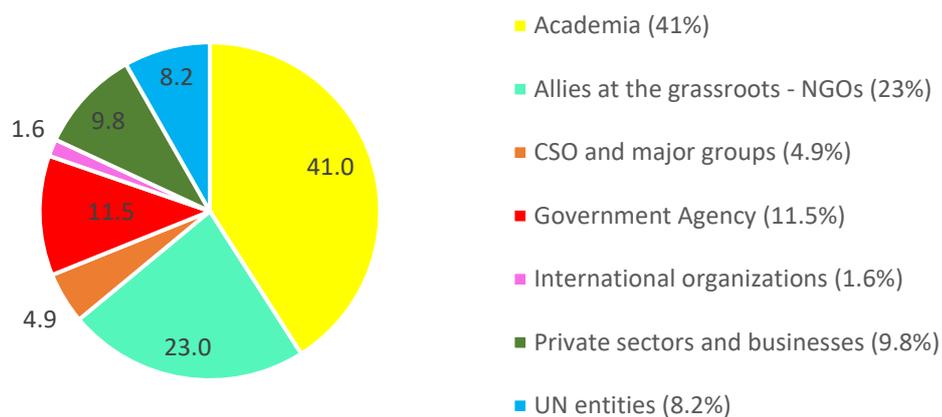
Male

- Academia
- CSO and major groups
- Government Agency
- Private sector and businesses

Female

- International organization
- UN entities

Registration by Stakeholders (%)



Summary of Key Messages:

The dialogue on 'Ecosystem Restoration in the Sustainable Consumption and Production Context' as a complimentary event to the Celebration of the 2021 World Environment Day in Pakistan, brought together several notable speakers from academia, international organizations, civil society and private sectors. The dialogue objective to share insights, current status, challenges, opportunities and practices on how to restore and protect ecosystem through SCP as a principle and a systematic tool.

The role of society in sustainable consumption and production, and how to engage people were highlighted. The expert panel discussed the importance of traditional values, sustainable lifestyles and behavior changes and, innovative approaches to mainstream SCP. In this panel, technology, innovation, and behavior change were highlighted as important aspects to improve sustainable production and consumption.

Through this dialogue, the RPAC successfully highlighted how ecosystem restoration can be achieved through sustainable consumption and production and enhanced the understanding of linkages between ecosystem restoration and SCP. The webinar inspired participants to take actions to shift towards sustainable lifestyles and systems for a resilient ecosystem that will benefit the triple bottom-line of people, profit and planet.

Welcome and opening remarks

Dr. Abid Suleri

Executive Director - SDPI

Dr. Suleri stated that economic prosperity is being achieved at the expense of the environment. He highlighted that rapid environmental degradation occurs as a result of anthropogenic activities with overall consumption continues to increase at a rate of 1.6 times more than the rate at which natural resources are replenished. As a result, there is a need for ecosystem restoration which can be achieved through behaviors focused on sustainable production and consumption that ensure optimum use of resources available to us. He emphasized on how we, as individuals and communities, need to take on more responsibility and develop ownership to collectively take action towards improving the environment that future generations are destined to inherit. Keeping in mind the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Suleri made parallels of how our planet is on the verge of facing a similar crisis if we are not careful. Whilst South Asia is culturally and religiously diverse, the message of respecting nature's balance and living in harmony with nature is common amongst all modern religions in the region.

