

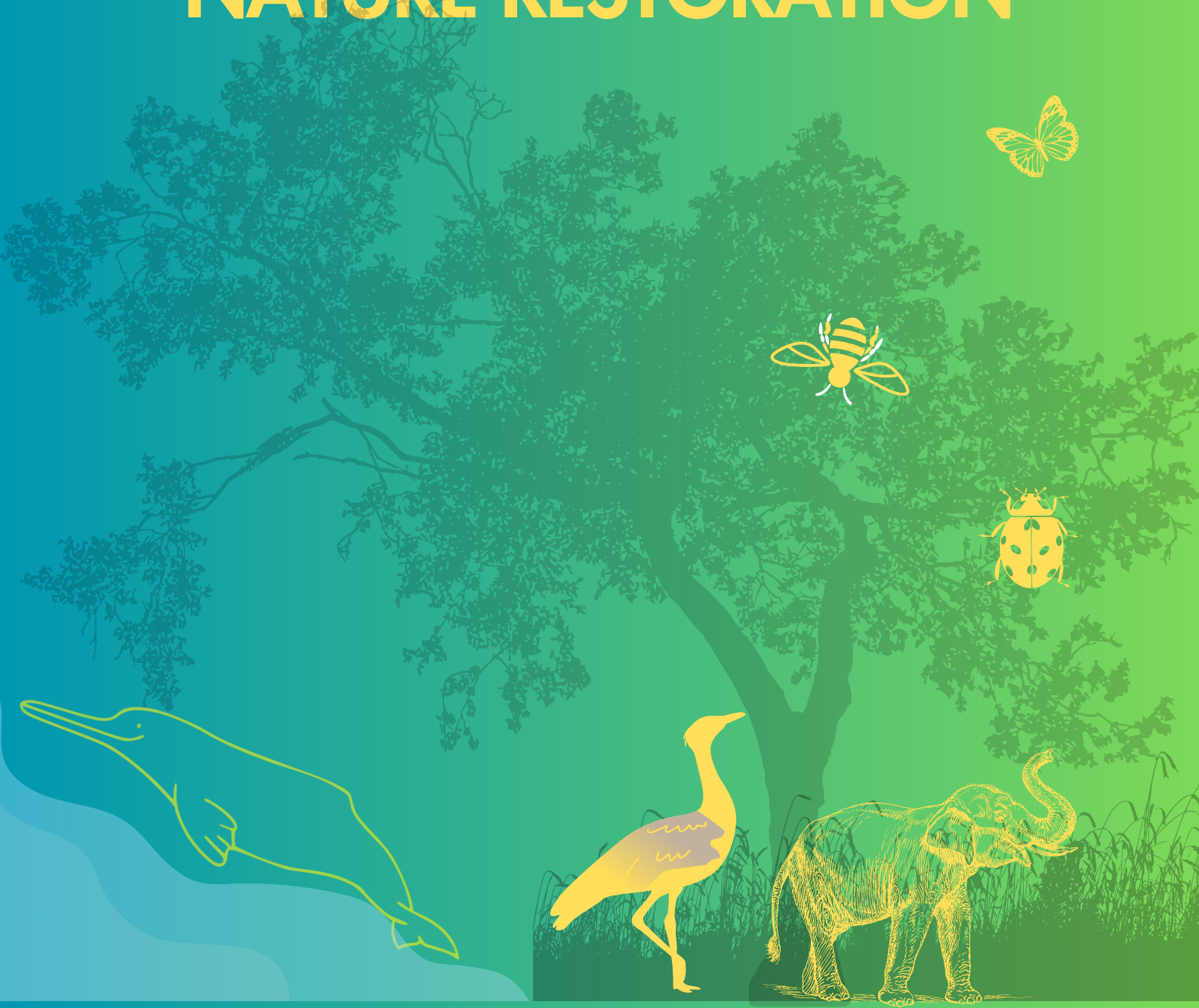


**FORWARD  
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Network India

# LAUNCH OF CENTRE FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP ON NATURE RESTORATION



# SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

## LAUNCH OF CENTRE FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP ON NATURE RESTORATION

Chennai, July 31st 2024

### Welcome Speech- Mr. Ratnesh, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network India

Mr. Ratnesh, the Executive Director of UN GCNI, addressed and welcomed Mr. C. Achalender Reddy, I.F.S (Retd.), Chairperson of the National Biodiversity Authority; Dr. V. Rajagopalan, I.A.S (Retd.) Former Secretary of MoEFCC; Mr. Anil Jain, the Managing Director of Reflex Group; Mr. Prashant Tiwari, V.P. – Southern Region, UN GCNI & Sustainability Head, Amara Raja Group; Mr. Suneel Padale, Senior Consultant of UN GCNI and all participants. He expressed his gratitude to all the dignitaries and the Reflex Group for their pioneering approach towards Biodiversity and for providing unwavering support towards the milestone of establishing the Centre.

