

Business Standard

Global initiative seeks answers to eco-challenges

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A unique global initiative which aims to mobilise experience and expertise to help find solutions to some of the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges was launched here Sunday. The South Asia Regional Network of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) seeks to work closely with stakeholders, including the government, businesses, civil society, UN agencies and other international organisations.

India's TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) University and Bangladesh's BRAC University are the regional SDSN centres for South Asia. The global SDSN is hosted by Columbia University.

"South Asia is a region in vital need of sustainable development in order to end poverty, empower women, reduce inequality, and protect a very fragile natural environment," said SDSN director Jeffrey Sachs.

"The entire global network of universities in the SDSN is excited to work with our close friends and colleagues in South Asia to advance the cause of sustainable development within the region and globally," added Sachs, who is also the director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University.

The SDSN is a global collaboration to mobilise expertise and experience from academia, civil society and the private sector to help find solutions for some of the world's most pressing - and interconnected - environmental, social, and economic challenges.

The SDSN's mission is to accelerate practical problem-solving for sustainable development at local, national and global scales.

TERI director-general R.K. Pachauri said: "Indian society has practised sustainable development for thousands of years, because sustainability was the foundation and the very essence of development in this country."

"Modern society, with its growing emphasis on consumption-driven lifestyles, including in this country, needs models of sustainable development that build on modern economic systems and structures. That is where sustainable development solutions are important, and need to be devised by networks of knowledge organisations across the globe," he said.

TERI University vice chancellor Leena Srivastava said: "TERI University, together with BRAC University in Bangladesh, is proud to host the regional hub for SDSN. The most valuable opportunity

that this provides us is to strengthen sustainable development research, education, and application in the university system in South Asia."

Launched by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in August 2012, the SDSN and its regional centres will help coordinate the activities of a network of stakeholders and facilitate solution-oriented partnerships on critical development challenges.