



Concept Note

UN GCNI Regional Convention – South 2026 (Coimbatore)

Date- October 9, 2026

Background and Context

The global sustainability agenda is no longer a matter of commitments alone; it demands implementation. Across industries, supply chains have emerged as the critical frontier for this transition. Procurement decisions that once focused purely on cost and efficiency are now expected to reflect environmental responsibility, social accountability, supplier inclusion, and climate resilience. The integration of sustainability across value chains has moved from a stakeholder expectation to a business imperative.

As the Indian Local Network of the United Nations Global Compact, UN Global Compact Network India (UN GCNI) works with businesses and stakeholders to advance responsible business practices and sustainability leadership across India. Through its convening platforms, thought leadership, capacity-building initiatives, and multi-stakeholder engagement, UN GCNI supports companies in embedding environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into their operations and value chains. Sustainable supply chains and responsible procurement have become central to this work, given their defining role in advancing responsible business conduct, long-term resilience, and meaningful progress on sustainable development.

India's southernmost states are increasingly at the forefront of this transition. Tamil Nadu, in particular, has built one of the most ambitious and structured climate action frameworks of any Indian state. Through the Tamil Nadu State Action Plan on Climate Change 2.0 (TNSAPCC 2.0),¹ the Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company (TNGCC), and a real-time Climate Action Tracker, the state has set a course for carbon neutrality ahead of India's national 2070 target. Between 2005 and 2019, Tamil Nadu reduced its emission intensity to GDP by nearly 60%, and today renewable energy accounts for approximately 60% of its total installed power capacity.² This state-level ambition is not confined to policy declarations; it is being operationalised at the district level, through dedicated decarbonisation plans that map industrial emission hotspots, chart clean energy transitions, and define measurable abatement pathways for specific geographies.³

This approach resonates closely with the philosophy that guides the United Nations Global Compact: that sustainability objectives are best advanced not through top-down mandates, but through collaborative, evidence-led action embedded in the realities of industry and place. Over 25 years, UN GCNI has built a network of more than 500 member organisations across India, committed to advancing the Ten Principles across their operations and value chains. More than 150 of these members are from Southern India, with Tamil Nadu among the network's most significant regional concentrations. Within this landscape, Coimbatore stands out as a region actively demonstrating what responsible growth looks like in practice. The Regional Convention - South is an opportunity to recognise that work and hold it up as a model for the wider network, a compelling example to member companies across India as well as to other attendees, of what it means to move from sustainability commitment to action.

It is within this spirit that UN GCNI is convening the Regional Convention - South 2026 in Coimbatore, a city that brings together industrial scale, manufacturing depth, and a live commitment to decarbonisation in ways that make it uniquely suited to host a national conversation on sustainable and resilient supply chains.

¹ Government of Tamil Nadu, Tamil Nadu State Action Plan on Climate Change 2.0 (TNSAPCC 2.0). Available at: <https://www.environment.tn.gov.in/environment/tnsapcc>

² TNGCC and CEEW. 2024. Tamil Nadu's Greenhouse Gas Inventory and Pathways for Net-Zero Transition. Available at: <https://www.ceew.in/publications/tamil-nadu-greenhouse-gas-inventory-net-zero-transition-and-climate-change>

³ "Tamil Nadu's Model for Sub-State Climate Action" (November 2025). Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/the-tamil-nadu-model-of-sub-state-climate-action/article70276313.ece>

Why Coimbatore-Tiruppur

The Coimbatore-Tiruppur belt is one of South India's most consequential industrial ecosystems. Spanning textiles and apparel, engineering and precision manufacturing, pumps and motors, automotive components, and a dense network of MSME-led suppliers, the region is not merely a manufacturing hub - it is a supply chain ecosystem in its own right.

The region's economic significance is substantial. Tamil Nadu topped India's national textile exports in FY 2024-25, contributing \$7.99 billion, a 26.8% share of total national textile exports⁴ with Coimbatore-Tiruppur as its anchor cluster. The two cities together account for 68% of India's knitted garment exports⁵. Underpinning this export engine is an MSME base of over 3,23,000 enterprises in Coimbatore alone, the second-largest MSME concentration in Tamil Nadu, spanning textiles, pumps, jewellery, EV components, and aerospace manufacturing.⁶

Yet the region is also navigating a set of deepening pressures. Export-oriented industries are facing growing scrutiny around ESG compliance, responsible sourcing, Scope 3 emissions, supply chain traceability, and supplier accountability from global buyers. A 2024 study on Green Supply Chain Management among motor and pump SMEs in Coimbatore identified significant gaps in sustainable procurement practices⁷, pointing to both the urgency of the challenge and the scale of the opportunity. Water stress, climate variability, logistics disruptions, and evolving regulatory frameworks are adding further complexity to supply chain planning across the region.