Mr. Ratnesh outlined the growing presence of the Global Compact, noting its expansion from 60 corporates to a member group of more than 20,000 participants globally. He also summarized the ongoing initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Global Compact Network India and explained that the UN GCNI is intended to serve as a dynamic platform that brings together Indian businesses, academic institutions, multilateral organizations, government bodies, and civil society organizations. Together, they collaborate actively to make meaningful strides towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and adhering to the 10 Principles of the UN Global Compact within the Indian context.

Furthermore, Mr. Ratnesh emphasized the growing need for business leadership in biodiversity conservation to meet national and global commitments, and how the Centre aims to spearhead a transformative movement within the private sector, significantly enhancing action, monitoring, and reporting related to biodiversity-positive initiatives.





## Presentation on the Proposed Centre- Mr. Suneel Padale, Senior Consultant, UN GCNI

Mr. Suneel briefly presented the Centre's mission, vision, and strategic goals. He also set the context of biodiversity action plans undertaken by the government in the last decade. He emphasized the Centre's goals to enhance and encourage private sector engagement in biodiversity and nature restoration. Mr. Suneel further elaborated on the scope and activities of the Centre, including serving as a knowledge hub, supporting national and international commitments, facilitating dialogue for policy formulation, and enabling a better system for meeting compliance and disclosure requirements. He also shared data and statistics on corporate engagement in biodiversity conservation in India. The presentation highlighted the expected outcomes and the key activities to be undertaken in the first year for the Centre.



## Video Address by Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General; CEO & Executive Director, UN Global Compact

Ms. Sanda, in her video address, congratulated Global Network India on launching the Centre for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration. She emphasized the importance of achieving peace with nature, referring to the remark given by the UN General Secretary and the crucial role of business leaders in achieving this goal. She further explained the impact of nature and biodiversity loss on businesses pointing out that it ranks 3rd out of top 10 business risks. Ms. Sanda also touched upon the increasing recognition by the global community in safeguarding biodiversity and the increasing adoption of biodiversity frameworks by companies during the COP15. She stated that collaboration and accountability is the key to reversing nature loss and that the Centre for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration aims to support businesses and governments in joining forces towards the cause.

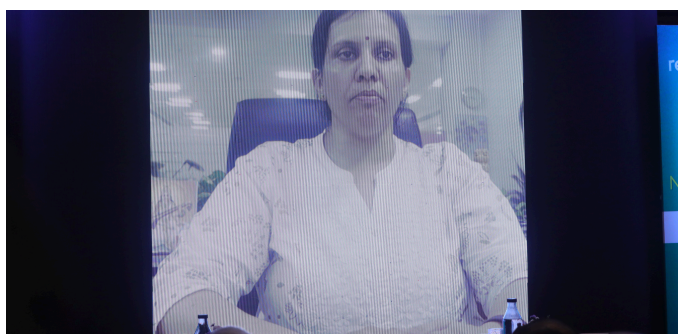


## Opening Address- Mr. Anil Jain, Managing Director, Reflex Industries Limited

Mr. Anil Jain highlighted the need to focus on biodiversity conservation and long-term loss of biodiversity due to natural and man-made calamities. He shared his insights on the importance of taking action towards global warming on an urgent basis with alternatives such as sustainable energy and technologies. He expressed his immense passion towards investing in initiatives like the Centre for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration. He also requested other corporates to join in the mission to restore natural biodiversity. He expressed his gratitude and congratulated all the guests present on the stage along with participants in the hall on the momentous day, for the launch of the Center. Mr. Jain also elaborated other ongoing initiatives by the Reflex Group like 'trees for life' project and the future commitment of the organization including the Mangrove plantation drive in Kalpakkam.

