



# Highlights of the Rio Conventions Pavilion UNCCD COP 14



4 September 2019

## MORNING TO THINK ABOUT GREEN ENVIRONMENT/ AFTERNOON ON GENDER CAUCUS”

Highlight 1: Green On My Plate: Our Food. Our Planet. Our Choice.

### *TERI School of Advanced Studies (TERI SAS)*

The first session of Rio Conventions Pavilion on September 4, 2019 began with Teri School of Advanced Studies (TERISAS) programme titled ‘**Green On My Plate: Our Food , Our Planet , Our Choice**).



TERI SAS panel made the following observation:

Food is one of the basic necessities for human sustenance. And yet, more than 800 million people in the world go hungry while a larger segment of the population consumes in excess leading to health issues related to unhealthy diets. These issues are, invariably, more pronounced in emerging economies such as India where inequality and inequity along with widening income gaps are significant developmental issues. While the hungry comprise ~21 % of India's adult population (2015-16, NHFW), the rate of obesity has increased from 12 % (2005-06) to a staggering ~20% (2015-16) of the total population. The problem is particularly acute in urban areas with twice the share of obese people as compared to rural areas. Thus, providing the overgrowing urban and rural population with healthy diets remains one of the biggest global development challenges.

The process of food production and management has driven large-scale changes in land resources, water, forests and climate. Further, food choices of individuals impact both – their health and environmental sustainability. The recently launched EAT-Lancet report 2019 states that there is “an urgent need for radical transformation of the global food systems”. Managing and transforming the food system with a focus on sustainable food, which is not only affordable and nutritious but also seasonal, traditional, local, safe, can help to achieve better health for both humans and the environment which is the key to addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



***Introduction to the session: Dr. Chubamenla Jamir, TERI SAS***

The introduction to the session was made by Dr. Chubamenla Jamir, Assistant Professor & Programme Coordinator, Environmental Studies and Resources Management, who spoke at length about the linkages between sustainable food choices and land degradation neutrality. She said that the food production, supply chain and consumption pattern has caused large scale land use changes, impacted land resources and the environment. This in turn adds concern for the sustainability of the food system.

Dr. Jamir said that the process of food production and management has driven large scale systematic changes in water and land resources and forest, and climate leading to irreparable bio diversity loss in certain cases. Today about 70% of the global fresh water use is for irrigation. In fact in India, irrigation accounts for more than 85% of the freshwater use. Agriculture intensification has led to depletion of the land resources and large scale land degradation. Both arable and livestock based agriculture contributes significantly to the green house gas emissions.

Dr. Shaleen Singhal, Professor, Department of Energy and Environment, TERI SAS, shared some interesting insights on production and management of food. He urged people to reduce the intensity of production to curtail green house gas emission as 8% of green house gases are released into the atmosphere. A video on food sustainability was also played.

Professor Pinaki Dasgupta presented his views on wastage of food and the places where food is likely to be wasted more. He said that food loss percentage in India are as follows:

Cereals 4.65 to 5.99

Pulses 6.36 to 8.41

Oilseeds 3.08 to 9.96

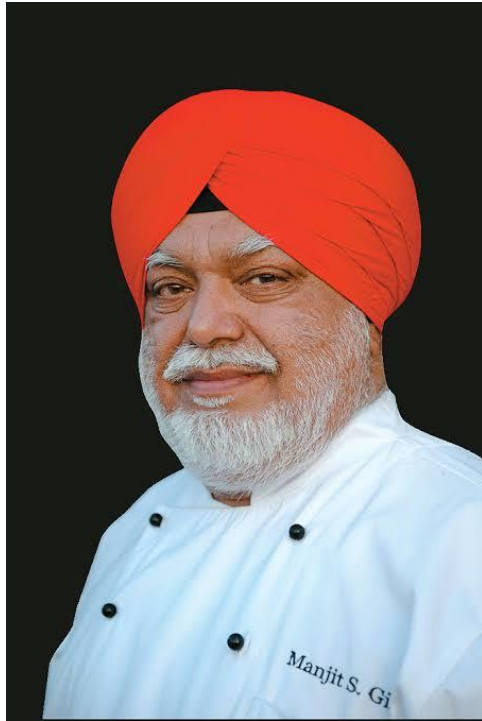
Fruits and Vegetables 4.58 to 15.88

Milk .92

Meat 2.71

Poultry Meat 6.74

Total loss: 92651 Crores in rupee terms.