At the same time, Coimbatore is one of only four pilot districts in Tamil Nadu with a dedicated district-level decarbonisation plan - developed in collaboration with Vasudha Foundation and the TNGCC.⁸ The plan charts pathways across clean energy adoption, industrial efficiency, mobility transformation, and nature-based solutions, with a projected net-zero target of 2055, a recognition of the district's industrial intensity and the scale of transition required. Sustainable and resilient supply chains are not peripheral to this plan - they are central to it. The decarbonisation of Coimbatore's manufacturing base will depend, in large part, on how procurement systems, buyer-supplier relationships, and value chain practices evolve over the next decade.

The Coimbatore-Tiruppur region thus offers something rare: a place where industrial relevance, sustainability ambition, and the urgency of practical action converge. It is an ecosystem that has much to share with the rest of India and much to gain from a structured dialogue on what resilient, responsible supply chains look like in practice. UN GCNI sees in Coimbatore a model and the Convention is, in part, an opportunity to bring that model to the attention of the wider UN Global Compact membership, nationally and globally.

⁴ Usthadian Academy, "Tamil Nadu Tops India's Textile Exports in FY 2024-25" (May 2025). Tamil Nadu exported \$7.99 billion in textiles — a 26.8% share of national textile exports. Available at:

<https://www.usthadian.com/tamil-nadu-tops-indias-textile-exports-in-fy-2024-25-a-rising-leader-in-the-industry/>

⁵ Usthadian Academy / TEA, "Textile Export Surge from Tamil Nadu 2024" (August 2025): Tiruppur and Coimbatore jointly contributed 68% of India's knitted garment exports in FY 2024-25. Available at:

<https://www.usthadian.com/textile-export-surge-from-tamil-nadu-2024/>

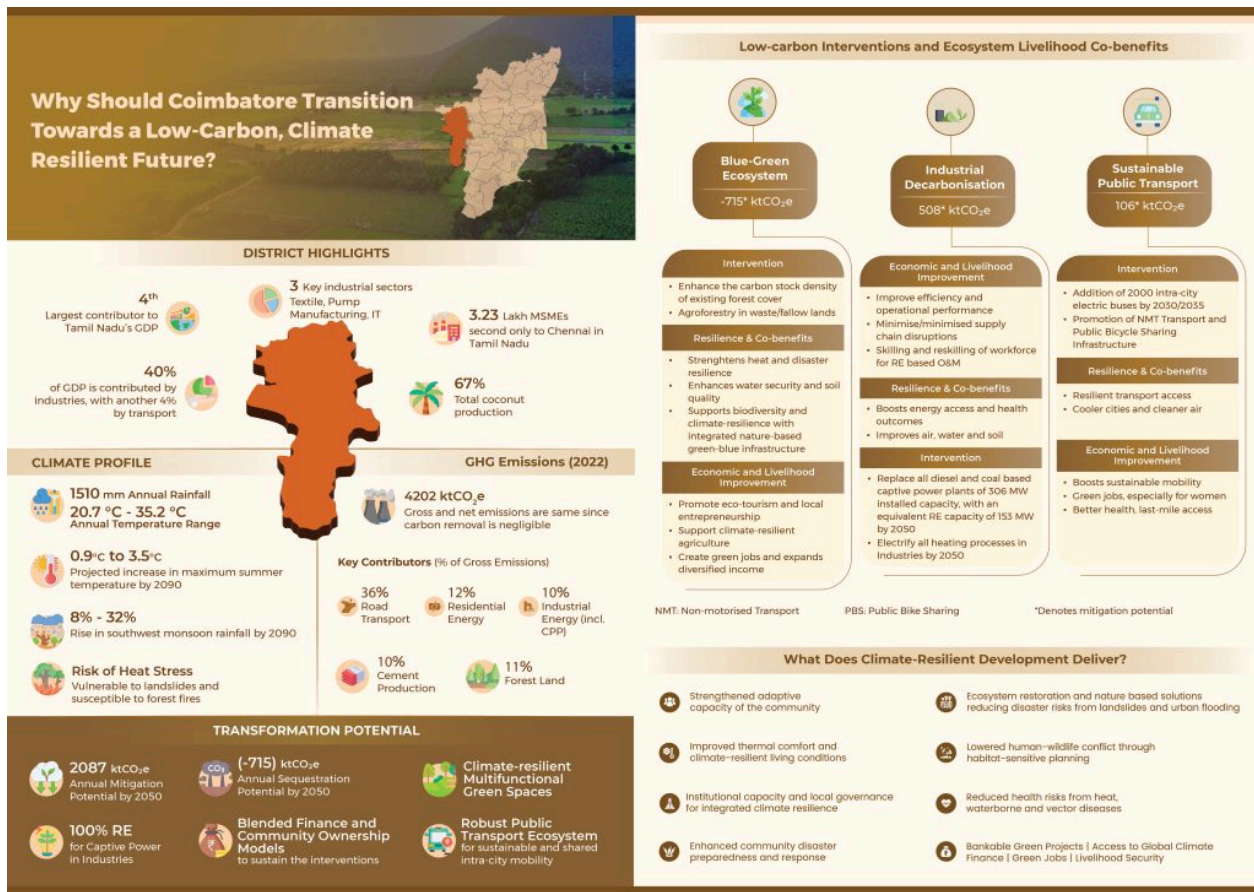
⁶ SME Communities, "Coimbatore's Industrial Playbook" (August 2025): Coimbatore hosts over 3,23,000 MSMEs — the second-largest MSME district in Tamil Nadu. Available at:

<https://smecommunities.com/coimbatores-industrial-playbook-how-a-tier-2-city-is-redefining-indias-sme-led-export-growth/>

⁷ Balamurugan et al. (2024), "Towards Sustainable Practices: An Analysis of Green Supply Chain Management in Motor and Pump SMEs in Coimbatore." Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385026408>

⁸ Vasudha Foundation, Coimbatore District Decarbonisation Strategy. Available at:

<https://vasudha-foundation.org/publications/>



Source: <https://vasudha-foundation.org/coimbatore-district-decarbonisation-action-plan/>

Regional Convention - South 2026

The Regional Convention - South 2026 is envisioned as an implementation-focused, multi-stakeholder platform that brings together business leaders, procurement professionals, MSMEs, financial institutions, policymakers, industry associations, and sustainability practitioners. The Convention is designed not as a forum for broad declarations, but as a space for practical exchange, where experiences are shared, solutions are examined, and collaborative pathways are explored.

Four interconnected themes will anchor the programme, each chosen for its direct relevance to the challenges and opportunities facing the Coimbatore-Tiruppur ecosystem and the wider South Indian industrial landscape:

I. Sustainable Procurement & Responsible Sourcing

Procurement is where sustainability commitments either take root or stall. This pillar will explore how businesses can embed environmental and social criteria into supplier selection, contracting, and ongoing supplier relationships, moving beyond compliance checklists toward procurement systems that actively drive supplier improvement and responsible sourcing at scale. Particular attention will be given to how buyer-supplier dynamics in Coimbatore's industrial clusters can be leveraged to raise sustainability standards across the value chain.

II. Supply Chain Resilience & Risk Management

Climate variability, geopolitical disruptions, logistics volatility, and evolving regulatory frameworks are making supply chain resilience a strategic priority for businesses of all sizes. This pillar will examine how companies are building more

adaptive, diversified, and future-ready supply chains and what lessons from the region's own experience with water stress, climate risk, and export market volatility can offer to the wider industry.

III. Scope 3 Emissions & Decarbonisation

For most manufacturing businesses, the largest portion of their carbon footprint lies not within their own operations, but across their value chains. This pillar will focus on practical frameworks for measuring, managing, and reducing Scope 3 emissions from supplier engagement and data collection to net-zero pathway planning. The discussions will draw directly on Tamil Nadu's district-level decarbonisation experience, exploring how industrial ecosystems like Coimbatore can translate state-level ambitions into value chain action.

IV. Supplier Sustainability & MSME Transition

Sustainable supply chains are only as strong as the suppliers within them. For the vast majority of businesses in Coimbatore-Tiruppur, the over 3 lakh MSMEs that form the backbone of the region's industrial fabric meeting evolving ESG expectations from buyers and markets is both a challenge and an opportunity. This pillar will focus on what it takes to support MSMEs through this transition: capacity building, access to finance, digital tools for traceability, and the kind of buyer-supplier collaboration that makes sustainability both achievable and commercially viable.

Knowledge Compendium

To extend the Convention's impact beyond the event itself, UN GCNI will develop a Knowledge Compendium on Sustainable and Resilient Supply Chains in India. The Compendium will bring together industry case studies, responsible sourcing practices, supplier engagement models, sustainability innovations, and thought leadership perspectives from business leaders and practitioners across the country.

Designed as a practical reference resource for businesses, procurement teams, MSMEs, and sustainability practitioners, the Compendium will document emerging good practices and implementation approaches from across the Indian industry. It will also feature lessons from industrial ecosystems such as Coimbatore-Tiruppur, contributing to wider knowledge-sharing across the UN Global Compact Network and the broader sustainability community in India and beyond.

Who Should Attend

The Convention is designed for decision-makers and practitioners from across the supply chain ecosystem, those who are responsible for driving sustainability action, enabling supplier transition, and building the collaborative partnerships that resilient value chains require.

- CEOs & Business Leaders
- Procurement & Supply Chain Leaders
- ESG & Sustainability Professionals
- MSMEs & Supplier Networks
- Financial Institutions & Investors
- Industry Associations & Policymakers

The Convention is expected to bring together over 150 participants from across industry, finance, policy, and the sustainability ecosystem.

Join the Convention

Through the Regional Convention-South 2026, UN GCNI seeks to strengthen the connections between sustainability ambition and operational practice and to build the collaborative networks that make resilient, responsible supply chains possible at scale across India.

UN GCNI invites businesses, procurement professionals, MSMEs, financial institutions, policymakers, and sustainability practitioners to participate in the Convention and contribute to shaping the future of resilient and responsible supply chains in India.

Further details and registration: <https://globalcompact.in/regional-convention-south-2026/>