## **Keynote Address (Video)- Dr. Garima Dadhich, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs**

Dr. Garima expressed her delight to join for the launch of the Centre of Business Leadership on Nature Restoration. She gave a brief about the School of Business Environment within IICA and the areas focused under this specialized vertical, the services provided by the school to government agencies, corporates and other stakeholders and the key contributions of the school including the National Guideline on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC). She also spoke about the significance of nature restoration and the role of businesses towards the restoration of degraded ecosystems and protecting biodiversity. She explained that businesses have the resources, innovation capacity and influence to make significant contributions towards protecting biodiversity. She also highlighted some of the significant actions taken by the Government of India on restoring nature and conserving the nation's biodiversity such as Project Tiger, Project Elephant, Green India Mission, Namami Gange Programme etc. Dr. Garima talked about the work undertaken by companies through the World Economic Forum initiative.



## **Chief Guest Address- Mr. C Achalender Reddy, I.F.S (Retd.), Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority, Government of India**

Mr. Reddy began his chief guest address by congratulating UN GCNI and Refex Group for joining hands to launch one of its kind Centre in Chennai. He called the Biodiversity Centre the "Temple of progress for biodiversity conservation". He referred to the recent coverage on biodiversity by the World Economic Forum, which explains the direct link between Biodiversity loss and World economies. He suggested that CSR should also focus on the lifestyle of other beings in nature considering biodiversity and climate change are two sides of the same coin.

Mr. Reddy talked about gaps and challenges in navigating biodiversity restoration due to diverse components and factors related to biodiversity conservation. He stated the benefits of capability building in overcoming these challenges. Further, he mentioned that instead of focusing only on carbon footprint, biodiversity footprint also needs to be taken into consideration and both should be calculated together to understand the impact of human activities on nature. Mr. Reddy explained about the system of environmental- economic accounting for understanding interrelation between them and also highlighted the importance of both "Greening the finance and Financing the green."

He emphasized that strengthening of the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has to be hastened in order to achieve biodiversity conservation goals. He also talked about limited CSR contribution towards this cause and partial understanding by the business community on links between biodiversity loss and business risks. Mr. Reddy stated that active action from the business community is crucial and practical and achievable solutions need to be in place by the corporates to restore nature. Mr. Reddy concluded his address by pointing out the need to be future-ready with policies to preserve nature and fight climate change and with this quote "We should begin by coming together, progress by keeping together and reach our goal by working together."





## Launch of the Centre

The dignitaries on the dias, Mr. C. Achalender Reddy, I.F.S (Retd.), Dr. V. Rajagopalan, I.A.S (Retd.), Mr. Anil Jain, Mr. Ratnesh, Mr. Prashant Tiwari and Mr. Suneel Padale, formally inaugurated the launch of 'Centre for Business Leadership on Nature Restoration' and launched the Briefing Paper titled "Enhancing Corporate Engagement with Biodiversity Conservation in India." followed by a brief felicitation ceremony for the dignitaries.



## Panel Discussion

**Moderator:** Dr. V. Rajagopalan, I.A.S (Retd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

**Panelists:**

- Dr. Santanu Basu, Project Director, Harit by HCL Foundation
- Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director, C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre
- Mr. Sunil Rajagopal, Lead - Sustainability, Royal Enfield
- Mr. Anirban Chatterjee, Head Sustainability Sales Growth & Innovation, Bureau Veritas



### **Context Setting by Dr. V. Rajagopalan**

- Dr. Rajagopalan highlighted the critical link between business operations and biodiversity conservation, emphasizing that GDP depends on nature and ecosystem services. He referred to the latest report from the World Economic Forum, noting that species extinction is at an all-time high. Dr. Rajagopalan advocated for businesses to go beyond conservation efforts and actively engage in restoration projects, encouraging proactive steps by business leaders in restoring nature. He discussed the importance of transparency in biodiversity impact disclosures.
- Explaining the financial aspects of environmental restoration, Dr. Rajagopalan noted that the cost of restoring one hectare of forest is approximately INR 60,000 and highlighted the budget allocated for land restoration. He observed that funds dedicated to biodiversity conservation in the environmental sector and through CSR are minimal. He indicated immense potential to leverage funds from other government programs for biodiversity conservation. In this context, he highlighted MNREGA's approximately INR 86,000 crore budget, which could support biodiversity conservation activities. Dr. Rajagopalan stressed the need to involve local communities in restoration efforts, either voluntarily or through incentives, suggesting eco-tourism and community benefits as ways to encourage local participation. He emphasized that sustainable restoration requires addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and called for outcomes to be verified by independent assessors.

