
**Speech for President
Global Compact Network India,
11th National Convention
on
Sustainable Development Goals: Broadening the horizon for India's
growth and transformation
March 12, 2016
ITC Maratha, Mumbai**

Hon'ble Minister Shri Prakash Javedkar, Ms. Lise Kingo, Executive Director, United Nations Global Compact, New York, Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, Shri. P.K Mohanty, Chief Secretary, State Government of Kerala, Dr. Kohli, Senior Adviser, UNGC, Mr. Pandey, Executive Director, Global Compact Network India, distinguished guests, dear students, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be here during the 11th National Convention of the Global Compact Network India taking place today here in Mumbai, the city with a long history, culture, economy and social progression, besides being the financial capital of India.

This year's convention is timely and rightly dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals: Broadening the horizon for India's growth and transformation - arguably the first such dedicated program on SDGs at this scale in India and perhaps anywhere else in the world. There are also associated many firsts to this event including among other things- carbon neutral event, more than 50 CEOs of various member and non-member companies, a high level business panel on SDGs, live streaming of the event and television coverage of the program, and most importantly presence of Ms. Lise Kingo, Executive Director, United Nations Global Compact, New York among us here today. I am also in particular grateful to the Hon'ble Minister Shri. Prakash Javedkar, Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, DG & CEO, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India and Mr. P.K Mohanty, Chief Secretary, State Government of Kerala for being able to spare their time on a weekend and attending our annual flagship program today.

As we all know that the recent months over the last year have been more eventful and have in a way more than ever before shaped history of the mankind and these are three fold:

First, Financing of Development Meeting in last July Ethiopian capital Addis,

Second, the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in New York last September and

Thirdly, the COP 21 in Paris in last December.

These three historic and episodic events under the leadership of the United Nations have created new pathways for protection of people, planet and prosperity through a multi-stakeholders' approach. Today, more than ever before, we stand ready to decide on our individual and collective actions to contribute to growth and development of our nations. All key stakeholders – government, civil society and businesses- are now shaping up gearing to take leadership roles in ensuring that three pillars (social, economic and environment) are integrated at all levels of our actions and performance. Role of the businesses, however, will continue to be vital in achieving of the new 17 fold Sustainable Development Goals and I firmly believe that Global Compact and its universal principles will be aggregator, enabler and fast-tracker of these global goals and power of principles of the Global Compact – Environment, Labour Standards, Human Rights and Anti-corruption-will underpin the success of the Sustainable Development Goals, going forward.

The 11th National Convention of the UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) comes at an opportune time – a time when nations across the globe are coming together to collaborate and identify ways to achieve sustainable growth while creating positive impact for the society at large. With almost a sixth of the world's population and as an emerging super power, India is uniquely positioned to contribute towards this global sustainable growth agenda. However, there are a number of challenges which we need to overcome to achieve this sustainable growth. There is a continuous need to identify innovative ways to address challenges related to poverty, hunger, ecological imbalances and resource shortages.

Given the diverse nature of challenges in the way of sustainable growth, there is a need for a holistic framework which stakeholders can leverage to shape and drive their growth agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) introduced by the United Nations and formally adopted by 193 member nations in 2015 provide such a holistic framework. These development goals are a set of 17 goals which are expected to set the world's development agenda for 2015. In this context, the importance of Global compact anchoring this convention around SDGs cannot be over-emphasized.

As we move ahead with our growth story, it is important for us to embrace the SDG framework to shape our transformation journey. The first step in this direction is to understand what SDG framework is all about and spread the message. Today as we also release the first of its kind Point of View document on the Sustainable Development Goals with 10 leading business thought leaders, there is no time better than today to re-commit and re-dedicate ourselves to Ten Universal Principles of the Global Compact and adopt these to our responsible business approaches as we move ahead to build a world based on equity, low carbon and dynamic economic growth and development at all levels and without leaving anyone behind. And, this can honestly happen with large scale and replicable collaboration and partnerships as duly reflected in the 17th Goal of the SDGs.

I wish the 11th national convention of Global Compact Network India a great success.