Demystifying Sustainable Consumption and Production

Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon

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

Dr. Memon highlighted that the need to facilitate dialogue across the Asian region on SDG 12 reporting has been reinforced during the Global Emergency such as COVID 19. He emphasized on the need for advocacy at regional and sub-regional levels using frameworks from ASEAN and SAARC to develop support for SDG 12. This allows for efficient reporting and monitoring of indicators and allows for roadmaps on sustainable production and consumption to be developed. He said that to increase advocacy around sustainable lifestyles that support environmentally friendly value chains, it is important for people to understand that sustainable production and consumption further empowers people to live better and lighter without compromising on quality of life. In fact, an overall increase in quality of life can be ensured once equity is prioritized through the implementation of policies and taxes. Dr. Memon highlighted that closing the loop at localized levels helps prevent leakages that can cause environmental degradation which in turn breaks the unsustainable production and consumption cycle. He highlighted the role the European Union is playing in mainstreaming sustainable production and consumption in different sectors through regional programmes such as Switch-Asia which offer grants to developing countries and aids in developing SCP systems that provide support at the national level. The SWITCH-Asia RPAC is providing technical assistance and advocacy with regard to sustainable production and consumption practices. In Pakistan, such programs have spearheaded efforts into plastic waste management. He broke down each step of SDG 12 to discuss how governments can work on resource efficiency through public procurement which allows them to have increased leverage into decision making regarding sustainable development.

Sustainable Lifestyles in South Asia region

Ms. Archana Datta

India SWITCH-Asia RPAC Coordinator, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Ms Datta said that we need to fundamentally rework our relationship with nature and redesign our societies based on equity within society and harmony with the planet. She commended the UN's Decade for Ecosystem Restoration by saying that it calls for a transformative way of production whilst also changing our individual perspectives and consumption patterns. Ms. Datta highlighted on how the youth has unfortunately inherited the responsibility of preventing further environmental degradation that past generations were not wary of. She emphasized that restoration cannot be achieved without public participation, especially government and individual action. She highlighted how SWITCH-Asia is conducting activities that promote sustainable lifestyles through capacity building programmes. One of the flagship activities she mentioned was the organization of Annual Leadership Academy, which focuses on improving knowledge and practical understanding on circular economy amongst young professionals. The program focusses on concepts such as the circular economy and mainstreaming sustainable lifestyles through behavioural change. She reinforced the idea that conservation

is easier to implement in South-Asian countries as our cultures have always been frugal with our consumption. She reflected on how people would simply repair products in past times to extend product lifespan. She added that there is a growing need to return to our cultural roots and avoid adapting towards western values of consumption.

Go slow on Fast Fashion

Ms. Afia Salam

Freelance environment and Climate Change Journalist and Development Practitioner

Ms. Salaam took a more specialized approach regarding the fast fashion industry by emphasizing the debate around consumption and the factors, rate and processes that determine the extent of it. She said that harmful effluents, generated as a result of an unsustainable production cycle, are now better controlled using effective management systems. However, it is imperative to understand that significant improvements cannot be implemented without a simultaneous decrease in consumption. Ms. Salaam stressed for a change in overall mentality regarding wasteful practises that stem from domains of 'want' as opposed to domains of 'need'. She highlighted that such change can only come from advocating for behavioural change and that the burden for reduction shouldn't only be placed on the producers. She expressed that whilst implementation of green processes and methods are important at the production level, the overall drive to make fast fashion sustainable can only be accomplished if the concept of reducing waste is allowed to seep down into human and societal psyche. Ms. Salaam further talked about how societal constructs and stigma around "repetition of wardrobe" has led to increase in textile waste. She agreed that while we need to inform our children and grandchildren of more sustainable methods of consumption, it is also important to reflect on our ancestral teachings when determining where to draw the line between wants and needs. Recycling clothing items is relatively easier in countries such as Pakistan and India where large segments of society exist that are open to accepting "hand me downs". She added that this can ultimately reduce the resource pressures that occur due to an inability to match the need for renewing products before their lifespan runs out.