### **Dr. P. Sudhakar, CPREE**

Dr. Sudhakar shared conservation success stories, including saving 53 Sacred Groves through his institute. He explained that these forests are preserved to produce income without cutting down trees. He highlighted the involvement of women in nursery work and crop sales and discussed educational outreach programs to teach environmental laws and biodiversity conservation. Dr. Sudhakar described efforts to restore local ponds with the help of villagers by educating them about desalination.

### **Mr. Sunil Rajagopal, Royal Enfield**

Mr. Rajagopal introduced Royal Enfield's motto, "Rebalance" which focuses on local area development, especially through promoting a balance between Man, Machine and Terrain. He detailed the social mission for the Himalayas, aiming to support Himalayan Ladakhi communities and briefly explained projects by the Eicher Group Foundation. Mr. Rajagopal described the role of the community of bike riders in behavior change and conservation efforts, mentioning various conservation projects, including the preservation of snow leopards in Ladakh and marine conservation in Goa and Tamil Nadu. He highlighted ongoing projects with long-term effects, such as the Himalayan Knot and Green Hub initiatives.

### **Dr. Santanu Basu, HCL Foundation**

Dr. Basu explained the Harit initiative, which spans across India with state government MoUs for wasteland restoration and reforestation. He described water body restoration projects and urban mini-forests which support biodiversity conservation. Dr. Basu emphasized training workshops for local communities to increase awareness and involvement in conservation programs. He detailed various projects, including bird species habitat restoration in Gujarat and water body restoration efforts. He especially shared in detail about the monitoring processes and significant impacts of the interventions HCL Foundation is supporting in different parts of the country.

### **Mr. Anirban Chatterjee, Bureau Veritas**

Mr. Chatterjee discussed the global context of biodiversity and energy transition, noting that net zero can be achieved through nature-based solutions. He highlighted the importance of agroforestry, coastal restoration, and carbon mitigation efforts. Mr. Chatterjee emphasized the need for measurable governance and ROI in environmental restoration, mentioning the importance of transparency and data in corporate biodiversity finance. He discussed the financial incentives for corporates to spend CSR funds effectively on biodiversity conservation.

### **Closing Remarks by Dr. V. Rajagopalan**

Dr. Rajagopalan thanked the panelists for their diverse insights and contributions to the discussion. He stressed the importance of documenting corporate initiatives for biodiversity conservation and encouraged continued collaboration and proactive efforts in biodiversity restoration by the business community.



## Perspective-sharing by Business Leaders

Facilitated by Mr. Suneel Padale, Senior Consultant, UN GCNI

Question to Dr. Santanu Basu, Project Director, Harit by HCL Foundation- What has driven your organization to fund biodiversity conservation?

- The foundation was motivated by the positive perspective of its senior leadership regarding the potential to positively impact biodiversity, leading them to initiate projects aimed at conservation
- Dr. Basu emphasized the belief that there is no negative outcome for a positive initiative to start.

Contribution by **Ms. Vaishali Surawar, Chief Sustainability Officer, Hindalco**- What are the challenges of establishing a biodiversity plan?

- Hindalco focuses on creating materials that are greener, cleaner, and smarter.
- The company aims for a “no net loss” approach and has started with a 33% green belt in all their plants across India.
- Initiatives include planting native species through the Miyawaki method creating habitats for butterflies and birds. Further, restoration of ash dumps are part of their initiatives.

Question to **Mr. Hari M R, Executive Chairman, Invis Private Limited**- What is a personal initiative where you have seen an impact?

- Mr. Hari shared a personal initiative of planting 5,000 native plants on barren land with no immediate outcomes but further moving onto Miyawaki technique and support from a district agriculture scientist.
- He also spreads the knowledge through his YouTube channel to encourage subscribers to plant Miyawaki forests.

Question to **Mr. Mouli Durai, Head- Environment, L&T Construction**- How is it possible to focus on ESG as an infrastructure company?

- Mr. Durai highlighted the strategic integration of ESG principles in infrastructure projects, ensuring sustainability is at the core of their operations.
- He also shared an example on how during the construction of Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (Atal Setu) their initiatives in partnerships with NGOs were adopted to maintain the ecological balance and maintain marine life.

Contribution by **Ms. Charuta, Principal Scientist, IIT Madras**- How do we structure capability-building programs?

- She emphasized moving from a philanthropic approach to a KPI/KRI-driven model for tangible results.
- IIT-M offers a course called “Sustainability for India Corporates” to educate students on the significance of corporate contributions to nature and biodiversity.