### ***Chef Manjit Gill***

#### **Celebrity Chef Manjit Gill, President of India Federation of Culinary Associations:**

Chef Gill spoke animatedly about green food choices and techniques of healthy eating. He stressed on use of local products as they are better in temperament of body and supports local climatic conditions. He urged people to use those foods which are in harmony with nature and tradition. He felt that nomenclature of food should not happen as it alters eating habits for instance the goodness of the Indian 'ghee' should not be confused or compared with refined oil and the local usage of 'maida' for less healthy refined flour. He also reminded the audience that in the Indian ayurveda system of medicine there are six distinct tastes of the natural flora and one should stick to eating traditional and healthy food while selecting one's daily diet.

**Seema Bhatt, FAO, India:** Ms. Bhatt made the following observations:

- India committed to conservation and utilization of biodiversity including agrobiodiversity.
- India has taken significant steps in support of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Need to strengthen agriculture and allied sector contributions to implement the National Biodiversity Action Plan NBAP 2008 and NBAP Addendum 2014 and achieve the National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs).
- Strong support for capacity development required.

**Ruchi Warikoo, Founder, Edible Routes:** Ms. Warikoo shared insights into the need for urban farming which can help people cultivate good eating habits and also sustainable growth. She stressed on the need to use vacant urban places to do farming and develop a culture of understanding and getting connected with food. She propagated the idea of growing native food as it is consistent with culture, climatic conditions and comfort of sticking to familiar tastes.

## Highlight 2: Gender Caucus

### *UNCCD Secretariat*

The second session of the day was Gender Caucus organized by the UNCCD secretariat.

**Overview of Gender Caucus:** The Gender Action Plan (GAP) adopted at COP 13 was a landmark decision for the UNCCD. With its adoption UNCCD parties show commitment to improve the quality of life for women worldwide. It bears the potential to move us closer to achieving women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the UNCCD process as well as on national and sub-national levels.

The Gender Caucus is an occasion to form an informal group of likeminded National Focal Points, CSOs, and scientists of the convention interested in gender issues for discussing COP 14 themes and issues from a gender perspective. The participation is voluntary, and outcomes are non-binding.

### **Objective**

In line with the above the objectives of the Gender Caucus are as follows:

- Promote and boost the implementation the UNCCD Gender Action Plan by gathering strong gender advocates during UNCCD COP meetings and beyond;
- sensitize negotiators and other stakeholder on gender implications of issues discussed during COP and develop the ability to look at UNCCD related themes with a gender perspective thereby detecting "gender blind-spots";
- empowering female and male delegates to negotiate with a gender lens/ perspective during negotiations and beyond;
- provide a platform to exchange information between UNCCD stakeholders interested in gender issues and the UNCCD Secretariat.

All UNCCD stakeholders, especially female and male national focal points are invited to come and to work together to guarantee that a gender perspective is applied throughout the process and implementation of the Convention.

The welcome address of the session was delivered by UNCCD Executive Secretary, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw. Corrina Voigt, UNCCD Gender Focal Point, introduced the session.

A short film on Gender Caucus and how it has transformed the lives of women was also screened. It was an informal brain storming session of about 30 experts who discussed about land tenure-lease, the right of ownership, rental, arrangement and access to land. Access to land is the most important.

Experts discussed about who has the right to own, borrow or use land- a wide topic in terms of actions.

The panel deliberated on how land tenure and LDN are related. It was emphasized that trees cannot be planted if people don't have the right to access the land for long term projects and for that to secure land right is necessary.



***Participants at work***

It was discussed in the group that the need for better social and collective action at the local level is of paramount importance. There is a need for qualitative indicators and good reporting for measuring the progress of the ground reality.

The participants discussed the important findings that 70-80% affected are women from LDN as they are more engaged and connected with the land. That is why women's perspective and inclusion is needed. There is a greater need to explore financial instrument and gender responsive mechanism.

Yusuf Aliyu Addy, Director, DDC explained the importance of capacity building at national level and simplification of the LDN concept. He said that there is need to set up a mechanism to ensure involvement of key stakeholders and also guidelines to address gender in LDN. Natalie Van Hareh, of BOTH ENDS, Netherlands explained how people exploit the land by overusing it and reducing the fertility of the soil. She stressed the need to recognize the customary lending rates of the particular country to ensure greater equality and greater land use.



***Aurelie Lhumeau from UNCCD at the group discussion of Gender Caucus***