Sustainable Consumption and Production in a post Covid-19 world

Ms. Bharati Chaturvedi

Founder & Director, Chintan Environmental Research & Action Group

COVID-19 showed a mirror to the unsustainable consumption aspects of our lives by exposing our ever-changing consumption levels. However, it also allowed us to reassess how a collective global effort can contribute towards restoring ecosystems. Climate change, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, has exacerbated the living conditions of poverty-stricken communities and the pathway forward needs to be centered around sustainable and equitable consumption. As economies recover from the pandemic, a debate has begun around how we should 'build back green', she said. One example of this is Germany investing significantly to reduce their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. She added that countries

like ours have to investigate consumption and production in a more fundamental way as implementing policy change is more complex due to the lack of pre-established development pathways that most developed economies exhibit. She highlighted that South-Asian countries are in the process of poverty alleviation, which is why equity should be at the core of our consumption. As a result, there is a need to prioritize already marginalized populations that are most vulnerable to climate change when planning and implementing environmental policies. She emphasized the need for South Asian countries to function as shared economies and how community building is very critical to the process. She gave the example of Pakistan's robust, middle-class urban communities which effectively share surplus. A 'green building back' community is vital to the foundation of a circular economy, and one cannot expect communities to expand if concepts of sharing and repairing are not prioritized, she further added. Ms. Chaturvedi talked about how professions in repair economies are shrinking over a generational period due to lack of monetary and incentive growth and respect associated with these professions. People working in repair economies extend the lifecycles of our materials and products we use every day and enabling them is a critical process in policy and planning to incorporate in national development plans. As a result, there is a need for shift in policy and practice. Ms. Chaturvedi pointed out that there is a need to completely reassess the way we think about fashion and incorporate it into the circular economy. She highlighted that this could prove extremely difficult to achieve as it requires a large-scale movement that shifts mindsets from a linear economy towards a circular economy. She concluded her argument by stressing on three points: focussing on equity and how sustainable production and consumption subsequently leads to more jobs, acknowledging the need to transform mindsets and how we should plan to keep these challenges in mind.

Plastic Pollution: Is Circular Economy the magic bullet?

Mr. Dharmesh Shah

Public Policy Analyst, Advisor to BFFP and GAIA

Mr. Shah through his presentation, talked about the issue of extensive plastic pollution and whether the concept of circular economy can ultimately work to resolve it. He shared that over-consumption and waste is one of the biggest issues we currently face as a civilization. He added that waste in modern time has become a symptom of a system in crisis. Shah shared that the concept of circular economy is premised on reused cascades, long-lasting cycles through more durable products, and closing the whole loop to maintain the pure flow of resources. Whilst the concept of circular economy is centered around a self-sustaining system mimicking nature, its ability to do so remains largely debatable. As a policy analyst, Shah said he is skeptical of certain aspects of the circular economy concept and scrutinizes certain policy ideas when compared to ground realities in South Asia. He stressed that the idea of a circular economy that is based on economic growth coexisting with environmental sustainability has limited prospects. Rebound effects, such as lower per unit production costs ultimately increasing overall consumption, are likely to occur and hence reduce majority of the benefits that the concept of a circular economy has to offer. Another point he laid emphasis on is the normalized use of complex materials that cannot be easily recycled. A considerable segment of all resources is neither recycled, nor incinerated nor dumped. This tells us that as long as

we are accumulating resources there is no way to effectively close the cycle. He said that there is a desperate need for downcycling as recycling our way out of this crisis is not as simple or achievable as it was once deemed. Shah suggested, that if the current trajectories were to continue then the overall situation for mankind will prove to be extremely dire by the end of this decade. He talked about anthropogenic metabolism and how currently less than 25% of all raw materials are converted into long-lasting products and even more worryingly, less than 10% is recycled back into the economy.

He further stated that consumption by the global economy is destined to double, and the extraction of mineral resources is expected to quadruple by 2060. There is an overall excess of input as opposed to output which has caused the use of resources to skyrocket by 1400% in the last century only, with an average increase of 3% per year. He ended his presentation by making a very thought-provoking claim that if a tub is overflowing, the only viable solution is to turn the tap off entirely. The idea of a circular economy makes some sense if we simultaneously work on contracting the overall circle itself. However, unfortunately, it cannot co-exist with unlimited growth.