Question by **Mr. Balaji Varthan, Hi-Flier Entrepreneur, BYST**- Why is the focus of corporates leaning towards utilization of CSR funds rather than bringing awareness to their employees on ways to contribute towards the CSR initiatives by their organizations? Are there any policies to include employees in CSR activities? Are we adopting technological advances in biodiversity programs?

Answer by **Mr. Sunil Rajagopalan, Lead - Sustainability, Royal Enfield**

- He explained that Royal Enfield has now started including employees in sustainability initiatives through employee volunteering.
- They also publish a sustainability journal that highlights impact stories resulting from CSR activities.

Followed by an answer from **Dr. Santanu Basu, Project Director, Harit by HCL Foundation**-

- Climate change and biodiversity courses are available for employees, along with employee volunteering opportunities in the company's CSR activities which also includes participation from top leadership.
- The company conducts quarterly site visits by board members to monitor progress of CSR activities.

Closing Remarks & Vote of Thanks- **Mr. Gagan Pattnaik, GM and Head (ESG & Sustainability), Refex Industries Limited**

Mr. Gagan concluded the event by delivering the Vote of Thanks and appreciated all the dignitaries, and guests present at the launch. The Centre launch and discussions ended with lunch by 3pm.





**ANNEXURE I**  
**AGENDA FOR LAUNCH WORKSHOP OF THE UN GCNI CENTRE FOR BUSINESS LEADERSHIP ON NATURE RESTORATION**

**July 31st, 2024 (Wednesday) | 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM (IST) | Venue - The Park Hotel, Chennai**

0930 – 1000 hrs	Registration
1000 – 1030 hrs	Welcome Address – Mr. Ratnesh, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network India Presentation on the proposed Centre for Business Leadership on Nature restoration – Mr. Suneel Padale, Senior Consultant, UN GCNI
1030 – 1035 hrs	Address (video) by Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, ASG and CEO, UN Global Compact
1035 – 1045 hrs	Opening Address – Mr. Anil Jain, Managing Director, Refex Industries Limited
1045 – 1055 hrs	Keynote Address (video) by Dr. Garima Dadhich, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Govt. of India
1055 – 1110 hrs	Address from the Chief Guest – Mr. C Achalender Reddy, I.F.S (Retd.), Chairperson, National Biodiversity Authority
1110 – 1115 hrs	Launch of the Centre
1115 – 1130 hrs	Tea/Coffee Break
1130 – 1230 hrs	Panel Discussion by experts in Biodiversity Conservation Moderator: Dr. V Rajagopalan, I.A.S (Retd.), Former Secretary, MoEFCC Panelists: Dr. Santanu Basu, Project Director, Harit by HCL Foundation Dr. P. Sudhakar, Director, C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre Mr. Sunil Rajagopal, Lead - Sustainability, Royal Enfield Mr. Anirban Chatterjee, Head Sustainability Sales Growth & Innovation, Bureau Veritas
1230 – 1315 hrs	Perspective-sharing by Business Leaders – Facilitated by Mr. Suneel Padale, Senior Consultant; UN GCNI
1315 – 1320 hrs	Closing Remarks & Vote of Thanks by Mr. Gagan Pattnaik, GM and Head (ESG & Sustainability), Refex Industries Limited
1320 hrs	End of Workshop followed by Networking Lunch