Special Remarks

Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam

Member, National Assembly of Pakistan

Ms. Alam pointed out how the entire South-Asian region shares common problems and should work in a collaborative manner to understand the environmental challenges in developing countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. She added that western development and conservation pathways are not fundamentally catered to resolving issues in the South-Asian context. She spoke of how the pandemic taught us all a lesson of reassessing our own footprints with regards to the environment and mother nature. She further added how the whole planet and its processes are connected to us and how the pandemic acted as an environmental break for the world to recover from the harmful effects of anthropogenic activities. Ms. Alam emphasized the need to develop concepts focusing on ecosystem restoration through sustainable production and consumptions amongst future generations to prevent the planet from further environmental degradation. She highlighted the need to engage academia and promote collaboration with schools to develop environmental protection concepts from a young age. She ended her dialogue on an uplifting note by labeling the panelists and speakers as fighters and soldiers for mother nature as every individual, despite having different approaches, is working towards a common goal to save the planet!

Snapshots of the Event

#WORLDENVIRONMENTDAY

HOW TO DITCH DISPOSABLES

1. Swap disposables: straws, bags, cups, food containers, forks, razors
2. Continue/start buy bulk food stores, bring your own containers/bags
3. Carry your vessel for water and hot drinks
4. Rethink food storage-eliminate plastic bags or wrap. Swap to reusable containers & other (beeswax) wraps
5. Clean greener- toothpaste to household cleaning products, find alternative, (often) cheaper ways to clean
6. Consider ways to refill products like cleaning and household liquids in bulk to reduce packaging
7. Use consumer power when you shop, eat, work to voice change you want!

Asks in other living areas:

1. **Food:** Use all food: When buying - avoid excessive packaging, take bags
2. **Fun:** Enjoy the journey: Refuse disposable plastics and single-use items, minimize your visit's impacts



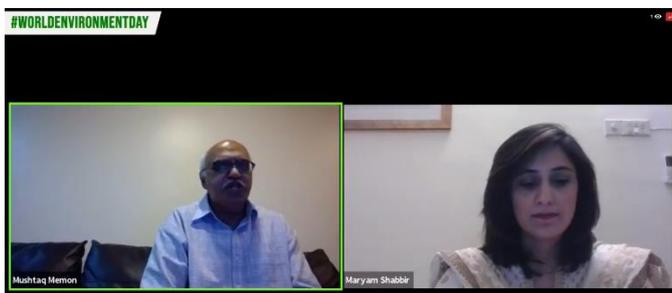
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Ecosystem Restoration In Sustainable Consumption and Production Context

1:19:10

Annex:

Annex 1: The Final agenda

Time (PKT)	Theme
1630-1645	Welcome and Opening Remarks Dr. Abid Suleri, Executive Director - SDPI
1645-1655	Demystifying Sustainable Consumption & Production Dr. Mushtaq Memon, Regional Coordinator – Resource Efficiency – UNEP ROAP & Project Manager - SWITCH-Asia RPAC
1655-1705	Go slow on Fast Fashion Ms Afia Salaam, Freelance environment and Climate Change Journalist and Development Practitioner
1705-1710	Sustainable Lifestyles in South-Asian Context Ms. Archana Datta, SWITCH-Asia Project Coordinator for India, UNEP
1710-1715	Sustainable Consumption and Production in a post Covid-19 world Ms. Bharati Chaturvedi, Founder & Director - Chintan Environmental Research & Action Group
1715-1725	Plastic Pollution: Is Circular Economy the Magic Bullet? Mr. Dharmesh Shah, Public Policy Analyst, Advisor to BFFP and GAIA
1725-1735	Special Remarks Ms. Romina Khurshid Alam, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan
1735-1745	Q/A & Closing

Moderated by **Maryam Shabbir, SDPI**

For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page:

<https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/ecosystem-restoration-in-scp-context/>

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