## ANNEXURE II

### List of Attendees

SNo.	Name	Company/Organisation	Designation
1	Abdul Kahdar Basheer	Pressform Industries	Tooling Manager
2	Ahalya Vaitheeswaran	Refex Group	Assistant Manager
3	Anirban Chatterjee	Bureau Veritas	Head- Sustainability Growth & Innovation, South Asia Region
4	Anish George	Bureau Veritas	Area Sales Manager-Certification
5	Anish Varghese	Mylan Laboratories Ltd	Assistant General Manager- CSR
6	Archana Asokan	Cognizant	Senior Executive
7	Babu	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Entrepreneur
8	Balaji	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
9	Bala Subramaniam M	3i Medical Technologies	CEO
10	Ben Davis	Adra India	Livelihood Coordinator
11	Bharath K	Refex group	Assistant manager ESG & Sustainability
12	Bilal	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Entrepreneur
13	Charuta Kulkarni	IITM School of Sustainability	Principal Scientist
14	Darshan Jain	Agriculture & Ecosystem Management Group (Ages)	Director- Projects
15	Dharani Kumar	Refex Group	Assistant Manager- QHSE
16	Dinesh S	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
17	Dr. Easa	Care Earth Trust	Chairman
18	Dr. Karthik Ramesh	Univest Business Machines UAE	Chief Transformation & Innovation Officer
19	Dr. Venkatraman Rajagopalan (I.A.S Retd.)	National Biodiversity Authority	Chair (Working Groups), Former Secretary, MoEFCC.
20	E. Venkat Reddy, (I.F.S)	ICFRE- Institute of Forest Biodiversity, Hyderabad	Director
21	Garima Adabar Pattnaik	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Student
22	Gakul	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
23	Gowri Shankar	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
24	Hari M R	Invis Pvt Ltd	Executive Chairman (UNCCD Consultant)
25	Haribaskar	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
26	Jayshree Vencatesan	Care Earth Trust	Managing Trustee
27	Jonathan	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Entrepreneur
28	K.murugapandian Moorthi	Damooga foundation	Founder/ceo
29	Kavya Akula	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Student
30	Krishna Mahan Ramachandran	Chennai Resilience Centre	Chief Resilience Officer
31	Lalitha Uthayakumar	Refex Group	CEO-Refrigerant Business
32	Mamata Adabar	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Teacher
33	Manoj	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Training head
34	Morris	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Cluster head
35	Mouli Durai	L&T Construction	Head- Environment
36	Nagabhushana Rao	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
37	Namboodiri	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Student
38	Narasimhan Rengachari	Pressform Industries	General Manager- Operations
39	Naveen	Damooga Foundation	Director- Damoga Foundation
40	P Sudhakar	C.P.R. Environmental Education Centre	Director
41	Prashant Tiwari	Amara Raja Energy & Mobility Ltd. (ARE&ML)	Chief Sustainability Officer
42	Purnima S	Bureau Veritas India Private Limited	Senior Sales Executive
43	Purvesh Kapadia	Refex Group	Group CHRO
44	R Sarvesh	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Student
45	Raghavendra Rao	Refex Group	President- Strategic Initiatives
46	Rajesh Parekh	Amara Raja Energy And Mobility Ltd	DGM Group Sustainability
47	Ravi A	Refex Group	Plant Manager
48	Sachin Navtosh Jha	Refex Group	Chief of Staff
49	Sahil Singla	Refex Industries Limited	President
50	Saji Varghese	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Project Head
51	Saleem Harris	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Entrepreneur
52	Sandeep Mishra	Refex Group	Vice President- Chief of Staff
54	Sandip Mookerjee	Hand in Hand India	Advisor
55	Santanu Basu	HCL Foundation	Project Director, Harit by HCL Foundation
56	Saravanan Vasanthakumar	Refex Group	Chief of Staff
57	Selvamani	Damooga Foundation	Director- Research
58	Shanmugasundaram	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Mentor
59	Shiva Raaman AP	Refex Industries Limited	Assistant Manager
60	Sreekanth Basineni	Refex Group	Manage- HSE
61	Sridhar L	Bangalore International Airport Limited	Head- Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)
62	Srividya N	Refex Group	Vice President- Corp Comm
63	Suhail Shariff	Refex Group	Vice President
64	Sunil Rajagopal	Royal Enfield	Sustainability Lead
65	Swaminathan Krishnamurthy	Cholamandalam MS Risk Services Ltd	Head- Sustainability & Environment
66	Vaishali Surawar	Hindalco Industries Ltd	Chief Sustainability officer
67	Wafia A	Lalaji Memorial Omega International School	Student
68	Yoga Terasa	BYST (Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust)	Sriperamduphur Cluster Head
69	Zeeshan Haseeb Khan	Lalaji memorial omega international school	Student



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Ratnesh**

Executive Director, UNGCNI  
ratnesh@globalcompact.in  
+91-9873021511

### **Suneel Padale**

Senior Consultant  
suneelpadale@gmail.com  
+91-9968027382

### **Syona Sachdeva**

Program Officer, UNGCNI  
abhishek.chandra@globalcompact.in  
+91-7829595656

### **Abhishek Chandra**

Program Manager, UNGCNI  
abhishek.chandra@globalcompact.in  
+91-9630876678

### **Refex Towers**

Sterling Road Signal, 313, Valluvar  
Kottam High Road, Nungambakkam  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600034



Network India

## **UN GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK INDIA (UN GCNI)**

4th Floor, Development Alternative, B-32, Tara Crescent, Block B, Outab  
Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016  
Email us at [genindia@globalcompact.in](mailto:genindia@globalcompact.in)  
Contact: 91-11- 26544289 / 82  
Website: <https://globalcompact.in/>



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